

2012-2013 ALA  
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2013 ALA Annual  
Conference

## **International Relations Committee Report to Council**

**July 1, 2013**

**Submitted by Nancy Bolt, Chair**

Members: Nancy Bolt, Sharon Bostick, Yolanda Cuesta, Allene Hayes, Esmeralda Kale, Tatiana Pashkova Balkenhol, Brad Schaffner, Carla A. Sothers, Fred Stielow, Jennifer Younger, Shali Zhang, Jamie Luedtke (intern), Cathy Zeljak (intern), Michael Dowling (staff liaison).

### **International Librarians and International Activities at Annual**

Almost 600 international members and colleagues from 80 countries traveled to Chicago to participate in this year's conference. The International Relations Round Table (IRRT) welcomed them with an orientation, and continues to provide assistance at the International Visitor's Lounge, and through the IRRT mentoring program.

The international librarians have been very active participants in the conference, bringing their knowledge and perspectives, while learning new ideas they can take back home.

More than 40 international colleagues have enlightened attendees on a wide variety of topics this year. Some of the many international-focused programs included "Ebooks in Europe," "Libraries Transform Lives in Brazil," "Public Libraries in China Today," "International Inter-Library Loan," and a preconference, "Innovative Library Services and Programs in Digital Era." In addition, 20 international poster sessions yesterday afternoon featured ideas and best practices from countries such as Germany, Peru, Nigeria, and Taiwan.

Later this afternoon there will be a session on "International Opportunities for Librarians," which has garnered a lot of advanced interest from U.S. attendees. Tonight's sold out International Reception will be held at the Harold Washington Library.

ALA's Annual Conference also attracts many international exhibitors. We would like to thank them for their attendance, and their contribution to enriching the experience for all attendees.

### **WIPO Treaty for Improved Access for People Who Are Blind, Visually Impaired, and with Other Print Disabilities**

At Midwinter Council passed a resolution supporting a World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) Treaty to assist the Library Copyright Alliance in its efforts to get the U.S. delegation to

WIPO to support a treaty that will achieve the goals of libraries. Despite early predictions of failure because of strong opposition from the motion picture association, supporters of the treaty prevailed and the treaty was passed. Carrie Russell, ALA's representative to WIPO, commented: "By passing what is an exception to copyright, WIPO demonstrated that there is international support for balance in copyright law. We applaud the world delegates for approving a treaty that makes it possible for every visually impaired person around the world to have fair access to reading materials."

### **ALA Representation at IFLA**

The International Relations Committee (IRC) was thrilled to learn that ALA member Donna Scheeder, from the Library of Congress, was elected the new President-elect of IFLA. Scheeder will serve as President-elect for two years and as President for two years. She will be the first IFLA President from the U.S. since Robert Wedgeworth finished his term in 1997. She will be only the third U.S. President in IFLA's 85-year history.

The IRC would also like to congratulate ALA Councilor Loida Garcia-Febo on her election to a two-year term on IFLA's Governing Board. She will join fellow ALA U.S. members Lynne Rudasill, Russell Lynch, and Clara Chu on the twenty-member board. The IRC is also pleased to report that 23 of 25 members nominated by ALA through various units were elected to four-year terms (2013-2017) to IFLA Section Committees.

### **IFLA Update**

IFLA President-elect Donna Scheeder presented a report from IFLA. The upcoming conference in Singapore is on target for registrations. The 2014 conference will be in Lyon, France, and the 2015 conference will be in Africa, in a city to be determined. IFLA will release a "Future Trends Report" at the Singapore conference.

### **Canada**

Following expressions of concern by Canadian members at Midwinter, the IRC worked with ALA President Maureen Sullivan to send a letter to James Moore, Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, supporting the Canadian Library Association's (CLA) request to have the Library and Archives of Canada's (LAC) revisit its *Code of Conduct* order. The order could be used to restrict LAC staff from teaching and speaking at conferences and other public engagements.

ALA President Sullivan received a response from Minister Moore that stated the *Code* does not preclude LAC staff from engaging in external activities/speaking engagements on their "personal time." At the same time that the letter was received, the head of the LAC resigned. When a new leader of LAC is appointed, ALA will seek further clarification on LAC's *Code*.

In response to the search for a new LAC director, Canadian library, information, and archive organizations prepared a job description listing the qualifications and experience they would like to see in a new LAC director.

### **ALA Leaders International Activities**

The IRC would like to acknowledge the continued participation of ALA leaders at international conferences, which help inform the world about U.S. libraries and ALA initiatives. ALA President Maureen Sullivan provided keynote presentations this spring at the Association of Mexican Librarians Meeting and at the Swedish Library Association national conference. ALA President-elect Barbara Stripling delivered a lecture at Laureate International Universities in Costa Rica.

### **U.S. National Commission of UNESCO**

At the 2013 ALA Midwinter Meeting the ALA Council passed a resolution initiated by the IRC in support of requesting Congress to approve a “national interest waiver” so the U.S. can again pay its dues and become a fully functioning member of UNESCO. The resolution was distributed to Congress. So far no response has been received.

The IRC would like to commend and thank ALA Past President Barbara Ford for her service as ALA’s representative on the Commission. The IRC reviewed nominations for a new representative at its first meeting of this conference.

### **American Library in Paris**

Winston Tabb, ALA’s representative to the American Library in Paris, reported at the revitalization of the library under the Director Charles Truehart. There is now substantial programming occurring regularly, and the library is heavily used. Tabb said the biggest current challenge is continued development of children’s programming and the need for an outstanding children’s librarian who would develop this for the library. Dr. Tabb is completing his term and at this conference the IRC reviewed nominations for a new representative. We thank Dr. Tabb for his service.

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

Nancy Quinn has served as a representative to U.S. Committee of the Blue Shield for four years. At this meeting the IRC reviewed nominations for a new representative. We thank Dr. Quinn for her service.

### **Participation in the ALA Advocacy Coordinating Group**

The IRC Chair continues to participate in ALA’s Coordinating Group’s monthly conference calls. Bolt brings international perspectives to the group’s advocacy agendas.

## **Creation of International Relations Coordinating Group**

Following the Advocacy Coordinating Group model, IRC has created an International Libraries Coordinating Council, which held its first conference call. Members of the group represent IRC regional subcommittee groups, IRRT, CALA, ALCTS, ACRL, and REFORMA. Other groups with an interest in international relations are encouraged to contact the International Relations Office to be added to the Coordinating Group.

## **International AL Direct**

*International AL Direct*, ALA's bi-monthly newsletter completed a successful first year this month. It now reaches over 10,000 librarians worldwide. *International AL Direct* features news about libraries and librarians around the world, ALA activities and products, conferences and institutes, continuing-education opportunities, awards and grants, international exchanges, how to get involved in ALA, and much more. ALA Council members are invited to subscribe. You can subscribe and read issues at <http://www.ala.org/offices/international-al-direct>.

## **Costa Rica Library Tour**

In collaboration with People to People, a library tour to Costa Rica is being offered this fall, November 30- December 7. ALA Past President Camila Alire will be the leader of the delegation for those interested in a professional travel experience. This is the first of three travel opportunities in the next three years. For more information on the tour, visit <http://www.ala.org/offices/people-people-library-tour-costa-rica>.

## **Study of International Study Programs in U.S. Library Schools**

The IRC Eurasia and Central Asia Subcommittee conducted a survey of international study programs at U.S. library schools. They have received 23 responses from the 50 library schools. The results will be presented in a paper.