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Community, Information Behavior, and Literacy at Neutinamu Library, South Korea: An MLIS Student Experience

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In the summer of 2017, while obtaining my master's degree in library and information science at the University of Washington iSchool online, I participated in a one-month study abroad exploratory seminar in Seoul, South Korea. The scope of the seminar focused on information seeking and sharing behavior in digital story-telling, social media, and photo sharing in modern Korean culture and society. We visited tech giants and start-up companies like Google Korea, KakaoTalk, Smartium, in addition to a visit to the National Assembly Library of Korea.

During the last week of the trip, I had time to reflect on the development and influence of information behavior in a digital context in Korea. Naturally, as an MLIS student, I was curious as to how the role of Korean libraries intersect with information seeking and sharing behavior



Nicole Almanza (far right, top row) leads a reading group session.

Inside this Issue

From the Chair	5
From the Chair Elect	6
From the IRRT Councilor	7
Swedish School Librarians	9
Dr. Hwa-Wei Lee Honored in Thailand	11
Conference Report: 6th North America—China Library Conference	12
IRRT Webinar: Library Map of the World	13
International Librarian Interview	14

in one of the most rapidly advancing technology hubs in the world. I then inquired about what steps it would take to intern in Korean Libraries to help answer this question. With the gracious support and guidance from my peers, UW iSchool faculty, and study abroad facilitators, I was granted a unique 6-month directed-fieldwork internship in Korea as the first American intern at Neutinamu Library as well as a UW iSchool scholarship to help finance the trip.

On 1 January 2018, I began a 6-month internship at Neutinamu Library, a non-profit public library in Yongin, Gyeonggi province, an hour south of Seoul. The first three months were spent as directed-fieldwork for academic credit towards my MLIS from the University of Washington iSchool and the last three months were as a volunteer.

Directed-Fieldwork: The online course required a set of concrete learning outcomes, a blog demonstrating my

Continued on page 2

engagement, a mid-term progress report, and a reflection paper. The course was a 3-credit course with a 150-hour commitment at the host's institution. I interned twice a week in addition to field trips and attended one library conference.

My internship outcomes included:

- Facilitate book reading club programs in English that focus on international social justice topics
- Improve skills and knowledge of acquisitions, cataloging and classification using the host's unique library cataloging processes
- Learn the process of "news scrapping" collection
- Librarian and staff interviews

Volunteering: For the last three months of the internship I volunteered once a week. I started a second book club, attended a few library employee training sessions, and continued participation in the dual-language children's reading program.

Community

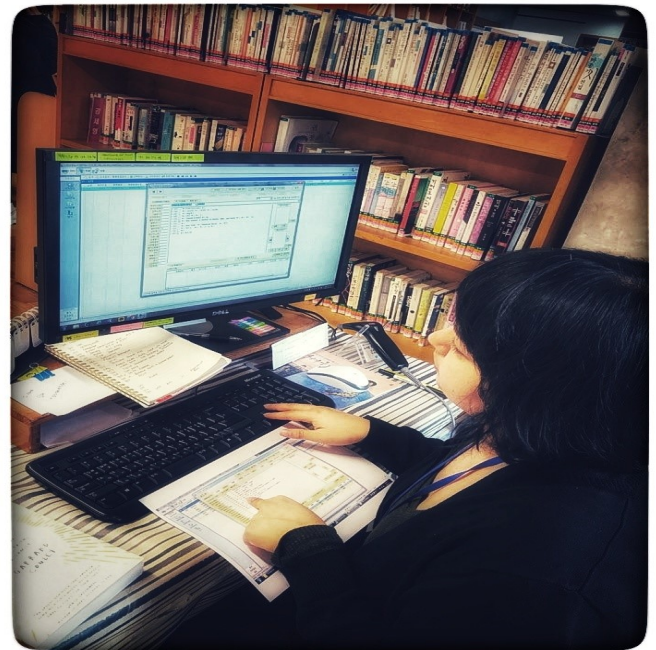
Librarian and Patron Interviews - At Neutinamu, it is very important for the librarians and volunteer staff to engage in conversation with each other and patrons. As part of my learning outcomes, I interviewed the staff and patrons with the help of a volunteer translator. My most memorable interview was with the members of the Sewing Book Club. While they sewed, we asked each other questions, about our perspectives on life, and what Neutinamu Library means to us. One of the members read to me her favorite Korean children's picture book about bereavement while the others sewed ornaments for me with my name on it in Korean. It was truly a heart-warming bonding experience as we talked, laughed, cried, and laughed some more.



The Citizens Collection at Neutinamu Library.

Information Behavior

Common Book Memo - Among the many book processing procedures like labeling and property stamping, I learned that every book must also contain a pocket sleeve with a piece of blank memo paper. The blank memo invites readers to share information with other readers by adding a comment, suggesting a keyword, and anything else they would like to share with future readers of the book. Most of the keywords are then plugged into the MARC record to improve catalog search retrieval results with words commonly used by the community. I was fascinated by the critical service model of incorporating the user's voice in the MARC tags and found myself looking at many common book memos on my free time to better understand the sharing of information.



Learning how to use Korean MARC for cataloging.

Citizens Collection

The heart of Neutinamu's collection is the 'Citizens Collection,' a series of topics that are commonly requested by patrons that reflect the daily lives of the community, i.e. gentrification, LGBTQ, women's rights, and education. I had an opportunity to contribute to collection development by adding English titles as well as learn how to catalog using the Korean MARC (KOMARC21) and the Korean Decimal Classification System..

Continued on page 3

Literacy

Book Club - Book clubs play an integral role at Neutina-mu because they bring people together to read, discuss, and learn from one another. I had the opportunity to design, plan, and facilitate two English language book clubs on social justice and the human condition. For the first book club, we read *Boy Erased: A Memoir* by Garrard Conley and I met an American expat from Ohio. For the second book club, we read *The Life Project: The Extraordinary Stories of Our Ordinary Lives* by Helen Pearson. The best part about participating in the book clubs was the cultural and linguistic exchange of wholesome discussion, the sharing of stories and experiences, and how such topics affect our daily lives.

Early Childhood Literacy



Nicole Almanza co-reads *The Queen of the Frogs* with a Korean colleague.

Children's Storytime and Dual-Language Reading - Every Friday I co-read two children's books in English while my partner read the Korean translated version. The children really enjoyed reading along to Davide Cali's *The Queen of the Frogs*, and learning different onomatopoeias and animals sounds in both English and Korean. I had never read to children in a library setting until my internship at Neutina-mu. I would get very nervous beforehand, but I was calmed by the gratitude from the children. One child had a habit of thanking us by sharing candy.

My directed-field internship at Neutina-mu Library exceeded my expectations and challenged me physically, mentally, emotionally, and culturally. It was an invaluable experience as I learned about the role of Neutina-mu Library in modern Korean society. Not only did I get hands-on library training in Korean librarianship while still in library school, I also gained an international perspective and cross-cultural competency both personally and professionally. The experience truly confirmed my passion as a future librarian to advocate for global partnerships, initiatives, and perspectives in libraries. I highly encourage anyone to take advantage of internships abroad! To read more about my directed-fieldwork in Korea, you can find it on my [blog](#).

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*Are you a library science student with an international experience?
We want to share it! Consider sending us a report.*

Photos are always welcome!

Call for Submissions

Do you have news or stories about ...

- ◇ **International library activities?**
- ◇ **People in international librarianship?**
- ◇ **Upcoming international conferences?**

Why not submit to International Leads?

Email us at ala.intl.leads@gmail.com

Connect with IRRT

Email: ala.intl.leads@gmail.com

Web: <http://www.ala.org/rt/irrt>

Blog: <http://www.alairrt.blogspot.com>

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Message from the Editors

Welcome to the first issue of 2019!

International experiences as library students are a wonderful way to gain exposure of how libraries work around the world, meet future colleagues, and make friends. In our lead article, a recent MLIS graduate shares her experience of studying abroad in South Korea.

Did you know IRRT is directly represented to ALA's governing body, the ALA Council? Indeed we are! We are starting with this issue to include a column from Sandy Hirsh, our representative to ALA Council. She explains her role and recent activities of the Council. In other business news, our Chair and Chair Elect share their thoughts from Midwinter. Elections of new executive board members are open now—don't forget to vote!

Our members often receive high recognition and honors for their work; we are happy to share the news that Dr. Hwa-Wei Lee received a Medal of Appreciation in Thailand for his hard work with Thai libraries.

We are always seeking profiles of libraries, partnerships, and librarians to share and inspire—we look forward to receiving one from you!

Meet the Editors

Rebecca Miller

Rebecca is an independent library consultant, focusing on libraries in developing countries. She specializes in research, strategic planning, outreach, administration/management for libraries. She offers tailored professional development trainings and presentations on these and other topics. Rebecca has over 20 years of experience with libraries, as a practitioner and professor.



Florence Mugambi

Florence is the African Studies Librarian at the Herskovits Library of African Studies, Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois, USA. She has over 10 years of experience as a librarian, and has a strong interest in literacy & establishment of libraries in rural communities of developing countries. She serves as the chair of the Africa Subcommittee, International Relations Committee.



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Message from the IRRT Chair



By Muzhgan Nazarova
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My reflections on chairing the IRRT

It has been almost eight months since I started serving as IRRT chair. I have to admit that it has been quite a unique and exciting experience.

As I have mentioned before, I have been a member of IRRT for 23 years now and served on a number of committees as chair and member. I had opportunities to assist with coordination of a number of IRC/IRRT international partnership programs in South Caucasus. However, chairing IRRT has been a completely different experience offering both a leadership and management opportunity. IRRT comprises 10 committees and each committee, in addition to 2 co-chairs has between 7 and 12 members, with a member of the executive board acting as liaison to a committee.

With my theme for this year being “Serving communities locally and globally,” I have made efforts to reach out to IRRT members on a local and global scale. During committee appointments, I recruited two new co-chairs from Singapore (Felicia Chan for Publications Committee, Katherine Lee for Membership Committee), one new co-chair from Norway (Jamie Johnston, an American living and working in Oslo), a native of China as co-chair for the International Connections Committee (Yan Lee), and the co-chair for the International Visitors’ Center is from Canada (Camille Callison). Among our new and old committee members are natives of Kurdistan, Egypt, China, and Kazakhstan to name but a few.

The IRRT has a variety of interesting programs planned for the Annual Conference in DC including, second year in a row working with the Emerging Leaders.

IRRT by the numbers: (December 2018)

We have 1,627 members with 1,443 personal members, (2.77% of ALA membership of 51,940) and 184 organizational members (almost 3.6% of total ALA organizational members of 5,119).

Interesting facts: 742 (51.4%) of our personal members are from outside the U.S., as are 163 (88.5%) of our organizational members.

IRRT is the third biggest round table after Social Responsibility Round Table (SRRT) with 1,868 members and Library Instruction Round Table (LIRT) with 1,765 members.

ALA Midwinter (Seattle) Updates

All Round Tables Committees (RTCA) meeting

ALA has 20 round tables and every round table with at least 1% of ALA’s total membership (57,959 as of December 2018) are represented by a designated councilor. IRRT’s councilor is Sandy Hirsh, Professor and Director, School of Information, San Jose State University. Those round tables that do not meet this quota are represented by one Small Round Table Councilor.

Members of the Conference Committee presented on the future of Midwinter Meeting. More concentration will be made on professional development and networking events that would focus on smaller second tier cities. Symposium of the Future of Libraries would work with all units to curate content.

ALA’s Membership Development Department and ALA’s Membership Development Office presented “[I Am ALA](#)” Video Series and Gallery (www.ala.org/membership/welcome-i-am-ala). I encourage IRRT members to add their stories to the video series and gallery.

Working lunch with the IRRT’s 2019 Emerging Leaders team

The team will be working on *International Peer-Mentoring: A Pilot Project* with the major goals to facilitate international exchange and partnership between library professionals in different countries, build global networks, and support knowledge and information exchange. The project will have a presence on the IRRT website where relevant information will be shared.

Brenda Hahn, a member of the Orientation and mentoring Committee, will serve as leader of the project on IRRT site. I and Yan Liu (Grace)- a co-chair of the International Connections committee will serve as project advisors.



Muzhgan with the 2019 Emerging Leaders team for IRRT.

Message from the IRRT Chair Elect



By Richard Sapon-White
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The IRRT Executive Board had a busy agenda at ALA Midwinter in Seattle. I would like to make you, our membership, aware of some important developments.

The IRRT Endowment Committee was established as an *ad hoc* committee about a decade ago to create an

endowment fund for the round table. With perseverance, the committee succeeded admirably. In 2018, IRRT disbursed funds for the first IRRT Mission Enhancement Grant, awarded to a project to supply ChromeBooks to a community library in Ethiopia. Annual grants like this one will enable IRRT to fund international initiatives in the years ahead. Fundraising to build our funding capacity is an ongoing task, as is the management of the process to select projects worthy of funding. For this reason, the Executive Board decided to make the Endowment Committee permanent. Appointments to the Endowment Committee will now be made according to the same procedures as all other IRRT Committees. This spring, I will be appointing new committee members to join some of the current members in order to provide continuity. You can find the call for volunteers to serve on IRRT committees elsewhere in this issue.

IRRT provides many services for visiting international librarians at ALA Annual, such as an orientation to the conference on Friday afternoon, a reception on Monday evening and, throughout the conference, an international visitors center. While international attendees typically number in the hundreds at Annual Meetings, Midwinter often attracts only about 150. With significantly fewer international visitors at ALA Midwinter, only one activity, a welcoming reception, is usually planned for Friday afternoon of Midwinter. At Midwinter in Seattle, IRRT provided a small reception with snack foods and beverages in the conference hall. Attendance was low and the board brainstormed how to improve attendance while keeping costs down. Skipping offering food (which is the major cost of the gathering) but having some sort of welcoming meeting is one idea that was floated. Another is to have visitors sign up to go to dinner with IRRT members. The board did not decide on an exact plan for the future, but will discuss further next fall to plan for ALA Midwinter in Philadelphia in 2020.

The Executive Board decided earlier this year to establish an ad hoc IRRT Webinar Committee to continue the series of webinars that Past Chair Loida Garcia-Febo initiated in 2017-2018. The ad hoc committee consists of Mark Mattson, chair, and members Gina De Alwis and Nicole Almanza. The plan is to have two webinars this year, then evaluate to see if the committee should be made permanent. Keep your eyes peeled for emails announcing these upcoming events.

Volunteer for IRRT Committees!

You've made a commitment to a global perspective for your library career by joining IRRT. Now help move IRRT into the future by volunteering to serve on an IRRT committee. With 13 committees to choose from, IRRT provides you with the opportunity to contribute your expertise and talent in numerous ways.

I will be filling dozens of committee vacancies this spring. To be eligible for appointment, you must be an ALA and IRRT member; attend both ALA Midwinter and Annual Conferences for the duration of your appointment; and actively participate in the projects and programs, which may include monthly virtual meetings.

Applications submitted by April 15 will get first consideration.

For more information about the 13 committees, please visit <http://www.ala.org/rt/irrt/irrtcommittees/committees>.

To apply to serve on a committee, please complete the form at <http://www.ala.org/CFApps/volunteer/form1.cfm>.

Thank you for your interest and commitment to helping ALA have a global impact!



IRRT Councilor Update

By *Sandy Hirsch*
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Have you ever wondered what happens at ALA Council meetings and what your IRRT Councilor does to represent IRRT at these meetings? I am serving my second 3-year term as IRRT's Councilor. This new column reports on some of the major topics addressed at ALA Council meetings at the 2019 ALA Midwinter meeting in Seattle, and how your IRRT Councilor represents IRRT interests.

Many of the issues that are addressed by ALA Council do not have a direct connection to IRRT's international focus. However, as a Council member, I participate actively in all of the matters that come before Council.

Here are a few highlights from the 2019 ALA Midwinter Council meetings.

ALA is engaging in a number of "streams of change" to modernize, streamline, and improve the way it works. Leaders of these efforts presented to Council.

- ⇒ The ALA Conference Committee, chaired by Clara Bohrer, has been investigating ways that ALA might change ALA's midwinter meetings ([CD#39](#)). Three options were considered: eliminate midwinter; tweak midwinter; or eliminate and replace midwinter with something new. The committee is exploring further the third option: to reformulate midwinter. In particular, it is looking to move midwinter away from focusing on business and instead focusing on professional development, curated content, and awards/media celebrations. Midwinter meeting changes would be implemented in 2021 Indianapolis.
- ⇒ Council also heard from Lessa Kanani'opua Pelayo-Lozada, chair of the ALA Steering Committee on Organizational Effectiveness (SCOE). SCOE is working to align ALA's organizational structure, policies and rules with the association's values, key action areas and strategic directions. After hearing an update on what work has been completed so far, Council engaged in a discussion about how ALA could be remodeled, particularly focusing on what a remodeled Executive Board and a remodeled Council could look like.
- ⇒ ALA Treasurer, Susan H. Hildreth, shared that the ALA headquarters real estate may be sold and the headquarters may be moved to a different site in downtown Chicago. Most of the proceeds from the sale of the headquarters would be used to create an

What does the IRRT Councilor do?

- Participate as an active member of the IRRT Executive Committee
- Solicit input from IRRT Executive Committee on key votes that will take place during ALA Council meetings
- Attend ALA Council meetings
- Share daily updates with the IRRT Executive Committee about what happened during each ALA Council meeting

Our Councilor is our direct voice to ALA Council

endowment to generate additional operating monies for the ALA.

- ⇒ ALA Past President Courtney Young is chairing the ALA Executive Director Search Committee. She discussed the next steps in the search ([CD#34](#)). An election was held to fill the ALA Council slots on the search committee; Susan Jennings and Peter Hepburn were elected.

Several important resolutions were approved by ALA Council including:

- ◇ Changing the language used in ALA Policy B.8.10 "Addressing Poverty, Economic Inequality, and the Responsibilities of Libraries" so that the language is more inclusive ([CD#14](#)); for example, one of the big changes was changing language from "poor people" to "people experiencing poverty."
- ◇ Adopting sustainability as a core value of librarianship ([CD#37](#)).
- ◇ Changing the Lemony Snicket Prize for Noble Librarians Faced with Adversity to the Penguin Random House Library Award for Innovation through Adversity ([CD#31](#)); the award recognizes U.S. libraries and staff who overcome adversity and create lasting innovative community service programs that successfully inspire and connect with new readers.
- ◇ Eliminating Monetary Library Fines as a Form of Social Justice ([CD#38](#)).
- ◇ Adopting "In support of Civil Rights Protections for People of Diverse Gender Identities" ([CD#41](#)).
- ◇ Adopting "Copyright: An interpretation of the code of ethics" ([CD#24.1](#)).

Continued on page 8

- ◇ Adopting revisions to three Library Bill of Rights interpretations and one article that were presented by the chair of the Intellectual Freedom Committee, Julia M. Warga.
- ◆ Library Bill of Rights, Article VII ([CD#19.1](#))
- ◆ Meeting Rooms: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights ([CD#19.2](#))
- ◆ Prisoners' Right to Read: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights ([CD#19.3](#))
- ◆ Challenged Resources: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights ([CD#19.4](#))

We heard many committee reports, including one from past-IRRT chair Robin Kear who is now the chair of the [International Relations Committee](#). She reported that 162 international librarians from 24 countries attended ALA Midwinter.

At the start of the third ALA Council meeting, ALA Council held a very long discussion about a Code of

Conduct complaint regarding an incident that occurred at a Council Forum meeting. Council Forum typically meets three times during the annual and midwinter meetings and is intended to allow councilors an opportunity to get feedback and discuss issues before introducing them more formally at a ALA Council meeting. Voting only occurs at ALA Council meetings. The incident is being investigated. ALA Executive Board released a [statement about this incident](#).

You can read more about what happened at ALA Midwinter (including the actions that Council took place) here: <https://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/2019/02/05/2019-midwinter-wrap-up/>.

I enjoy serving as your IRRT Councilor. If you have any questions, please reach out to me through the IRRT Executive Committee.

Volunteers Needed for the International Visitors Center

Do you like meeting new people from all over the world?

Do you speak multiple languages?

Do you have some time to give during Annual?

The IRRT [International Visitors Center](#) Committee has a great opportunity for you!

We're looking for volunteers to help staff the center during ALA Annual, as well as help with new initiatives this year.

The International Visitors Center provides a place for conference attendees from outside the U.S. to rest, use computers, and get information about conference events. Volunteers are needed to greet visitors, offer assistance, and keep the center running smoothly.

The committee this year is also planning the following initiatives and will be seeking volunteers for them as well:

- ⇒ A "conference buddy" program to match an ALA member who has been to at least one annual conference with an international attendee to help answer any questions they may have and be a support throughout their time at the conference.

- ⇒ Visits to the Library of Congress and African American and Native American Museums.
- ⇒ A list for visitors of words for common food allergens translated into other languages

More details will be sent as the conference gets closer, so if you'd like to help, please be on the lookout. For more information, please contact Katie Spires at mkspires@gmail.com.



Hej Svenska Bibliotekarier! Hello Swedish Librarians!

By Lesley Farmer, Prof. of Library Media, California State University Long Beach
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I was awarded a sabbatical this fall to work with school librarian educators at the [University of Borås](#) in Sweden. This university, which is located about an hour east of Gothenburg, offers the most extensive school librarian preparation in the country. I wanted to explore the school librarianship situation in Sweden first hand. Here are some of my findings.

Sweden has about 4,000 school libraries, which are funded and managed by local authorities. The first national library law did not exist until 1996 with the Act on Library Services, which focused on public libraries. Many library associations lobbied for legislation that would support school libraries, and the National Authority for School Improvement funded pilot school library development. As a result, the Education Act of 2010 made the school library mandatory. Additionally, all Swedish curriculum was revised in 2017 to strengthen digital competence, and school librarians are responsible for supporting and empowering students in their linguistic and digital skills.

Recent national reports pointed out the important function of school libraries and librarians, and identified the knowledge and skills needed by school librarians. The reports made several recommendations: to clarify the law about school libraries and staffing, strengthen school library activities within the national school development program, inform the school community about the importance of school librarians, increase school librarians' competence, and provide short-term funding to hire school librarians. The 2018 national revised curriculum also clarified the role of



Dr. Lesley Farmer at Sundsvall school librarian symposium

school libraries as part of teaching. The government has also provided extra funds to hire school librarians.

However, the reality is that several schools might share one collection or be served by an integrated public-school library, and about half of the students in Sweden have access to a school library that has at least half-time staffing; one third have no access to a school library. No legal set of qualifications for school librarians exists in Sweden, and decisions about librarians are made at the local level. Because school libraries are answerable to both state school and library law, planning and governance are complicated, and no clear guidelines exist.

The principal decides who is qualified, and has the authority to hire the library staff. Studies found that principals often do not know what school librarians can do, and tend to prioritize an unmanned library rather than a school librarian (*Skolinspektionen, Skolbiblioteket som pedagogisk resurs*; Stockholm, 2018). Fortunately now, principals are explicitly required to address school library function and staffing, and must take training workshops to take action.

So it is no surprise that a librarian shortage exists for both school and public libraries. Preparing school librarians has lagged behind the regulations. Five universities in Sweden offer library science programs, and Borås is the biggest, as well as the leader in school librarianship; they have 70 faculty members, 20 of whom teach courses for school librarians. The library school overall offers a bachelor's degree, two master's degrees, and a joint doctorate program. They also offer four extension courses for practitioner school librarians. Regional media centers provide continuing education training, and try to help local school librarians develop their site libraries. Professional organizations hold occasional mini-conferences to inform school librarians about recent developments and to showcase beneficial practices.

I knew of this situation to some degree, which was my impetus to work with Borås school library science faculty. The faculty are overhauling their curriculum so I worked with them, with special attention to preparing school librarians with teaching backgrounds and strengthening their media literacy efforts. For starters, the faculty and I discussed lengthening their courses to two months instead of five weeks, which is the current norm; this approach gives more time for students to reflect on their learning and show progress within that course. We also discussed the benefit of career pathways, supplemented by a faculty advising role. In addi-

Continued on page 10

tion, I suggested a shorter “course package” for credentialed school teachers that would enable them to serve as school librarians (being clear that they cannot function as a professional librarian in other library settings).

Besides working with faculty about school librarianship curriculum, I guest lectured in three courses, conducted a research seminar on fake news, presented about school librarian preparation on a regional library conference, and presented a workshop on actively engaging students, especially in online learning environments.



University of Borås Library

I also visited a library museum, top school libraries, and regional media centers, and presented a keynote on U.S. school libraries for school librarians in Sweden’s Eastern region.

What were some of my strong impressions?

- Faculty collegiality, reinforced by fika (coffee breaks) and social events
- Emphasis on källkritik: source evaluation
- Topical research groups who share their studies and collaborate on grants
- Recent national attention and reports on school librarianship.
- Discussion about disinformation, larger than fake news
- Attention to online algorithms and their impact on searching and filter bubbles
- Awareness and concern about GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation)

At the same time that school librarians shake their heads about the need for school librarians – and the uneven

quality of current staff – those same school librarians are creatively engaging their school communities with innovative, meaningful learning activities and quality collections. Site school librarians, library educators, and supporting government personnel are on the lookout for relevant resources and initiating projects to improve school library programs.



Henrik Urbanusson, librarian at Stapelbaddskolan

In

the midst of changing dynamics, it can be difficult to find equilibrium, but school librarians do not seem to be panicking. Rather they are working at a scale that they are comfortable with. Some efforts are deployed quickly on the national level, such as workshops for principals to become more aware and knowledgeable about school library functions and needs. Other tasks, such as establishing qualification baselines and credentialing school librarians, may require greater incentive to make the effort. Many structures are in place but need systematic coordination in order to insure high-quality school library service for every student.

In sum, school librarianship in Sweden can serve as a microcosm to see the factors and dynamics of change and how to deal with such change. Moreover, our exchanges have the potential to improve both Swedish and my campus’s own teacher librarian programs.

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Lesley Farmer is a long-time member of IRRT and a vocal proponent of school librarianship.

IRRT Member Dr. Hwa-Wei Lee Honored in Thailand

In April 2018, IRRT member Dr. Hwa-Wei Lee was awarded the Medal of Appreciation by Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn of Thailand for his role both as the founding library director and as a member of the International Advisory Committee in the rebuilding of the Asian Institute of Technology (AIT) library after it was damaged by a devastating flooding that affected about two-thirds of the country in 2011. The entire AIT campus, including its library, was inundated under 6 feet of water for about two months and most of the library collections were damaged.

Dr. Lee was the founding director of the AIT Library and Regional Information Center in Thailand from 1968 to 1975. It was exactly 50 years ago Dr. Lee was recruited by the U.S. Agency for International Development to join a team of 12 American engineering professors and administrative professionals traveling to Bangkok, Thailand to establish the Asian Institute of Technology (AIT), a regional graduate school of engineering and technology. The project was an international initiative in which countries around the world joined forces to successfully establish such a graduate school in Asia.

In 2014, Dr. Lee was invited by AIT President, Dr. Worsak Kanok-Nukulchai, to serve on the International Advisory Committee for the Library Modernization Project under the honorary chair, Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn of Thailand. The committee headed the fundraising initiative to rebuild the AIT library.

In acknowledgement of the highly successful international fundraising efforts and his advisory role in the design of the modernized library, Dr. Lee was recognized at the opening of the renovated AIT library on April 27, 2018.

From his legacy at the AIT Library to the many key li-



Dr. Hwa-Wei Lee received the Medal of Appreciation from Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn of Thailand.



Dr. Hwa-Wei Lee (seated, fourth from left) and other recognized guests with HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn (center).

brary positions he held in the U.S., including 21 years as the Dean of libraries at Ohio University, three years as the visiting distinguished scholar and consultant at OCLC, and five years as the chief of Asian division at the Library of Congress, Dr. Lee and his wife retired to Jacksonville, Florida in 2008. In 2015, he was the first Asian American librarian to receive the Melvil Dewey Medal awarded by American Library Association.

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Congratulations to Dr. Hwa-Wei Lee on the recognition of his years of dedication to the AIT Library!



Dr. Hwa-Wei Lee displays his Medal of Appreciation.

Conference Report: Sixth North America—China Library Conference

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The Sixth North America – China Library Conference was held on 31 July 31 - 2 August 2018 at OCLC (the conference host) in Dublin, Ohio. Winston Tabb, Sheridan Dean of University Libraries and Museums at Johns Hopkins University, chaired the North America Organizing Committee to plan this successful conference. American Library Association, Association for Research Libraries, National Library of China, and the Library Society of China were the conference organizers.

The Sixth Conference, with the theme on “Collaboration and Innovation: Envisioning a Shared Future,” provided a timely platform for librarians from China and North America to discuss the issues, challenges, and opportunities facing the library communities and to continue the efforts in collaborations and innovations. Over 40 library and information science professionals from China, U.S., and Canada participated in this international gathering.

Jim Neal, immediate ALA past president, and Mr. Sun Yigang, Deputy Director of the National Library of China, gave keynote speeches at the conference. In his presentation, “You can’t count the apples in the seeds: The challenges of a shared future,” Mr. Neal examined the challenges in the rapidly changing environment with technologies and The Internet of Things. He offered a list for a new set of knowledge and skills that are needed for changing library roles: libraries as consumers, intermediaries and aggregators, publishers, educators, R&D organizations, entrepreneurs, policy advocates, etc. Deputy Director Sun shared the National Library of China’s strategies and efforts in reaching out to global partners and in working on numerous projects benefiting users beyond the Library, e.g., Chinese Ancient Books Protection Plan, Digital Library Promotion Project, Museum

Exhibits at the National Library, and other initiatives to make the Library a leader for user access to libraries and museums.

The conference participants gave 14 papers at four conference sessions; visited Columbus Metropolitan Library; had a dinner hosted by OCLC, and decided to hold the next conference in the series in 2020 in Beijing, China. The conference presentations are at <http://northamericachinalibraryconference.wpshared.library.jhu.edu/program-3/>



Sun Yigang and Winston Tabb (photo credit: Shali Zhang)

The first conference of this series was held in August 1996 in Beijing, China, prior to the 62nd IFLA Conference, with much effort led by Dr. Hwa-Wee Li, then Ohio University Library Dean. Since then, the conferences were organized and hosted by the libraries in China and the U.S. Winston Tabb, Jim Neal, ALA, ARL, and OCLC have been with the conference series since 1996. “I am very happy that we continue meeting with our library colleagues from China through this excellent venue. It is a perfect platform to explore new opportunities for LIS professionals in North America and China,” said Tabb.

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Shali Zhang is a long-time member and previous Chair of IRRT. She was a member of the North American Organizing Committee for the 6th Conference.

Have you participated in an international conference? Consider sharing about your experience with IRRT readers!



Participants at the 6th Conference (photo credit: OCLC)

IRRT Webinar: The Library Map of the World and the Art of Storytelling

By Rebecca Miller

On 17 January 2019, IRRT held a webinar on the IFLA Library Map of the World and the art of storytelling. The recording of the webinar can be watched here: <https://ala.adobeconnect.com/pagwtzvm1rmx/>. This webinar is part of ALA President Loida Garcia-Febo's initiative to increase awareness of international librarianship.

ALA President Loida Garcia-Febo first welcomed attendees, then Nicole Cooke, Associate Professor and MS/LIS Program Director at the Graduate School of Library/Information Science at University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, presented on models of narratives, such as stock stories, concealed stories, and resistance stories. Librarians can use these models to tell their own stories about librarianship to improve awareness and understanding of the diversity and importance of librarians and libraries.

Building on the notion of using stories to share experiences, Kristine Paberza, IFLA Member Engagement Officer, introduced the [IFLA Library Map of the World](#). She summarized the three purposes of the Map: capturing national library statistics, presenting library landscapes in countries, and sharing stories about how libraries support communities around the world. Libraries are encouraged to share stories online at the Library

Map website, especially stories that share how libraries address a problem or challenge in a community, have an impact on people's lives, and contribute to local, regional or national development needs. IFLA provides a storytelling manual to help libraries craft an engaging narrative.

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The IRRT Webinars are a wonderful way to learn about international librarianship issues and activities. More information can be found at <http://www.ala.org/rt/irrt/initiatives>



It is Election Time! Vote for Your IRRT Executive Board

Remember to vote in the 2019 ALA Elections, including voting for the IRRT Executive Board.

Polls open 11 March and close 3 April 2019 at 11:59 pm CDT. Election results will be announced 10 April.

Slate of candidates:

Chair Elect

- ◇ Gene Hayworth
- ◇ Alexandra Houzouri Humphreys

Member-at-Large

- ◇ Mark Mattson

Secretary/Treasurer

- ◇ Julia M. Gelfand
- ◇ Ayaba Logan
- ◇ Katie Spires

Thank you to the IRRT Election Committee for their hard work to put together another slate of well qualified candidates!

A check in with Librarians from around the world

Raymond Pun is an IRRT member and an instruction/research librarian at Alder Graduate School of Education where he coordinates collection development and provides distance-learning services for graduate students in education. He is an active member of ALA, ACRL, SLA and IFLA. He coordinates interviews with international librarians for *International Leads*.

An Interview with Tilahun Shiferaw, Haramaya University Library, Ethiopia

Ray: Thanks for interviewing with us! Can you briefly tell us about your role in the library?

Tilahun: Well, it's giving me a wonderful opportunity to introduce myself, my name is Tilahun Shiferaw and I belong to Ethiopia. Now I'm working as lecturer, researcher, trainer and library and information service consultant at Haramaya University. My roles at library and information service of Haramaya University are coordination, organizing and provision of training on basics of library and information services, and information literacy for postgraduate student and newly recruited librarians respectively. In addition, counseling library activities in five branch libraries located in main campus and health library at Harar town. Strengthening and supporting planning, monitoring and evaluation of library activities and ensuring service delivery performance of the branch libraries is the one of my prime roles.

I have also a great contribution to the library by developing and implementing digital library and institutional repository to reflect changes in research, innovation, and equity of access. Doing this significantly minimizes the resource divide among disable students. I believe that my greatest achievement as librarian is being a wholesome person. I'm highly participant in the community and organize workshops and trainings on information literacy, record management, reference management and library for knowledge exchange.

Ray: How did you get into librarianship and what (if any) formal education or training did you receive?

Tilahun: I have completed a Bachelor's of Science in information science and Master's of Science in Electronic and Digital Resource Management. I'm very affectionate for the development of library profession. I was Vice chairperson, Education & Training Institutions section of African library and Information association (AFLIA).

Ray: What is a library trend/library hot topic in your country currently?

Tilahun: Thanks, this is a good question! As the number of visits to the physical library has been slowly declining, we look that there is a need to actively engage the community in the library's offerings because the library is the community's hub for learning and knowledge creation. The other fact is people love going



to the library but they also have higher expectations from libraries. So, it is must for us to plan that our libraries have started using their spaces for new purposes, such as to enable innovation and knowledge exchange, to create cultural meetings, and most importantly to create community hubs by partnering with other local institutions. Which will help us to offer a mix of library services and public services.

Ray: Why is international librarianship important in your work as a librarian?

Tilahun: We are in globalized world, no one is island. I'm very quite agree international librarianship is too important because you can share culture, experience and knowledge which is beyond money. Also, it helps strengthen the ability to achieve the mutual goal of the library schools, and academic libraries, and the capacity of faculty and librarians to increase the quality of teaching and learning, research, library and information services as well as cost advantages in sharing human resources.

Ray: Thanks for speaking with us! We appreciate your responses! One last question: if you working on research projects, can you tell us more about it?

Tilahun: I have number of projects that considerably contribute to community in different project development and project management, database management systems, digital knowledge base systems, digitization and system administrations, community services and research are which some of the works done during my time. My acquired skills will come in handy when working with the communities.