

International Relations Committee Report to Council

Submitted by Beverly Lynch, Chair

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International Participation at Midwinter

The IRC was very pleased that 80 international colleagues from 15 countries were able to participate, share ideas and network with their U.S. colleagues at this meeting. The International Relations Roundtable hosted an orientation/reception for international librarians on Friday night.

ALA International Membership

Currently ALA has over 1,800 members in 110 countries. This is a small reduction from last year.

Increased Emphasis on International in LIS Programs

A recent survey from the International Relations Office of LIS programs in the U.S. and Canada shows a 30% increase in courses with an international or global focus, from 25 courses to 37.

ALA Participation at IFLA Conference

Though the U.S. delegation to the IFLA Conference in Milan last August was a little smaller than normal, ALA was well represented through its 60 plus appointed members serving on IFLA Committees. Also attending were President Camila Alire, Past-President Jim Rettig, and President-elect Roberta Stevens. The ALA leadership met with many ALA international members throughout the conference. President Alire also participated in a worldwide webcast organized by the U.S. State Department's Information Resource Officers.

Campaign for the World's Libraries

At the IFLA Conference, the International Relations Office, with support from Campaign for America's Libraries staff, organized a well-received program on the Campaign for the World's Libraries, which included a presentation from the Greek Library Association. As a result of the program the Library Association of Jamaica is a new participant in the Campaign, and is kicking off its campaign with a kid's poster contest.

International Federation of Library Association and Institutions (IFLA)

IFLA President-elect Ingrid Parent, from Canada, provided an update on IFLA activities. IFLA is also working on crafting its new strategic plan for 2010-2015. An increased emphasis will be on advocacy and policy development. IFLA has been very successful, in collaboration with partners such as the Library Copyright Alliance, in influencing the discussions at the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) regarding limitations and exemptions on access to materials. IFLA is extremely pleased the Obama administration has changed the U.S. viewpoint on this issue, and is now in favor of limitations and exceptions for libraries and other educational institutions.

IFLA's conference this year will be in Gothenburg, Sweden in August. Conference Co-Chair Agneta Olsson, from the University of Gothenburg, provided an update on conference preparation to the IRC and at an IFLA Update Session. The 2011 Conference will be in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

U.S. Committee of the Blue Shield

The IRC received a report from Nancy Gwinn, ALA representative to the U.S. Committee of the Blue Shield (USCBS). She participated in the 2-day "Culture & Conflict: The U.S. and the 1954 Hague Convention" conference last October. The conference was jointly sponsored by the USCBS and the Lawyer's Committee for Cultural Heritage Preservation. Included were presentations on the U.S. military efforts, with help from the USCBS to train troops headed for Iraq and Afghanistan, and other locations, to sensitize them to issue of cultural heritage. The International Relations Committee will be following up through a program at Annual, "Libraries in a Time of War."

International Programming for Annual in D.C.

There will be 12 programs with an international theme. The IRC geographic subcommittees will be sponsoring four of these programs. Two of the 12 programs are planned to be webcast globally with the assistance of the U.S. State Department.

10th Year ALA-FIL Guadalajara Book Fair Free Pass Program

With the demand for Spanish-language materials increasing, 126 ALA members, despite the economic challenges, were able to participate in the 10th ALA-FIL Free Pass Program at the Guadalajara Book Fair. The members represented all types of libraries and came from 29 states. Though budgets have been reduced, the librarians were able to collect around \$600,000 worth of much needed resources for their Spanish speaking users.

Staff International Working Group

The International Relations Office has convened an internal working group that includes IRO, Publishing, Conference Services, Membership, and Divisions to better connect and service the needs of ALA's international members and international customers. Work includes investigation into providing print-on-demand products and the continuing education needs of members outside the United States.

Haiti Resolution

The IRC would like to thank the Massachusetts Convention Center Authority and ALA members, vendors, and others for raising over \$27,000 for humanitarian relief at this conference. The Americas Subcommittee drafted a resolution on Haiti, focusing on support for efforts to rebuild the library and archive community in Haiti. The IRC has adopted this resolution and moves this to Council for your consideration, Document CD#18.1.

Resolution on Rebuilding Libraries and Archives Damaged or Destroyed
by the Earthquake in Haiti

- Whereas, On January 12, 2010 a massive earthquake in Haiti caused the death of over 100,000 people, including library workers and their families; and
- Whereas, The ALA Council observed a moment of silence for all of the victims of the tragedy at its Midwinter Meeting on January 17, 2010; and
- Whereas, This tremendous tragedy has resulted in damage and destruction to libraries and archives throughout the country; and
- Whereas, Libraries and archives are vital to all societies especially in helping citizens recover in times of crisis; and
- Whereas, ALA Policy 58.1 (7) objective is “to promote awareness of the importance of the role of librarians, libraries, and information services in national and international development” ; and
- Whereas, ALA Policy 8.3 states “When a disaster occurs that affects one or more libraries, the staff or friends of those libraries are encouraged to contact the ALA for assistance. Such assistance shall include, at a minimum: (1) the provision of information to the public about the disaster, its effect on the library, and where contributions can be made and (2) information to the library on dealing with disasters” ; and
- Whereas, ALA Executive Board has established a policy EBD # 12.16 rev. 2004-2005 for reviewing and responding to the destruction of libraries nationally and internationally; therefore, be it

Resolved, That the American Library Association:

1. Expresses its deepest sympathy to the National Library and Archives and the library community in Haiti.
2. Works in coordination with other U.S. Associations, IFLA and its members, and UNESCO on the international response to this disaster.

Resolution on Rebuilding Libraries and Archives Damaged or Destroyed by the Earthquake in Haiti/2

3. Publicizes and provides information to the international library community and the public on the importance of rebuilding damaged libraries and their collections; and
4. Publicizes and provides information on how and where the library community and the public can contribute to these rebuilding efforts; and.
5. Urges the U.S. Government and Non Government Organizations (NGOs) to provide funding for the reconstruction and rebuilding of libraries and other cultural institutions in Haiti; and
6. Acts as a conduit for the receipt of funds to assist in the rebuilding of libraries in Haiti; and
7. Urges libraries to provide up-to-date information about social and communication services available in the communities for the Haitian diaspora and links to donation and other relief services.

Adopted by the Council of the American Library Association
Wednesday, January 19, 2010
In Denver, Colorado



Keith Michael Fiels
ALA Executive Director and
Secretary of the ALA Council