Canadian Library Association Conference

The annual conference of the Canadian Library Association was held May 23–26, 2007, St John's, Newfoundland and Labrador.

Is International Librarianship for you? How can you tell in advance? Five speakers offered their advice on these two questions in a program organised by the Canadian Library Association World Libraries Interest Group entitled 'The Big Adventure: Canadian Library Workers Go Abroad'.

Dr Bob McKee, CEO of the UK's Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals, set the context by drawing on research by IFLA and the Danish Royal School of Library and Information Science. To be successful, he said, you need a sense of adventure, acceptance of others, adaptability and flexibility. In addition to your core competencies as a librarian, you need to be able to work with a multi-ethnic staff, develop language skills and learn to cope with complexity, ambiguity and stress.

Sybil Harrison (now at Hamilton Public Library, Ontario) and Larry McCallum (now at Mohawk College, Hamilton, Ontario) told of their experiences in Abu Dhabi. Sybil had been Technical Services and Systems Manager and then Acting Dean of Library Resources, Higher Colleges of Technology, and Larry had been Librarian of Abu Dhabi Men's College. They reinforced Bob McKee's points but added that some of the core ethics of librarianship can be challenged in areas such as privacy, intellectual freedom and open access. There were also local customs which had an impact on the working environment such as *Inshallah* — if Allah wills it, and *Wasta* — the clout or inflence which enables tasks to get done. Sybil and Larry were there long enough to bring something of Canada to Abu Dhabi by organising a visit of Canadian children's and young adults' authors and their books.

Janis Rapchuk, a special librarian with Field Aviation, in Calgary, Alberta, went to Kabul on a fact-finding mission under the auspices of Canadian Women for Women in Afghanistan and the University of Manitoba. Her aim was to visit the Kabul Medical Institute, which had received textbooks donated by the Canadian Medical Students Association. She had ambitious plans to run training courses for the library staff to help them assist the students and also to select staff who could take online courses offered for library technicians in Alberta. Unfortunately these plans had to be scrapped — the library had no catalogue and no online access to databases; in addition the staff had limited command of English. She made recommendations for the medical students to have more direct access to the library's collection as well as for the provision of three computers for literature searching.

The last speaker was Sue Adams, librarian at the Coady International Institute, Saint Francis Xavier University, Antigonish, Nova Scotia. She talked of the role of the Coady working with overseas partners and focussing on how libraries can support adult education programs. Confirming the views of the earlier speakers on the need for flexibility, she cited Dr Daniel J. Kealey for his writings on 'intercultural effectiveness'.

Reflecting the large number of new graduates present, the first question was on recommended sources on international librarianship. This was followed by asking which credentials were accepted internationally. Those recognised by ALA, ALIA and CILIP were the audience's recommendations.

Interestingly, international aspects of librarianship surfaced again that evening at the 2007 Canadian Association of Public Libraries/Brodart Outstanding Public Library Service Award presentation to Josephine Bryant, City Librarian, Toronto Public Library. In her acceptance speech, she expanded on her 2006 ALIA Perth talk by giving an international overview of recent developments in major public library buildings in many countries where they serve as 'knowledge centres for the 21st century'.

Norman Horrocks
nhorrock@dal.ca

Web access snapshot

The University of Technology Sydney Library has published some useful statistics on how its students are accessing the library website.

Browsers				
Internet Explorer	80.58%		Mac	5.89%
Firefox	14.54%		Linux	0.33%
Safari	3%		**Internet connection**	
Operating systems			Cable/DSL	73.08%
Windows	93.72%		Dialup	19.24%
(XP)	73.85%		**JAVA**	
(2000)	24.45%		enabled	98.27%