Community of Librarians in Kyrgyzstan Seek International Partners

By Jyldyz Bekbalaeva, 
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The Republic of Kyrgyzstan is a mountainous country situated in the heart of Central Asia, with a population of six million. Since its independence in 1991, from the Soviet Union, the country’s 2000 public, academic, school and special libraries have steadily reshaped into civic-focused institutions and coalesced to form a network of highly dedicated professionals.

Library and Information Consortium

In 2002, the Library and Information Consortium of Kyrgyzstan was formed, and is now one of the most dynamic professional associations in the country. Among the Consortium’s goals are professional trainings, strengthening advocacy, and offering financial and technological assistance. With donor support, the Consortium has initiated programs to promote the role of the library in supporting education, culture and civic participation and has implemented projects to increase access to information, build the capacity of librarians, conduct nationwide educational and cultural programs, foster regional library cooperation and digitize local materials.

The library community in Kyrgyzstan actively engages with various national and international partners to shape and advance its agenda and provide critically needed services to the Kyrgyz population. The Consortium benefits from input and support from the international library community with programs such as professional and cultural exchanges and other cross-border initiatives.

Annual Library Conference

The country’s first national library conference was held in 1999 and today is an annual gathering of information professionals at Lake Issyk-kul. Attendees are mostly Kyrgyz librarians, but conference participants have traveled from neighboring countries and overseas. The conference is not only a rare opportunity for information professionals to travel and experience the Central Asian region but to offer their valued experience and knowledge at the forum. International participation is critical for the growth of the library community in Kyrgyzstan.

Each year the conference is held in October 1-5, in Issyk Kul, Kyrgyzstan. For more information please visit the website: http://conference.bik.org.kg/.

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Message from the Editors

Welcome to the March 2017 issue of International Leads.

This issue comes out at a time of much political uncertainty in international affairs, but also a time in which libraries can play important roles.

Articles in this issue that underscore the importance of library roles around the world include a call from Kyrgyzstan for international library partners, a call for new scholarship in international librarianship, and an overview of a successful partnership between libraries in China and Oregon.

Also please find here a call for a new editor of International Leads to begin after ALA Annual 2017.

Thanks for reading this issue, and thanks for your continued commitment to international librarianship.

Karen Bordonaro and Gail Sacco, IL co-editors

Call for Submission

MAY 1 Deadline for the June issue:

Do you have news about...
International library activities?
People in international librarianship?
Upcoming international conferences?

Then why not submit to International Leads? Send your news and stories to the co-editors: Karen Bordonaro, kbordonaro@brocku.ca, Gail Sacco, gsacco75@gmail.com
Message from the IRRT Chair

By Elizabeth Cramer

It was great seeing many of you at the ALA Midwinter Conference in Atlanta. I left the conference feeling energized, hopeful, and grateful for my profession. One of the highlights of my conference was meeting the ALA Emerging Leaders that will be partnering with IRRT to enhance our Sister Libraries program. They are an amazing group of young librarians that will help IRRT to identify best practices for matching and sustaining Sister Libraries partnerships. I also participated in the Atlanta March for Social Justice and Women. What an amazing experience! I was grateful for the opportunity to support our profession’s core values such as diversity, democracy, and social justice.

At Midwinter, IRRT committees were busy preparing for ALA Annual 2017. The Chair’s and Papers Programs have selected speakers for Chicago and the IRRT Pre-Conference Committee announced their 2017 pre-conference theme: Supporting the United Nation’s Sustainable Development Goals with International Open Access Initiatives. When you register for ALA Annual 2017, you’ll want to include the IRRT International Reception on the evening of Monday, June 26. It promises to be a fun social event and will be held in the beautiful Winter Garden on the ninth floor of the Harold Washington Library Center.

Between now and ALA Annual our Chair-Elect, Loida Garcia-Febo, will be making IRRT committee appointments. So if you are interested in serving on an IRRT committee, please visit our committee site to complete the online volunteer form. We are also looking for one-two new editors for our newsletter, International Leads. If interested, see the call for volunteers included in this issue for more information.

Warm regards to all IRRT members. It is truly a pleasure to work with you, Beth

United Nations Data Sources for Librarians

By Lisa DeLuca
Seton Hall University

Data literacy in politics and international relations research is an important skill for university students and academic librarians. More broadly, such literacy is crucial for developing nations and agencies of the United Nations (UN). This article from College & Research Libraries News contains a comprehensive list of UN Data Sources including data repositories, country data and current UN initiatives written by Lisa DeLuca, Social Sciences Librarian at Seton Hall University.

http://crln.acrl.org/content/78/1/41.full
Message from the IRRT Vice Chair/Chair Elect

By Loida Garcia-Febo

As a passionate librarian serving communities in the United States and in different regions of the world, I am glad to share with our international colleagues that I am committed to work with the American Library Association and all our members to advance library concerns on national and global arenas. These are critical times for libraries, librarians, and the communities we serve. In the middle of this, I am confident that TOGETHER, we can bring change to impact public policy, and benefit our communities and our profession!

ALA will continue advocating for libraries and library users while upholding our core values, access, confidentiality/privacy, democracy, diversity, education and lifelong learning, intellectual freedom, preservation, the public good, professionalism, service, and social responsibility which can be found on the Library Bill of Rights and the Freedom to Read Statement.

During this past month, ALA has affirmed its commitment to its core values, our profession and our communities through the following statements:

**ALA opposes new administration policies that contradict core values** - Statement responding to recent actions by the new administration and specifically addressing issues regarding access to information, discrimination and intellectual freedom.

**ALA affirms support for NEH, NEA** - Statement in support of the National Endowment for the Humanities and the National Endowment for the Arts.

**ALA denounces recent FCC Lifeline revocations, report retractions** - On February 3, 2017, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) revoked all of the designations of Lifeline Broadband Providers and ordered the retraction of multiple reports, including the “E-rate Modernization Progress Report” and “Improving the Nation’s Digital Infrastructure.” The American Library Association (ALA) is dismayed by these actions to reduce digital opportunity and revise the public record. ALA President Julie Todaro released this statement.

Let’s continue working together to benefit our profession and the communities we serve!

“I wholeheartedly believe that our core values will guide us to build coalitions with like-minded partners sharing our values, and to adopt policies to impact public policy.”
Call for International Leads Editor

International Relations Round Table (IRRT) seeks a volunteer editor for International Leads commencing July 2017. The IL Editor serves a two-year term, renewable once, which begins immediately following the 2017 ALA Annual Conference.

International Leads (IL) is the official publication of the International Relations Round Table (IRRT). The purpose of IL is to disseminate information about international librarianship and the activities of the Round Table. IL seeks to support Round Table and Association objectives by bringing members news, brief articles and reviews that help them understand and react appropriately to recent developments in international librarianship. It seeks items of timely value and emphasizes current reports and programs undertaken by the Association and the IRRT. IL is published quarterly, edited by a member volunteer and uploaded to the IRRT website by the IRRT Webmaster.

The Editor of International Leads is responsible for publication of the International Relations Round Table quarterly newsletter including size, content, layout, typography, and other aspects of formatting. The Editor reports to IRRT Publications Committee and IRRT Executive Board. Previous issues are available on the IRRT website at:

International Leads Web Site
http://www.ala.org/irrt/intlleads/
internationalleads

Responsibilities:
- Coordinate International Leads working with the IRRT Publications Committee and the IRRT Executive Board.
- Have responsibility for the content, form and design of IL within the parameters of ALA and IRRT policies and in consultation with the IRRT Publications Committee, the IRRT Executive Board, the ALA International Relations Office (IRO).
- Seek manuscripts and encourage the submission of high-quality articles.
- Review all submitted manuscripts in light of the philosophy, purpose, and general style of the publication. Correspond with authors regarding acceptable, rewriting and resubmission, or rejection of articles.
- Edit and proof manuscript copy.
- Assume final authority for all content in each issue of IL.
- Serve as a non-voting, ex-officio member of the IRRT Publications Committee and the IRRT Executive Board.
- Attend IRRT Publications Subcommittee and IRRT Executive Committee meetings at ALA Annual and Midwinter meetings.

Qualifications:
- Experience in publishing and/or journalism, either in editing or writing, sufficient to be able to produce a high-quality publication that addresses interests of the readership.
- Effective communication skills.
- Experience in or demonstrated knowledge of international librarianship.
- Membership in the International Relations Round Table.

More information about the IL Editor’s responsibilities and the editorial statement are available on the IRRT website at: http://www.ala.org/irrt/intlleads/edstatement/editorialstatement

Applications are due by March 31, 2017.

Applications should include a brief statement about your interest in the position and a description of your skills and background relevant to the position, particularly your experience in publishing and/or journalism, as well as a current resume or CV.

Send inquiries and applications to Colleen Schalm at cschalm@prl.ab.ca
Kyrgyzstan, continued

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Major projects of the Consortium

With support from the U.S. Embassy, the project, Rare Books of Kyrgyzstan (2008) was the first initiative in Kyrgyzstan to preserve the country’s cultural and historical heritage by digitizing rare books and unique manuscripts available at selected libraries in the country.

Public Libraries against Tuberculosis (2012), with support from the eIFL Consortium, helped to raise public awareness and prevent TB in Kyrgyzstan, which is prevalent in the country.

Reading Caravan (2015-2016), a major countrywide summertime campaign to promote reading and education, supported by the U.S. Embassy, reached thousands of people in the most remote areas of Kyrgyzstan.

Right to Read- Right to Knowledge (2016), supported by the Soros Foundation, promotes open access and fosters harmonization of the country’s copyright law.

New Life of Urban Libraries (2016), funded by the U.S. Embassy, helped re-design one of the public libraries in the capital city to transform it into an engaging public space for social learning and community collaboration.

For more information about the library initiatives in Kyrgyzstan, please visit the website of the Library Consortium: http://bik.org.kg.

Central Asia: Krygystan, World Factbook, January 12, 2017

Ways to Connect with IRRT:
Introducing the International Journal of Librarianship—IJoL

By Xiaoai Ren, Valdosta State University, United States; Guoying Liu, University of Windsor, Canada; Keven Liu, Shanghai Library, China; Yongming Wang, The College of New Jersey, United States; Qing Zou, Lakehead University, Canada

The Chinese American Librarians Association (CALA) is proud to announce the launch of its new publication - The International Journal of Librarianship (http://journal.calaijol.org). This is an international, peer-reviewed, and open access journal. It is fully committed to the Open Access Initiative and will provide free access to all articles as soon as they are published. The inspiration for IJoL emerged from the apparent need to provide a dedicated venue for CALA members to exchange their research findings and best practices. It is founded to both recognize and embody the increasingly prominent role of international librarianship, especially Chinese librarianship in shaping the LIS field.

IJoL encourages, and editors welcome submissions across a wide variety of topics that support the mission of the journal. It publishes original research findings, theoretical explorations, and case studies from librarians, information scientists, library school faculty and students of Chinese heritage, as well as by librarians and information professionals of other nationalities on broader issues. It reports major development of the Chinese librarianship around the world. It also invites reviews of monographs, books, and reports about library and information science.

The editors of IJoL are responsible for the final selection of content of the journal and reserve the right to reject any submissions deemed inappropriate for publication. All feature articles are double-blind peer reviewed and adhere to the highest editorial standards.

IJoL is published semiannually. The inaugural issue of the IJoL was published in December, 2016. This issue covers a wide variety of topics including: the current state of library makerspaces; eBook service in Shanghai Library; a survey study of the current status of Chinese academic library services; improving Chinese digital resources’ discovery and access by leveraging NISO standards and best practices; and a case study of how a university library is taking up challenges to adapt to the dynamic higher education environment. If anything is distinct to readers of our first issue, we hope it is the rich information on Chinese librarianship out there to share.

This is the first of many issues and the start of many conversations. Following the successful launch of this inaugural issue, the IJoL is now calling for papers for a special issue which will be published in the summer of 2017 on data services and management. This is a rapidly evolving area, and around the world librarians are facing many distinct technological, regulatory and theoretical challenges. The IJoL invites both LIS practitioners and researchers to share their experiences and strategies on any aspects of academic and research data services and data librarianship.

We encourage you to share your work with us – and, more importantly, with your peers. Your sharing through IJoL will inform practices that strengthen international librarianship, Chinese librarianship in particular, and will increase the knowledge in this field greatly.
Library Transformation Continues in Egypt

By Dr. Hesham Mohamed and Dr. Salwa Elmeawad, Queens Public Library, New York

As part of a library transformation campaign, Dr. Hesham Mohamed, Queens Library, Dr. Salwa Elmeawad, Queens Library, and Dr. Hisham Makki, Library of Congress - Cairo Office, continue to fuel library staff training in Egypt by developing and conducting a full week of advanced training program to school librarians from all around Egypt.

The training program was organized by the Egyptian Library Association (ELA) under the leadership of Dr. Amany Gamal Megahed and hosted by the Egyptian Ministry of Culture at the Greater Cairo Library under the management of Mr. Yaser Osman.

The program was highly publicized in the Egyptian TV and national newspapers.

The training program was designed to focus on training school librarians in Egypt to understand the psychology and brain development of children, tweens, and teens from K-12, and how to develop programs for each school grade. The program further included training the librarians on how to catalog library materials and how to conduct scientific researches using different methodologies, including action research, to identify student and teacher needs.

Dr. Zain Abd Elhady, Professor and Chief of Library and Information Science Department - School of Arts, Helwan University in Cairo had invited us to lecture to the faculty members of the School of Arts regarding scholarships.

Another lecture was also offered on how to conduct qualitative and quantitative scientific research in the field of Library and Information Science.

Dr. Zain Abd Elhady is considered the leader in advancing the scientific research in the field of Library and Information Science in Egypt. He was recently appointed as the World Ambassador of the Word by the Spanish Museum.
Twenty Years of Building Bridges between Oregon and Fujian, China: The 2016 Horner Exchange

By Richard Sapon-White
Oregon State University

The Horner Library Exchange, celebrating its twentieth year in 2016, began as a collaboration between the Fujian (China) Provincial Library and the Oregon State Library. It is one of only two such exchange programs administered by a state library association (in this case, the Oregon Library Association). I have been involved in the program since 2002 and coordinator of the Oregon side for the past nine years. Last fall, I was one of three Oregon delegates to visit Fujian, finally taking the plunge to travel there myself.

In the early years, our colleagues in Fujian would send two librarians to Oregon for a month, alternating with one Oregon librarian traveling to Fujian for up to six weeks the following year. Starting in 2007, this pattern changed to three-week visits every three years, with four Fujian librarians coming to Oregon and three Oregonians visiting Fujian. During their time abroad, librarians visited a multitude of public, academic, school, and special libraries; gave lectures about the latest developments in their home libraries; and went sightseeing. Originally, funds for the Oregon side of the exchange came from a bequest by Dr. Layton Horner. Once those moneys were spent, the Oregon State Library continued to provide funds for the exchange. Oregon delegates also were required to contribute to their own travel. The Fujian provincial government provided for all room and board in China, as well as land transportation. Plans are underway to do fundraising to ensure future exchanges.

In May, 2016, Oregon hosted Li Fan, Huaqiao University Library in Quanzhou; Chen Wenge, Quanzhou Municipal Library; and Liu Xuzan and Lin Yongxiang, Fujian Provincial Library. In the course of three weeks, they spoke with library staff the length of the Willamette Valley as well as visiting the Columbia River Gorge. As has been our custom, a banquet on the last night ensured that our guests had a great sendoff and departed with distinctively Oregonian gifts – CDs of Portland-based Pink Martini and books about the history of the Chinese in Oregon.

In October, Jian Wang (Portland State University), Veronica Vichit-Vadakkan (Oregon College of Oriental Medicine), and I embarked for our three-week visit to Fujian Province. We were accompanied during the first week by Rosalind Wang, a retired librarian and past Horner alumna whose efforts over the three decades laid the foundation for the exchange and built many bridges between Fujian and Oregon; Amy Lee, a 2010 Horner alumna; and MaryKay Dahlgreen, Oregon State Librarian. Our itinerary was a mixture of library tours and meetings with library staff at twenty-four libraries as well as sightseeing in Fuzhou, the provincial capital, Xiamen, the largest city in the province, and Quanzhou, a bustling metropolis that was the terminus of the maritime Silk Road.

During our time abroad, Veronica and I maintained a blog to keep our families, friends, and library communities informed of our doings and whereabouts. What follows are some highlights from our trip and the impact that this experience has had on me.

While I enjoyed touring each library, my favorite moments were sitting down with library staff and discussing our work. Our hosts would describe their latest accomplishments: the opening of a new building, producing videos of vanishing minority art and culture, the preservation of ancient books. We would talk briefly about similar developments in our libraries. Then the moment would come for asking questions – and that is when we would really connect. Those questions revealed what we each really wanted to know about the people on the opposite side of the table. These friendly interrogations often took the form of “do you do X?” or “how do you do Y?” We asked: Do you have obligations to collect datasets from your researchers? (Short answer: no, not yet, but we know this is something that is happening elsewhere.) Where do you get funding for your cultural preservation projects? (“The provincial government.”) And in turn we were asked: Who pays for the books that the public library book clubs read? (Answer: the public library – we don’t make our patrons purchase their own books.) When will Bibframe be implemented? (Answer: it’s too early to say specifically!) Through this exchange of questions, I had the feeling that both sides of the table were asking: Are your libraries like ours? And how are we different?

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Horner Exchange, continued

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Ultimately, I learned that we are all simultaneously the same and different. Both sides of the Pacific are interested in funding, the latest technology, and innovative services. In many instances, we are doing the same things: cooperative cataloging (although carried out in different ways), purchase-on-demand, digitization projects. But many times we heard or saw things that are not yet widespread in the United States. In Xiamen, we saw kiosks that allowed 24/7 access to books and were placed around the city. Using a library card to unlock a sliding door, a user could select from a 12-shelf collection of books that might be just outside a branch library or located inside a shopping mall. Xiamen had 116 of these kiosks scattered around the city. We also saw self-service book sanitizers that used UV light to kill germs on the surface of books. I wondered about damage to the paper by the radiation, but assumed that these public library books were not destined to be part of an archival collection anyway. (I was also puzzled as to why these elaborate machines were in place when these same libraries offered no soap or paper towels at their bathroom sinks.) Several of the large municipal libraries we visited were conducting extensive video and audio projects to document the music, dance, and crafts of ethnic minorities in the province. With funding from Beijing, staff were using state-of-the-art equipment for these projects. An example of one such video is available here.

In addition to learning about libraries in the province, we were also taken on sightseeing trips, both in the cities and the countryside.

We enjoyed seeing the Fujian tulou, round earthen buildings of several stories, dating back centuries and still inhabited. They are a UNESCO World Heritage Site. On our way to see these rural structures, we drove through banana and tea plantations. The terrain is so different from Oregon, with lush tropical trees instead of our familiar Douglas fir and pine trees. In Quanzhou, our tour guide, Quanzhou Municipal Library Director Xu Zhaokai, took us on a walking tour of the neighborhood where he grew up, visiting Buddhist and Taoist temples and the oldest mosque in China, all within a few blocks of each other. In Xiamen, we visited Gulangyu Island, also known as Piano Island for the many families owning pianos there, a former colony of foreign business owners and diplomats whose European background resulted in distinctively non-Chinese architecture.

As if the library visits and the sightseeing wasn’t enough, we were treated almost nightly to banquets, often with local and provincial dignitaries. I was somewhat concerned whether my vegan diet could be accommodated, but our hosts went out of their way to ensure that I had plenty to eat. While the others dined on sea cucumber, squid, and various species of fish, I was stuffed with mushrooms and related fungi of seemingly endless variety. After the first week, I commented that I had been served dragon eyes (a fruit related to lichee), dragon beard (a leafy green) and dragon fruit, to which Chen Wenge responded that dragons were vegan! (On returning to the U.S., I learned that dragon fruit are native to the New World and are grown commercially in the Southwest. Funny how I had to travel so far to discover something so near.) I would be remiss if I did not also mention the tea ceremonies that we were treated to. I found them so interesting that I bought a tea set for myself. You can watch a Fujian tea ceremony here.

As with all of my travels abroad, it was difficult to have to say goodbye and return home. I learned so much about the libraries we visited that I am still processing the trip. I will be sharing what I learned at an upcoming seminar at my library and a presentation with my fellow delegates at the Oregon Library Association. I know that I am very committed to ensuring the continuation of the exchange program and will be an enthusiastic fundraiser for it. I am also attempting to start some ongoing collaborations with colleagues in Fujian, which should solidify the relationships established in 2016. My hope is that the Horner Exchange will continue for many more years so that it can be a source of inspiration, learning, and cooperation between our two countries.

“OSU Libraries Hosts Visitors from Fujian Province, China,” International Leads 17:3 (Sept. 2003)).