

THE WLIC/IFLA CONFERENCE IN BUENOS AIRES 2004



Denise Nicholson

I attended the IFLA Conference in Buenos Aires in August 2004. Buenos Aires is a fascinating, vibrant city. My husband managed to get on a flight right at the last minute so he accompanied me to Argentina. We were lucky to go on a city tour and some very enjoyable day trips (e.g. Tigre and the Parana River Delta, La Boca and others), as well as a trip to Colonia, in Uruguay, which was like a step back into the past, where time just stood still. We had great fun at a Gaucho farm where we enjoyed a fantastic

'braai' and enjoyed a ride in an old-fashioned horse carriage. I also had my first horse-ride, sitting behind a Gaucho horseman, who sped around the arena with me holding on for dear life! Night entertainment included the IFLA cultural evening at the Opera Theatre and a dinner/tango show, both of which were outstanding. We became quite good at sign language, since few Argentinians speak English. Buenos Aires is a shopper's paradise, but unfortunately a librarian's salary does not allow one to go too crazy!

As I had been re-elected for a second term to the Advisory Board of the IFLA Committee on Copyright and Other Legal Matters, as well as to the Committee itself, I attended four meetings where various global copyright issues were discussed. I am also a member of PRAC, the Publishers' Relations Advisory Committee, and attended its meeting, where we discussed various topics of common interest between libraries and publishers. I also attended all the copyright sessions which were very interesting. Unfortunately the papers have not yet been placed on the IFLA website.

The session to address copyright issues for the print handicapped was very good and presented some positive ideas and recommendations to break the barriers to access to information for persons with disabilities. These are the papers which have been placed on the IFLA website at this stage:-

Copyright exceptions for the visually impaired - international perspective (Geidy Lung, WIPO) <http://www.ifla.org/IV/ifla70/papers/177e-Lung.pdf>

Copyright protection as access barrier for people who read differently: the case for an international approach (Dr. Johan Roos, Director, SA Library for the Blind) <http://www.ifla.org/IV/ifla70/papers/147e-Roos.pdf>

Copyright: how can barriers to access be removed? An action plan for the removal of some copyright barriers that prevent equitable access to information by people with print disabilities (S. King and D. Mann) http://www.ifla.org/IV/ifla70/papers/173c-King_Mann.pdf

Towards the ideal: steps to improve access (V. Owen) <http://www.ifla.org/IV/ifla70/papers/121e-Owen.pdf>

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Impressions and the IFLA Document Delivery Standing Committee meetings

The IFLA 2004 conference in Buenos Aires was really spectacular! It was especially fascinating to learn so much more about the Latin American region, and note how libraries are a hard-won and fought-for right. Libraries truly represent, and are symbolic of, intellectual freedom in Latin America. The people of Latin America are vigorously passionate about their libraries, and that is really heartening. I found the whole debate about Cuba through FAIFE to be especially interesting. Libraries are the most political issue there is! As a representative of the National Library, I in particular found it most useful to hear what other National Libraries are doing, and meet and exchange ideas with colleagues. The National Library of South Africa still has a long way to go, but as we link up more and more, globally, the vision of our role becomes more focused.

My main purpose at IFLA was to attend the IFLA Document Delivery Standing Committee meetings held on Sunday, 22nd August to Saturday, 28th August 2004. I represent South Africa on this Committee from 2003 - 2007, and this was my first attendance at a full SC meeting. I prepared a report on this, which I used as the basis for a feedback session to the LIASA Interlending Interest Group at the LIASA 2004 conference in Polokwane. If any colleagues are interested in reading the full report, they are welcome to e-mail me, and I will e-mail them a copy.

In short, an incredible experience! Having the conference in Latin America made it an especially rich, textured, and deep experience.

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LIASA poster awarded 3rd place

Naomi Haasbroek and Nohra Moerat were awarded third place in the Best Poster Competition it was announced at the Closing Ceremony of the World Library and Information Congress in Buenos Aires, 22 - 27 August 2004.

It was a proud moment for both LIASA members to be recognised in this way as neither had presented at an international conference before and both were newcomers to IFLA.

The poster entitled "Developing a vibrant and relevant library profession for South Africa" was designed to familiarise the international library community with LIASA who will be hosting the Congress in 2007. The abstract for the poster reads as follows:

The process that led to the inauguration of the Library and Information Association of South Africa (LIASA) mirrors the political process that gave rise to a democratic South Africa. Just as the "new" South Africa has been welcomed into the fold of the international community, so LIASA has been chosen to host the World Library and Information Congress/73rd IFLA Conference in Durban in 2007, its 10th anniversary year. It will be the second time only that IFLA comes to Africa.

This poster aims to illustrate this remarkable achievement and how South African librarians have enabled LIASA to become the voice of the library and information profession, recognised and respected nationally and internationally.

Through its communication, advocacy and marketing strategies, its online and print publications and Annual Conference, LIASA provides its membership with opportunities to network and share, to develop and learn new skills and to interact with fellow professionals, both locally and internationally. It offers a window to LIASA and its activities for all key LIS stakeholders as well the public at large.

Through this poster session we wish to offer conference delegates a glimpse of LIASA that will encourage them to foster good relations, form partnerships with their South African colleagues and most of all, attend WLIC in Durban in 2007.

The poster sessions were held between 12:00 and 14:00 on two days and presenters were expected to be present to answer any questions that delegates had for them.

For Naomi and I this started even as we mounted our poster in the vast exhibition area and continued over the next few days. We were astounded by the interest that librarians have in South Africa and many delegates, especially from Africa and the developing world, indicated that they would be coming to Durban in 2007. Some, mainly from Europe and North America, were concerned about the security situation, but the overwhelming majority were more interested in the costs as the 2005 (Oslo) and 2006 (Seoul) would be too expensive for many to attend.

There was a palpable excitement among our African and South American colleagues and many indicated that they would be marketing the Durban congress to their colleagues back home. This was fuelled in no small measure by the shopping bags displaying the WLIC/IFLA 2007 logo (the logo's first public appearance) and brought all the way from Durban by Haffy Haffajee for us to hand out as part of our presentation.

The interaction with colleagues was stimulating and inspiring. Being awarded third place out of 80 posters was the cherry on top of a truly amazing experience overall.

Naomi Haasbroek was also the official LIASA representative to IFLA and attended all Council meetings as well.

Nohra Moerat's travel and accommodation was generously sponsored by the Department of Arts and Culture because the poster was regarded as preliminary marketing for WLIC/IFLA 2007 in Durban.

Nohra Moerat

