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MODERN LIBRARY DEVELOPMENT IN CHINA—AN INTERVIEW WITH DEAN HWA-WEI LEE

By Ron Chepesiuk

Dr. Hwa-wei Lee, Dean of University Libraries and Professor of Education at Ohio University, has had a distinguished relationship with libraries in the People's Republic of China since 1982, the year the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) of Canada invited him to the country to lecture at a two-week seminar on "Management of Information Centers in China." Since then, Dr. Lee has been invited to China every year to teach and consult by various universities as well as the Chinese Academy of Sciences, the Ministry of Education, the National Library, and the Shenzhen Library. Sponsors have included the Chinese government, OCLC, Ohio University, UNDP, UNESCO, the United Board of Christian Higher Education in Asia, and the World Bank.



Hwa-wei Lee

Besides giving lectures, organizing conferences, and advising on library management, Dr. Lee has brought some 150 Chinese librarians to Ohio University as part of an International Librarians Internship Program he established in 1979. His 1996 book, *Modern Library Management*, was written in Chinese and published in Taiwan, and it is currently being used by several library schools in China as a textbook.

Dr. Lee's long relationship with China has given him a unique perspective on that country's library development as it struggles to become what many experts believe will be the superpower of the twenty-first century.

What kind of role do libraries play in the country's development?

Historically, China always has had a very high regard for libraries, even though their missions and functions have gone through many changes over the times. Throughout the twentieth century, even with the negative effects of successions of wars and periods of political instability, libraries in China have managed to grow, modernize, and play a key role in national development.

Despite inadequate funding, libraries of all levels and types have expanded rapidly since 1978 when China began major economic, educational, social, and political reforms.

The 1996 IFLA General Conference in Beijing demonstrated the Government's support of libraries. Mr. Li Peng, Premier of China at that time, spoke at the opening ceremony on the importance of libraries in national development in China. He also urged more cooperation and exchange of information among libraries of the world.

During my last trip to China in October 1998, I was received by two deputy ministers of the Ministry of Culture, who consulted with me in lengthy discussions as to the proper course of action in China's plan to launch a national digital library project.

Does the current Chinese leadership view libraries as important in its efforts to modernize the country?

The opening speech given by Premier Li Peng at the 1996 IFLA General Conference clearly pointed out the important role played by libraries in national development. He pledged the government's strong support to further library development as China strives to build a modern

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MESSAGE FROM THE IRRT CHAIR CELEBRATING OUR FIFTIETH BIRTHDAY

By Lucinda Covert-Vail

This year marks the fiftieth anniversary of the International Relations Round Table. It is a year to celebrate our golden anniversary and recognize all of you who have contributed to the Round Table's



Lucinda Covert-Vail

success, activities, and interest in the international potential of our profession.

Our roots are in the book distribution programs organized by ALA during World War II and handled through its International Relations Office in Washington, DC. Although that program ended in 1948, the interest of U.S. librarians in international activities and librarianship was far from over. We were originally established as The Round Table on Library Service Abroad by the ALA Council in 1949 "to provide a means whereby the general membership of the American Library Association may inform itself regarding the international aspects of library work and may be given to participate in activities for the improvement of international relations and/or library services throughout the world." We held our first meeting in April of that same year. In 1956, our name was changed to the International Relations Round Table, and our purpose was reframed to include serving as a communications conduit between the ALA International Relations Committee and the ALA membership, providing hospitality and information to visitors from abroad and developing the interests of librarians in activities and problems in the field of international relations. Such a broad charge and such a responsibility.

Since our name changed in the fifties, we, too, have gone through changes, but have always continued with that original goal of membership involvement and outreach to our international colleagues. Our objectives are reflected in the publication of *International Leads*, the IRRT's international programs at annual conferences, and activities such as the international visitors lounge, orientation, preconference, and reception. More recently, with the co-sponsorship of the

International Relations Committee and the ALA International Relations Office, the international poster and paper sessions, and the mentoring program were introduced.

This column does not allow for the list of names of those forty-nine past IRRT chairs and numerous officers and subcommittee chairs, many of whom have gone on to other ALA and International posts and all of whom have left their mark on international librarianship here in the United States and abroad. Nor does it allow me the space to list all of our over 700 current IRRT members. Each of you has marked your interest and commitment to international library relations through membership in the International Relations Round Table.

So how do we celebrate our fiftieth? How can each one of us continue with our founding charge? Join us at our annual conference in New Orleans this summer. Answer the call in this issue of *International Leads* to "host" your international colleagues at the conference by working in the international visitors lounge or serving as an ALA conference mentor to one of our attendees from abroad. Attend the international poster session or international papers program to learn about specific library programs developed by your colleagues outside the fifty states. Our annual program will feature speakers discussing international librarianship—past, present, and future. At the program we'll also be honoring our past chairs and others who have contributed to international librarianship over the last half century. Many of them will be in attendance, and we'll all have the opportunity to thank them for their commitment and leadership.

Of course, I realize that not all of you can attend the annual conference. That does not mean, however, that you are excluded from our activities. Your very act of joining IRRT, the only ALA membership organization devoted solely to international library interests, is a statement of your interest in its mission. Through *International Leads* and ALAWorld (the IRRT listserve), we can all participate in the discussion surrounding international library affairs. Share

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MODERN LIBRARY DEVELOPMENT IN CHINA

(Continued from page 1)

socialist country with an open-market economic system based on education, science, and technology.

Even though funding and human resources for libraries are still very limited, a great deal of development has taken place in China in recent years due to a greater recognition and support given by various levels of the Chinese government to libraries.

What has been the biggest change in Chinese library development since your association with China began?

Many significant changes have taken place in Chinese library development since the early 1980s. Most important of these was the rebuilding of libraries ruined by the Cultural Revolution. Because of a serious shortage of trained librarians, the number of library schools has grown from four before the Cultural Revolution to over fifty in 1998.

A large number of continuing education programs have also been developed during this period. Over the past twenty years, not only has the number of libraries of all kinds increased, but so has the size of library collections and the variety of services offered.

Many new library buildings have been built to replace small and out-moded facilities. Modern library concepts and practices have also been adopted, including the conversion by an increasing number of libraries from a close-stack system to an open-stack system.

Noticeable progress also has been made in other areas.

Could you give some more examples?

These include the development of library standards in cataloging, subject headings, and classification; the compilation of a National Bibliography; the implementation of the cataloging in publication (CIP); the establishment of a national microfilming center; wide dispersion of library automation applications and networking; increasing numbers of professional publications; substantial efforts in library research; the rapid growth in Internet connectivity and use; and international cooperation.

What are some important issues facing the library profession in China?

Even though libraries are recognized as very important in national development, funding for libraries has been inadequate to meet the needs. Salaries for librarians and support staff are not attractive, and this has caused a serious brain-drain problem.

The high costs of publications, especially those from the West, increasingly place them beyond the reach of most Chinese libraries, and this contributes to a paucity of foreign information resources in Chinese libraries. The use of more sophisticated information technologies by libraries has also drained the limited library funding.

The concepts of library cooperation and resource sharing have been much discussed among Chinese librarians, but little has been done. Government intervention through funding and other incentives may be necessary to jumpstart such efforts.

Disparities in economic development among different regions of China also have caused imbalances in library development. In Beijing, Shanghai, and Guangdong Province. For example, modern library facilities and services are readily available but not in poorer regions, especially those in the inland western provinces.

How important is the copyright issue to our colleagues in China?

Chinese libraries are very much aware of the copyright issue. Since 1990, the Chinese government has also promulgated a series of laws and regulations including the 1991 Copyright Law and the 1994 Regulations for the Punishment of Copyright Violators.

After China joined the Paris Universal Copyright Convention and the Berne Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works, a Regulation on the Implementation of International Copyright Agreement was issued in September 1992.

In July 1994, the State Council promulgated additional measures to protect the intellectual property rights. On September 29, 1994, the Supreme Court of China also issued a set of directives to lower courts to enforce the protection of intellectual property rights.

In my recent visits to China, I have been pleased to find that the previous practice of reproducing foreign journals and reference publications for redistribution in China without authorization has ceased. Because most libraries in China cannot afford to acquire highly priced foreign publications, either in print or electronic format, they are starving for the latest foreign information sources. To alleviate this grave situation, more publications in Chinese, which have been written by Chinese authors and published in China, are quickly filling the void.

How is the position of librarian viewed in China?

The positions of librarians and information workers are viewed as equal with professional people in other fields. This is especially true in universities and research organizations. It is quite common to find competent librarians with subject specialization in science, engineering, or medicine, who are willing to work in libraries or documentation and information centers.

In recent years, professionally trained librarians have filled increasingly more library positions. Library directors are required to be scholars or senior professionals before being appointed.

Is the pay commensurate with the librarian's new-found status?

With the progress toward an open-market economy, the salary gap between employees in the public and private sectors is widening every day. The situation has made the positions of librarians and information specialists, who are mostly in the public sector, less attractive due to low pay.

For the first time in the last twenty years, library schools now find it difficult to attract the best students to apply for admission. Libraries, too, are having a hard time retaining their best staff members.

What kind of relationship have Chinese librarians developed with their foreign colleagues?

In my frequent contacts with Chinese librarians, I have found a strong desire among Chinese libraries and librarians to establish cooperative relationships with foreign libraries and librarians to exchange professional knowledge, publications, and staff visits. Chinese librarians also are interested in learning the latest changes and developments in librarianship in other countries from foreign colleagues.

In response to this need, the Ohio University Libraries and many other American libraries have set up exchange programs and internships for Chinese librarians. Many more such opportunities are needed.

How far along is China in connecting to the Internet?

China started to connect with the Internet in the beginning of 1994. Since then, the rate of growth, both in terms of the number of computers and the number of users connected to the Internet, have been dramatic. According to a news report on October 20, 1998, by the official China Xinhua News Agency, the number

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WORLD SCENE

Editor: Fazle Kabir

LOBBYING PROPOSED EUROPEAN UNION COPYRIGHT

Several committees of the European Parliament have prepared reports for copyright provisions in the European Union. The European Bureau of Library Information and Documentation Association (EBLIDA) and the European Copyright User Platform have lobbied in favor of libraries and consumers.

The Economic and Monetary Committee has received six suggestions for amendments to its report. The Legal Affairs Committee has presented its report for the first time. The report has upheld the copyright holders' rights over the rights for libraries. Only two of the eight German members of the European Parliament have supported this view, while six other members and the copyright advisor of the Library Association of England have been critical of the above view. The Cultural Committee has received eighty suggestions for incorporating into this report. The European Copyright for the European Union would finally be based on the acceptance of the provisions contained in these reports and presented in the European Parliament. ■

Reported by Fazle Kabir

LIBRARIES ARE FOCUSED IN LONDON FESTIVAL OF LITERATURE

The London Festival of Literature held from March 19-28, 1999 hosted 34 English writers and 32 writers from abroad. Each borough of London adopted two writers during the festival who would work with libraries, arts and education departments. The writers represented all forms of writing and activities, travel, storytelling and poetry. Group readings, storytelling and workshops were also featured during the festival. The Association of London Chief Librarians was also a partner in this Festival. ■

Reported by Fazle Kabir

ASIA/PACIFIC REGIONAL FORUM

Special librarians in the Asia-Pacific region are invited to join a forum that is being established in the subject areas of physics, astronomy, mathematics, and computer science. This forum, a project of the International Relations Committee, Physics-Astronomy-Mathematics Division of the Special Libraries Association (SLA-PAM), and the Australian Library and Information Association, aims to foster the exchange of information among colleagues. It will also serve to inform publishers of technological weaknesses in the developing world, especially in the Asia-Pacific region. There is no financial cost involved with joining this forum, and members do not need to

join SLA or the Australian Library and Information Association. A regional online discussion list will assist these specialists in keeping abreast of new developments and in giving access to advice from colleagues with similar interests or problems. More information is available at the SLA-PAM Website at msowww.anu.edu.au/library/pam/intro.htm. For further information or to send suggestions or comments, contact Jeanette Regan at Jeanette.regan@anu.edu.au or write to Branch Librarian, Astronomy Library (ANU), Private Bag, Weston Creek, P.O. Act 2611, Australia. ■

Reported by MLA News

CELEBRATING OUR FIFTIETH BIRTHDAY

(Continued from page 2)

International Leads with your colleagues at work and watch for the abstracts of the international papers that will be posted on the international website.

Do I sound like an IRRT booster? Or an international relations groupie? Probably so. But the richness we all gain from involvement with international library activities, both in our increasingly globalized library communities here in the States and abroad, as we share with and learn from our international colleagues, is a value we can't underestimate. We hope that in another 50 years some of us will be around to remember the "second half century" of the IRRT, celebrate our successes, look to our future, and honor the contributions all of our members made by recognizing the value in going international.

International ALA Annual Conference will be held in New Orleans, June 24-30, 1999, and the following international activities have been planned for the conference:

Friday, June 25

9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.—Pre-conference for International Visitors—"State of American Librarianship"

4:30 p.m.-6:30 p.m.—Orientation for International Visitors

Saturday, June 26

8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.—All IRC/IRRT

Subcommittee Meetings

Sunday, June 27

8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.—IRRT Executive Committee

1:00 p.m.-2:30 p.m.—International Poster Sessions

Monday, June 28

8:30 a.m.-12:00 noon—International Papers—"Intellectual Freedom: A Global Perspective" (IRC/IRRT)

2:00 p.m.-4:00 p.m.—IRRT Program—"Celebrating Our Past, Posed for the Future"

6:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m.—International Visitors Reception, Plimsoll Club

ALSO:

Friday, June 25-Monday, June 28—International Visitors Lounge IRRT Program—Annual Conference, New Orleans

Join us for the fiftieth anniversary celebration of the International Relations Round Table. This year's program opens with a roll call honoring all the past IRRT chairs and others who have made a difference in international librarianship. This will be followed by a panel presentation featuring a historical overview of U.S. librarianship in international library affairs and the future of international librarianship at the turn of the new century. All will be followed by the opportunity to meet and speak with our honored guests and presenters. ■

WORLD SCENE

INFORM THE WORLD!

The World Library Partnership (WLP) in the United States and the Rural Libraries and Resources Development Programme (RLRDP) in Zimbabwe are pleased to announce the 1999 Inform the World Librarian Volunteer Program. WLP connects libraries around the world with partner libraries in the United States and produces training materials for librarians in developing countries. The RLRDP has established a network of over 100 rural libraries in Zimbabwe and has a waiting list of 4,000 communities that want libraries.

The Inform the World program will train and place ten to fifteen U.S. librarians in rural libraries in Zimbabwe. The volunteers will conduct practical service projects determined by their host libraries. They will also help to design projects to promote the sustainability of their host libraries once they return to the United States.

The trip will last approximately four weeks in June, July 1999. The pre-departure and orientation and training will take place in Durham, NC. Estimated cost of the trip is \$3,900, which includes placement, orientation or training, debriefing or follow-up, lodging, and round-trip airfare from Durham to Harare.

Information about travel grants and potential funding sources are posted on WLI's Web site (rlpnet.org/-wfp). If interested, contact Laura Wendell, Executive Director, The World Library Partnership, 1028 Bahama Rd., Bahama, NC 27503; 919/479-0163; email, wendell@acpub.duke.edu. ■

Reported by MLA News

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL WINS HERITAGE LOTTERY

The Kent County Council, England, will restore its nineteenth century tithe map collection containing Church levy maps for the area. These maps are held in Canterbury Cathedral and the Center for Kentish Studies in Maidstones.

An earlier grant of £967,000 from the Lottery has helped to improve the Alquin Wing Project in York Minster. The Alquin Wing now houses its library, archives and conservation workshop. The project has resulted in improved access to the facility and its large reading room. The Heritage Lottery has also helped to restore the village institute and its library at Bessbook Newry. ■

Reported by Fazle Kabir

FREE PUBLICATION AVAILABLE FROM IFLA OFFICE

"Interlending and Document Delivery in Developing Countries" is now available free from the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA). These brief papers were presented at the workshop organized by the IFLA Section on Document Delivery and Interlending, held during the sixty-fourth IFLA General Conference in Amsterdam, August 20, 1998. The workshop was part of the project, financed by Danida, dealing with the establishment of electronic document delivery in a num-

ber of research libraries in Ghana. The workshop attracted more than thirty participants; many different problems were discussed, and economically feasible solutions were examined. To order this free document (ISBN 0-95-32439-31) contact IFLA offices for UAP and International Lending, c/o The British Library, Boston Spa, Wetherby, West Yorkshire, LS23 7BQ, United Kingdom, +44(0)1937-546254; fax +44(0)1937-546478; e-mail ifla@bluk; Web site, www.ifla.org. ■

Reported by MLA News

BIBLIOTHECA ALEXANDRINA RESOLUTION PASSED

A resolution on Bibliotheca Alexandrina was passed by the IRC and ALA Council on February 2 at the 1999 ALA Mid-Winter Meeting in Philadelphia. The following is the text of the resolution: **RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF THE BIBLIOTHECA ALEXANDRINA**

WHEREAS, the American Library Association has supported the revival of the Alexandrina Library as acknowledged in the Council's resolutions of July 1, 1987 and July 12, 1988; and

WHEREAS, the development of the Bibliotheca Alexandrina has enjoyed good support in many countries around the world, including the United States,

as well as support from UNESCO; and **WHEREAS**, the construction of the Bibliotheca Alexandrina is now underway and the inauguration of the library is being planned for fall 1999; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the American Library Association extend its wholehearted support for the library and its congratulations in the successful international endeavor; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the American Library Association continue its support of the goals and objectives of the Bibliotheca Alexandrina. ■

FREE PASS PROGRAM PROVIDES OPPORTUNITY TO ATTEND ZIMBABWE BOOK FAIR

ALA and the Zimbabwe International Book Fair (ZIBF) will be joining to help support a delegation of 10 ALA librarians to the 1999 Zimbabwe Book Fair in Harare July 31-August 7. The Free Pass Program will provide free registration and three days lodging and breakfast at the expense of ZIBF. ALA will be contributing \$200 toward the cost of airfare for each librarian.

ZIBF offers the largest gathering of African publishers, writers, librarians, and book sellers in the world. The fair is a week-long festival of books, readings, workshops, and events including the opening Indaba conference on "Women's

Voices—Gender, Books, and Development."

In addition to ZIBF activities, ALA will be coordinating opportunities for the delegates to interact with colleagues from Africa, and visits to a variety of libraries in Zimbabwe. ALA and ZIBF encourages applications from school, special, public, and academic librarians. The application deadline is April 15.

For information and applications for the ZIBF99 Free Pass Program contact the ALA International Relations Office at 1-800-545-2433, ext. 3201; e-mail intl@ala.org or visit the ZIBF website at 222.mediazw.com/zibf. ■

WORLD SCENE

Editor: Fazle Kabir

PROBLEMS IN FAR- RIGHT FRONT NATIONAL CONTROLLED LIBRARIES IN FRANCE

The French Government has suspended its funding to libraries because of the controversial library administration in Orange, France. The National Front Controlled local authority is continuing to appoint non-professional staff in senior library professional positions. The government has expressed its displeasure against such political control of the public libraries by the mayors. There is no appropriate measure against such political control which might be detrimental to library services. The government has as its only recourse to suspend funding as a measure of punishment.

A spokesperson of the French Library Association said that there was no evidence that the funding sanction had any effect on the undesired activities perpetrated by the library authority. Services are now being run by non-professionals, and professionals are afraid to protest and fear reprisals if they speak out.

The new French government has promised to enact legislation to ensure that all libraries conform to some standards in the management of libraries. Any legislation, however, is a complex process. In France, a local Mayor has the ultimate responsibility in all local authority appointments. The existing guidelines for such appointments are not obligatory.

The current Front National Chief Librarian in Orange is only twenty-five years old and has very limited experience in library and personnel management. Two other municipalities, Vitrolles and Marignane, are also under Front National control. Libraries in these two municipalities are also having problems. Many of the professional staff members are leaving and are being replaced by the wives of the Front National officials. The promised legislation ensuring some library standards may not be enacted before the millennium. ■

Reported by Fazle Kabir

STAFF STRIKE AT BIBLIOTHEQUE NATIONALE DE FRANCE ENDS

The eighteen-day strike at the Bibliotheque de Nationale on the issues of new technology affecting working practice has ended.

The trouble started when the patrons using the new research reading room did not get their computer requested reading materials. However, they were prevented by the computerized exit for non-return of the library materials requested by them.

Despite the insistence of the library management that adequate staff training

was given and system testing was done, in reality, the new technology-run system failed to operate properly. A staff delegation to the Ministry of Culture has agreed to the suggestion that the library would remain closed from February 1, 1999 to June 30, 1999, to correct the malfunction of the implemented technology. Library patrons would also be consulted to determine whether the above library operating schedule would be suitable for them. ■

Reported by Fazle Kabir

INTERNATIONAL CALENDAR

Compiled by Frederick C. Lynden

April 15-16, 1999—International Conference on Information Literacy, Malmo, Sweden. Theme: Creating Knowledge. Website for the conference: <http://www.bibl.mah.se/konferens/index.htm>. Contact: Christina Tovote, Academic Services, Malmo, Sweden; e-mail: christina.tovote@mah.se

April 19-21, 1999—Preservation Management between Policy and Practice, The Hague, Netherlands. Theme: Interaction between Theory and Practice. Topics: organizational, financial, and managerial aspects of preservation. Contact: Barbara de Goederen; e-mail: barbara.degoederen@konbib.nl or the conference website: <http://www.konbib.nl/pmc>

May 9-11, 1999—International Conference on Solving Collection Problems through Repository Strategies, Kuopio, Finland. Theme: How to House Printed Collections, at What Cost, and What Kind of Repository and Cooperative Solutions Exist. Topics: collection cooperation, cooperative cataloging, electronic repositories, and different repository solutions. Contact: Pentti Vattulainen, Director, National Repository Library, Kuopio, Finland; e-mail: pentti.vattulainen@nrl.fi

May 10-12, 1999—ICCC/IFIP Conference on Electronic Publishing, (3rd), Ronneby, Sweden. Theme: Redefining the Information Chain, New Ways and Voices. Topics include: electronic serials, new publishing models, intelli-

gent agents in EP, digital libraries, and electronic commerce. Contact person is Peter Linde, University of Kariskrona, Ronneby, Sweden; e-mail Elpub99@hkr.se

May 23-26, 1999—International Conference on Conceptions of Library and Information Science, (3rd) Dubrovnik, Croatia. Theme: Digital Libraries: Interdisciplinary Concepts, Challenges and Opportunities. Topics: fundamental and theoretical aspects and questions underlying digital libraries; nature of digital library collections; organization of digital libraries; access to, use of, evaluation of and economics of digital libraries. Contact: website <http://www.scils.rutgers.edu/colis3>

August 19-28, 1999—IFLA Council and General Conference, (65th) Bangkok, Thailand. Theme: On the Threshold of a New Century: Libraries as Gateways to an Enlightened World. For further information, contact Mr. Sjoerd Koopman, Coordinator of Professional Activities; e-mail IFLA@ifla.org

October 4-5, 1999—International Conference on Grey Literature, (4th), Washington, DC. Theme: New Frontiers in Grey Literature. Topics: global assessment of grey literature, archiving electronic grey literature, and copyright and grey literature. Contact: Dominic.Farace@inter.NL.net. Conference information available at website: <http://www.konbib.nl/infolev/greynet/frame1.htm>

MODERN LIBRARY DEVELOPMENT IN CHINA

Continued from page 5

of people who plug in to the Internet in China doubled in the first half of 1998, reaching 1.17 million by the end of June.

There were 542,000 computers connected to the Internet and 3,700 Websites. It was estimated by the China Internet Information Center that the number would reach 2.5 million by the end of 1998 and 5 million by the year 2000.

How does this state of affairs compare to other Third World countries?

As a newcomer to using the Internet, China was ranked low in terms of its long-term potential of information technology in Asia and the Pacific region, according to a 1996 Gartner Group report. It ranked China behind Japan, Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, and the Philippines. But recent developments in China, coupled with strong economic performance (and the economic decline in other parts of Asia), may change this ranking in the near future.

To increase the usefulness of the Internet as an important resource for Chinese information, a Web-based Chinese information service, ChinaInfo, has been established by the Institute of Scientific and Technical Information of China (ISTIC) and operated by Wangfang Data Corporation. Regarded as a comprehensive Chinese "Yahoo" service, ChinaInfo intends to build a comprehensive and dynamic information service, combining both public and commercial information into one unified information source.

How important is it that China hook up to the Internet?

The decision by the Chinese government in late 1993 to connect China to the Internet was a major recognition of the importance for China to be a part of the worldwide information flow and exchange. Internet users, both in China and abroad, have greatly benefited from the availability of Internet connectivity.

What are some of the problems that the Chinese face in connecting to the Internet?

Taking full advantage of the Internet for the growing number of Internet users in China requires that China quickly expand its national information infrastructure and lower user fees. A concerted effort will also be needed to coordinate the creation and maintenance of all important and relevant Chinese information databases on line.

Is there any concern on the part of the Chinese leadership about the freedom the individual enjoys on the Internet?

Initially, there were concerns by the Chinese Government that the Internet

might subject China to much undesirable information, some of which could have negative political, social, cultural, or moral effects. But, the decision-makers felt that the advantages far outweighed the disadvantages in connecting to the Internet.

Has the Chinese government tried to censor the Internet?

In February 1996, the State Council did issue a policy statement: "The Contemporary Rules of Computer Networks Connected with the Internet," which stated that only state-owned telecommunication companies could provide Internet international connections. It also required that any other ISP or ICP be registered with government agencies before their operation.

There was fear then that the Chinese Government would introduce some measures to ban pornography and politically sensitive content. The new rules threaten potential offenders with jail terms. So far, other than this policy, the Chinese Government has not taken any obvious action to censor the use of the Internet.

What can librarians in other countries do to further the Internet connection and a more open China?

Libraries in China have been in the

forefront of the country's move to connect to the Internet. We need to give our Chinese colleagues more encouragement and recognition for their achievements and offer our technical help if needed, although China's level of technical expertise is high.

What are some of the things you plan to do in the future vis a vis China?

The greatest need in China, as I see it, is to establish more library linkages with other countries for information and staff exchange. I will continue to be a facilitator for these types of linkages. In addition, I will continue to conduct workshops on modern library management in China as long as there is such a need.

Ron Chepesiuk is Editor-in-Chief of International Leads. ■

BECOME A MENTOR FOR AN INTERNATIONAL LIBRARIAN AT THE ALA ANNUAL CONFERENCE

In an effort to make the ALA Annual Conference as rewarding as possible for international attendees, the ALA International Relations Office will once again be matching up American librarians with an international colleague at the ALA Conference.

The Mentoring Program is a wonderful opportunity to meet an international librarian, and help him or her navigate the complexities of the conference.

If you are interested in being a mentor in New Orleans, please contact Annie Wolter at the International Relations Office, 1-800-545-2433, ext. 3201; e-mail intl@ala.org.

IRRT FOREIGN VISITORS RECEPTION

IRRT is pleased to announce that the annual IRRT Foreign Visitors Reception will be held on Monday, June 28, 1999 from 6-8 PM at the Plimsoll Club in New Orleans. Located at the top of the World Trade Center (30th floor) on the Mississippi River, this is a splendid site for this annual event. Any questions about the reception can be referred to the Reception Chair, Frederick C. Lynden (401-863-2946) or e-mail Frederick_Lynden@brown.edu.

INTERNATIONAL LEADS EDITOR

The term of office for the Editor of International Leads will end in January 2000. IRRT is looking for people with editorial experience to consider as candidates for this important volunteer position. If you are interested, please contact Richard A. Olsen, Chair, IRRT Publications Committee, James P. Adams Library, Rhode Island College, Providence, RI 02908 (rolsen@ric.edu). The appointment will be made at the ALA Annual Conference in New Orleans.

WEB PAGE EDITOR

The IRRT Publications is seeking candidates for the volunteer position of Web Page Editor. Inquiries and applications should be sent to Richard A. Olsen at the James P. Adams Library, Rhode Island College, Providence, RI 02908 (rolsen@ric.edu). The appointment will be made at the ALA annual Conference in New Orleans.

HUMPHRY/OCLC/FOREST PRESS AWARD FOR CHEPESIUK

Ron Chepesiuk, head of the Archives and Special Collections, Dacus Library, Winthrop University in Rock Hill, South Carolina, has been selected to receive the 1999 Humphrey/OCLC/Forest Press Award for his significant contribution to International Librarianship. He is founder and executive director of the University's Senior Research Associate Program, a university think tank that supports the Archives' objectives and programming. He is a member of Beta Phi Mu and holds a B.A. from Moorhead State University, a MLS from Clark Atlanta University, and post graduate diploma in archival studies (DAS) from the University of Ireland, University College Dublin.

As a journalist and scholar, he is a contributing editor to *American Libraries* magazine; Editor-in-Chief of *International Leads*, the ALA's international arm; and a contributing editor to several other publications. His awards include the ALA's Bogle Award for International



Ron Chepesiuk

Travel and Winthrop University's Award for Community Service.

He is the author of ten books and more than 1,500 publications that have appeared in 225 plus publications including, *Modern Maturity*, *New York Times*, *National Review*, *The Progressive*, *Defense And Diplomacy*, and *USA Today*. As a journalist and scholar, he has written about library and political events in

more than 30 countries, and his interviews have included Jimmy Carter, Yasir Arafat, Gerry Adams of Northern Ireland, former president Violeta Chamarro of Nicaragua, and former president Andres Pastrana and President Ernesto Samper of Columbia.

"In announcing the award Tracey J. Hunter Hayes, chair of the Humphrey/OCLC/Forest Press Award Jury subcommittee, said the "Chepesiuk had made the world particularly aware of the challenges that exist in many known and obscure locations in our ever-changing world" and described him as a "consummate professional and a 'librarian's librarian.'"

The award will be presented to Mr. Chepesiuk on June 28, 1999, during the Annual Conference of the American Library Association to be held in New Orleans. ■

VOLUNTEER TO SOCIALIZE!

Here's your chance to relax, have fun, and be a good global citizen at the same time! IRRT's Hospitality Committee needs volunteers for the International Visitors Lounge at ALA's annual conference in New Orleans. The Visitors Lounge provides a convenient place for our international members to meet, chat, and take a break from a busy day of meeting-going and exhibit-viewing. It is a terrific opportunity to greet colleagues from around the globe.

Volunteers will be responsible for assisting international visitors with their questions and directions regarding the conference, ALA, our international activities, and U.S. librarianship in general. The Hospitality Committee will furnish

you with all the information and resources you need to succeed at being a volunteer. All you need to provide is a two-hour time commitment and a friendly disposition! Knowledge of a second language is a plus, but by no means a requirement as most international conference attendees are comfortable with English.

If you are interested in volunteering or have questions, please contact Paula Field at paula.feid@nyu.edu. You need not commit to a particular time yet, but it will help our planning if we hear from you soon. We will notify you about specific time assignments after the annual conference program schedule is released.

OOPS!

In the December 1998 issue, we published an article entitled "Wounded Libraries in Croatia—Destruction and Heroic Recovery Efforts" by Dr. Katherine Cveljo. By mistake, the following information was left out:

"Research for this publication was supported by a 1997 grant from IREX (International & Research Exchanges Board) with funds provided by the U.S. Department of State (Title VIII Program) and the National Endowment for the Humanities. None of these organizations is responsible for the views expressed in the article.

We apologize for our mistake.

—Editors

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