



# INTERNATIONAL LEADS

Publication of the International Relations Round Table, ALA

## HISTORY OF THE INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS ROUND TABLE

By Rebecka Lindau & Lucinda Covert-Vail

This year the International Relations Round Table celebrates its 50th anniversary. To commemorate the anniversary a program, "Celebrating Our Past - Poised for the Future", was held at the annual conference in New Orleans. Speakers Louise S. Robbins, Robert Wedgeworth and Nancy R. John addressed issues relating to the past, present and future of international librarianship. Past IRRT chairs were honored and the festivities concluded with a birthday party. As is often the case, these occasions invite retrospection. The following history touches on some highlights of the Round Table, discusses its founding and presents its major activities and publications.

During World War II, the American Library Association established an International Relations Office (IRO) in Washington, D.C. to develop programs for overseas assistance. The major areas of assistance included: 1) provision of materials to be made available to scholarly and research libraries in war areas and; 2) development of plans for the acquisition of materials published abroad needed for US collections.

The Washington office was closed in 1947 due to a lack of funds. A second IRO was later formed thanks to a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation, the same foundation that had funded the original office. The new IRO operated from ALA head-

quarters in Chicago and an office in Washington, D.C. With the closing of the original IRO a need was felt for an organization within the ALA to stimulate the interests of librarians in international library activities and to handle "the impact of the war and the invasion of librarians from abroad after the war" (*Leads*, vol. 13, no. 1 (May 1970): 1). In addition, USIS libraries were being established in many countries, military librarians were being sought to provide service abroad, and many US librarians were working in foreign countries (Jay, p. 5).

A \$2,500 grant from the Carnegie Corporation of New York in 1948 made possible a conference in Williamstown, Massachusetts, to be held in June of that year, under the sponsorship of the ALA International Relations Committee, then the International Relations Board, and with the cooperation of the Williams College Library. Wyllis E. Wright hosted the Williamstown conference with Marie Hurley and Marietta Daniels serving as co-directors. 58 were in attendance. Some of the attendees had either traveled extensively or had command of little known languages, while others had spent several years in foreign libraries or studied or resided abroad, such as Patricia Van Delden, Chief of Exhibitions and Information Centers in Germany; Flora Belle Ludington, then chair of the ALA

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### Call For Submissions for the Bogle/Pratt International Travel Fund

The Bogle/Pratt International Travel grant is given to ALA member(s) to attend their first international conference. If you have never been to an international conference and have found one that you are interested in attending next year please apply for the \$1,000 stipend. The deadline is January 1, 1999.

For an application, please visit <http://www.ala.org/work/international/amopps.html>

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#### WRITERS' GUIDELINES FOR INTERNATIONAL LEADS

IL seeks to support Round Table and Association objectives by bringing members news, brief articles and reviews that help them understand recent developments in international librarianship. IL welcomes articles of timely value that reflect the editorial focus of the publication, including: current reports and programs undertaken by the Association and the IRRT; newsworthy items generated by other divisions, units and round tables of ALA that are relevant to the interests of IRRT and its members; reports on other international library activities outside ALA, including organizations, people, and publications; general news releases intended for mass publication vehicles

Manuscripts are welcomed and reviewed for possible publication. Articles should not exceed 1500 words and may be accompanied by appropriate artwork. All manuscripts are subject to editing. Care is taken in the handling of manuscripts and artwork, however, IL cannot assume responsibility for lost or damaged material or for the return of unsolicited manuscripts.

Send manuscripts, letters of inquiry and other news items of interest to International Leads, ALA International Relations Office, 50 E. Huron St., Chicago, IL, US, 60611; Fax - 312-944-3897; Email - mdowling@ala.org

**History** *(Continued from page 1, Column 2)*  
International Relations Board; Isabelle Jinette who had just returned after two years of library service for the Tasmanian government; Lilian Foley, librarian for the Australian government's Information Bureau in NY; Frederick Cromwell, director of the ALA International Relations Office; and Verner Clapp of the Library of Congress.

Much of the Williams conference was devoted to discussing librarian qualifications for service abroad and recommending strategies for the recruitment of qualified people. In addition to professional skills, good health and physical endurance were deemed important, as were "knowledge and honesty in interpreting one's own country, knowledge of the foreign country concerned and its language, training in psychology and a wide experience in dealing with people" (Marinelli, p. 317). Edward Kennard, cultural anthropologist of the State Department's Foreign Service, gave a lecture on the understanding of foreign peoples. Others gave lectures on specific geographic areas.

As a result of the conference, Luther H. Evans, then Librarian of Congress and member of the ALA International Board, proposed to ALA Council in January 1949 that a Round Table on Library Service Abroad be established. A petition supporting the proposal was signed by approximately fifty people. The proposal was carried and the first meeting of the Round Table was held in Washington, D.C. on April 23, 1949 with Helen E. Wessells presiding as Chair.

The plan was to examine objectively the advantages and disadvantages of working abroad, and to suggest methods for the recruiting and training of librarians who, through their personal qualities, professional knowledge and specialized backgrounds, could be recommended to American and foreign governmental agencies, and to any private groups requesting advisers in the various fields of library service. (Marinelli, p. 317)

The purpose of the Round Table was officially stated as follows:

In the belief that participation by librarians in library programs abroad will contribute to an improvement in the library profession and in library services both here and abroad (as well as to international understanding) the ALA Round Table on Library Service Abroad is created to provide a means whereby the general membership of the American Library Association may inform it-self regarding the international aspects of library work and may be given opportunities to participate in activities for the improvement of international relations and/or library services throughout the world.

In recognition of the increasing importance of international library work, the name of the organization was changed in 1956 to the International Relations Round Table. Its statement of purpose was broadened:

To develop the interests of libraries in activities and problems in the field of international library relations; to serve as a channel of communication and counsel between the International Relations Committee and the members of the Association; and to provide hospitality and information to visitors from abroad. The IRRT arranges programs or business meetings and appoints representatives to attend meetings of the other professional groups.

In 1962 by-laws were adopted, superseding the constitution of 1950. These by-laws, since amended, provided for a chair, vice-chair, immediate past chair, a secretary/ treasurer, two members-at-large and various subcommittees, including membership, publications, nominating and continuing education. The IRRT chair attends the IRC meetings as an observer. During the term of IRRT Chair Beverly Lynch the mission statement was re-

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## MESSAGE FROM THE IRRT CHAIR

By Lucinda Covert-Vail

New Orleans 1999 is behind us, but the memories definitely linger on. We successfully navigated our 50th year and are ready to embark on our next half century. But before I look too much to the future, let me tell you about New Orleans.



IRRT activities began with a sold-out preconference for international attendees on the "State of American Librarianship". With over 30 librarians in attendance from more than 20 countries, 6 speakers shared their thoughts on topics as diverse as information literacy, fund-raising and development, electronic publishing and the creation of new library buildings. This was followed by an incredible New Orleans style torrential downpour and more than a few soggy but enthusiastic people enjoying a buffet at the Court of the Two Sisters. Undaunted, these and about 300 other international attendees came together again that afternoon for the international visitors orientation that featured an overview of the ALA, tips on reading the conference program (no small task), pointers on conference etiquette, and visitor information about New Orleans. It was also at this point that many of you who had volunteered to "mentor" an international attendee had the first opportunity to connect.

The International Visitors Lounge opened on Friday with an enthusiastic volunteer staff. This year's lounge featured a pc with an Internet connection and various software applications, copies of ALA publications, information on New Orleans restaurants and events and many comfortable chairs. I never passed that it wasn't filled with US and international attendees, chatting away and making new friends.

Saturday am began with the usual cacophony at the all IRC/IRRT subcommittees meeting where plans were finalized in preparation for the upcoming events. Sunday gave us the first

opportunity to learn from many of our international colleagues at the International Poster Sessions. The posters included presentations by librarians from Haiti, Bermuda, Hungary, Russia, Switzerland and other countries. The range of topics was impressive and, as usual, offered up many ideas for US librarians and libraries as well. The poster sessions have been formalized by the IRRT and a poster session subcommittee is now taking shape.

The posters were followed on Monday by the IRC/IRRT international papers program, "Intellectual Freedom: A Global Perspective". Papers were presented by authors from Azerbaijan, Denmark, Taiwan, Switzerland, Australia, and Bulgaria. The papers are posted on the web at: <http://www.ala.org/work/international/intfreedom.html>.

The IRRT 50th anniversary program, "Celebrating Our Past, Poised for the Future" opened with a roll call of past IRRT and IRC. Speakers were Louise Robbins, Robert Wedgeworth and Nancy John. Robbins touched on early international ALA history, focusing on our formative years shortly after WWII with special emphasis on the Overseas Libraries controversy. Wedgeworth discussed the international arena from the viewpoint of library education. John raised areas of change and challenge to international librarianship, including: international standards, laws and regulations; convergence and cooperation; technology; personal contacts and improved information access. See the August 1999 issue of *American Libraries* (p. 84) for a brief summary of their remarks. And for those of you interested, we still have copies of the 50th anniversary commemorative program that features an IRRT timeline and a list of all the IRRT and IRC chairs during the last 50 years. Just let us know.

And finally, we all attended the International Visitors Reception, high above New Orleans at the Plimsoll Club. In addition to massive amounts

of networking and good cheer, the Taiwanese Library Association announced a \$2000 gift to the Spectrum Initiative and made presentations to ALA President, Ann Symons and President-elect Sarah Long. In addition, Ron Chepesiuk, past editor of *International Leads* received the Humphry/OCLC/Forest Press award for his significant contribution to international librarianship. Congratulations Ron! The Bogle-Pratt International Library Travel Fund award was presented to another IRRT member, Wendy Miller, who is now working in South Africa.

My heartfelt thanks go to all the IRRT subcommittee chairs and members and the IRRT Executive Board for their programming and development efforts during the 1998-99 preconference year and to all of you who attended our various events and contributed to their success. Special thanks as well to Barbara Kile, who completed two years as the IRRT Secretary/ Treasurer and Jan Gilligan who served during the same period as Member-at-large. Finally, I wish to acknowledge the donation of Gale Group International whose generosity contributed to this year's successful conference programming.

One additional thing. Anne Haley, 1998-99 Chair-elect of the IRRT has resigned due to work commitments. This means that the current Chair and Past Chair will continue in their positions through annual conference 2000. In other words, you'll be reading a few more of my columns, including my exhortations to all of you to join us at conference and become an active participant in IRRT planning and events. We are *STILL* looking for a few good members for the IRRT subcommittees. Please contact me directly if you are interested. Thanks for staying with us this year and I look forward to working with all of you in 1999-2000.

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## INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON NEW MISSIONS OF ACADEMIC LIBRARIES IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Peking University, October 25-28, 1998  
CONFERENCE SUMMARY<sup>1</sup>

Prepared by Beverly P. Lynch, University of California, Los Angeles

A conference on the theme, *New Missions of Academic Libraries in the 21st Century*, was held in Beijing on October 25-28, 1998 on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the founding of Peking University and the dedication of its new library building. Nearly 200 academic librarians from 19 countries participated. The conference was organized by an international committee of 11 members which was chaired by Bessie Hahn, Brandeis University, and Hwa-Wei Lee, Ohio University. The published conference proceedings<sup>2</sup> include the 144 papers accepted for presentation at the conference. Plenary papers on the six sub-themes of the conference were presented and discussion sessions followed each plenary session.

Through these papers and the discussions, all delegates learned much and shared many experiences. The delegates praised the conference organizers and acknowledged, particularly, Zhu Qiang, who edited the proceedings and managed the local arrangements.

### Keynote addresses

Dai Lonji (Peking University) in his keynote address introduced the audience to the planning for the new Peking University Library, not only in terms of the new building, but in relation to the goals for the future collections and services. Three projects guided the building: the modernization of the building, the implementation of the Sirsi system, and the provision for Peking University Library to be the hub and the base for resource-sharing for Chinese academic libraries. The new building, the largest academic library in Asia, has over 50,000 square meters, 4500 seats for patrons, and an open-shelf arrangement. The building and the planning for it reflect the extra-

ordinary change occurring in university libraries in China. The bibliographic systems are state of the art and several digital library projects are underway, one being a joint project with Princeton University to digitize ancient Chinese books.

Ching-chih Chen (Simmons College), appointed by President Bill Clinton to the Advisory Committee on High-Performance Computing and Communications, Information Technology, and the Next Generation Internet, described the work of the committee and the planning underway at the national level in the U.S. for the NGI (Next General Internet and Internet II). She identified several issues academic librarians must be concerned about: digital content, copyright issues, and intellectual property issues.

### Conference Themes

The two plenary speakers addressed the theme, *Mission and Purpose of Academic Libraries in the 21st Century*. Min-min Chang (Hong Kong University of Science & Technology) and Fred Friend (University College London) agreed that the mission of the academic library is unchanged: it is to support the information needs of the university's faculty and students. Friend described the mission and its historical frame: immediate service and long-term preservation. Friend urged a reinterpretation of the mission in light of change in method and called for an international collaboration on a new mission now that technology had broken the barrier of distance, a barrier of great significance in the world of scholarship.

Both plenary speakers agreed that the methods of carrying out the mission have changed. While collections remain important in the digital environment as well as in the print environment, issues of collection evaluation,

access and ownership have become more important. In terms of information and access services, the academic library is being transformed from a storehouse model to a model of provision.

Friend observed that technology is changing the way users do their work and librarians must begin to understand that. Assessments of how users are working must be made and then acted upon. Lynch, in summarizing the conference, observed that the many references to the library's users were made rather casually. The question of how users seek information was not explored, nor were the differences in user behaviors addressed in terms either of differences in academic discipline, information need, or user status, i.e., whether the user is a student or a faculty member. Knowing more about university library users will be essential as librarians move forward in designing the changes in library method.

Following the plenary speakers the participants divided into three groups to discuss the issues relating to academic library mission. All groups agreed with the speakers that the mission is basically unchanged, with some recognition given to the difference in type of academic library. There was emphasis on the need to be relevant to the library's own community, that is to those people who form the library's primary clientele, the university's faculty and students. Some acknowledged that users other than primary clientele would be important in some academic institutions and that the decision about others will depend upon local determination.

The discussion groups generally supported the need to preserve the record. Except for the papers by Sarah Thomas (Cornell) and Peter Fox (Cambridge), however, there was less emphasis on the preservation of the record.



There was agreement that the methods used to accomplish the mission are changing and will continue to change. New technologies provide new opportunities for improving service, access to content and resource sharing. User expectations about library performance are increasing and the new ways of providing access to instruction will challenge libraries to participate actively in the design and delivery of course content.

In all discussions it was emphasized that the change is driven by technology and is fast-paced. While libraries are responding well, there are some major problems confronting library directors: issues related to staff, facilities, and relations with faculty were identified.

The two plenary speakers, Zhang Xiaolin (Sichuan Union University) and Jerry D. Campbell (University of Southern California) offered provocative observations on organizational change and addressed the theme, Management and Organizational Structure of Digital Libraries.

Zhang Xiaolin redefined the concept of the university librarian. He described the old role as that of manager of physical information resources and organization; and defined the new role as one of information market researcher, user educator, and information policy researcher. He identified the new roles as calling for new operational practices, placing greater emphasis on service quality and effectiveness, less emphasis on efficiency; greater emphasis on service creation and improvement and value-added. He said that the new roles require an open organizational structure that incorporates a permanent library department together with temporary task oriented project teams from library and non-library department.

Zhang commented that the processing of materials currently takes much of the library's investment and urged change in that respect. The change in staff jobs, which will be required in the digital environment, will come about more easily in some places than in others. An understanding of personnel rules and regulations is important as well as an understand-

ing of organizational culture.

Jerry Campbell also discussed new models of organizational structure. His published paper described the current structure in his university library. He provided key characteristics of a new organizational model that include cost effectiveness, difficult decisions to define priorities, a research and development capability, and defining the new information professional. Campbell offered some characteristics of the digital library and urged that the old model of library not be the model used for the digital library.

Team management, currently a trend in the United States, was discussed by the speakers and was a topic in several of the published papers. One discussion group identified teams as good for small problems, and particularly good for redesigning procedures. This group did not see teams as being effective for large problems that demand creativity and vision.

Forty papers were accepted for presentation on the theme, Services and Resource Sharing in a Networked Environment, providing extraordinarily rich case study material. The papers describe how libraries are continuing to serve students and faculty, using new technologies to bring materials to them. New forms of cooperation were reported with the models of CERNET (China Education and Research Network) and CALIS (China Academic Library and Information System) and were presented and discussed in detail. Developments in Ohio and Illinois were also featured.

The paper by Zhu Qiang (Peking University) on the development of CALIS offered a fine description of the new cooperative developments among libraries in China. The paper by Rush Miller (University of Pittsburgh) described a pilot venture to provide articles from Chinese periodicals held only in China to users in the U.S. through the use of digital technology. Miller also urged the conference and its leadership to develop programs of international lending.

The group discussions emphasized the importance of CALIS to the development of academic library ser-

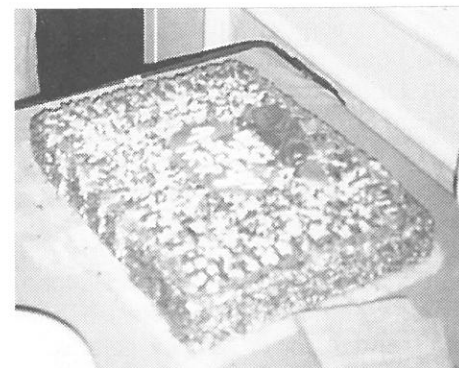
vices in China. Some similarities to developments in Europe were acknowledged. There was some discussion regarding the utility of a union catalog approach given language, classification, and other differences among libraries. It was generally agreed that at this point in the development of libraries in China such an approach was useful and CALIS important.

Discussions on resource sharing and document delivery possibilities continued. It was observed that cooperative acquisitions programs are very difficult to implement and that competition among institutions impedes such efforts. The point was made that even among competing institutions, cooperation in the area of licensing of databases through consortia was possible.

Other papers were organized around themes relating to the Management of Electronic Information, Libraries and Distance Learning, and Professional Development and Continuing Education. A full conference summary is available as ERIC ED 425 755 and on Lynch's home page: <http://dlis.gseis.ucla.edu/people/bplynch/chinapku.html>

## Notes

1. An earlier version of this paper was presented at the closing session of the conference, October 28, 1998 and published in *IL* (December 1998).
2. International Conference on New Missions of Academic Libraries in the 21st Century, Oct. 25-28, 1998. Proceedings. [Beijing], Peking University Press, 1998. ISBN: 7-301-03859-3



The IRRT birthday cake at the 50th Anniversary Program, June 29, 1999.  
Photo: Ed Valauskas

**History** (Continued from page 2, Column 3)  
written in 1995 as follows:

To promote interest in library issues and librarianship worldwide; to help coordinate international activities within the American Library Association, serving as a liaison between the International Relations Committee and those members of the Association interested in international relations; to develop programs and activities which further the international objectives of ALA; and to provide hospitality and information to visitors from abroad.

### IRRT PUBLICATIONS

The Round Table has produced several publications. In 1957, its *Bulletin* which had been issued occasionally since 1950 was replaced by a quarterly publication, *Leads: A Fact Sheet*. The title was formally changed in January 1987 to *International Leads*. The publication provides information about:

- activities of the IRRT, IRC and other international library organizations such as IFLA
- US librarians overseas and foreign librarians visiting the US
- travel tours and grants

It features editorial comments (Chair's message) as well as articles on international librarianship. Issues have been devoted to regional topics such as Latin America (June 1965), the Middle East and North Africa (August 1972) and Southeast Asia (September 1967, May 1973) and to special topics such as the Library/Book Fellows Program and library twinning. Its editors have been: Helen E. Wessells, Elizabeth Lindsey, Mohammed M. Aman, Edward S. Moffat, Dorothy Pollet Gray, W. L. Williamson, Leena Siitonen, Robert P. Doyle, and Ron Chepesiuk.

*The Directory of American Librarians Who Studied or Worked Abroad 1940-1958* by Mary Duncan Carter was published by the IRRT in 1958 and it included 275 librarians. The title was changed to *Foreign Service Directory of American Librarians* and 2 subsequent editions were pub-

lished. The publication was formally discontinued as an IRRT publication in 1983. In 1988 the IRC/IRRT Joint Subcommittee on International Exchanges published, *Going International: Librarians' Preparation Guide for a Work Experience/Job Exchange Abroad* by Linda Williamson, a working guide for librarians interested in working abroad. It has also published, *Guidelines for Library Use in Foreign Countries* and *Guidelines for Short-Term Visits to the US by Foreign Librarians*.

In 1998 the IRRT went electronic and created its first website. The site was overseen by the IRRT Publications Subcommittee and continues as the most comprehensive source of IRRT programming and information for its members. It includes selected articles from *International Leads*, information about member opportunities for involvement, the IRRT bylaws and its various subcommittees. Due to the growth of the website, a web editor, Tracy Lay, was named in 1999. The IRRT listserv, *ALAWorld*, was introduced in 1998.

### IRRT PROGRAMMING

The IRRT offers a variety of programming at the annual ALA conference. In keeping with its mission statement to provide hospitality and information to visitors from abroad the IRRT hosts an international reception, maintains a hospitality and information booth for international visitors, and sponsors an orientation for international visitors.

During its 50 years the IRRT has sponsored a variety of social events at annual conference. In the 1950s it co-sponsored international banquets with other ALA committees and divisions. The banquets brought together US and foreign librarians and featured speakers on international topics. The international banquets included the "East-West Dinner" in San Francisco (1958) and the "Dinner of the Americas" in Washington, D.C. (1959), which had over 600 attendees. In 1960 the format was changed and the first international visitors reception was held at annual conference in Montreal.

The orientation for international visitors was introduced in 1990 with 25 in attendance. By 1998 the number had swelled to over 500 in Washington, D.C. Approximately 300 attended in 1999.

In 1998, in conjunction with the International Relations Committee and during the Presidential year of Barbara Ford, international papers were invited from conference attendees from abroad. These papers were presented in Washington, D.C. at the annual ALA conference at a panel entitled "New Ways to Serve the Library User: A Global Perspective". The international papers program was formalized in 1999 and offered as a regular feature of IRC/IRRT programming at conference. Also introduced in 1998 were international poster sessions presented by foreign and US librarians on international issues. These too are now an ongoing programming initiative.

Programming topics at annual conference have covered, for example, USIS Libraries and Peace Corps library activities (1963); UNESCO's activities (1965), Mexican librarianship (1971), intellectual freedom in Asia, Africa, and the Middle East (1983), and developments in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union (1990).

The IRRT also hosts a continuing education institute for international attendees. First introduced in New York in 1996, the institute focused on UN documents and provided an Internet workshop. Recent institute themes include collection development in an electronic age and the state of US librarianship.

### OTHER IRRT INITIATIVES

In addition to programming at the annual conference, the IRRT has undertaken a variety of international initiatives including an examination of the library situation in Nigeria and Thailand in 1966. In 1995 it received a grant of \$20,000 to conduct a series of workshops in the Republic of Moldova and Romania to assist in the organization and development of national library associations in those

*Continued on page 8, Column 1*



## From ALA's International Desk:

### Building International Library Communities" Program Looking For Participants at ALA Midwinter.

As you know ALA has two seasons, Midwinter and Annual. With Annual Conference a distant memory I'd like to highlight the special "Building International Library Communities" program which will be held in San Antonio from January 14-19, 1999.

The program, an international initiative of ALA President Sarah Long, will bring together librarians from Mexico, Latin America, the Caribbean and the United States to learn from each other, share experiences, provide a supportive environment for cooperation and foster future professional collaboration.

The IRO has received a grant from the U.S.-Mexico Fund for Culture for \$15,000 to help bring Mexican librarians to the program.

Here is the program agenda:

#### Friday, January 14

3:00pm-5:00pm -- Registration

5:00pm -7:00pm -- Reception and orientation at the San Antonio Public Library

#### Saturday, January 15th

9:30am-12:00pm -- Networking sessions on library issues

12:00pm-1:30pm -- Lunch (included)

2:00pm- 5:00pm -- Special visits to the Exhibit Hall

5:00pm-7:00pm -- "Libraries Build International Communities" Reception

#### Sunday, January 16th

10:30am-2:00pm -- Tours of libraries in San Antonio (box lunches included)

3:00pm-5:00pm -- ALA Presidential Program noted playwright Luis Valdez as keynote speaker followed by a panel discussion on successful international cooperative programs

5:30pm-7:00pm -- Presidential reception

#### Monday, January 17th

9:00am-1:00pm -- Optional tour to the Nettie Lee Benson Latin American

*Collection at the University of Texas-Austin*

If you are interested in participating in this program please contact the International Relations Office at intl@ala.org. We are especially looking for librarians who speak Spanish or Portuguese and can participate in the program, as well as assist as mentors to our international colleagues.

One of the potential outgrowths of the program is the creation of new Sister Library relationships that will benefit both libraries. If you are interested in setting up a Sister Library relationship with a library in our hemisphere, or anywhere else, please fill out an interest form at <http://www.ala.org/sisterlibraries>.

As of September 20th, over 190 participants have signed up to participate in the ALA-FIL Free Pass Program to the Guadalajara Book Fair. The number of participants has continued to grow each year since the inception of the program in 1997, and this is the first year that we fill all of the 200 allotted spaces for the program. To help subsidize the program the IRO received a \$5,000 ALA-World Book Goal Award grant given for innovative programs.

The IRO is happy to announce that we have a new Administrative Assistant to replace Annie Wolter, who left to work at the Spanish Consulate and pursue her dream of becoming a Spanish teacher. Our new assistant is Guisela Munguia Martinez who is a native of Chicago and has an A.A. degree from Robert Morris College. Guisela is fluent in Spanish and has a passion for photography. Her email address is gmunguia@ala.org and her phone extension is 3201. She is new to library and association work but is learning fast, and is working hard on the Guadalajara Book Fair and the "Building International Library Communities" program.

Michael Dowling  
International Relations Officer, ALA  
mdowling@ala.org

### Thai-US Seminar in Bangkok

40 US librarians and 40 Thai librarians met for an informal seminar on the afternoon of August 26th at the USIS facilities in Bangkok during the 1999 IFLA Conference. The US contingent was comprised of representatives from ALA, ARL, MLA, SLA, AALL, ALISE, and the Library of Congress. Six ALA Executive Board members and ALA Executive Director William Gordon participated in the seminar. President Sarah Long gave the US keynote address. The Thai participants, all members of the Thai Library Association, also represented a variety of library types.

The seminar included roundtable discussions on the following topics: international cooperation, exchange of information and librarians, library and information science education, information technology, and preservation and conservation. It was a good opportunity for the US librarians to interact with their host colleagues and to learn how Thai libraries operate, what services are being currently provided, and what are some of the challenges facing libraries in Thailand.

The need for future cooperation and interaction was a recurring theme throughout the roundtable discussions. Some ideas for cooperation will be to provide librarians in Thailand with information on exchange opportunities with libraries and library schools in the US; the possible creation of discussion lists to discuss issues and provide advice; investigation with the Sabre Institute and others on how to provide Thai libraries with much needed textbooks in science and technology; and work to assist in getting support for consultants to come to Thailand during the TLA conference to discuss issues such as preservation, public library advocacy, and management. All the US librarians who participated in the seminar were given "honorary membership" in the Thai Library Association. TLA members gave each US librarian a TLA pin as token of their friendship and future collaboration.

-- submitted by Michael Dowling with assistance from Yu-Lan Chou

**History** (Continued from page 6, Column 3)  
countries and the adoption of national and international library standards. IRRT members participating in the workshop included Opritsa Popa, Beverly Lynch, Nancy John, Edward Valauskas and Lucinda Covert-Vail.

### IRRT LEADERSHIP

Since its founding, 47 individuals have served as IRRT chair. They come from all sectors of librarianship, including public, school, special and academic libraries as well as library education. They are (in chronological order): Marietta Daniels Shepard, Helen E. Wessells, Irving Lieberman, Dorcas W. Connor, Wayne M. Hartwell, Marie V. Hurley, Lee Ash, Kathleen B. Stebbins, Jane Wilson, John Lester Nolan, Laurence J. Kipp, John Fall, Harold Lancour, Raymond C. Lindquist, Elizabeth M. Robb, William V. Jackson, Lucile M. Dudgeon, David Wilder, Joseph Shubert, James C. Marvin, Morris A. Gelfand, Frank M. McGowan, Norman Horrocks, Valmai Clark Fenster, Elisabeth Nebehay, Mohammed M. Aman, David C. Donovan, Jane P. Franck, Donald F. Jay, Josephine R. Fang, Hans E. Panofsky, Edwin S. Holmgren, Warren M. Tsuneishi, Edwin S. Gleaves, Esther J. Walls, Henriette D. Avram, Theodore F. Welch, Miles M. Jackson, E. Christian Filstrup, Jordan M. Scepaniski, Hannelore B. Rader, Ernest A. Di Mattia Jr, Beverly Lynch, Helen

Meadors, Opritsa D. Popa, Nancy R. John, and Lucinda Covert-Vail

The IRRT is the only membership organization in ALA focused solely on international activities and interests and continues to be a vibrant round table within the American Library Association. Membership now stands at over 700. It is the members, their dedication to the international aspects of the profession and their active participation in the IRRT, its subcommittees, programming and international outreach activities that continue to strengthen the round table and will certainly contribute to the success of its activities in the next 50 years.

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