American patrons currently take for granted a library with open stacks filled with books they can freely browse. At the end of the 19th century, American public luminaries decided the education of the public and free access to information was the foundation of free society. The problems inevitably present in an open stack situation, like theft or misplacement of materials, did not outweigh the benefits of free access to books. While access was sometimes prevented by technical problems or uniqueness of the collection, the value of open stacks was never seriously challenged.

The situation was different in Europe. In most academic libraries the stacks were closed, typically due to space considerations. Shelving by accession number and by size, popularized by National Library of France, helped to use space more efficiently, but made free access to shelves useless. Most often part of the collection was kept open in reading rooms or in smaller departmental libraries, and some universities created special undergraduate libraries to facilitate the access to their extensive collections.

In Eastern Europe, the debate about closed or open stacks was nonexistent. For example, the Warsaw University Library in Poland used to have closed stacks and large reading rooms with quite comprehensive reference collections. After searching a card catalog, the patron filled out and gave to the librarian a request form. Sometimes the waiting period was quite long. Often the content of the book did not fulfill the promise of its title and the whole process had to be repeated. Closed stacks were not only the result of space problems; it was also an effect of traditional materials arranged by accession number according to the French system. The closed stacks also represented the closed society, the library that guards and hides information instead of making it freely accessible. In a country where access to information was strictly regulated and censorship was an important controlling tool, the open access to shelves was just too free to fit into the general scheme of tightly controlled media.

The year 1989 brought significant changes and challenges. The political and economical landscape of Eastern Europe began to transform rapidly and thus came the promise of open access. 

Continued on page 7
Message from the Editor

Welcome to a new year! In this issue, we learn about open access in Warsaw, preservation in Germany, a conference, a visit, and IRRT events at Annual.

Ewa Dzorak opens the doors to the University of Warsaw Library and discusses the transition undertaken to make its stacks open to patrons, thanks in part to a new library building. Curtis Rogers describes a study tour of German libraries that provide research and information services to federal and state parliaments and non-governmental organizations. His report provides a brief view into the many fascinating libraries they visited, as well as the digitization and preservation efforts currently underway.

An international conference and an international visit are included in this issue. First, Lesley Farmer reports on the annual meeting of the International Association of School Librarians, held in Taipei. Second, Sha Li Zhang reports on her visit to the Ivanovo State Textile Academy in Ivanovo, Russia, and the connections made between libraries.

Finally, several items about IRRT events at ALA Annual are included.

~ Rebecca Miller Banner

Seeking IVC Volunteers and Mentors

The IRRT IVC Committee is looking for volunteers to staff the International Visitors Center at the ALA Annual Conference in Anaheim, CA. IRRT sponsors the IVC for international librarians attending the conference. Please consider volunteering for a 1- to 2-hour time slot (or more!) between Friday, June 27 and Monday, June 30. To volunteer, please contact the International Relations Office at intl@ala.org.

The IRRT Orientation/Mentoring Committee seeks mentors to help out international colleagues during the ALA Annual Conference. If you are interested in being a mentor in Anaheim, please fill out a form at http://www.ala.org/ala/iro/iroactivities/intlmentor.cfm or contact the International Relations Office at intl@ala.org.

What a great way to meet an international librarian!
Message from the IRRT Chair

By Joan Weeks

In a few short paragraphs I would like to reflect back on IRRT’s accomplishments at midwinter in Philadelphia and look ahead to plans for annual in Anaheim. For the first time at midwinter we had an orientation session for international librarians and Lorraine Roy, ALA President delivered welcoming remarks. A good number of librarians joined IRRT during the conference and now IRRT with 1940 members is one of the largest round tables. Our goal is to go beyond the 2000 level by annual.

A group of Emerging Leaders (ALA’s initiative enable new librarians to move into leadership roles) got a great start on IRRT project to identify and organize free online tutorials and learning experiences that librarians can tap to keep abreast of the latest and best practices in the field. They are collecting and organizing the resources into a web product that all librarians around the world can access. They will unveil their project during the Chair’s Program in Anaheim which will focus on the topic: “Professional Development Around the World: Meeting the Challenge of Rapid Change in the Digital Environment.” [Editor’s note: See below for details on this project.]

This is just the time of year to think about an appointment to an IRRT committees. Judith Lin Hunt, IRRT chair-elect has begun appointing members to committees for 2008. You may use the committee interest form at: http://www.ala.org/ala/irrt/irrtcommittees/interestform.cfm to request an appointment to a committee.

Several new postings have appeared on the IRRT blog http://alairrt.blogspot.com/ in the past week, and there is one I want to highlight. The Lubuto Library Project has a matching gift challenge to begin construction of a second library in Zambia to help orphaned street kids learn to read. A small donation can make a big difference in reaching this goal.

We have many exciting programs and activities planned for Anaheim starting with the Pre-Conference on Collaboration and Resource Sharing in the Digital Age On Friday, June 27, 2008 and culminating with a very special International Reception to be held at the Muzeo, a new museum complex of the arts and culture. Please check the IRRT website at: http://www.ala.org/ala/irrt/annualmtgs.cfm for all the details about dates, times and venues as they are finalized. To borrow a theme from Disney, I hope you can join us in Anaheim and catch the IRRT magic.

Emerging Leaders of IRRT

Free Links: Providing Access to Free Professional Development Opportunities for ALA Members around the World

For the first time, an IRRT supported project is part of the ALA Emerging Leaders program. Begun in 2007, the Emerging Leaders program brings together new leaders in the field to work on projects submitted by the divisions and round tables. The IRRT project will identify and select free web-based tutorials and professional development information for librarians in other countries who do not have the funds to travel to conferences or regular access to professional development resources in their own countries and want to advance their skills in emerging areas. Six “emerging leaders” form the project team, guided by an IRRT mentor, past IRRT chair Susan Schnuer.

Project members have opted to focus on grant opportunities, collection development, digital collections, information literacy, leadership and management, and technology training and issues. The resources are evaluated for relevance, accessibility and format, language choices, and currency. Progress will be periodically reviewed by outside international librarians.

From January to May, the group will gather information on one large area of professional development: technology training and issues. The results of the project will be presented at the Emerging Leaders poster session, to be held on Friday June 27, 2008 at the ALA Annual Conference.

The project members are:
- Ms. Katherine Artzner, Foundation Center, Cleveland, Ohio, USA
- Mr. Kodjo Atiso, Animal Research Institute, Achimota, Ghana
- Ms. Paloma Celis-Carbajal, University of Wisconsin at Madison, USA
- Ms. LaVerne Gray, University of Illinois at Chicago, USA
- Ms. Robin Kear, University of Pittsburgh, USA
- Ms. Laura Park, Pierce County Library System, Tacoma, Washington, USA
- Ms. Susan Schnuer, Mortenson Center for International Library Programs, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, USA (IRRT Mentor)
From the Dresden Codex to Scanning Robots: The 2007 German Library Study Tour

By Dr. Curtis R. Rogers

In early October 2007, ten American librarians participated in an invited study tour of German libraries that provide research and information services to the German government, the federal and state parliaments and non-governmental organizations. The study tour was provided by the Initiative Fortbildung für wissenschaftliche Spezialbibliotheken und verwandte Einrichtungen e.V. (Initiative for Continuing Education in Academic and Research-Oriented Special Libraries and Related Institutions - www.initiativefortbildung.de) and the German Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Parlaments-und Behoerdenbibliotheken APBB (Section of Parliamentary and Government Libraries) with generous support from the Checkpoint Charlie Foundation (www.cc-stiftung.de). The program’s aim is to acquaint German and American librarians with their counterparts and to open a dialogue of exchange and cooperation. As a participant of the 10-member tour, it was fascinating to see the many similarities and many differences of government and non-profit/institutional library operations in both the United States and Germany.

The Stasi Records Office (Archiv der Zentralstelle) in former East Berlin contains the recovered documents from the legacy of the former intelligence service of the GDR developed in the four decades of existence of the Ministry for State Security. The archives also includes photos, slides, videos, films and recordings. The tour and information session was lead by Günther Bormann and his enthusiasm for the archives office was infectious. He provided tour participants with great detail on how the records are preserved and maintained as well as discussed the process involved in requesting personal records.

The Stasi Records Office (Archiv der Zentralstelle) in former East Berlin contains the recovered documents from the legacy of the former intelligence service of the GDR developed in the four decades of existence of the Ministry for State Security. The archives also includes photos, slides, videos, films and recordings. The tour and information session was lead by Günther Bormann and his enthusiasm for the archives office was infectious. He provided tour participants with great detail on how the records are preserved and maintained as well as discussed the process involved in requesting personal records.

Another very fascinating tour and discussion centered on digitization and preservation programs at the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek in Munich. Tour members were provided with an in-depth look at the new scan robot. This was an amazing device (and expensive at approximately €70,000) that scans two pages simultaneously through the use of vacuum suction that pulls two pages upward while scanning them. The pages then fall to the left and the scanner head moves downward to suction and scan the next two pages while the library technician manages the process.

Tour members also took a detailed look at the preservation unit where delicate manuscripts and monographs are repaired and preserved for displays and future use. Many specialized staff members were mending torn and aged pages and discussed the various processes. One staff member explained how technicians make paper from fibers to fill in gaps of old paper that has been damaged or eaten by insects. It was quite interesting to see these processes in action.

Tour members were very privileged to also view rare manuscripts, books, sheet music, and other treasures in the special collections room and were also able to view the pièce de résistance, the Dresden Codex. Tour members carefully examined this version of the Maya Codex (Codex Dresdensis) at the Sächsische Landesbibliothek (SLUB), the state library in Dresden. “It is the most elaborate of the Maya codices, and also a highly important work of art. Many sections are ritualistic (including so-called ‘almanacs’), others are of an astrological nature (eclipses, the Venus cycles). The codex is written on a long sheet of paper which is ‘screen-folded’ to make a book of 39 leaves, written on both sides” (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maya_codices).

Herbert Karbach of the Archives of the Auswärtigen Amt (Federal Foreign Office in Berlin) provided an in-depth view of many treaties and documents of great importance to Germany. Instruments of Ratification and Foreign and International Treaties were just a few of the documents tour members were able to examine. Mr. Karbach’s detailed descriptions of the historical items and documents were fascinating.


For more information including the tour itinerary, photos, and videos, please visit http://germanylibtour.wordpress.com/.

Dr. Curtis Rogers is the Director of Statewide Library Services Division, South Carolina State Library
International Leads

March 2008

International Relations Committee Announces Winners

Barbara Ford wins John Ames Humphry/OCLC/Forest Press Award

Barbara J. Ford 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 it is given to an individual for significant contribution to international librarianship.

Ms. Ford received this award for her significant contributions in librarianship, extensive publications, and significant contributions to ALA and IFLA.

Ms. Ford is the director of the Mortenson Center for International Library Programs and a professor at the Library of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. She has presented and published on international aspects of librarianship. Through her editorial positions, she has encouraged the dissemination of information on librarianship to a global audience.

“Barbara J. Ford is truly an outstanding and influential international librarian. She is thoroughly committed to connecting librarians around the world through her work at the Mortenson Center for International Library Programs at the University of Illinois, through her long involvement with IFLA, including serving on the Governing Board from 2005-2007, and through her leadership in ALA’s and ACRL’s international committees and activities, including serving as ALA President from 1997-98. Ms. Ford also spent four years in the Peace Corps in Panama and Nicaragua and continually presents and publishes about her international activities”, said Robin L. Kear, Chair of the Award Committee.

Ms. Ford will be recognized during the International Relations Round Table Chair’s Program on Monday, June 30, 2008 at the ALA Annual Conference in Anaheim, California.

Congratulations to these two worthy women!

Rose Dotten wins Bogle-Pratt International LibraryTravel Fund

Rose Dotten is the 2008 recipient of the "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 Ms. Dotten to attend her first international conference in Berlin, Germany. She is the Principal/Director of the School Librarianship Department, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto.

The award is in recognition of Sarah Comly Norris Bogle, a prominent U.S. librarian who made notable contributions in international library service. Ms. Dotten will attend the European Council of International Schools (ECIS) Librarians’ Conference where she will be presenting two papers:

"Information Literacy: A New Curriculum for Students for the Future" and "School Libraries for Information Literacy Programs in Canada, Belgium and Your Country: An International View on Requirements and Implementation Strategies."

"The award committee was particularly impressed with Dotten’s application because of the contributions she has already made in developing school library curricula in Ontario and the interest on the part of the European community in these developments," states Steve Shadle, Committee Chair. As Ms. Dotten states in her application: "Presenting this new curriculum to the international participants at the conference in Berlin, will we hope, give a new vision for the development of school libraries in many countries where this has not been an integral part of their students’ educational environments."

Ms. Dotten will be recognized during the International Relations Round Table Chair’s Program on Monday, June 30, 2008 at the ALA Annual Conference in Anaheim, California.

Barbara Ford wins John Ames Humphry/OCLC/Forest Press Award

Ms. Ford received this award for her significant contributions in librarianship, extensive publications, and significant contributions to ALA and IFLA.

Ms. Ford is the director of the Mortenson Center for International Library Programs and a professor at the Library of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. She has presented and published on international aspects of librarianship. Through her editorial positions, she has encouraged the dissemination of information on librarianship to a global audience.

“Barbara J. Ford is truly an outstanding and influential international librarian. She is thoroughly committed to connecting librarians around the world through her work at the Mortenson Center for International Library Programs at the University of Illinois, through her long involvement with IFLA, including serving on the Governing Board from 2005-2007, and through her leadership in ALA’s and ACRL’s international committees and activities, including serving as ALA President from 1997-98. Ms. Ford also spent four years in the Peace Corps in Panama and Nicaragua and continually presents and publishes about her international activities”, said Robin L. Kear, Chair of the Award Committee.

Ms. Ford will be recognized during the International Relations Round Table Chair’s Program on Monday, June 30, 2008 at the ALA Annual Conference in Anaheim, California.

Congratulations to these two worthy women!
Reports - Conferences and Visits

International Association of School Librarians (IASL)

By Lesley Farmer

Imagine 500 school librarians from 22 countries sharing ideas face-to-face. I participated in such a conference: the International Association for School Librarianship, which was held July 16 to 20 in Taipei. The key phrases were “information literacy,” “collaboration,” and “social networking.” In each case, attendees were grappling with ways to promote school libraries and make them relevant to today’s school community.

Sessions included the use of learning object repositories, student reading information behaviors of teachers, children’s reading habits, online reading competitions, a wired summer reading program, a reader-based digital gallery, collaborating with service personnel, talking with politicians, working with parents, and cultural competence, among many others.

During the conference, attendees could visit local model school libraries. Some of the special features and services included: a question of the week (correct answers led to prizes), book reports displayed under glass on the student tabletops, school history archive, posters of traditional sayings about reading and learning, parent-child shared reading before school, school-wide thematic activities that incorporate the library and its resources, student-created library newsletters, and interactive library portals.

Both in Taipei and Kyoto, school libraries tend to have two library staff members: a trained school librarian who oversees daily operations but does not teach, and a teacher librarian with a teaching credential and some library training who serves as the library administrator. Unfortunately, most teacher librarians have to teach regular classes so they spend between 10% and 90% of their time outside the library. The most effective teams included full-time school librarians and teacher librarians, and had teacher librarians or other trained staff who handled technology.

IASL is the only international association that focuses solely on school librarianship, and provides good advice and resources about a variety of related issues. Joining IASL can help the school community become more aware of how libraries operate in different countries and the information literacy needs of students around the world.

Conference information can be seen at http://www.iasl-online.org.

From North Carolina to Russia

By Sha Li Zhang

Spring 2006, Rosann Bazirjian, Dean of University Libraries and Sha Li Zhang, Assistant Director for Collections and Technical Services met Dr. Natalya Masyuk, then Vice Rector for Finance at the Ivanovo State Textile Academy (ISTA) in Ivanovo, Russia, and a Fulbright Scholar at University of North Carolina-Greensboro. When Dr. Masyuk returned to Russia, she sent an invitation to Rosann and Sha Li to visit her university library which happened in June 2007.

We were asked to present a series of lectures to the library staff from the Academy and from the six universities in the city. We presented on the topics of emerging technologies, budget planning and management, and trends of academic libraries. The audience was very interested in learning the specific and practical aspects of library operations. The sessions of questions and answers continued as we were with library staff on breaks and lunch time. It was overwhelming that we felt we had so much to offer and we had so much to learn from our Russian colleagues.

We learned that an MLS degree is not required for being a librarian in Russia. Library staff move up through the years of working experience. While the funding for the library is lagging behind the needs of the library users, the library staff do their best to make the services available and help students get the materials they need. Our Russian colleagues did not hesitate to propose several action items for us to take back to textile faculty at our campus.

At the same time, Rosann offered library action items to the Russian library:

- Send English literature to the Russian library;
- Provide ILL through scanned articles and book chapters where copyright allows;
- Answer reference questions through e-mail and other real time methods;
- Send reference books of updated English terminology on textiles;
- Host short-term training sessions at UNCG for library staff from the Academy if they are able to come and speak basic English.

Though time goes by, we are still absorbing information that we acquired about the Russian university and the library on its services, collections, and facility. We continue communicating with our Russian colleagues to accomplish the above-listed action items. Having meaningful and double exchanges with Russian library colleagues has enabled us to be open minded and with broad vision. We are grateful to be able to take this trip that has enriched our experience beyond the library community in U.S.
Open Stacks

Continued from Page 1

equally dramatic changes in library world. The Warsaw University Library leaders and staff, crammed in a beautiful, historical, but small building were planning for changes. The process of selecting and purchasing an integrated library system, funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, naturally led to the reevaluation and rethinking of library services and organization. This action combined with a government decision to construct a new library building opened the possibilities for new solutions. When the competition was announced for the design of a new library building, the specifications listed free access to shelves as one of the most important requirements, a truly revolutionary decision in Polish library world.

The new building, funded by Warsaw University Foundation with the blessing of a newly elected Polish government, was finished in 1999 and in the summer that year the first part of collection was moved into it. After deciding that in the new building there will be open access to shelves, the library management, led by Henryk Hollender and Ewa Maciuszko, had to make important decisions about the space’s organization and a classification scheme that would help to organize the collection in open access areas. Since current materials are most often used by students, it was decided that all books published after 1980 will be placed on open shelves. In time other frequently circulating materials will be added to it. The preparation of materials destined to free access began long before the new building was ready to receive first patrons.

A necessary element of open access is arrangement of materials according to subject. The Library of Congress classification scheme was chosen as the best organizational tool because of its adaptability and flexibility. The staff uses the Library of Congress online tool ClassificationWeb, the LC catalog and WorldCat to check classification numbers already assigned by other libraries. Many Polish publications do not get incorporated into the LC collection, so the catalogers in Warsaw University Library need to assign their own call numbers. The LC classification is accommodating and can be stretched to fit narrow topics that relate to history and development of specific industries or cultural events, for example the history of Polish press, specific periods in history of Eastern Europe, regional geography and history. In those cases catalogers in Warsaw University Library create their own tables that fit the larger schedules. The entire schedules were not translated into Polish so every librarian in Warsaw University Library is required to have a working knowledge of English. The classification librarians also assign the subject headings correlated with class numbers and input them into catalog records in English. The LC catalog is their everyday tool and by putting English language subject headings in Warsaw University Library catalog they make it truly international finding tool. This is a real exercise in international librarianship possible only on information superhighway.

Open stacks require close monitoring. The subject librarians with desks scattered throughout the library supervise the collection and being specialists in their subject area they serve as a collection development consultants. The open stacks collection is divided into eight wide subject areas marked by clearly visible signs hanging over the shelves. The division into eight wide areas of knowledge is rooted in the European tradition, but is not fully compatible with LC classification. For example Class G is scattered between different areas of knowledge – Archeology (GN) is placed with historical sciences and Anthropology (also GN) with social sciences and Geography (G, GR) is located with sciences. A carefully designed system of visual information is really essential while locating the materials. The discussion about the rationale of this kind of division versus placing books on shelves according to LC number in A to Z order could probably last forever. The truth is that the library management had to make their decisions fast and was trying to find the middle ground between old and new order. This division seemed like a good compromise between a new classification scheme and what is traditionally conceived as a division of knowledge.

Warsaw University Library managed to close the technological gap in a very short time. Still there is room for further improvements. Access to materials, for example, is a mixed bag. Monographs or monographic series are classified with LC numbers, periodicals though are placed on shelves in an alphabetical order by title at the beginning of each subject area. Some titles can be found in OPAC, some are in card catalogs, and there are few of those. Those problems are going to be resolved in time since the online catalog grows at an unprecedented rate and the classification work goes smoothly in Warsaw University Library.

As we know by now change is a normal part of the library world. But change so dramatic, so deep and so fast does not happen often. The leadership of the Warsaw University Library and all the librarians there should be commended for their ability to face an extraordinary challenge, find quick solutions and productively adapt to a new environment. It is no wonder then that many libraries in Eastern Europe are following the lead of Warsaw University Library and are opening their stacks.

Ewa Dzurak is Cataloging Librarian at the College of Staten Island
Pre-Conference Session at ALA:
Collaboration and Resource Sharing in the Digital Age

Please join ALA’s International Relations Roundtable for a pre-conference to be held on Friday, June 27, 2008, focusing on resource sharing for international libraries. We will provide a continental breakfast and lunch for attendees. Our speakers are experienced global librarians who work to provide resources to libraries large and small around the world. Learn how to become part of the worldwide information network of libraries.

HINARI – OARE – AGORA are sister programs set up to assist developing countries in gaining access to current scientific information. Three of our speakers will explain how their programs help provide access to current scientific journals for developing countries.

HINARI, Health InterNetwork Access to Research Initiative, is a program set up by the World Health Organization to provide developing countries with access to biomedical and health literature. Kimberly Parker will discuss how HINARI provides journal articles to health institutions in 113 countries.

OARE, Online Access to Research in the Environment, is an international public-private consortium coordinated jointly by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Yale University, and leading science and technology publishers. It enables developing countries to gain access to one of the world’s largest collections of environmental science research. Evviva Weinraub will talk about how this program provides scientific articles to developing countries.

AGORA, Access to Global Online Research in Agriculture, is led by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. The goal of the program is to improve the quality and effectiveness of agricultural research, education and training in low-income countries, and in turn, to improve food security. Mary Ochs will talk about AGORA which provides free or low cost access to major scientific journals in agriculture and related biological, environmental and social sciences to public institutions in developing countries.

Our fourth speaker is from another resource sharing organization, eIFL, Electronic Information for Libraries. Rima Kupryte will talk about eIFL.net, a multi-country consortium which negotiates affordable subscriptions, supports national library consortia, and maintains a global knowledge sharing and capacity building network. Some of the areas eIFL works on are open access publishing, intellectual property rights, open source software for libraries and the creation of institutional repositories of local content.

Join us Friday, June 27, 2008, from 8:00AM – 3:00PM for this exciting program! Cost is $75 and includes lunch and light refreshments.

And don’t forget the International Librarians Reception! Get your tickets early this year and join us Monday, June 30th, from 6-8 PM. There is no cost for international librarians; advance tickets for all others are available on the Conference registration form at $30.