The Power of Community: A Look at the Library Association of Bermuda

By Jiselle Maria Alleyne

In Greek, *Koinonia* means community, joint participation, teamwork; it also implies a sense of association, a common effort, an alliance or partnership (Strong’s Greek Dictionary, 2000). The essence of *Koinonia* can be seen as the foundational principle for the existence of the Library Association of Bermuda (LAB). Herein, individuals are not only united by a professional title, but by common experiences, interests, and a shared vision for the provision of library services in Bermuda. This short paper seeks to show the progress of a small association, to look at some of the challenges faced and to show what lies ahead for the Library Association of Bermuda (LAB).

*The Purpose of Community: The Bermuda Context*

According to C.R Karisiddappa, on the purpose of the professional association he states, “associations and professional societies are powerful forces representing the voice of the professional community” (Karisiddappa, 2002). Historically, this has been the tradition for the LAB. K.C Harrison records, “inspired by the president of the Commonwealth Library Association on the importance and need to have a library association, we see the formation of the LAB in 1984 with its first AGM and election of officers…its mandate was to act as an advisory body on library and information services to the government” (Harrison, 1984). This tradition has continued within the present LAB. As an association we operate with the understanding that we are the voice for the library professionals and we must continually create and sustain an environment of fraternity. This has worked to our advantage in ensuring the longevity, viability and relevance of the association.

The current membership record of the LAB is approximately 30, with an active membership of 15 professionals. The existence of the LAB is proof that ‘small’ does not denote insignificance. Findings relating to our genesis have shown “qualified librarians in 1984 numbered a total of 11 professionals with a total workforce in libraries of no more than 30” (Harrison, 1984). But, in spite of small numbers we have carved a place for ourselves and made a valuable impact within our society.

The association operates with a three-fold vision:

1. to promote and advocate for the provision of excellent library services to the island and people of Bermuda;

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Message from the Editor

In the northern hemisphere where I am, it’s cold and wintry - what a perfect time to dream about warmer climes, such as at the island of Bermuda. Jiselle Maria Alleyne of the Bermuda College Library takes us to her country for an introduction to the Library Association of Bermuda. Although the LAB has been in existence since 1984, it has found renewed vigor with an influx of young professionals. Ms. Alleyne shares the challenges and potentials as this small association develops. Perhaps someday we will be invited to attend a library conference hosted by LAB in Bermuda - hopefully during the winter!

We also have the pleasure of learning about Lesley Moyo, the Director for Research and Instructional Services at the University Library of Virginia Tech. Ms. Moyo is a native of Zambia who has successfully transplanted to the United States, contributing to the diversity of librarianship here. Mr. Paul Hover of Virginia Tech University Libraries interviewed Ms. Moyo for a new series published by the ALECTS division of ALA that focuses on international librarians who have had an impact on librarianship. We are glad to connect to the International Relations Committee of ALECTS in this way and look forward to other reports from them.

I am also in author mode in this issue, supplying a report of the SOFIA2008 conference, held November 12-14 in Sofia, Bulgaria. Over 225 participants from 23 countries attended this conference, the fifth in a series.

For those who are planning to attend ALA Midwinter Meeting in Denver this coming January, a list of the meetings for the IRC and IRRT is included. Note that locations have not yet been assigned, so be sure to check the Midwinter webpage or the IRRT webpage for updated information. If you are an international attendee, a special orientation is organized for you on Friday night. This is a great time to meet other international attendees and familiarize yourself with Midwinter.

I will be going to Denver in January and am looking forward to snow and meeting many new colleagues! I hope to see you there!

Note: in December I changed my name from “Miller Banner” to “Miller”.

~ 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.
Message from the IRRT Chair

By Judith Lin Hunt

ALA Midwinter Meeting will be in Denver, Colorado, January 23-29, 2009. From 4:00 to 5:00 p.m., just before the exhibits open at 5:15 p.m. on Friday, January 23, the IRRT Executive Board and Committee Chairpersons will provide a special introduction to ALA, the city of Denver, an overview of how to make the most of the midwinter meeting, as well as recommend programs and social activities. While the midwinter meeting is mainly for ALA business, a number of international librarians will be attending, so please give them a warm welcome!

This year our Emerging Leaders Project will be focused on creating a commemorative booklet to celebrate IRRT's 60th Anniversary, 1949-2009. It is an opportunity to learn about IRRT’s history and hear from IRRT past chairpersons and other librarians who are leaders in international librarianship. Look for the booklet at the Chair’s Program and the International Reception at ALA's Annual Conference in July in Chicago.

As we celebrate our past, it reminds us to look to the future. I recommend looking at the ALA 2010 International Strategic Plan - http://www.ala.org/ala/aboutala/offices/iro/iroactivities/plandoc0711.cfm - to see what challenges are ahead. Among these challenges are facilitating connections between U.S. and international librarians through identifying and publicizing opportunities for exchange programs, and making available the professional expertise of the ALA membership to countries interested in assistance to advocating for appropriate technological development and freedom of access to information worldwide.

There is much to celebrate and much still to do! And you can help by encouraging a colleague to become a member along with you! Membership information and forms are available at http://www.ala.org/ala/irrt/irrtmembershipinfo/membershipinformation.cfm. And if you already a member, you can join a committee! If you are attending the Midwinter Meeting, on Saturday morning, January 24 from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m., the IRRT Committees will be meeting. Stop by and introduce yourself and let us know of your interest!

Help us make the celebration at the Annual Conference great! Contact the Chair or the IL Editor and share...

Memories of experiences with IRRT

Memories of international experiences with ALA

Recognition of librarians who have had an impact on international librarianship

Photos and/or memorabilia from IRRT events

Let’s makes the 60th anniversary of IRRT one to remember!
Profiles of International Librarians: Lesley Moyo

By Paul Hover

Editor’s Note: Lesley Moyo was interviewed by Paul Hover for ALECTS IRC. He graciously shared the article with us.

Lesley Moyo is Director for Research and Instructional Services, University Libraries, Virginia Tech. She was born in Zambia, one of seven children in a family of modest means. She remembers that education was always considered of primary importance in her family. One of her earliest memories is of a treasured, “but probably very old version,” as she phrases it, of the Encyclopedia Britannica, along with several shelves of various books running an entire wall of the family room.

Until independence in 1964, Zambia was the British protectorate known as Northern Rhodesia. Lesley recalls that “When I was young, everything was patterned on the British system. I remember using pound sterling when shopping for elementary school supplies.” The British would play a role in her higher education as well.

Back when Lesley applied to the University of Zambia in Lusaka, undergraduates had little say in their choice of majors. Students were peremptorily placed in a college by the administrative powers based on their high school subjects, and in her case, that college was Education. Within the College of Education she had the choice of only two majors: Teacher or Librarian. Feeling she was not cut out to be a teacher, she chose librarian “by happenstance.”

Once in the major, however, she “became excited” about the opportunities her course of study had to offer. During the long summer breaks from the university, she was able to do several internships at government and university libraries, including one at the US Embassy Library. After she earned her BA with a double major in English and LIS in 1981, she left for UC Berkeley on a staff development fellowship to study for her MLIS. The conditions of the grant stipulated that she return and work for the University of Zambia after her degree, which she did from 1983-1986.

Towards the end of 1986 Lesley relocated to Harare with her family, where she worked as an Assistant Librarian at the University of Zimbabwe until 1992. Seeking to return to a teaching career, Lesley again relocated to Gaborone, Botswana, where she taught various courses at the University of Botswana’s LIS Department until 1999. It was at the University of Botswana that she met the indefatigable Professor Peter Havard-Williams, a pioneer in the development of librarianship in Third World countries. As the then head of the library school at Botswana, he mentored Lesley in the areas of research and technology, but his greatest influence was to inspire her to see the impact she would be able to make as a librarian. She affectionately recalls the brain-storming sessions she and other students at the University of Botswana had with the long-past-retirement aged “Prof,” as they called him. Their discussions of social issues enabled her to see her profession as part of a larger network of knowledge.

Immigrating to America

Lesley applied for and was granted US permanent residence in 1998, and she set off with her four children to make a home in America in 1999. Her initial year was challenging, working on a part time job at Delaware Technical and Community College in Newark, DE where she taught computer studies in the Industrial Training Division while also helping her children adjust to a new school system. It was at this time that she applied for and got a tenure track position at Penn State, where she later became the head of the Gateway Libraries. Her responsibilities included reference, instruction, and collection development for Contemporary Topics. Soon after her tenure and promotion to Associate Librarian, Lesley fulfilled a dream to advance to a leadership position with a career move to her present position at Virginia Tech.

Diversity in Experience has Led to Diversity in Hiring

Lesley is thankful for her international experience. “Although the basic nuts and bolts of librarianship are similar,” she says, “the actual training of librarians is different all over the world.” In contrast to American librarianship training, which traditionally takes place at the master’s level, in some parts of the world librarianship training occurs during the undergraduate years. Having an international perspective gives Lesley the power to grasp the relevance of people’s educational credentials from broad vantage points. She knows immediately what the international equivalents are of prospective hires as compared to the ALA accredited qualifications, allowing her to hire globally with confidence, thus potentially increasing diversity in her work environment.

Advice to Americans Interested in International Librarianship

Lesley urges Americans to develop a global understanding of issues that affect librarianship. While the profession is largely the same internationally, “context matters.” For example, acquisitions work at the University of Zimbabwe is very different than in the USA. Here in Virginia, she says, “You get a request from faculty and, if

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International Leads

December 2008

ALA 2009 Midwinter Meeting
IRRT/IRC Meetings

January 23-28, 2009
Denver, Colorado

International Librarians Orientation
Friday, 1/23/09
4:00 - 5:00 pm
Hyatt Regency, Suite 3608

Come join us for an introduction to the ALA Conference and the city of Denver for International and other attendees from abroad. ALA members will provide an overview of the conference, including recommended programs and social activities. Learn about conference transportation, the ALA’s Exhibit Hall and the Meaning of the ALA’s many acronyms. (For International librarians outside the U.S.)

IRC Meetings

International Relations Committee I
Friday, 1/23/09
2:00 pm - 4:30 pm
Colorado Convention Ctr, Rm 707

Humphry/OCLC Forest Press Award
Saturday, 1/24/09
8:00 am - 10:00 am
Curtis Hotel, Room Hide-n-Seek
*Closed meeting*

Bogle Pratt Award Committee
Saturday, 1/24/09
8:00 am - 10:00 am
Sheraton Denver Hotel, Biltmore Rm
*Closed meeting*

IFLA Update
Saturday, 1/24/09
11:00 am - 12:00 pm
Colorado Convention Ctr, Rm 605-07

International Relations Committee II
Tuesday, 1/27/09
1:30 pm - 3:30 pm
Colorado Convention Ctr, Rm 106

IRRT/IRRT Meetings

IRRC/IRRT Meeting*
IRRT All Subcommittee Meeting
Saturday, 1/24/09
8:00 am - 9:00 am: Chair Orientation
9:00 am - 10:00 am: Subcommittee meetings
10:00 am - 11:00: Subcommittee reports
Colorado Convention Ctr, Rm 605-07

IRRT Meetings

Executive Committee Meeting
Sunday, 1/25/09
8:00 am - 11:00 am
Colorado Convention Ctr, Rm 604

International Papers Subcommittee
Saturday, 1/24/09
8:00 am - 10:00 am
Brown Palace, Leadville Room
*Closed meeting*

For more information and to register for Midwinter, visit
http://www.ala.org/midwinter/
Conference Report: SOFIA 2008
November 12-14, Sofia, Bulgaria

By Rebecca L. Miller

With the theme of “Globalization and Management of Information Resources,” Sofia 2008 was the seventh meeting of an international biennial conference series that has been hosted in Kansas City, Kansas (1995), Warsaw, Poland (1997), and Sofia, Bulgaria (2000, 2002, 2004, and 2006). As a primary organizer, it was my pleasure to welcome over 225 participants from 23 countries to explore the impact of globalization and change on the development of libraries, information infrastructure, and society.

The regular conference sessions opened with a welcome speech from His Excellency Mr. Georgi Pirinski, Chairman of the National Assembly of Bulgaria and patron of the conference. Over 80 participants gave presentations on the subjects of this year’s themes; some of the best attended sessions were on digitization of cultural heritage, LIS education, ethics and the right to access information, and digital and virtual libraries. A concurrent session showcased posters created by LIS students from the United States and Bulgaria. Twenty-five students shared their knowledge about many current LIS topics.

The keynote speech was given by Monsignor Caesare Pasini, Prefect of the Vatican Archive and Library. He gave a very interesting speech about the history and future of the Vatican Library, taking us from its founding during the papacy of Pope Nicholas V (1447-1455) to its current challenges of conservation and digital preservation, and increasing open access to its materials. However, the on-going spirit of the Library is “universal and ecumenical” and Monsignor Pasini concluded by noting “the Vatican Library of the present and future is called upon to pursue collaboration and cultural understanding with institutions from every corner of the world.”

During the three-day conference, the attendees put into practice this call to pursue collaboration and cultural understanding. New acquaintances were made and old friendships rekindled between LIS professionals from around the world. I was honored to be a part of the organizing team and look forward to the next conference in 2010.

More details about the conference can be found at the website: http://slim.emporia.edu/globenet/Sofia2008/

Alexander Dimchev, University of Sofia, Bulgaria; Viktorija Kostoska and Mile Bosheski, National and University Library, Macedonia; Rebecca L. Miller, University of Kentucky, USA; and Stana Jankoska, National and University Library, Macedonia.
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2. to expand the profession by providing training avenues locally, for new librarians and para-professionals; and
3. to make the profession more marketable by improving the status and visibility of local librarians.

Obstacles to Our Community

In its effort to sustain the concept of Koinonia the LAB has faced challenges, which has caused the association to turn the lens within assessing where we are now and what will be the next step for the association. This has been necessary for the association to remain relevant and maintain its position as an advocate for the provision of quality library services. Some of the challenges faced are:

1. LAB Constitution: Members have seen where the association has outgrown the constitution. The constitution did not reflect the growth of the association over the years nor did it represent the strides made in our development.
2. The Threat of Inactivity and Extinction: As with any organisation the LAB has undergone periods of inactivity where it was only the will of a few faithful that have kept the ‘wind in the sail’ of the association.
3. The Threat of Separatism: The tendency to operate in isolation has threatened to undermine the effectiveness of the association. At times we have not capitalised on the strength of our numbers and the greater impact we could have made by working together.
4. Lack of Growth in the Association: Marketing of the profession has been difficult because of the mis-education about the many faces of the librarian and the role of the librarian within the information society.

Without a catharsis however, there can be no growth. These challenges have served in causing a reinvention of the associations’ image and a renewed vitality amongst its members. Members are accepting the challenge of being retrained, resource sharing and networking has increased within the association, and the use of the expertise of the members within the association has also increased.

The Promise and Potential of Our Community

The LAB is now on the cusp of playing a greater role than before in the development of Bermuda’s Library Services. This will be accomplished through the following:

1. promotion of the profession through marketing, advising and lobbying to the relevant agencies;
2. promotion of networking and linkages with other associations;
3. promotion of lifelong literacy which will produce a more holistic individual better able to cope with the challenges of the information society;
4. promotion of standards, policies and procedures that will govern the provision of information services and employ industry best practices to efficiently serve the residents of Bermuda.

The promise and potential for greatness for the LAB can be assured not because of an idealistic dream, but because we can use as reference points patterns set by other associations.

Bibliography


Ms. Alleyne is Reference & Bibliographic Instruction Librarian at Bermuda College Library

Clock Tower at Bermuda College Library
it is within the budget, you just order it.” In many countries in the African context, on the other hand, one needs first to obtain allocation of the foreign exchange to purchase books before ordering, regardless of budget. This leads to much more selectivity, and one must ask oneself: what books will make the greatest impact for the foreign currency available? In some parts of the world book acquisitions may be subject to censorship if material is considered politically sensitive. There is a myriad of issues that librarians all over the world may be dealing with that are not always obvious. “Understanding the existence of such contextual dependence will make you as an American librarian more understanding of global contingencies in the profession.”

Advice to International Librarians

Lesley has the following succinct advice for colleagues abroad: “Be willing to explore beyond your own domains, seek the guidance of renowned librarians, and aspire to be global players.”

Lesley Moyo
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IFLA in collaboration with ekz.bibliotheksservice GmbH offers the IFLA LIS Student Paper Award 2009 in recognition of the best student paper at the IFLA Conference in Milan, Italy, August 2009.

The Award is coordinated by the IFLA Section Education and Training Standing Committee (SET SC). It is open only to students (not including PhD students) whose abstracts have been accepted by any IFLA section for presentation at the Congress. One award will be given.

The Award winner will receive the current IFLA Congress registration fee plus grant for economy airfare and economical lodging, up to 2800 €. The registration fee for students is 200 € until May 15, 2009.

Complete application material and form can be downloaded from http://www.ifla.org/VII/s23/index.htm, then click on Announcements to see the award announcement in English, Chinese, German, Spanish, French, Japanese and Russian. Applications are due by March 1, 2009.