



International Leads

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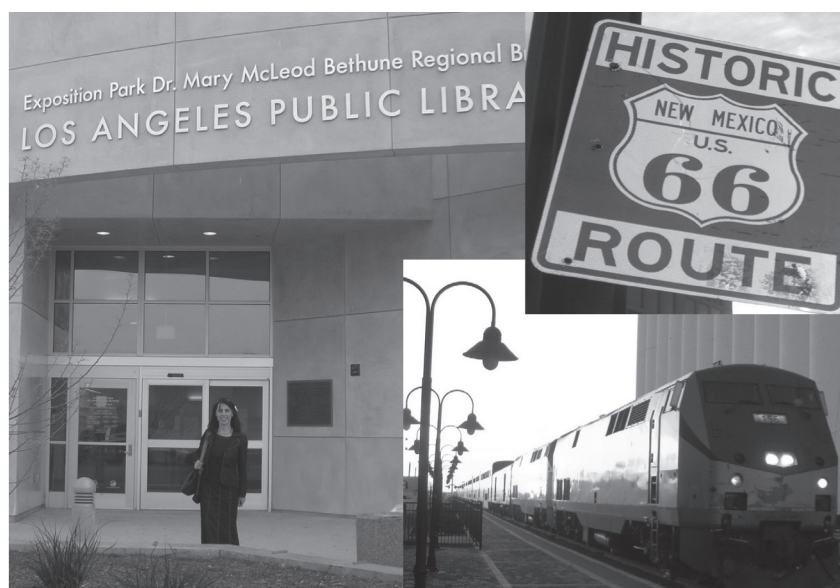
Crossing the United States by Train: Not a 19th Century Story - Research on Library Volunteering

By Beate Hoerning

What would you do if you plan to interview people in American public libraries for a research work, and you want to have a wide variety – geographically as well as in public library types? For a German like me – used to traveling by train almost every day – it sounds quite normal to think of using the train for such a project.

From all the different Amtrak Routes, the famous Southwest Chief (Chicago - LA) seemed to be the most interesting for my project. It passes through eight different U.S. states, and most of the public libraries in the cities where the train stops are located in walking distance to the Amtrak Station. Furthermore, there is a wide variety of library types and library sizes on that route. In addition, I found out that parts of the Historical Route 66 run parallel to the Southwest Chief. (It's the dream of many Europeans to see this legendary route at least once in a lifetime!)

My research interest in library volunteering in the U.S. goes back to 2004, when I did an internship at the Public Library in Nashville, Tennessee. It was the greatest working experience I've ever had in my life! Among many other impressions and gains of knowledge, I was simply fascinated by the different and



Beate Hoerning stands outside a branch of the Los Angeles Public Library, at the end of her journey by train across the United States, mostly along Route 66.

diversified ways library volunteers can enrich the services of a public library. Why does it work so well in the U.S.? What can librarians from abroad learn?

Some time after my return from the U.S. I began to study about volunteering in U.S. Public Libraries. I tried to find historical, sociological, mental and economical roots and reasons for the successful "American Way of Volunteering". I think it is a logical conclusion that after you have studied a lot about a fascinating topic, you get more and more curious.

After a while, you start focusing on the relationship between theory and praxis. This was the main trigger for my U.S. Public Library interview trip.

At the end of last year I started by contacting public libraries along Amtrak routes, mainly the route mentioned above. I wrote to them about my research project and asked if I could interview volunteers as well as volunteer coordinators. There was great feedback! So step by step I was able to create a four-week travel- and interview-schedule for March 2009.

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Message from the Editor

In this issue of *International Leads*, we start with an article by a German member of ALA. Ms. Beate Hoerning shares with us her perceptions of traveling the United States by Amtrak train to visit public libraries throughout several states. The motivation for her trip was to learn more about volunteering at public libraries in the US, and she has some very interesting insights to share - including how much fun it is to travel by train in the United States!

We also have several reports from the ALA Annual meeting held in Chicago last July. Jacqueline Solis provides a detailed account of the IRRT Pre-Conference, the organization of which she chaired. Several interesting speakers addressed the issues of digitization in developing countries.

Johan Koren contributes a report on the activities of the International Relations Committee at ALA Annual. The IRC exists to give policy recommendations to ALA Council and liaise with all things international concerning ALA. They are beginning work on the 2010-2015 International Strategic Plan, so watch *Leads* for updates.

Every year, the International Relations Office awards two major prizes. The John Ames Humphry/OCLC/Forest Press award recognizes an individual for significant contribution to international librarianship. The Bogle-Pratt International Travel Fund award recognizes an ALA member by supporting first-time attendance at an international conference. This year Dr. Patricia Oyler and Ms. Jessica Brooks, respectively, received these awards.

Ms. Brooks reports on her preparations to use this award to travel to IFLA in Milan, Italy. She will report back on her experiences in the December 2009 issue. I'm sure she had a great time!

With this issue we welcome the incoming Chair of IRRT, Dr. Sha Li Zhang. If you have been a member of IRRT at any point in the last several years I am sure you have seen or heard about Dr. Zhang - she has been a faithful member of IRRT for a long time. She has previously been the *Leads* editor for four years, then the Secretary/Treasurer for three, before becoming the Chair-Elect in 2008. Her experience with IRRT and ALA will be a great asset as she assumes leadership. Welcome to all our new Executive Board members!

~ Rebecca L. Miller

Call for Submission

Do you have news about...

International library activities?

People in international librarianship?

Upcoming international conferences?

International partnerships between libraries?

Then why not submit it to *International Leads*?
Send your news to intl.leads.irrt@gmail.com
for consideration.

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Message from the IRRT Chair

By Sha Li Zhang

It was wonderful seeing many colleagues and friends at the ALA 2009 Annual Conference in July in Chicago. At the Conference, IRRT welcomed more than 400 librarians from over 80 countries and many U.S. librarians as well through its successful programs and events. These programs and events include a Pre-conference on "Digitizing in Developing Countries;" International Librarians Orientation; International Papers program on "Libraries Serving Multicultural Communities;" International Poster Session; 60th Anniversary Chair's Program on "African's Resources: Funding, Gathering, Digitizing and Providing Access to Cultural Heritage;" a program on "Sub-Saharan Africa: Assessing Recent Successes and Challenges," sponsored by the IRC Africa Subcommittee; an International Sustainable Library Development Interest Group's program on "Yes We Can: Support International Sustainable Library Development," and the popular International Librarians' Reception which was another sold-out event. These programs and events provided opportunities for the audience to expand their horizons on a global scale. I want to take this opportunity to thank all event sponsors, program committee chairs and members, and speakers. Their time and efforts made these programs and events possible at the ALA Annual.

In celebrating the round table's 60th anniversary this year, the IRRT Sixty for Sixty Campaign is making good progress. Led by Jordan M. Scepan-ski, IRRT Chair in 1990-1991, and H. Lea Wells, IRRT Chair in 2001-2002, the fundraising efforts are continuing after the ALA Annual. Jordan and Lea are co-chairing the campaign's Coordinating Committee. As of this writing, more than 70 donors have contributed over \$8,000, despite a tough economic climate. With the

contribution of \$2,500 from IRRT in 2008-2009, we are ready to send the first \$10,000 to the ALA Endowed Fund. The incomes generated from the endowment will be used to support the activities, services, and programs of the round table and support international librarians attending ALA conferences. At the ALA Annual Conference in Chicago, both Jordan and Lea were very busy talking with

individuals and groups, making connections, and collecting donations. For the remaining months of 2009, we will continue asking for donations. I strongly encourage you to support this fundraising campaign. Its success depends on everybody's participation, from the round table members and beyond. For updated information about the campaign, please see <http://www.ala.org/irrt60thanniversary/>



Lea Wells and Jordan Scepanski pose with IFLA President Claudia Lux and a poster acknowledging donors to the Sixty for Sixty Campaign.

The IRRT activities in other fronts also progress well. Joan Weeks, immediate past chair of IRRT, has taken the post of the IRRT Web Master. She is working very hard to upload current news and information on the round table's web site. Jeannette Pierce, past IRRT chair (2005-2006), is recruiting the roundtable's 2010 ALA Emerging Leaders (EL), designing an EL project, and developing a frame work for the round table's participation in this ALA initiative. Dr. Lorie Roy, a Notable IRRT Member and past ALA President (2007-2008), is assisting in creating guidelines for the ALA Presidential Citation for International

Innovation, which was established by Dr. Roy during her presidential year, and presented at the ALA International Librarians Reception since. Susan Schnuer, past IRRT chair (2006-2007), has agreed to represent IRRT to the Round Table Coordinating Assembly (RTCA) on ALA 2015 Planning. She will keep us informed about the progress from this working group. It will be another exciting year for IRRT. I look forward to your continual support and to working with you during my term as IRRT Chair.

The 2009 Bogle-Pratt Award Recipient Prepares for IFLA

By Jessica Brooks

Editor's note: Ms. Brooks received the 2009 Bogle-Pratt Award for assistance to attend her first international conference at the 2009 IFLA meeting. She wrote this piece in preparation for the trip, and will submit a post-conference report for the December 2009 issue.

In August I will be attending the 75th IFLA World Library and Information Congress in Milan, Italy, as well as presenting at a satellite meeting in Bologna. The theme for this particular satellite meeting is "Moving in, moving up, and moving on: strategies for regenerating the library & information profession" and is geared towards new professionals interested in getting involved with IFLA. This will be my first experience hosting a poster session as well as my first time presenting a paper.

When I saw the call for proposals many months ago, it was an opportunity that I could not pass up, despite the fact that I already had a busy schedule working full time for the Brooklyn Public Library and was in the second year of my MLIS studies at Pratt Institute. I have a Bachelor's degree in International Relations and I saw involvement with the International Relations Round Table and IFLA as a way to combine my former studies with my present career. Traveling and engagement in the international community is something I value and I was pleased to meet many like-minded students at Pratt, including my co-presenter at the conference, Mary Finnan.

Mary and I discussed potential paper and presentation topics that would interest other new professionals and decided to explore library careers in international settings that seemed to be experiencing growth amidst hiring

freezes and general economic decline. Mary explored job possibilities in the Persian Gulf with academic institutions, specifically in Doha, Abu Dhabi, and Dubai. Although the economy has slowed the exponential growth rate in the region, many universities continue building outposts and library jobs are opening as a result. Library jobs in academic institutions can be difficult to find in the United States, so securing a university position in the Persian Gulf could potentially facilitate an academic library career back in the United States.

I researched library positions at international organizations, with which I became interested during my undergraduate studies for their cross-border approach to international problems. In American library school programs, emphasis is placed upon public, school, and academic librarianship. However, with the proliferation of international organizations and the vast amount of information these organizations produce, the number of library and information professional jobs is increasing. I focused on the United Nations and UNESCO for the paper, but a significant appeal of international organizations for me is that they allow librarians to become involved in a more specialized secondary field of interest. For example, an information professional with a background in wildlife conservation could work for the Wildlife Conservation Society in any of the organization's field offices.

Preparing for the conference has been an ongoing process for the last eight months! Aside from the project proposal and writing and revising the paper, the search for sources of funding was imperative. As an entry-level professional, it would have been impossible for me to afford the total cost of attending an international

conference without outside funding. I applied for ALA's International Relations Committee's Bogle-Pratt International Travel Fund and I am very fortunate to be the 2009 recipient. In addition, Mary and I received generous financial support from Pratt Institute.

The process of finalizing the materials for the presentation and poster session also has been a constructive first-time learning experience. Preparing for the poster session and presentation raises many questions, as I have limited conference experience, having only attended one ALA conference in 2007. I am not sure how many people will be attending the satellite conference, what type of set-up to expect, and whether or not the talks should be in lecture format or will be more interactive. Fortunately, this satellite conference was designed for new professionals and mentors were assigned to first-time presenters like Mary and me who need guidance through the process.

I look forward to meeting other new professionals and I imagine the conference will involve valuable networking opportunities. I also look forward to exploring the city of Bologna. In between the satellite meeting and the conference I hope to travel to Modena to sample the famous balsamic vinegars; Ravenna to see the painstaking mosaics; and Rimini to enjoy the beach. In Milan I will try to see Leonardo da Vinci's "The Last Supper," visit local libraries, experience a local wine tasting, and explore the nearby lake region. I am a big fan of The Olympics, so I plan on taking a day trip to Turin as well once the conference has ended.

The theme of the main conference in

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International Relations Office Announces Winners

John Ames Humphry/ OCLC/Forest Press Award



Dr. Patricia Oyler is this year's recipient of the American Library Association (ALA) International Relations Committee's John Ames Humphry/OCLC/Forest Press Award.

OCLC/Forest Press donated the cash award of \$1,000, which is given to an individual for significant contribution to international librarianship.

Patricia Oyler received this award for her significant contributions to library development in Vietnam, including cataloging standards, modern services and new technology application. As a result, her teachings continue to apply valuable knowledge in many workshops, trainings and conferences. Dr. Oyler worked to implement the translation of the Dewey Decimal Classification System into Vietnamese. She also helped to develop a bachelor's degree program of study in Library and Information Management at Can Tho University.

Dr. Oyler is a professor and associate dean of curriculum in the Graduate School of Library and Information Science at Simmons College. A devoted advisor and teacher, Dr. Oyler strives to allow students to excel in the library profession.

"Dr. Patricia Oyler has dedicated the past 16 years of her professional and personal life to the development of a program for Vietnamese librarians to earn MLS degrees in library and information science at Simmons College. Creating an exemplary model for professional training for 21st century librarianship in transitioning

countries, Dr. Oyler has coordinated fundraising, teaching, consulting and many other logistics for the now 55 plus graduates. She also consulted on the grant-funded building of five major university libraries in Vietnam. Over her 40-year career, she has worked to automate and implement bibliographic control in Sweden, Brazil and Vietnam, once as a senior Fulbright lecturer. She has served on international committees in ALA and IFLA. Dr. Oyler has lectured in Vietnam, Jordan, the United Arab Emirates, Hong Kong, India, and Thailand. She also continues to teach and mentor library science students at Simmons College, as she has done since 1974," said Robin L. Kear, chair of the IRC- John Ames Humphry/OCLC/Forest Press Award Committee.

Dr. Oyler was recognized during the International Relations Round Table Chair's Program on Monday, July 13 at the ALA Annual Conference in Chicago.



Bogle-Pratt International Library Travel Fund



Jessica Brooks is the 2009 recipient of the American Library Association (ALA) International Relations Committee's "Bogle-Pratt International Library Travel Fund."

The Bogle Memorial Fund and the Pratt Institute School of Information and Library Science will provide a \$1,000 cash award for Brooks to attend her first international conference in Italy.

The award is in recognition of Sarah Comly Norris Bogle, a prominent U.S. librarian who made notable contributions to international library service.

Jessica Brooks is planning to attend the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions World Library and Information Congress (WLIC) satellite meeting in Bologna and the WLIC in Milan. At the satellite meeting she will present a paper and a poster session highlighting international opportunities for librarians, specifically for librarians who are beginning their careers. Brooks is the librarian trainee at Brooklyn Public Library, Brooklyn Heights Branch.

Ms. Brooks was recognized during the International Relations Round Table Chair's Program on Monday, July 13 at the ALA Annual Conference in Chicago.

Digitization in Developing Countries: The 2009 IRRT Pre-Conference

By Jacqueline Solis

The International Relations Round Table Pre-conference session "Digitization in Developing Countries" was held at ALA Annual in Chicago on 10 July 2009. Over 100 attendees from 21 countries attended the session. Copies of all the presenters' PowerPoint slides are available at <http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/rrts/irrt/irrtcommittees/irrtce/continuingeducation.cfm>.

Dr. John Van Oudenaren, Director of the World Digital Library (WDL) project at the Library of Congress, was the invited speaker. Dr. Van Oudenaren explained that the Librarian of Congress proposed to UNESCO the creation of the WDL in 2005 as a way to provide free and universal access to primary source content that documents the histories and cultural achievements of all countries. When the World Digital Library had its public launch at <http://www.wdl.org> in April 2009, its contents included rare books, journals, manuscripts, maps, prints and photographs, films, and sound recordings from 26 institutions in 19 countries. One of the goals of the WDL is to increase its number of partners to include institutions from all UNESCO member countries.

Dr. Van Oudenaren emphasized that there are several key questions that must be answered in international digital library projects. The first is "What kinds of international collaborations add value for users and other stakeholders?" The second question is "In the face of resource constraints, how can we avoid projects that add little or no value, or are even 'value-subtracting' (i.e., the resources expended to effect the collaboration could be better spent by individual institutions; whole less than sum of parts)?" The WDL's answer thus far is twofold. Digital library collaborations add value if the digitization projects make

intellectually and culturally valuable content available that without the collaboration would not be digitized in the foreseeable future. Collaborations also add value if the way the make content available is superior to that which users would experience accessing the same information on individual web sites access through a search engine or portal.

As a result of these answers, the World Digital Library aims to digitize new content, especially in developing countries, rather than just re-purposing or finding new ways to search for existing content. The WDL also concentrates on adding value, even if this means sacrificing the number of items digitized in the short run. As part of the added value the WDL has taken an ambitious approach to creating a multilingual interface in which every part of the content is available in seven languages. This allows for a completely equivalent experience for speakers of any of the six official languages of the United Nations, plus Portuguese.

In the longer term, the World Digital Library hopes to continue to build digitization capacity in developing countries by establishing digital conversion centers around the world and to establish a worldwide, web-based network for cataloging, translation, and ingest of materials. Additional objectives include assisting partners with creating their own institutional and national digital libraries, integrating content selection and creation with curriculum and educational needs, and addressing issues related to low Internet penetration and low bandwidth in many areas.

In addition to the invited speaker, five papers were accepted for presentation. Huang Chen of Zhejiang University Libraries in HangZhou, China spoke about "Collection and Service of

China America Digital Academic Library (CADAL) Project." This joint project of universities and institutes in China and the USA, funded by the Ministry of Education of China and National Science Foundation of the US has already digitized over a million books and plans to add at least 1.5 million more in the next phase of the project.

Mrs. Bukky Omotayo of Hezekiah Oluwasanmi Library at Obafemi Awolowo University in Ile-Ife, Nigeria presented a paper "Digitization of Library Collections in Developing Countries: the Hezekiah Oluwasanmi Library's Experience" co-authored with two colleagues from the same university, Mrs. K. O. Jagboro, and Mr. Wahab A. Aboyade. Digitization projects at the Hezekiah Oluwasanmi Library began in 2003 with money from a Carnegie grant. The first project was the conversion of their manual catalog to electronic format. Ongoing projects include digitization of Nigerian newspapers and digitization of abstracts of masters and doctoral theses. Manuscripts of court cases are still awaiting digitization.

Krystyna Matusiak of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Libraries in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, USA spoke about "Undertaking a Newspaper Digitization Project in Mongolia" in a paper co-authored with Myagmar Munkhmandakh, Director of the Press Institute of Mongolia. The newspaper digitization project, initiated by the Press Institute of Mongolia, was the first large-scale digitization project in Mongolia. The project was funded by a grant from the Endangered Archive Programme of the British Library. The project team selected for digitization rare newspapers that were valuable for researchers and journalists, but difficult to access or in danger of rapidly deteriorating.

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Volunteering

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I started my trip on the East Coast in Manhattan. At The New York Public Library I had my very first interviews with volunteers in the famous Humanities and Social Sciences Library. I was deeply impressed by their enthusiasm and dedication. In the Harlem Branch located in a beautiful three-story Carnegie building, I learned a lot about the “Center for Reading & Writing” and their volunteer tutors.

My only U.S. domestic flight during the trip brought me from New York to Chicago, where I started my first train ride with the Amtrak route Illinois Zephyr. I travelled to several smaller libraries, among them the Beardstown Houston Memorial Library where I got to know several multicultural programs in which the volunteers are involved.

After this “detour” to the Illinois countryside I travelled to Fort Madison, Iowa. I had talks with the Friends of the Fort Madison Public Library, about all their activities like bookselling and genealogy. By the way – when I got on the Southwest Chief in the evening, I was the only passenger who was boarding in Fort Madison!

My next train stop was in Kansas City, Missouri, where I got a guided tour through the system of the Kansas City Public Library by the volunteer coordinator. I spoke with volunteers in several branches. After a night train ride, the Finney County Public Library in Garden City, Kansas was my next object of interest, and only two train hours after Garden City (again I was the only one who was boarding) I came to Lamar, Colorado. In the Lamar Public Library I heard a lot about the Summer Reading Program and later I was invited to join the monthly meeting of the Friends group.

Santa Fe, New Mexico was the first place where I could see the famous Route 66 on my walk to the Public Library where I had several interviews about volunteer management. The just-opened “New Mexico Rail Runner” train route brought me from Santa Fe to Albuquerque, and later to Los Lunas – the only village on my trip. Whatever places I visited now, Route 66 was always close. I visited two branches of the Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Library System. I learned about the amazing program “Read to the Dogs” (children can read in a relaxed atmosphere) and a lot about volunteers who are doing genealogy work in the “Special Collections Branch.”

My next stop with the Southwest Chief train was Flagstaff, Arizona, where the rails parallel Route 66 again. In the Flagstaff City/Coconino County Public Library I got to know how the two book mobiles are serving several Indian Reservations.

An 11-hour train ride brought me to the very last stop of my trip – the Union Station in Los Angeles, California. In the Main Library, as well as several branches of the Los Angeles Public Library I got to know how the “Adult Literacy Center” works. Several Volunteer Coordinators, instructed from the Center in the Main Library, are responsible for several branches where they are instructing the volunteer tutors. “GaB” (Grandparents and Books) is another interesting volunteer program. It brings young (listening) and old (reading) together. Only a few hours before my flight back to Germany, I visited the last library of my travel: the Ocean Park Branch Library in Santa Monica – very close to the West End of Route 66!

Of course, I am not able to list here all the different volunteer programs, as well as all the 24 libraries I had the pleasure to visit. Since my return from this interview trip I have been

working on the evaluation of my interviews. It looks like I will still need a lot of time! The more I work on it, the more I realize what a rich treasure I carried back home! Thanks to all my 80 great interviewees – volunteers, volunteer coordinators and Friends of the Library – and thanks to all the librarians who helped me to arrange my schedule!

There were uncountable impressive experiences! Although we cannot compare all aspects of the historical, mental and sociological conditions and facts in the U.S. with the ones in Europe – I think we can learn a lot! We can learn how to improve management and coordination of volunteer work and how to network with organisations like R.S.V.P. (Retired and Senior Volunteer Program). Furthermore, we can learn from the American colleagues how to maintain a positive attitude even in difficult situations like extreme budget cuts. There is always a way!

Apart from all the incredible professional experiences I had in all those libraries, this train trip was probably the most interesting, exciting and impressive trip I have ever had in my life! On my way from the wintry cold East Coast to the summery warm West Coast I had a wide variety of weather, landscapes – and public libraries! My dear American friends! I recommend: just adventure and get on the train! You have awesome trains in the U.S.!

Ms. Hoerning works at the University of Leipzig, Germany.

Have you recently visited libraries overseas or hosted an overseas guest? If you have - please share your experiences with us! Send a description of your partnership or visit to intl.leads.irrt@gmail.com. Photos are always welcome!

Bogle-Pratt

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Milan this year is "Libraries create futures: building upon cultural heritage," and there are many interesting meetings scheduled, beginning with the newcomers session with talks on how to experience the IFLA conference and what to see in Milan. From there it will be difficult to choose, but some sessions that attract my attention include talks about map and geography digitization; a session on women's health resources in Asia; and the Freedom of Access to Information and Freedom of Expression (FAIFE) open session. Eventually I may become more specialized in my career, but as a new professional, I still have the advantage of embracing an eclectic agenda and exploring all of the options I have ahead of me in this profession.

Ms. Brooks is a librarian trainee at the Brooklyn Heights Branch of the Brooklyn Public Library.

Pre-Conference

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Bogdan Trifunović of the Public Library "Vladislav Petković Dis" in Čačak, Serbia presented "Digitization Projects among Public Libraries in Serbia: Problems, Obstacles and Success Stories." In Serbia each of the 27 district libraries in the country is required to have a Local History Collection, and these collections are being prioritized for digitization projects. The presentation offered examples of how several public libraries in Serbia have overcome challenges of lack of funds, lack of staff, lack of training, and undefined objectives to begin digital preservation projects.

Dr. Xie Chunzhi of the Wuhan University Library in Wuhan, China presented "Digitization in China's Academic Libraries: Taking the Yangtze River Repository as an Example." The Yangtze River Repository, funded by China Academic Library & Information System and Wuhan University Library, contains over 200,000 digitized records pertaining to all aspects of the Yangtze River – economic, scientific, cultural, and environmental.

Ms. Solis was Chair of the 2009 Pre-Conference Committee.

International Relations Committee at Annual

By Johan Koren

The International Relations Committee (IRC) is a standing committee of ALA Council, charged with providing policy recommendations regarding international matters that are of importance to the Association. (See <http://www.ala.org/ala/aboutala/offices/iro/internationalrelations.cfm>). At ALA in Chicago, the IRC...

- Recommended a candidate for ALA representative to the US Committee on the Blue Shield from a slate of nominees.
- Received a report on IFLA from the president-elect, Ellen Tise of South Africa, during the Friday meeting.
- Expressed concern about the announcement to move IFLA's World Library and Information Congress 2010 from Brisbane, Australia, to Göteborg, Sweden for economic reasons.
- Passed memorial resolutions for Connie Constantino, who had been an active member of the Africa subcommittee, and E. J. Josey, a former chair of the IRC.
- Began work on the ALA International Strategic Plan for 2010-2015, and we will be using ALAConnect as a place to post documents and share discussions.