



International Leads

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Hosting strengthens ties at home and abroad

By Kristin McDonough

In late 2001, in the wake of 9/11's devastating impact on New York City's economy, The New York Public Library imposed a temporary moratorium on travel to professional meetings. Having just stepped down as chair of the ACRL International Relations Committee, I was sorry to miss upcoming committee meetings at ALA conferences and sought to keep a finger on the pulse of global librarianship during the travel ban. A simple way to do so "in my own backyard" at the NYPL Science, Industry and Business Library (SIBL) is, I have discovered, to exploit opportunities to host international visitors.

Four years later, with dozens of study tours and exchanges under SIBL's belt, it's clear that this heightened receptivity to accommodating colleagues from abroad reaps rich mutual benefits. The most visible was the recognition accorded to SIBL's director as the 2003 recipient of the first John Jacob Astor award for "exceptional contribution to the transatlantic transfer of information" from the Checkpoint Charlie Foundation, whose mission is to foster cooperation between German and American institutions. But perhaps the most gratifying result has been the strengthening of ties between SIBL and colleagues from *local* libraries and government bodies, as well as commercial associates such as architects and database vendors, when we involve them in planning events for foreign guests.

Michael Dowling of the ALA International Relations office first set



SIBL Director Kristin McDonough (right); Alvin Roselin, district manager, New York, Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE); and Jennifer Keohane, business outreach librarian, Simsbury Public Library, address 400 participants on "Business Assisting Services in U.S. Public Libraries" at the Research Institute on the Economy, Industry and Trade symposium in Tokyo, Japan, in July 2003.

SIBL on this path by asking us to handle a key aspect of the Dutch Library Association's (DLA) New York study tour. Their able organizer herself had set up the rota of visits to academic and special libraries, but couldn't realize her dream of culminating the week-long study tour with a symposium that brought together Dutch and U.S. librarians as presenters and participants. Via email she and I quickly determined the symposium topic (the rising cost of serials), engaged speakers, solicited underwriting from

vendors, and created an e-invitation and other promotions, all in virtual exchanges. Then I took over site and refreshment selection, guest list generation, gift-bag preparation, etc. When she literally wept her gratitude at the closing reception, I was taken aback until I realized that making local arrangements, though hardly an onerous task, might seem an insurmountable challenge when tackled at a distance.

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Hosting

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Since this initial venture, SIBL librarians have dialoged with international colleagues in formal programs on a range of topics. Issues addressed include: digital reference services with Nordic Library Association members as a follow up to a session organized by Rutgers University's Center for International Faculty and Students; remote services to small business, where we demonstrated our smallbiz@nypl.org website in a videoconference with librarians at the American College in Thessaloniki, Greece, and, most recently, the library as an economic engine, at the second annual working seminar sponsored by NYPL and the International Library Information and Analytical Center (ILIAC).

Communication is never one-way. A discussion with a touring representative from any of the advanced libraries in Singapore always leaves us with new technological possibilities to explore, i.e. RFID options for collection security. Two other examples illustrate that we get as much as we give. A group of librarians paired with scientific researchers from the former Soviet Union expressed surprise to learn that SIBL does not routinely collect technical standards. Their observation is making us rethink this policy. And when another Russian team of librarians, this time from government offices, spent two days exploring our databases they reciprocated, once home, by forwarding us translated documents on noise abatement regulations for a SIBL researcher.

Pre-9/11, SIBL had, frankly, shied away from hosting individuals from abroad given the challenge of the NYC housing options. Currently we offer short-term exchange placements of up to three months for international visitors, including students attached to library programs, if they can arrange for, and fund, their own transportation and travel. (RMIT University in Melbourne, Australia, is one institution that has found this arrangement sufficiently appealing to one of its graduating students for four consecutive years.) These placements happily have led, as mentioned earlier, to close collaborations with local NYC entities as diverse of Goethe House, the

Financial Women's Association, the Weissman Center for International Business at Baruch College, and the Bar Association of the City of New York.

For example, two years ago we hosted a scholar in residence, Elena Bayalieva, through the International Research and Exchange Board (IREX) exchange program, to create the first trilingual (Russian-English-Chinese) dictionary of customs terminology. SIBL staff introduced her to trade specialists, customs officials, staff at the Port Authority, and commercial attaches. When SIBL hosted the Gateway Event launching the Commerce Department's World Trade Week in NYC this May, the spirit of Elena Bayalieva was very much alive as we met staff from the Chinese and Russian trade offices whose earlier consultations with her constituted their first exposure to SIBL's resources.

Serendipity has played a role in promoting SIBL as an attractive study tour site. For several years, we hosted the repeat visits of a young woman, Akiko Suyaga, who attended graduate school in the States and returned here from Japan as a fellow associated with a Tokyo-based think tank. With our blessing, Sugaya shadowed SIBL librarians as they engaged in their information, instruction, and outreach services. With entrée to interview a number of senior managers, she set up appointments to observe at other research centers and branches across the Library.

The result of her behind the scenes investigations at NYPL, a book entitled *Libraries making a future: A report from New York*, has proven a popular success in Japan, where policy makers are engaged in a concerted effort to transform libraries from traditional book repositories to more vibrant community centers harnessing technology for access to a range of information resources and services. Sugaya was instrumental in the Research Institute of Economy, Trade and Industry (RIETI) inviting me, as SIBL's director, to keynote its daylong symposium, "Business Assisting Services at U.S. Public Libraries," held in Tokyo in July 2003. Joining me at the podium were Alvin Roselin, the NYC chair of the SBA's Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE) and Jennifer O. Keohane, Business Outreach Librarian from the Simsbury Public Library. Since

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Message from the IRRT Chair

By Nancy Bolt

Currently, IRRT has almost 900 members, making us one of the largest of the round tables. If this growth continues, IRRT could have its own councilor on the ALA Council, giving a permanent voice to international issues. A membership recruitment program is getting underway.

Several important actions were taken at the Board meeting on Sunday, June 26.

The IRRT Executive Board voted to recognize subgroups that are focused on international relations of ALA recognized Student Chapters. We will be developing procedures to implement this new policy.

The Board voted that our quarterly publication, *International Leads*, would remain free on the IRRT website. The publication is considered a part of membership promotion.

The Board and committees discussed at length whether full contact information about all IRRT committee chairs and members should be available on the public website. The final decision was that the web site should contain:

- full information about the five elected officers
- full information about the Committee Chairs

- name and institutional affiliation of Committee members

Also at the Board meeting we heard that Carol Brey-Casiano is donating \$5000 from her Presidential fund to continue with Sister Libraries activities. They hope to use the funds to promote the Sister Library program. Chair Nancy Bolt suggested that part of the funds also be used for an evaluation of the program. How many libraries actually put their library's name into the database? How many connections are made? How long do they last? Do the libraries consider them successful? What kinds of activities are conducted?

At the conference, Jeannette Pierce conducted a very successful orientation session for current and next year's chairs on Saturday morning. Jeannette has completed her appointments of all committees for next year and they are ready to do their work.

IRRT had a successful pre-conference in Chicago. It was called *State of American Librarianship: Advocacy and Other Issues*. It was held at the University of Illinois, Chicago and was linked via a webcast to Brazil. Unfortunately, the web link was not successful and Brazil had to withdraw from the pre-conference. Those present in Chicago heard speakers on advocacy

and on critical issues in U.S. libraries today.

IRRT also continued providing conference services to international librarians:

- International Poster Session
- International Papers Session, *Shaping Our Future: Library Services for Youth*
- Visitor's center
- Orientation to ALA and the conference

More than 95 people attended a chair's program on *Becoming a Global Librarian: Making Connections and Developing Travel Plans*. Of special note are the winners of the two IRC awards that were presented at the Membership Meeting:

- Humphry/OCLC/Forest Press Award: Marianna Tax Choldin
- Bogle Pratt International Library Travel Fund: Irina Tarsis

The reception at the Chicago Public Library had over 650 attendees and was sold out. It was one of the hottest tickets at conference. The reception was supported by the following vendors:

- Blackwell's Book Services
- OCLC/Web Junction
- Elsevier Science
- VTLS Inc.
- ALA Conference Services

IRRT annual program turns out overflow crowd

By Lea Wells

"Becoming a Global Librarian: Making Connections and Developing Travel Plans," IRRT's 2005 annual program and business meeting, drew an overflow crowd at the Sheraton Chicago Hotel in Chicago.

Mara Saule, Chief Information Officer and Dean of University Libraries, University of Vermont, organized and moderated an informative and entertaining panel of speakers. Robin Kear, Nova Southeastern University; Mary Boone, U.S. Department of State; Jonathan Miller, University of

Pittsburg; and Claudia Morner, University of New Hampshire, provided inspiration, reassurance, ideas, and solid advice for librarians seeing an international experience.

Speakers urged audience members to take the plunge, go abroad, and be passionate voices for international perspectives at home. If travel isn't in your immediate future, you can still have an international experience by helping a librarian from abroad come to your library for work or cultural exchange.

A wealth of information for the internationally inclined is available

at Robin's website at <http://www.robinkear.com/global.html>. Mary called out attention to <http://www.cies.org>, which is a link to information about the Fulbright Commission's opportunities and other programs. Jonathan and Claudia provided slides as well as amazing word pictures of their experiences beyond the walls of their university libraries.

"Promote your visit abroad to your local press," Mara urged, "because it not only educates readers, it promotes your library and the library profession."

IRC presents awards to Choldin, Tarsis

Dr. Marianna Tax Choldin 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 is given to an individual for significant contribution to international librarianship.

Dr. Marianna Tax Choldin received this award for her significant contributions in librarianship and community service worldwide. Dr. Choldin is the director emerita of the Mortenson Center for International Library Programs at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and the Center's first director. Her accomplishments include making the program one of its kind, furthering international exchanges of library material, extending the involvement of the University of Illinois and its library in international programs, and promoting research and teaching.

Dr. Choldin is an internationally renowned scholar, librarian and advocate for intellectual freedom. She is known for her commitment to improving library services, sharing knowledge, and opening the doors of intellectual and human exchanges.

In 2002, the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign recognized Dr. Choldin for her work in international librarianship by awarding her the Distinguished Faculty Award for



Nancy John, left, associate professor emerita at the University of Illinois, and Joan S. Mitchell, right, DDC editor-in-chief, present Dr. Marianna Tax Choldin with the John Ames/Humphry/OCLC/Forest Press Award.

International Achievement.

In its recommendation, the 2005 jury noted that "Dr. Marianna Tax Choldin has touched the lives of many librarians all over the world most notably through her work at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign's Mortenson Center, as its first director, through her work with the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) on its Freedom of Access to

Information and Free Expression (FAIFE) activities, and through her work with the Open Society Institute. Her numerous contributions to libraries around the world, but especially in Central Europe and Central America, reflect the same dedication and commitment to international librarianship that John Humphry displayed in his career."

Dr. Choldin was recognized during the ALA Annual Conference in Chicago, Illinois.

CHICAGO - Irina Tarsis is this year's recipient of the American Library Association (ALA) International Relations Committee's 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 Irina Tarsis to attend her first international conference in Berlin, Germany.

The award is in recognition of Sarah Comly Norris Bogle, a prominent U.S. librarian who made notable contributions in international library service.

Irina Tarsis is a curatorial assistant for the Houghton Library at Harvard University. Tarsis works in the department of Printing and Graphic Arts. Her research focuses on the acquisition of Russian publications by leading U.S. institutions.



Irina Tarsis

"This year we had a number of very good applications, but the leading candidate which the

Committee unanimously chose was the application by Ms. Irina Tarsis," said Priscilla Yu, chair of the IRRT-Bogle Pratt Award. "Ms. Tarsis is an up-and-coming scholar of Russian antiquarian book dealers and her research centers on the acquisition of Russian publications by prominent and leading libraries in the U.S., such as the Library of Congress and Harvard Library."

Tarsis attended the VII World Congress of International Council for Central and East European Studies (ICCEES) in Berlin, where she presented the paper, "Russian Antiquarian Booksellers and Harvard Acquisitions."

U.S. students attend symposium in Budapest

By Terry Weech

Every year since 1993, library and information studies students from two European universities organize a conference on current issues in library and information science. The name of the conference, BOBCATSSS, is an acronym for the cities in which the universities which originally established the annual conference are located. Teams of students plan and implement both the content and the management of these conferences as a part of their studies. The pattern over the years has been to pair one school from central and eastern Europe with a school from western Europe. All participants profit from the cross-border team work with other European cultures.

The Graduate School of Library and Information Science at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign has been supporting student participation in this unique library and information science event for the past four years. Terry Weech, who teaches at the school, has worked with the students and often co-authored papers that the students present at the conference. He is also one of the American Library Association's elected representatives to IFLA's Education and Training Section and currently serves as chair of that section.

In January of 2005, Terry traveled to Budapest, Hungary, with four graduate students from the school to attend the BOBCATSSS conference. The theme of BOBCATSSS for 2005 was Librarianship in the Information Age. At the conference, Jaclyn Bedoya and David Kunz presented their paper, "Teaching Librarians to Assist International Students: Part I, Identifying the Problem," while Leah Dodd and LeAnn Suchy presented the follow-up, "Part II: Services, Programs and Instructions." Part I addressed the problems involved in training international students to use a library, due mostly to the language barrier and differences in culture. Part II dealt with how to overcome these problems by, for instance, offering library instruction online in different languages and communicating with international student organizations on campus so as to better integrate different cultures into library training classes. Their papers are published in the proceedings of the symposium.



University of Illinois students attend the BOBCATSSS conference in Budapest, Hungary. Pictured, from left to right, are Leah Dodd, Jaclyn Bedoya, LeAnn Suchy, David Kunz, and Terry Weech.

BOBCATSSS gave these students the opportunity not only to share their research with others, but also to discover what kind of research in library and information science is being conducted throughout the world. It introduced the students to library programs they might never come across here in the States. LeAnn Suchy explains, "It was wonderful to speak to students and librarians from so many different countries, and to hear about their library experiences."

BOBCATSSS 2006 will be held in Tallinn, Estonia, from January 30 to February 1, 2006. The theme for 2006 is "Information, Innovation, Responsibility: The Information Professional in the Network Society." More information can be found at <http://www.bobcatsss.nu/> For photos of recent BOBCATSSS conferences, see <http://leap.lis.uiuc.edu/spring05/lis590IL/BOBCATSSphotos.htm>

International Visitors Center welcomes the world

By Elizabeth Cooper

Thank you to everyone who helped to make the International Visitors Center (IVC) a success at the ALA Annual Conference in Chicago! For those of you not familiar with the IVC, it provides a friendly place for international visitors attending the annual conference to stop and ask questions about the conference or host city, access Internet/email, and meet with friends and relax. This year, the IVC was lucky to have a visible

and comfortable space that was inviting to visitors. According to our statistics, over 530 people visited the Lounge during the three days it was open — we were busy!

Special thanks to the 39 people who staffed the IVC, as well as the 70+ people who offered to volunteer at the IVC and weren't able to serve because of schedule conflicts. We were lucky to have so many people offer their time. Having a large pool

of volunteers gave us the flexibility to set a schedule that kept the IVC double-staffed from 9-5, Saturday - Monday, of the conference. Special thanks also go to Delin Guerra of the International Relations Office who helped get the IVC organized. We couldn't have done it without her!

Thanks again to everyone who contributed to the IVC and helped to make ALA's international guests feel welcome!

Singapore National Library embraces change

By Deborah Abraham

On a recent trip to Singapore, I set out to take a look at the city's libraries. The Singapore National Library appeared on my map only a few blocks from our hotel. So, I set off in my usual forge-ahead style in search of a large red brick, Victorian building. The area was interesting but I soon ran into a huge construction site for "SMU"—Singapore Management University. A little bewildered and already wilting from the Singapore heat, I retreated to the closest air-conditioned building. It turned out to be a renovated Victorian, the Stamford Building, where I found an Internet Café and Restaurant called the Moon River Café.

The mystery of the National Library was resolved during a bus tour. (I usually shun packaged tours, but the heat and humidity convinced me to take it easy.) For a Bostonian, it was surprising to see Duck Tours half way around the world. On second thought, it makes perfect sense. Singapore, like Boston, where the World War II era amphibious vehicles were first used to take visitors on land and water tours, is a compact city with a harbor and waterways. Along the way, our guide pointed out the newly constructed, but not yet opened, National Library. She explained that the old building had been demolished and the site used for the expansion of SMU.

The new building on Victoria Street was also close by, most comfortably walked in the early morning. The modern, 16-story library was designed by Malaysian architect Ken Yeang. It is shaped like the letter K to symbolize Singapore's aspiration to be the knowledge center of Asia. It was so early that I could stand in the street to get most of the building into my camera's frame and take a peek at the spanking new lobby. I don't know if this is the only library with an observatory on top, but it certainly is a striking feature. To learn more about this impressive library building, I decided to visit a branch and do some research. I learned that the new building has a floor area of over 58,000 square meters and it houses 634,000 items in the research library and 134,000 items in the lending library. RFID



The entrance to the Singapore National Library stands ready to welcome visitors. The library has undergone renovations consistent with a new approach to attracting patrons.

technology is used; circulation is accomplished through self check-out stations, and library business such as paying fees and fines is done at electronic kiosks.

The Esplanade Branch of the SNL is in the area of the city where new venues have been developed for theatre, music and dance and to take advantage of beautiful harbor views. The Esplanade Branch specializes in Fine Arts and reflects this in its sleek contemporary design. I wandered around, checking out the collection, the OPACs, and the self-charging stations. I also chatted with the staff and took along some brochures and publicity for the new library.

The business literature says that Singapore is in the process of reinventing itself. Faced with competition from other Asian business centers, such as China's Shenzhen Special Economic Zone, Singapore is pursuing a strategy to become a global city. Judging from the amount of construction going on around the city, this has gone far beyond rhetoric. Singapore's Libraries faced a different challenge: declining interest and use. Their efforts to turn the library system around through a combination of

pushing the technology edge and marketing the library to a young demographic, making the library "the place to be," has been very successful, making it the subject of a Harvard Business School case and articles in *Library Journal* and other periodicals.

The new National Library is a research library that incorporates the new concept. It includes not only the Lee Kong Chian Research Library, but also the central lending library, a drama center, display space, cafes, gardens and even an observatory pod. Obviously, this is a research organization that seeks a meaningful relationship with more than an elite scholarly community. Lee Kong Chian was the founder of the Lee Foundation, which donated US\$60 million to Singapore's library. While its purposes are serious, the Singapore Library has shed its stodgy image and imbued its new library with accessibility, energy, and style.

Back home, I popped the "Quest for Knowledge" disc in my computer. This clever marketing device is part digital tour of the new library and part game. Appropriate for an organization

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U.S.-China conference explores knowledge management

By Beverly P. Lynch

The third U.S.-China Library Conference was held in Shanghai March 22-25, 2005. It follows the first conference, held in Beijing in 1996 as a pre-conference to the 62nd IFLA Conference, and the second conference, held in New York in 2001 just before the IFLA conference in Boston. Fifty-six delegates from China and 26 from the United States participated.

The theme of the third conference, proposed by the China Organizing Committee and agreed to by the U.S. members, was Knowledge Management and Services in the Digital Age.

Two major papers were presented at the opening plenary session. Dr. Deanna Marcum, Associate Librarian for Library Services, Library of Congress, and Dr. Zhan Furi, the director of the National Library of China, discussed how these national libraries are engaged in major transformations as their collections are digitized. Marcum described the collaboration the Library of Congress has with many partners, including other national libraries such as the National Library of China, and with commercial firms. She emphasized that the library "...cannot do digitization on [its] own." She indicated that the Library of Congress is integrating two tracks: the print and the digital, and that it will continue to have collections in both formats. Zhan said that service is now a major thrust in the National Library of China. He noted that the library has added a new core value, that of value added to clients.

The two speakers emphasized that their national libraries have broken out of the physical boundary of place and that the growing emphasis on digital will lead to new concepts of service. Three major issues facing both libraries were

reported: 1) staff - very difficult to change; 2) technology - insufficient equipment for networks and storage; 3) money - insufficient funds to carry out the needed transformation.

There were many excellent case studies of digitization projects and full discussions of plans and implementations in various libraries: China's National Digital Library Project, a significant development for China, was considered; the Information Commons at the Texas Christian University was described in a paper by Robert Seal; the influential project at the University of Washington was presented by Lizabeth Wilson in her paper, "Building the Any Time Any Place Library." Papers considering the use of strategic planning by the Chinese Academy of Sciences and the development of Beijing Historical Database were very informative.

Profiled in the many presentations on digital projects were selected criteria to be used for digital projects: choose unique materials; choose materials with a special focus and a sizeable amount; foresee importance in sharing with others; follow collection development policies; digitize materials offering academic value; pay more attention to "born digital" material; metadata is critical, and recognize that more money will be needed than originally planned.

Finally, James Cheng, Harvard, proposed a number of very major collaborative projects that would benefit scholarship, knowledge, and understanding. The attendees of the conference expressed hope that mechanisms would be found to address his proposals, identify priorities, and begin implementation.

The full set of papers presented at the conference is on the conference website maintained by the National Library of China: <http://www.nlc.gov.cn/culc/cn/index.htm>.

Hundreds attend IRRT reception

By Deborah Mazzolini

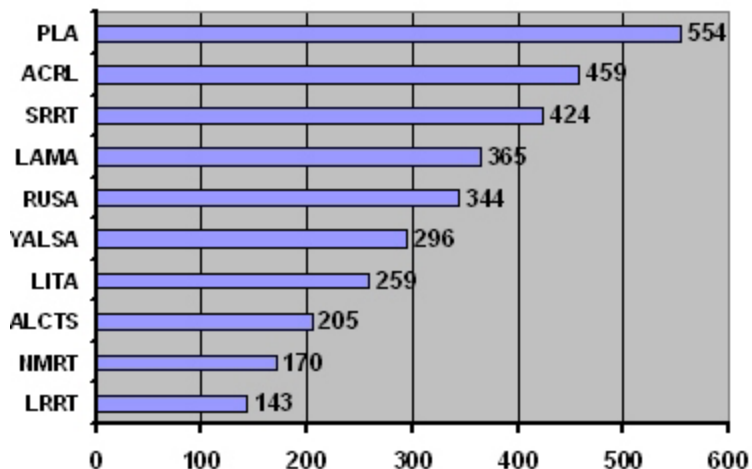
More than 60 countries were represented and more than 650 tickets were sold for this year's International Relations Round Table Reception held at the Chicago Public Library's Harold Washington Library Center.

Open to all conference attendees and free to international visitors, this reception always offers a unique opportunity to network with hundreds of information professionals from around the world.

Blackwell's Book Services, OCLC/WebJunction, ALA Conference Services, Elsevier Science, and VTLS Inc. were this year's sponsors. Many thanks to them for their support in making this event possible.

IRRT Fast Facts

IRRT Members' Top Ten Affiliations with Other ALA Units



Compiled by Sha Li Zhang, IRRT Membership Chair

Hosting

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the book's publication and the RIETI symposium, no fewer than 10 study groups from Japan have visited SIBL from a number of different cities and prefectures. While some of these teams approach NYPL directly, others work through non-governmental agencies such as Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) and the Japan Local Government Center, putting SIBL

on the radar screens of these New York-based offices.

Currently, we are planning a one-day seminar for the U.S. State Department, whose program is bringing 25 young business and economic leaders from the Near East, North Africa, and Asia to the States to learn first-hand how governments can assist in economic development and the launch of new businesses. SIBL is responsible for only a third of the program to highlight its resources and services for entrepreneurs and has

invited the NYC Department of Small Business Services, the SBA's Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE), and several other business support groups to highlight their work for the State Department. The seminar will wrap up with demonstrations from three commercial database producers, who welcome this heightened exposure to potential new markets. At the end of the day SIBL, our presentation partners, and international guests are all well served by an effective global reach effort that's travel-free for me!

Singapore

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trying to attract the attention of a new generation, "Quest" introduces potential customers to the new building in an engaging way, even before the building is open. Not an accomplished gamer, I was slow to get the hang of it, but "Quest" made me feel as if I had actually made the opening.

At the opening, Ms. Lim Soo Hoon, Chairperson of the National Library Board, spoke to a large and enthusiastic crowd. She said, "The new National Library is a library designed to drive Singaporeans forward in a knowledge-based world. It is a library for today's generation of users. It is a place to embark on a journey filled with knowledge, imagination and possibility—knowledge to fuel the

imagination, spark off innovation and create limitless possibility." After the formal ceremony, everyone enjoyed exploring the new facility and indulging in free ice cream. Still, browsing the official sites and press coverage failed to put me at the scene. Fortunately, the Rambling Librarian, Ivan Chew, came to my rescue. Chew is a staff member of the National Library Board and serves on IFLA's Standing Committee for Libraries for Children and Young Adults. Take a look at his blog entry (<http://ramblinglibrarian.blogspot.com>) for July 22, 2005, for great pictures and commentary.

If you remember the old Stamford Building, I was able to use the internet to check my email and look up Bookcrossing.com to see if there were any nearby locations to "drop" a book off into the wild and perhaps find one

to read. Wouldn't you know, Moon River Café was Bookcrossing friendly—but that's another travel story.

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