Shared values bring different cultures together

By Lesley Farmer

This summer I had the privilege to be invited to teach for the Master's degree in Library and Information Management program at the University of Hong Kong (HKU). I also served as the external examiner for the Diploma for Teacher Librarianship, under the auspices of HKU's School of Professional and Continuing Education: SPACE.

Hong Kong Education

Hong Kong's education reflects the long occupation by the United Kingdom. The system is basically British in nature, and consists of six primary forms and seven secondary forms. Since the reversion to China, Hong Kong's curriculum has become more Sino-oriented. The main strands include reading/literacy, science, technology, and moral education. Students must meet both English and Cantonese language standards.

In higher education the associate's degree and diploma program usually require two years, and the bachelor's program is set up as a three-year process. The master's degree typically requires a two-year commitment. There has been some talk about changing the educational year divisions to provide more seamless education from primary through higher education.

HKU is Hong Kong's oldest institute of higher education, and

Lesley Farmer had the opportunity to work with many people during her time in Hong Kong. Farmer taught in the Library and Information Management master's program and served as an external examiner for the Diploma for Teacher Librarianship at the University of Hong Kong this summer.

began in 1910 as a medical training

(EMB), every primary and secondary school is mandated to hire a qualified full-time teacher librarian. These teacher librarians need to be credentialed teachers *and* credentialed teacher librarians. In some cases, a classroom teacher takes the position for a year or two, but others find teacher librarianship to be their real niche. Much of their time is spent in collection management, but increasingly they are working with teachers in reading promotion, information literacy, and technology competency efforts. The EMB has established the mechanism for a union catalog, so it is hoped that teacher librarians will contribute to it. There has also been some movement to push information literacy more substantially; the new emphasis on liberal studies may be the window of opportunity for such integration.

At one point, EMB in-house training provided the basis of academic preparation, but in 1999 a diploma program was established at HKU. Because credentialed programs did not require a bachelor's program, students came with a wide spectrum of experiences and academics. Now teacher librarians need to have a bachelor's degree, although most have already earned such a degree for their first credential. The master's program is open to all types of librarianship, but is not required for teacher librarians. The Education and Manpower Bureau is contemplating the bachelor's degree as a requirement for entering teacher librarians; they also plan to phase out their own training, and require all candidates to take at least one year of graduate courses, which would be paid by the state. The full diploma, however, would require an additional year of training.

The Diploma of Teacher Librarianship program now consists of ten modules (courses) with 36 credits total. Class modules are usually held weekly for eight to ten weeks, followed by the next module. Subjects include collection development and organization, technology, information sources and technology, information

literacy and collaboration. A field experience is built into each year's program. The approach blends theory and practice and accesses catalogs

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Message from the IRRT Chair

By Jeannette Pierce

Thank You!

I would like to personally thank the committee chairs and committee members who conducted the work of the IRRT at the Midwinter Meeting in San Antonio. Our membership will learn about some of the IRRT's upcoming activities in this issue of IL and there will be more to learn in the June issue that will come out before the Annual Conference in New Orleans. We are a busy Round Table and we want all of our members to be aware of our many activities and to share them with others. Check our web site (http://www.ala.org/irrt) for updates between now and June.

Upcoming ALA Elections

I encourage all IRRT members to

Indigenous librarians gather in Canada

By Loriene Roy, Sandra Littletree, and Robert L. Yazzie, Jr.

Since fall 1999, indigenous library workers from around the world have been gathering every two years to exchange information, make contacts, and deliberate on policy and planning documents. The Fourth International Indigenous Librarians Forum recently took place in Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada. Hosted by the Library Services for Saskatchewan Aboriginal Peoples, Inc. and the Albert Community Library Committee, Forum sponsors included the Regina Public Library, University of Saskatchewan Library, and other donors.

The Forum offered two events: a two-day preconference open to anyone interested in indigenous information services and the two-day Forum gathering for indigenous peoples only. Pre-Conference and Forum agendas included indigenous observances including an opening prayer and the singing of "O Canada" in the Cree language and honoring knowledge arriving from the four cardinal directions. Key note speakers from these four directions/doors opened each day's session. Keynote speakers included Diane Hill (Mohawk), Maria Campbell (Metis), and Sharon Shorty (Tlingit/Northern Tutchone/Norwegian). Delegates from the East represented the place of renewal and new beginnings. They spoke about public library initiatives in the provinces of Saskatchewan and Ontario, a book distribution service for indigenous publications, services available from Library and Archives Canada, and the role of tribal college libraries.

Day two brought knowledge from the south, the place of the heart, with presentations on heath information, policies and protocols created for work with aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations in Australia, contemporary themes in children's books, and services from the New Mexico State Library and the Institute of American Indian Arts library. Day three brought reports from the west, the place of sacrifice, with a panel on graduate education for indigenous librarians and a presentation on First Nations library services. Panels from Alaska led the program on day four, focusing on knowledge from the north, the drawing place of true wisdom.

eIFL.net: Sharing E-resources globally

By Isabel Bernal

eIFL.net is an international network of library consortia dedicated to providing services to transition and developing countries. In only five years of existence, eIFL.net has developed an enviable record of success advancing the information needs of fifty countries on three continents.

eIFL.net was born in October 1999 as an Open Society Institute Initiative within its Information Program. The purpose was to address technological, economic or information awareness barriers that education and research institutions in the former Soviet Union and East European countries were facing regarding access to online scholarly documentation. To achieve its goal, eIFL.net has encouraged the creation and built the sustainability of national library consortia in these transition countries. At the same time, eIFL.net deemed that it could use its purchasing power to negotiate with commercial publishers on behalf of eIFL.net member countries to enable them to obtain electronic resources at highly discounted subscription rates and under fair terms and conditions.

In 2002 eIFL.net built upon its success and became an independent incorporation (as a foundation under Dutch law) and enhanced its scope both geographically and thematically, while maintaining its dedication to build and support library consortia in developing countries. Today, it is the largest library consortium network, comprising 50 member countries in Africa, Asia, the former Soviet Union, Central and Eastern Europe, and the Middle East. The membership encompasses about 4,000 local libraries and 800 million users. Current country members include Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Bulgaria, Cambodia, Cameroon, China, Croatia, Estonia, Georgia, Ghana, Kazakhstan, Kosovo, Kyrgyzstan, Laos, Latvia, Lesotho, Lithuania, Macedonia, Malawi, Mali, Moldova, Mongolia, Nigeria, Poland, Russia, Senegal, Serbia and Montenegro, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Sudan, Swaziland, Tajikistan, Uganda,
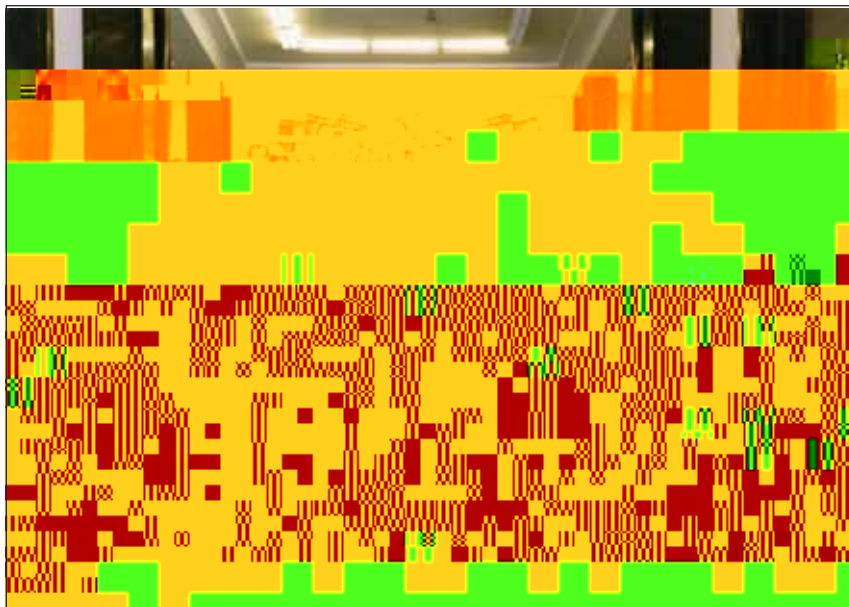
Forty-four eIFL country coordinators, along with the eIFL team, attend the 2005 General Assembly, which took place at the National Library in Vilnius, Lithuania, on October 27-28.

Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. New Members in 2005 included Egypt, Iran, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine (both West Bank and Gaza), Syria, and Mozambique.

With its main office in Rome, Italy, eIFL.net provides multiple programs for its members, including: electronic resource licensing; advocacy and support to provide access to quality scholarly e-resources for library, education, research, and professional communities; and educational services related to library consortium management and sustainability. As a result, eIFL.net has become a leading multi-country negotiator for securing affordable commercial electronic information services for transitional and developing countries, as well as a key player in the international community to improve access electronic resources. While maintaining these activities at its core, eIFL.net continues to diversify its services. In 2005, eIFL.net embarked upon programs to advocate and support fair intellectual property legislation, established partnerships with several open access communities and initiatives, and launched a technology advancement programme.

eIFL.net continues to seek opportunities to close the digital divide in content access in developing countries by:
- endorsing strong and sustainable library consortia;
- negotiating and lobbying for the wide availability of electronic resources, including the adoption of a model license and contract now used for eIFL.net-negotiated agreements with commercial publishers;
- motivating the development of local electronic material;
- engaging in strong central business relationships with commercial and open access content providers;
- providing top quality educational and consulting services;
- working for the adoption and advancement of effective information distribution models;
- supporting the use of Open Source Software for libraries in member countries

The organisation of training sessions and workshops for library staff within the eIFL.net network of countries is an essential method to help