

## International Relations Committee Report to Council

Submitted by Blanche Woolls, Chair

Members: Buenaventura Basco, Carol Brey-Casiano, Marcy Carrel, Sergio Chapparo, Maurice Freedman, Loida Garcia-Febo, Alfred Kagan, Hai-pieng Li, Joe Mocnik (intern), Eve Nyren, Win Shih, Patricia Wand

### International Participation at Midwinter Meeting

Over 100 international visitors from 22 countries participated in this Midwinter Meeting. With the increase in international participation during the last few years the International Relations Round Table held its first 'Welcome and Orientation for International Visitors' on Friday evening.

### International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA)

The IRC was pleased that IFLA Secretary General Peter Lor, Professional Coordinator Sjoerd Koopman, and Membership Manager Cynthia Mouanda were able to attend Midwinter from the Hague, Netherlands.

Peter Lor will be retiring from IFLA after the Quebec City Conference in August this year. He announced that Jennifer Nicholson, former Executive Director of the Australian Library and Information Association, has been appointed to succeed him. Also, Dr. Stuart Hamilton has been named the first-ever Senior Policy Advisor for IFLA. Dr. Hamilton will work on issues such as intellectual freedom, intellectual property, etc.

Peter Lor reported that IFLA finished 2007 with a positive financial year, and will be able to transfer much needed funds to build up its reserve. IFLA's budget is less than 2 million dollars and has a staff of only 11. IFLA, like ALA, is also undertaking a redesign of its website.

### ALA and IFLA

Seventy-five ALA members are currently representing ALA on 40 IFLA Sections. A call for new nominations for ALA representatives for 2009-2013 will be sent out this spring.

Most of these ALA representatives, and ALA president Loriene Roy and ALA Executive Director Keith Michael Fiels, participated in the IFLA World Library and Information Congress in Durban South Africa.

### IFLA Quebec City- August 2008

IFLA's World Library and Information Congress will be held on August 10-14 this year in Quebec City, returning to North America for the first time since the Boston Conference in 2001.

Claude Bonnelly, Co-Chair of the Quebec City Organizing Committee, extends an invitation to all U.S. librarians to attend the Congress. Opportunities to present at the Congress are now available on the IFLA

website at [www.ifla.org](http://www.ifla.org) The early registration deadline is May 7th. ALA members can register at the IFLA member rate through ALA's institutional membership.

### **Campaign for the World's Libraries**

At the IFLA Congress in Durban both South Africa, and Trinidad and Tobago, joined to participate in the *Campaign for the World's Libraries*. With these additions 32 countries are now part of the ALA-IFLA partnership program. The 'Guide to Campaign for the World's Libraries,' a joint effort between the International Relations Office and the Campaign for American Libraries, was unveiled to an audience of 200 people.

### **Library Copyright Alliance International Activities**

Carrie Russell, from the OITP reported on the new grant the Library Copyright Alliance (LCA) received from the MacArthur Foundation to fund 3 librarians to represent U.S. libraries interest at WIPO meetings over the next three years. The International Relations Committee applauds the LCA and OITP on their hard work to receive this grant, and their continued effort to represent the U.S. library community in international arenas.

### **U.S. Committee of the Blue Shield**

ALA representative Bob Martin reported on meetings of the new U.S. Committee of the Blue Shield. The Committee continues to push for the United States government to ratify the "Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict."

The IRC does not make any recommendation on CD #44, "Resolution on the confiscation of Iraqi Documents from the Iraq National Library and Archives," but voted to ask the Near East and South Asia Subcommittee to work with the U.S. Committee to investigate this matter and provide a report to the IRC at the ALA Annual Conference in Anaheim, if not before.

### **Guadalajara Book Fair**

A total of 182 ALA members participated in the ALA-FIL Free Pass to the Guadalajara Book Fair this November, including ALA President Loriene Roy. IRO Program Officer Delin Guerra presented a half-day strategic analysis workshop for the Mexican Association of Librarians (AMBAC).

The IRC would like to thank ALA Executive Director Keith Michael Fiels for agreeing to extend the collaborative agreement for the ALA-FIL Free Pass Program to 2012, and for restoring ALA's support to 200 ALA members.

### **New Library Student Initiative**

Chair Blanche Woolls reported on the new initiative to connect library school students from the United States with library school students from around the world. Over 60 library school students in the U.S., many with multiple language skills, have already expressed interest. A wiki will be set up and outreach is beginning to library faculty around the world. It is hoped that some of these students will be able to connect at the ALA Annual Conference in Anaheim or at the IFLA WLIC in Quebec City.

### **ALA International Activities**

The IRC continues to be pleased with the expansion and participation of ALA and its members (including its 2,000 international members) who engage in international activities on behalf of ALA, their libraries and personally. The IRC voted once again to urge ALA to provide more staff support for the growing international activities.