

Report on the 66th IFLA Council and General Conference in Jerusalem, August 13-18, 2000

By John Day, LSDP Chair

General Impressions

Especially in light of the worsened situation in Israel shortly following the conference, traveling between hotels, the conference center, and cultural events during the conference itself was quite placid. And, given the tense political climate, attendance overall and for our LSDP meetings was very good. The old, walled section of Jerusalem was

astounding, and especially at night walking through the narrow cobblestone streets gave a very strong feel of being transported 2,000 years back through history. Although there were at least two bomb scares close to the conference center, they were not directed in any way against IFLA, and I don't think anyone felt that violence was imminent. From talking with our Israeli colleagues, it was clear that there was a general

knowledge that the situation would worsen. However, most of us attending the conference had no feeling for how soon such violence would erupt, and such thoughts were non-existent as we so thoroughly enjoyed the cultural evening at the Israel Museum and Center for the Book, where the Dead Sea Scrolls are housed.

LSDP Open Session: Public Library Services to Disadvantaged Persons

This year, our open session focused specifically on the provision of services in public libraries to persons with special needs in the general community. We were fortunate to have two excellent speakers followed by a panel discussion regarding the development of guidelines. The program had a good attendance of approximately 60 persons, especially in consideration of the occurrence of a bomb scare in front of the conference center about an hour and a half before the session began. Our main speakers were from Denmark and France and their topics were specific to public library services to deaf people and to hospital patients.

Full Participation in Cultural and Social Life: French Museums Take Steps to Make Handicapped Visitors Welcome

by Michel Rosenfeld

Background

The International Council for Museums defines museums as enduring cultural and social institutions with open access to the public and with collections that are tangible creations of Man and his environment. The main purpose of the museum is to make its collections available for study, education and enjoyment by all citizens. The museum is therefore an important part of a country's cultural heritage. Until the 1980s, however, a large number of disabled persons in France faced a myriad of obstacles in their

attempt to become full participants in society, including their wish to enjoy their cultural heritage like everyone else. This meant that approximately 5 million citizens (those with physical and mental disabilities) out of the country's 68 million population were in certain respects treated as second class citizens. And access to museum buildings, exhibits, and programs was a problem for many.

Getting Access

Beginning in the 1980s, but especially since 1992, museum access

please see Handicapped, Page 5

please see Report, Page 3

Public Libraries in Andalusia, Spain, are Improving Services to Disabled People

The Ministry of Culture in Andalusia has issued new regulations regarding access to public library buildings and services. These regulations augment the original 1983 public library law which stipulates "free and total access to information and cultural resources for all people" without specifically addressing the needs of disabled people. The new regulations require full equity in the provision of services to users with special needs, as well as the elimination of both external and internal architectural barriers. The libraries have a transition period to come into compliance, without which they are not eligible for government funding or membership in library systems. Detailed directives are being developed dealing with circulation procedures, formats of library materials, signage, etc.

There has already been a significant growth and development in the public library sector since the first public library law almost twenty years ago. All municipalities with a population above 1000 has a public library; some even smaller communities have libraries. The new regulations pertain to all of them.

Andalusia in general has seen a rapid growth in both social services and cultural offerings in the last decade, partly as a reaction to public expectations for integration of the disabled

please see Andalusia, Page 6

New Adaptive Services for the Physically Challenged at the Queens Public Library, USA

Queens Library attempts to provide service to all library customers. The library this past fiscal year teamed up with Verizon (the local telephone utility) to lend free TTY (text typewriter) devices to library customers for up to three weeks at a time. The units can be checked out like any other library item. A TTY is a keyboard-like device that a hearing- or speech-impaired person can use to communicate over telephone lines by typing. They are available at 10 library locations borough-wide to any holder of a valid Queens Library borrower's card. The TTY machines will be a boon to customers who want a unit on a temporary basis, either to try one out

before purchasing, or while their own is out for repair, or for a visitor. Because the TTYs simply plug into any modular phone jack, they are extremely portable. The devices are being provided by Verizon as a public service.

For the visually impaired, closed circuit TV set-ups are available to enlarge type at 21 library branches plus the Central Library and all six Adult Learning Centers.

Kurzweil 1000 computer workstations for the sight-impaired were installed at one of our branches and the Central Library. Also, Kurzweil Personal Readers can be found in select locations. Volunteer Readers' Service provides cassettes of print materials to supplement the "Talking Books" service.

(For more information contact:
Joe Catrambone,
jcatrambone@queenslibrary.org)



Panel in Jerusalem discussing guidelines: Birgitta Irvall, Gyda Skat Nielsen, Bror Tronbacke, and Nancy Panella.

Report (from Page 1)

Following are abstracts of their presentations.

Anita Otte Clausen: *Public Library Service to Deaf and Hard of Hearing Persons in Denmark.* Ms. Clausen is hard of hearing and is a librarian at the Ørnevej Public Library in Copenhagen. "Speaking" in Danish Sign Language, her presentation was voiced in English by two interpreters.

Abstract

The purpose of the public libraries in Denmark is to increase information, education and cultural experiences by making books and other suitable materials available without charge. This should be valid for all groups in society. For instance, in Denmark we have a rather long tradition of services for blind people. For hearing impaired people there have not been any special services until our library started to look in to the matter back in 1990. The full text of this paper may be obtained at <http://www.ifla.org/IV/ifla66/papers/010-143e.htm> (010-143f.htm for the French version)

Claudie Guerin: *Hospital libraries and the public library system in France: how can they work together?*

Ms. Guerin is the coordinator of the multimedia libraries centers of the Assistance Publique-Hopitaux de Paris.

Abstract

For someone in hospital, "shut up" inside the four walls of a room, reading can be a marvelous escape, a way of forgetting his or her illness, anxiety and pain for a while. For a moment, a book also offers a way of entering into a special relationship with a mediator, the librarian, a friend... Reading or being read to, going to a meeting and visiting an exhibition are all things that can contribute to the patient's well-being and even recovery. The provision reading matter is now a recognized part of the quality of the hotel facilities for patients. After reviewing the state of hospital libraries in France, this paper will discuss the ways hospital libraries and other public libraries can cooperate in the light of various experiments. The full text of this paper may be obtained at <http://www.ifla.org/IV/ifla66/papers/135-143e.htm> (135-143f.htm for the French version).

Panel Discussion

These presentations were followed by a panel discussion on "Special Services and Guidelines for Quality" which centered on how to produce and publish effective guidelines for providing services to people with special needs. Members of the panel were Birgitta Irvall, Director of the Osteraker Public Library (Sweden); Gyda Skat Nielsen, Director of the Department for Outreach Services of the Sölleröd Public Library (Denmark); Nancy Mary Panella, Director of the Bolling Memorial Library (USA); and Bror Tronbacke, Director of the Swedish Easy-to-Read Foundation (Sweden). Dr. Panella was responsible for the development of the IFLA *Guidelines for Libraries Serving Hospital Patients and the Elderly and Disabled in Long-Term Care Facilities*; Ms. Irvall and Ms. Nielsen are developing the IFLA *Guidelines for Library Services to People with Dyslexia* that will be published in 2001; and Mr. Tronbacke is the editor of the IFLA *Guidelines for Easy-to-Read Materials*. The discussion was moderated by John Day, editor of the IFLA *Guidelines for Library Services to Deaf People*.

LSDP Standing Committee Meetings

During the Jerusalem conference, the Standing Committee held two meetings attended by 11 members and 3 observers.

The primary topics for discussion were the Section's ongoing projects and planning for the upcoming conferences. Each project coordinator gave a status and financial report. The *Guidelines for Libraries Serving Hospital Patients and the Elderly and Disabled in Long-Term Care Facilities* have been published as well as the *Guidelines for Library Services to Deaf People*. And, translations are underway for both. The final draft of the *Guidelines for Library Services to People with Dyslexia* was approved pending editorial review of the English translation. Much of the Standing Committee's work centered on the planning for the Boston 2001 conference where the Section's Open Session will be on "Library Services to People with Dyslexia." The program will be a joint effort with the International Dyslexia Association and the European Dyslexia Association, and there will be a booth focusing on dyslexia in the exhibition area. Although not discussed until after the

please see Report, Page 4

Report (from Page 3)

Jerusalem conference, the Section is also developing a joint workshop with the Section of Biological and Medical Libraries, tentatively titled, "Health Information: Web Based Resources and Library Tour." Noting that 2001 will mark the 70th year of the Section of Libraries Serving Disadvantaged Persons, the Standing Committee began planning for an anniversary celebration in Boston.

It was particularly gratifying to note that the LSDP section's new guidelines publications were the very top sellers for IFLA during the conference and that the section's web page <http://www.ifla.org/VII/s9/sldp.htm> is ranked number 7 out of the 60 sections, core programs, and roundtables in terms of the number of times the web pages are accessed.



Photo opportunity in Jerusalem for LSDP Standing Committee members: Birgitta Irvall, Yu Kikuchi, Michel Rosenfeld, Gyda Skat Nielsen, John Day, Misako Nomura, Bror Tronbacke, and Teresa Pages Gilibets.

LSDP Projects: Progress Report

The *Guidelines for Libraries Serving Hospital Patients and the Elderly and Disabled in Long-Term Care Facilities* was published in the Spring of 2000 as IFLA Professional Report No. 61. The Russian translation has also been published, and the French, German, and Spanish translations are currently being prepared.

The development of the *LSDP Section Resource Book* was originally a two-year project, but a one-year extension has been granted, due to the death of the original project leader, Anne Galler. A colleague of Anne, Joanne Locke, who had worked with her on this project, has taken over the project. Considerable progress has already been made, and Joanne Locke will complete this book in time for publication before the 2001 Boston conference.

The second, revised edition of the *Guidelines for Library Services to Deaf People* was published in the Spring of 2000 as IFLA Professional Report No. 62. The French, German, Spanish, and Russian versions

have also been published. Additionally, a Brazilian Portuguese translation has been completed and will be published in 2001. A Japanese translation is in the making.

The final draft of the *Guidelines for Library Services to Persons with Dyslexia* was presented during the Jerusalem conference and, following English language editorial work, is nearly ready for publication, which is expected prior to the Boston conference.

The Professional Board has approved the Section's proposal to produce an *Information Brochure on Dyslexia* that will inform people about dyslexia and library services to persons with dyslexia. This brochure will be ready for distribution at the Boston conference.

"Libraries are reservoirs of strength, grace and wit, reminders of order, calm and continuity, lakes of mental energy, neither warm nor cold, light nor dark. The pleasure they give is steady, unorgastic, reliable, deep and long-lasting. In any library in the world, I am at home, unselfconscious, still and absorbed.

~ Germaine Greer

Handicapped (from Page 1)

for handicapped has gradually improved. The *Direction des Musées de France* (Department of French Museums) is the government agency within the Ministry for the Arts with administrative responsibility for museum operations. The *Direction* has launched an awareness campaign aimed at museum curators and their staff on the issue of accessibility for disabled persons. As part of this effort, training has been provided to museum managers and staff on the various obstacles faced by handicapped persons in their daily lives. This type of “sensitivity” training was designed to improve staff attitude, as well as the actual physical access to museum buildings. The training, which is provided on an ongoing basis, is also designed to help administrators develop new accessibility policies that reflect not only an understanding of different disabilities, but also the many different reasons a person may have for visiting a museum.

In 1994, new accessibility regulations went into effect, covering all new public and private buildings open to the general public. These regulations are, unfortunately, not retroactive and therefore not applicable to many older museum buildings. The new regulations have been welcomed by advocacy and support groups for the handicapped, but the general public is also pleased with the many improvements that benefit *all* visitors. The regulations cover, among other areas, doorways, elevators, bathrooms, telephones, desk counters, restaurants and cafeterias, information publications in various formats (including Braille), directional signs, and the layout of the general floor plan. The regulations have been almost 100% implemented, bringing France up to the level of accessibility compliance long in existence in the Anglo-Saxon and Scandinavian countries.

The older museums present a major challenge. The Department of French Museums has been working hard on the education of the *Architectes des Bâtiments de France*, the agency responsible for the maintenance and renovation of monuments and historical buildings. High ranking civil servants in the Ministry for the Arts, who see themselves as scrupulous guardians of the French “patrimonial” monuments, must be persuaded that the time has come to open the old historical buildings to all citizens. With this goal in mind, a new program called “Accueil pour tous” (welcome to all) went into effect in January 2000, administered by the *Caisse nationale des monuments historiques et des sites* (fund for national historical

monuments and sites). The *Caisse* manages the daily operation of more than 100 of the most visited monuments and buildings, including museums. These sites receive between 9 and 10 million visitors per year.

Enjoying the Visit

The 1994 accessibility regulations deal only with physical access to buildings. They do not address many other issues that contribute to the enjoyment of museums, including the attractiveness of surroundings and the manner in which exhibits are organized and presented. Most of these considerations fall under the domain of museographers. These people try to arrange exhibits in a manner that let all people explore and enjoy the displays on their own terms, which includes giving the visitor the choice of when, how often, and how long to visit, without having to ask for assistance. A person in a wheelchair will most likely be discouraged from visiting, if it means entering through a back door or the basement and having to call in advance to make arrangements.

Traditionally museographers have not paid attention to the needs of disabled persons, but this situation is currently changing. Increasingly more museum installations and exhibits take into account such elements as

- level floors without thresholds
- floor coverings that do not impede wheelchairs
- varying heights of wall mounted items
- lighting level & location
- presentation that allows close-up viewing from a wheelchair
- ergonomic arrangement of interactive exhibits
- easy-to-read exhibit texts & informational materials in alternative formats.

Official access regulations go only so far – and the degree to which a disabled person enjoys a museum visit is still dependent upon the level of commitment shown by individual museum administrators. Fortunately, many of these civil servants have recognized that suitable accommodations can be made within a reasonable budget. The Natural History Museum in Paris is setting a good example through specific programs to make disabled visitors feel welcome. Deaf actors have been hired to greet deaf children, and a deaf guide conducts tours and workshops in sign language. There are special orientation sessions for blind visitors. They are also permitted to touch many exhibit items in order to “see” shapes and textures, e.g. skeletons, stuffed animals, stones, plants,

Project Open Library in the Netherlands: "Handybieb" for the Mentally Handicapped

In September 2000, the President of the Dutch Parliament opened the first "Handybieb" in the city of Nootdorp. This event signaled the beginning of the Open Library Project, a cooperative effort by a local public library, a community agency, and an institution for mentally handicapped persons, and supported by ProBiblio, the Provincial Library Center. The purpose of this project was twofold: 1) to enhance the accessibility to the public library and 2) to make the mentally handicapped enthusiastic library users. The project focused on two tangible elements: suitable materials and attractive user guide tools.

The library organized a orientation day for all staff involved in the project, and the library's collection was examined for materials suitable for the targeted population group. This exercise was a positive experience for the staff, and it dispelled a number of myths about mentally handicapped persons and their interests and capabilities. Agency staff learned about the suitability of various texts, prints and pictures, and levels of comprehension. Also about books with many illustrations and photographs, music for those who cannot read, stories with clear logic and familiar daily situations, and books with "creative" language. Thanks to a grant, the library's collection was enhanced with new videos, CD-ROMs, and games and pictures. This special collection was placed in a separate area and was named the "Handybieb" (handy library).

The other aim of the Open Library Project was to improve access to the library for the mentally handicapped user. A working group developed a user guide with an accompanying video. Each section of this guide has its own color: getting to the library, registering as a borrower, looking for a book, checking out materials, returning materials, library hours. All sections have color illustrations and easily understood signs and explanations, e.g. showing how to find the library among all the other neighborhood buildings. The guide also explains what kind of equipment is required to play a video or use a CD-ROM and how long these items

may be checked out. Library hours are indicated through words and through the depiction of an actual clock. The idea is to make it easy for the mentally handicapped users to choose library materials for both themselves and others in their residential facility. The new users will receive the help they need from both library and residence staff. It is hoped that library use will become an integral part of the services available to this population group.

Three ProBiblio experts, Peter Spuy, Marian Klaren (public library), and Kaat Deprez of Craeyenburgh, are currently working on a handbook that should be helpful to others who want to set up a "Handybieb" themselves. The three are also preparing a 2001 conference on the subject. For more information contact:

Marian Koren
NBLC, Vereniging van Openbare Bibliotheken
Postbus 433000
NL-2504 AH Den Haag
Email: koren@nblic.nl

Andalucia (from Page 2)

into society. Libraries have done their part, developing outreach services to the home bound and persons in residential care facilities; the libraries have also enhanced their collections with talking books, easy-to-read materials, and other alternative formats. There are also many cooperative projects between libraries and support and advocacy groups for the disabled. The public librarians in Andalucia are very pleased with the new regulations, which they believe will contribute greatly to better services for all citizens.

(Information provided by Maria Luisa Toran)



LSDP Section Celebrates 70th Birthday

by Nancy Mary Panella

The Section of Libraries Serving Disadvantaged Persons (LSDP) celebrates its seventieth birthday in 2001. Established August 29, 1931 - four years after IFLA's own founding – the Section has enjoyed a continuous and impressive history of activity within the international library community.

LSDP was created as the Sub-committee on Hospital Libraries (patients' libraries). It was the seventh sub-committee IFLA formed and the first to focus on library services for a specific user group. It came into being during a time when decades of sustained efforts to cooperate internationally in librarianship were finally bearing fruit, perhaps most notably in the founding of IFLA. Coincidentally, the era was also witnessing growing multi-national interest in library services to hospital patients, a phenomenon fueled in part by the noticeable positive effects of books and reading on hospitalized military personnel during and after World War I.

The organization, promotion, and support of 'hospital libraries,' and education and training for hospital librarianship, occupied much of the Sub-committee's efforts through the 1950s. Eventually, though, the group began to consider the particular needs of disabled hospitalized people, and it was a short step from there to considering the needs of the disabled both within and outside the hospital. Thus we see subsequent interests in library services to the blind, the deaf, "mentally retarded" children, and those needing easy-reader materials. Ultimately, coverage came to include all of those unable to use conventional library materials and services.

Both IFLA's changing rules and the Sub-committee's own expanding terms of reference caused a series of name changes. In 1951, the Sub-committee was renamed the Committee on Hospital Libraries; it subsequently became the Hospital Libraries Sub-section, then the Libraries in Hospitals Sub-section, and then the Section of Library Services to Hospital Patients and Handicapped Readers; finally, in 1984, it assumed its current name, the Section of Libraries Serving Disadvantaged Persons.

LSDP holds many IFLA "firsts" and "probable firsts." Among them are:

- The first to conduct a major international survey of its field (1931-32).

- The first dedicated to a specific user group (1931).
- The first to publish in the IFLA Professional Report series.
- Most publications in the Professional Report series.
- Among the first, if not the first, to regularly issue a Newsletter to its members
- Probably the first to issue an international reading list
- One of the first, very possibly the first, to aggressively seek the lifting of customs and copyright restrictions on specific kinds of library materials.

NOTE: The LSDP Standing Committee is planning a birthday party at the 2001 Boston Conference for section members and other interested parties. The Standing Committee is welcoming suggestions for this celebration. Please email Nancy Panella at slhbml4@metgate.metro.org or write her at Bolling Memorial Medical Library, St. Luke's Roosevelt Hospital Center, 1111 Amsterdam Ave., New York, NY 10025, USA.

Handicapped (from Page 5)

and models. More than 150 French museums now offer such "tactile" visits. In 1995, five museums in Tours (Fine Arts Museum, Natural History Museum, Trade Guild Museum, Heritage Workshop, and Wax Museum) presented a joint "tactile" exhibit about stones and minerals, "Touching for knowledge – from the uncut to the polished stone." This exhibit, although aimed at a broad general audience, paid special attention to the needs of visually handicapped visitors. The exhibit "catalog" was created in the form of a box, containing text cards in Braille, a compact disc, and samples of uncut and polished stones.

STANDING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

1999 - 2001

Officers

John Day (Chair)
Gallaudet University Library
800 Florida Avenue, N.E.
Washington D.C. 20002, USA
john.day@gallaudet.edu

Bror Tronbacke (Secretary)
LL-Stiftelsen
Easy-to Read Foundation
Box 4035
S-102 61 Stockholm, Sweden
bror.tronbacke@llstiftelsen.se

Vibeke Lehmann
(Information Coordinator)
Department of Corrections
P.O. Box 7925
Madison, WI 53707, USA
vibeke.lehmann@doc.state.wi.us

Committee Members

Sue Lithgow
Open Learning Unit, University of Wales
Llanbadarn Fawr, Aberystwyth
Ceredigion SY23 3AS, Wales, UK
sdl994@aber.ac.uk

Carme Mayol Fernandez
Facultat Biblioteconomia i Documentacio
Universitat de Barcelona
Melcior de Palau 140
08014 Barcelona, Spain
mayol@fbd.ub.es

Teresa Pagès Gilibets
Biblioteca Popular Can Castells
Lluís Castells 16
08830 St. Boi de Llobregat
Barcelona, Spain
pagesgt@diba.es

Maria Luisa Toran
Consejería de Cultura, Centro Provincial
Avenue de Europa 49
29003 Malaga, Spain
mtoranm@nexo.es

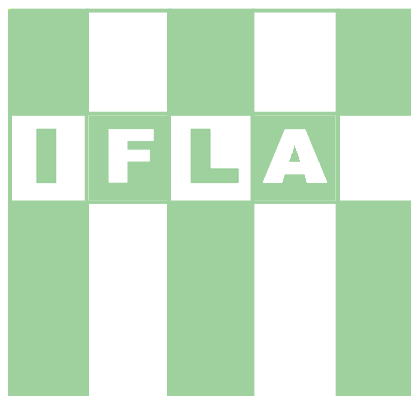
Nancy Mary Panella
Bolling Memorial Medical Library
St. Luke's Roosevelt Hospital Center
1111 Amsterdam Avenue
New York, NY 10025, USA
slhbnl4@metgate.metro.org

Gary E. Strong
Queens Borough Public Library
89-11 Merrick Blvd.
Jamaica, NY 11432, USA
gstrong@queenslibrary.org

Birgitta Irvall
The Swedish Library of Talking Books
and Braille
S-122 88 Enskede, Sweden
birgitta.irvall@tpb.se

Claudie Guerin
Assistance Publique, Hopitaux de
Paris
10 rue des Fosses St. Marcel
75005 Paris, France
claudie.guerin@sap.ap-hop.fr

Gyda Skat Nielsen
Søllerød Public Libraries
Holte Midtpunkt 23
2840 Holte, Denmark
gsn@sollerod.dk



Newsletter of the IFLA Section of Libraries Serving Disadvantaged Persons

*Edited by Vibeke Lehmann,
Department of Corrections
P.O. Box 7925, Madison, WI 53707, USA
FAX: +608.266.5069;
E-mail: vibeke.lehmann@doc.state.wi.us*

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Vera Elitsova Strelkova
Central Clinical Hospital Library of the
President
of the Russian Federation
c/o Russian State Library
3/5 Vozdvizhenka
Moscow 101000, Russia
mbs@rsl.ru

Michel Rosenfeld
Bibliothèque Municipale
2 bis, Avenue André Malraux
37042 Tours Cedex, France
biblio@ville-tours.fr

Yu Kikuschi
Japan Hospital Patients' Library
Association
2227-1 Okura, Machida-shi
Tokyo, Japan
libraryp@join-am.ne.jp

Misako Nomura
Japanese Society for Rehabilitation
of Persons with Disabilities
22-1 Toyama 1-chome
Shinjuku-ku
Tokyo, Japan
nomura@dinf.ne.jp

Corresponding Members

Dimitriyka Stefanova
St.st. Cyril & Methodius National
Library
Boulevard Vassil Levski 88
1504 Sofia, Bulgaria
FAX: +359.2435495

José Díaz Roque
Biblioteca Provincial
Calle 37 No. 5615
e/ 56 y 58
CP 55100 Cienfuegos, Cuba
bprgvaldes@binanet.lib.cult.cu

Advisors

Ka-Jo Carlsen
Högåsvn 38
1352 Kolsås, Norway
FAX: +47.67.53.9755

