

The IASL Conferences



1971	Kingston	Jamaica
1972	London	England
1973	Nairobi	Kenya
1974	Singapore	Singapore
1975	West Berlin	West Germany
1976	Annapolis	USA
1977	Ibadan	Nigeria
1978	Melbourne	Australia
1979	Middelfart	Denmark
1980	Cuidad Guayana	Venezuela
1981	Aberystwyth	Wales
1982	Red Deer	Canada
1983	Bad Segeberg	West Germany
1984	Honolulu	USA
1985	Kingston	Jamaica
1986	Halifax	Canada
1987	Reykjavik	Iceland
1988	Kalamazoo	USA
1989	Kuala Lumpur	Malaysia
1990	Umeå	Sweden
1991	Everett	USA
1992	Belfast	Ulster
1993	Adelaide	Australia
1994	Pittsburgh	USA
1995	Worcester	England
1996	Ocho Rios	Jamaica
1997	Vancouver	Canada

Anniversary Celebrations

It was fitting that Jamaica should be the host country for this twenty-fifth anniversary conference, and it was good that Jamaican Charter Members and early supporters of IASL were able to attend. The conference theme, 'Sustaining the Vision', was selected as a reference both to the past and to the future. At the conference opening ceremony, there were anniversary greetings from other associations, including the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA), the Commonwealth Library Association (COMLA), and the

International Reading Association.

Over the years, a number of features have come to be part of the IASL conference opening ceremony, so that while special elements from the host country are included each year, there are some things that are by now regarded as traditional. This year, the traditional presentation of the flags of each country represented at the conference was handled a little differently, with the 21 flags being carried and presented, not by delegates, but by uniformed cadets from Jamaica's Prospect College, with accompanying music from the young

people of the Jamaica Military Band. The cadets also carried and raised the IASL flag. Song and dance performances, including a costumed dance by the children of nearby St Ann's Bay Primary School, enhanced the Jamaican flavour of the ceremony.

The conference was officially opened by the Governor-General of Jamaica, His Excellency the Most Honourable Sir Howard Cooke, who also attended the opening reception and met many of the overseas delegates.



The Governor-General of Jamaica, Sir Howard Cooke, opening the 25th IASL Conference in Ocho Rios, Jamaica, on 28 July.

A founder of IASL, **Dr Jean E. Lowrie**, the retiring Executive Secretary, was presented with a copy of a book that was launched at the Opening Ceremony, *Sustaining the Vision: A Collection of Articles and Papers on Research in School Librarianship, in Honor of Jean E. Lowrie*. This publication reflected two of Jean's enduring professional concerns:

the promotion of school libraries worldwide (particularly in developing countries) and the encouragement of research in school librarianship as a basis for the development of school library services. Six Australians (**Ross Todd, Chris Skrzeczynski, Joe Hallein, Judy Phillips, David Waters and Anne Clyde**) contributed five of the articles for this book.

The conference closed with a 25th Anniversary Banquet which continued the birthday theme with toasts, special presentations, an address by former IASL President **Lucille Thomas**, and a partly edible birthday scenario by **Roberta Margo** of the United States. (Unless you have seen one of Bobbie's presentations, it is hard to imagine them - suffice it to say that butcher's paper, Mars bar wrappers and the English language can be combined to produce entertaining effects.)

Special Publications

In addition to the Anniversary Banquet and other activities, **Helen White's** Anniversary Committee produced a small booklet, *Sustaining the Vision 1971-1996: Memories, a Sharing From Our Earliest Members*, that was distributed free to all delegates. This booklet consisted of a collection of messages and reminiscences from Charter Members and others who were involved in early IASL activities.

A special issue of the IASL journal *School Libraries Worldwide*, produced under the editorship of **Dr Dianne Oberg** of Canada and distributed at the confer-

IASL in Jamaica... 'No problems!'

Laurel A. Clyde



JAMAICANS say 'no problems' the way Australians say 'no worries' or 'She'll be right, mate!'.

A taxi to the market? *No problems!*
A missing bundle of conference handouts? *No problems!*
An Internet connection malfunctioning? *No problems!*

I was not surprised to find, then, when I got to the aforementioned market, that one of the best-selling items was a T-shirt that said *Jamaica, no problems!* However, just as the Australian 'no worries' is not an indication that you should stop worrying, so the Jamaican 'no problems' is not a promise that life will be free of frustrations.

Thus it was that this year's International Association of School Librarianship (IASL) conference, held at Ocho Rios, northern Jamaica, in the last week of July, was a sometimes frustrating mixture of the excellent and the pedestrian, organisation and chaos, friendliness and whatever is the reverse.

The conference highlights (and there were many) were not always those that the organisers had planned, just as some of the problems probably could not have been anticipated by planning.

Nevertheless, on balance, the week-long experience was positive, especially in terms of interaction among delegates from twenty-one countries. However, the conference venue, a large and expensive, all-inclusive resort hotel, effectively isolated delegates from the real Jamaica, yet those people who were able to venture out found that Jamaica beyond the gates of the Jamaica Grande Hotel was much more interesting, both professionally and culturally, than the somewhat sanitised Jamaica of the conference.

An Anniversary

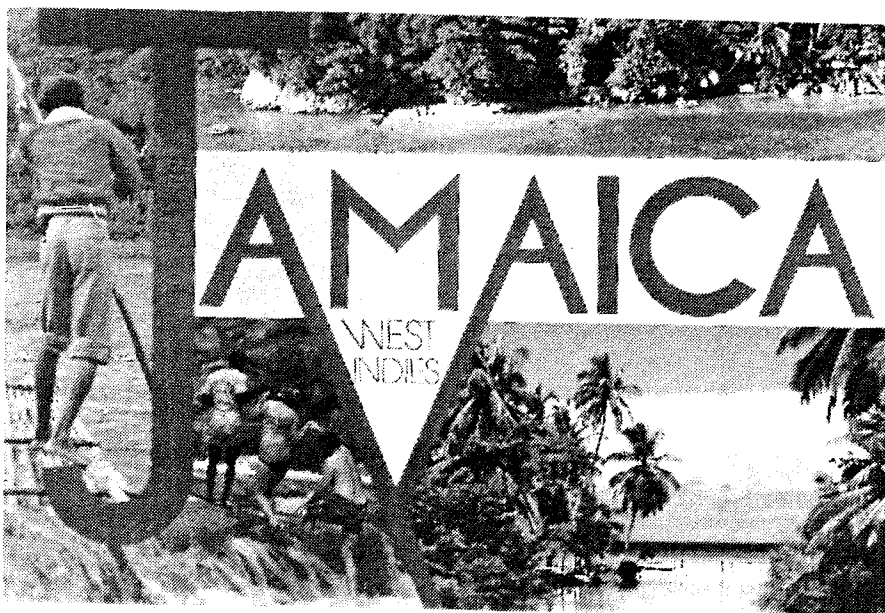
This conference was a special one in the life of the association, in that it marked the twenty-fifth anniversary of the formal establishment of IASL. In the early 1960s, school librarians attending meet-

ings of the then World Confederation of Organisations of the Teaching Profession (now Education International) had talked about having an international meeting of people associated with school library services.

The first result of this was an international meeting in 1967 in Vancouver, Canada, during the WCOTP conference in that city. An international steering committee was formed to create an international forum for 'people interested in developing library services for primary and secondary schools'. Australians were involved from the very beginning, with representation on this steering committee (along with the United Kingdom, Kenya, Paraguay, Malaysia and the

United States). During the WCOTP meeting in Sydney in August 1970, a tentative framework for an International Association of School Librarianship was approved in principle. Following the Sydney meeting, the IASL charter was drawn up and the Association was inaugurated in Jamaica in August 1971.

It is worth noting that not only have Australians been involved in IASL from the initial planning stages, but there were Australians (including **John Ward, Joyce Fardell and Ann Parry**) among the Charter Members. Today Australians are the second largest national group in IASL, after the United States. Considering the relative populations of the two countries, this is no mean achievement.



Jamaica, Caribbean tourist paradise and venue for the international conference.

IASL Sponsors

Some sponsored sessions are part of all IASL conference programs. The annual Weston Woods Lecture was delivered by **Isabel Gómez** of Santiago, Chile, on the topic 'Teaching for audio-visual media: A challenge for education', while the World Book International Lecture was given by **Virginia Dike** of Nigeria, who spoke about 'Expanding the educational horizons of Nigerian students through the school library program'.

Jeff Bobick of Softlink International (Australian developers of the OASIS/Annie/Alice school library automation software) presented a system to a local Jamaican school library selected by the conference organisers, and later demonstrated the system.

IASL/SIRS International Commendation Award

The 1996 IASL/SIRS International Commendation Award was presented to the Association for Teacher Librarianship in Canada (ATLC) for their publication, *Winners: Resource Based Units Cooperatively Planned by Teacher-Librarians and Teachers* [see the May 1996 issue of *Orana*, p. 110]. Linda Knight, the editor of this book, was at the conference and accepted the award on behalf of ATLC. This award is given each year for 'outstanding and innovative projects, plans, programs or publications which could serve as models for replication by other school librarians/media specialists'. The winner receives a monetary award and a commemorative plaque, both provided by SIRS. This year, an Honourable Mention

certificate and a cheque were also presented for another project that impressed the judges, the SLAQ Promotion Project: Subcommittee Expansion, Development and Support. **Pat Matthews** of South Australia accepted the award on behalf of the School Library Association of Queensland (SLAQ). As Pat commented in her brief acceptance speech, 'SLAQ is definitely not slack'. This is the fourth time in seven years that the Queensland association has been commended through this IASL/SIRS award.

IASL/Softlink 25th Anniversary Research Grant

To celebrate the Silver Anniversary of IASL, Softlink International (through its president, Queenslander **John Dunne**, who is an IASL member) sponsored the IASL/Softlink 25th Anniversary Research Grant. This was awarded to a group of researchers from two countries: **Dr Dianne Oberg** of Canada and **Lyn Hay** and **James Henri** of Australia, who will be investigating 'the principal's role in developing and supporting an information literate school'. Dianne received the award during the conference opening ceremony on behalf of the research team.

Research Award

One of the objectives of IASL is 'to foster communication and research in the field of school librarianship' and clearly the IASL/Softlink Grant helped to draw attention to the importance of research. To continue this work, the IASL Board has approved the establishment of an

IASL Special Programs & Awards

IASL/UNESCO Cooperative Action Program helps provide books for school libraries in developing countries – Africa, Asia, the South Pacific, Eastern Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean.

School Library Leadership Development Fund assists in bringing leaders in the field of education and libraries from developing countries to the Annual Conference of the International Association of School Librarianship.

Support-A-Member is a gift program designed to make it possible for school librarians, teacher-librarians, media specialists, library assistants and others interested in school library service who are living in developing countries to belong to the International Association of School Librarianship.

The **Association Assembly** provides a forum at the IASL Annual Conference for association member delegates to share programs and activities and to advise IASL on its activities. The Association Communiqué is the annual report of the Association Assembly.

The **IASL/SIRS International Commendation Award** is given for an innovative project submitted by a school library association member of IASL which could serve as a model for replication by others.

annual research award to be called the IASL/Murofushi Research Fund Award. The fund is named for **Professor Takeshi Murofushi** of the Asia University in Japan, a former member of the IASL Board who has provided financial support for several of the association's activities in the past. At this 1996 conference, he was one of the recipients of certificates of special recognition from the President of IASL, **Dr Sigrún Klara Hannesdóttir**

of Iceland, for his contributions, particularly to the support of research. The first grant from this fund will be awarded at the 1997 conference, and details will be available from the IASL office and on the IASL World Wide Web site.

Leadership Development Grant

The 1996 IASL/Jean E. Lowrie Leadership Development Grant was awarded to

LAUREL A. CLYDE

ence, also contained articles related to the history and development of the Association. **Dr Rebecca Knuth** (University of Hawaii) wrote her doctoral dissertation on the development and role of IASL as an international professional association, and articles in this special issue of the journal are based on her research. A paper that she presented during the conference (Trends and movements within IASL, 1972–1996) was also based on this research. In addition, conference delegates were provided with a copy of another article by Becky, 'The impact of an international professional organization on school librarianship in Jamaica', which was published in the journal *Third World Libraries*.

Together, these publications provide an important historical record for the Association and useful background for members.

Research Papers

One of the good features of this year's conference was an apparent overall increase in the quality of the papers, though there were fewer papers than at some other recent conferences. Perhaps there is a connection here? Certainly the proportion of research-based papers was higher than in previous years, a development that is entirely appropriate for an international association. With research-based papers scheduled throughout the conference (not just in the formal Research Session), more practitioners, as well as academics and researchers, attended and, not surprisingly, found them relevant to their work. Among the re-



Dr Dianne Oberg, Associate Professor at the University of Alberta, Canada, giving a paper at the IASL Conference.

search-based papers were:

- 'So little instruction: Use of libraries in schools' (on the ways in which teachers use libraries in their teaching) by Dr Dianne Oberg (Canada),
- 'The impact of scheduling on Cooperative Program Planning and Teaching (CPPT) and information skills instruction: A comparison between Canadian and American elementary schools' by Dr Ken Haycock (Canada),
- 'Student research: Productive or counterproductive?' (a qualitative study that examined the value of library research projects) by Dr Joy McGregor (USA),
- 'IASL, school libraries and the Internet' (my own paper) which was based on three recent research projects that looked at ways in which the Internet is being used in school libraries.
- Four research-based papers that dealt

IASL IN JAMAICA... 'NO PROBLEMS!'

with aspects of children's reading or children's literature – from Jamaica, papers by Cherrell Shelley-Robinson and Verna George, and from South Africa, papers by Myrna Machet and Dr Sandra Olén.

The formal Research Session (a feature of each conference since 1991) was organised by **Dr Maureen Nimon** of the University of South Australia, but chaired in her absence by Dr Dianne Oberg.

Professional Papers

The professional papers, like the research papers, covered a range of topics, though again with some emphasis on literacy and reading. Papers included:

- 'The combined school/public library concept in the United States' by Jack Stack (USA),
- 'Integrating information skills into the curriculum: A Jamaican perspective' by Myrtle Harris (Jamaica),
- 'Information processing skills, scope and sequence planning and integration matrix' by Mary Ann Paulin (USA),
- 'School library administration: Leadership for the 21st Century' by Dr Ann Nauman and Marvene Dearman (USA),
- 'Helping teachers sustain the vision: A leadership role' by Dr Blanche Woolls (USA),
- 'The teachers' activity centres of Malaysia' by Dr Diljit Singh (Malaysia),
- 'Local heroes and heroines in books for Caribbean children: A cultural necessity as we redefine our identity' by Dianne Brown (Jamaica),
- 'Socio-cultural and gender factors that

affect reading' by J. Patrick Romaine (Canada),

- 'Celebrating diversity of traditions via bridging cultures' by Madeleine Hoss and Roslyn Wylie (USA)
- and a thoughtful discussion of the topic 'Will school libraries all become virtual libraries?' by Dr Sandra Olén (South Africa).

Although there were no Australians amongst the presenters of professional (rather than research) papers, there was Australian involvement, with **Lalita Brond** and **Maggie Roche** both chairing sessions.



Maggie Roche of Sydney used the conference Internet terminals to send e-mail 'postcards from Jamaica' to IASL-LINK and OZTL_NET.

Daisy Lake, Supervisor of School Libraries in Antigua. Daisy's vision – that we all have to work for the improvement of school libraries with whatever resources we have – was expressed in her acceptance speech: 'If it is to be, it is up to me!'

The IASL Leadership Development Grant is provided each year to enable a person who is in a leadership role in a developing country to attend the IASL conference. From 1996, it has been officially named the IASL/Jean E. Lowrie Grant in recognition of Jean's long-standing interest in the promotion of school library services in developing countries.

Over the past seven years, this fund has been supported by the annual IASL Auction, a fun night at each conference when **Gerald Brown**, IASL Vice-President (described in a previous Australian report as 'that Canadian charmer') auctions all kinds of (more or less auctionable) contributions from members and sponsors. This year's auction raised more than US\$1200, which will go to the Support-A-Member Fund which subsidises fees for people in developing countries who normally would not be able to afford membership (particularly when that membership has to be paid for in foreign currency). This is the only way that people in leadership roles in some developing countries can be part of IASL and have access to IASL publications like the newsletter and the journal *School Libraries Worldwide*. To someone in Australia, this may not sound like much, but I found in my travels in Africa earlier in 1996 that in some developing countries even national libraries may not

be able to afford *any* foreign journal subscriptions and some school library advisers in those countries see only their own school library newsletters and the journals and newsletters provided by IASL. The requirement that foreign subscriptions be paid in 'hard' currency put them well beyond the means of individuals in developing countries for whom an IASL subscription might represent a month's salary. Under these circumstances, the fund can make a real difference.

Special Activities

Other activities that were part of the conference week included the Assembly of Associations (where representatives of the IASL member associations report on their activities and share information), visits to schools and libraries, readings from Caribbean children's literature, a presentation of Jamaican videos for children and demonstrations of IASL-LINK and the IASL Web site.

Telecommunications of Jamaica (the equivalent of the Australia's Telstra) set up four Internet terminals which were available for use by delegates throughout the conference. I used one to demonstrate the IASL Web site during a conference session, and all four were also used for short Internet tutorials for delegates. In the latter, I was assisted by **Sigrún Johannesdóttir** (Iceland), **Dianne Oberg** (Canada) and **Hallgrímur Indriðason** (Iceland). **Owen Burthwright** of Telecommunications of Jamaica was present throughout the conference and he also helped delegates to

use the terminals. **Maggie Roche** of Sydney was one of the people who took enthusiastic advantage of this, not only using the conference terminals to send e-mail 'postcards from Jamaica' to IASL-LINK and OZTL_NET, but also showing other delegates how to use the Internet.

1997... IASL in Vancouver!

The 1997 IASL conference will be held in beautiful Vancouver, British Columbia, from 6–11 July in cooperation with the Association for Teacher-Librarianism in Canada (ATLC). The theme of 'Bridging the Gap: Information Rich but Knowledge Poor' will provide the foundation for the exploration of opportunities and challenges that face schools and school libraries today.

Lynne Lighthall's Vancouver organising committee has begun work on a program that promises to be profession-

ally exciting, incorporating a range of visits, research papers and professional development sessions. The venue will be the University of British Columbia (UBC) with accommodation on campus and in hotels.

As Qantas flies into Vancouver from Sydney, attendance at this conference will be easier and cheaper for Australians. In addition, Vancouver is a wonderful gateway to other scenic areas including the Canadian Rockies, the Whistler mountain resort area, the Gulf Islands and the Inside Passage to Alaska. □

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