



CONFERENCE 2006

a personal experience

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The 9th LIASA conference in September 2006 was held at the Saint Georges Hotel, a mediterranean oasis in the heart of Gauteng (15km from Pretoria). I was accompanied by Ethney Waters, a book selector and colleague who attended the conference for the first time. The Saint Georges Hotel is one of the most beautiful hotels I have ever stayed at, a massive venue that could accommodate large numbers of people - perfect for the conference.

On Monday, 25 September 2006, there was a choice between attending a pre-conference presentation or a tour through Johannesburg and Soweto. As it was her first time in this mega city Ethney decided to go on the tour. I was more interested in the pre-conference and attended all the presentations which included the following topics:

- ❑ the South African government support to libraries for nation building
- ❑ marketing library products and services: with special reference to Africa Institute of South Africa (AISA) library and documentation services
- ❑ the Internet: a dynamic tool for librarians and information specialists
- ❑ partnerships toward a common goal: a task beyond profit making.

On Monday evening a fun run was arranged for all the energetic librarians who wanted to show off their athletic talents.

On Tuesday, 26 September 2006, the official opening was held in the Parthenon, one of the many auditoriums that could easily accommodate up to a 1000 people. All activities were centered around the theme of the conference: *Libraries: partners in learning, nation building and development*. The conference was opened by Rachel More, chair of Local Area Committee (LAC), the singing

of the National Anthem and a 10 000 book donation ceremony for disadvantaged schools. This was a very emotional ceremony - one of my friends from University of the Western Cape, Beulah Isaacs told me that she shed some tears when the theme song of **Chariots of fire** was played and children and publishers who sponsored the books walked through the isles.

Topics that were presented that day included:

- ❑ the changing roles of public libraries in Tanzania
- ❑ learning and teaching: the public library in a world of lifelong learning.

Dr Graham Dominy, who was standing in for Dr Pallo Jordan (Minister of Arts and Culture) delivered the keynote address which conveyed the message that the minister is passionate about and committed to public libraries and Government has recognised that public libraries need transformations

The beautiful Saint Georges Hotel in Gauteng was the venue for the Liasa Conference 2006. This group of photos shows the entrance (right), and balcony with a sparkling fountain (below right), and patio for light meals and coffee (below)

tion. The speech also highlighted that R1 billion will be spent in this regard on the transformation process.

That evening everybody was invited to the mayoral welcoming function in the Sammy Marks Conference venue in Pretoria where Executive Mayor, Dr Ramokgopa delivered her keynote address. She stressed the importance of public libraries in Pretoria and the Council's commitment thereto. Robert Pierce from UNISA and programme director for the mayoral function, entertained the delegates with a Frank Sinatra song.

On Wednesday 27 September 2006 librarians had a choice of attending a variety of presentations held in different venues, with names such as Acropolis, Calamata, Omania, Ionic Athena and Asteria. Ethney and I chose the public and community libraries interest group session to update us on the latest issues pertaining to public libraries.

The topics presented are all available on the LIASA web site: www.liasa.org. However, here are some of the most interesting presentations at the conference:

- ❑ cultural integration - a tool for nation building: the role of libraries: Nigeria as a case study
- ❑ strengthening the library through improved access and use of information and communication
- ❑ information literacy and nation building: the University of Botswana experience



- ❑ education and Africa's information needs in the global context
- ❑ creating partnerships for the development of information literacy materials build capacity amongst instruction librarians: a GAELIC experience
- ❑ promoting information skills to health care professionals: oncology nurses as an example
- ❑ from information literacy to knowledge generation, communities of practice and advocacy to help bridging the divide: a theoretical model
- ❑ the role and influence of professionally-trained teacher-librarians in the school library programme: a study of former University of the Western Cape diploma in school librarianship students

- ❑ information or knowledge workers? Some views of employers
- ❑ library 2.0 is not only for Greeks and Techie librarians
- ❑ how information professionals can support collaborate research efforts in building a knowledge community.

Lunches were served mostly in the Marble Hall...a huge venue in which publishers and bookshops held exhibitions. I have to admit that the exhibitions were interesting and a must to view to keep one up to date with the latest material on the market.

On Thursday morning, 28 September 2006, everyone attended the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) session where Ellen Tise, coordinator of this event for 2007 in Durban, informed and discussed what could

be expected at IFLA.

(South Africa hosts the IFLA conference every 7th year.)

On Thursday afternoon the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of LIASA was held in the Parthenon Hall. Tommy Matthee, President of LIASA was re-elected as president.

That evening everyone was escorted to the Pretoria National Zoological Gardens and taken on a guided tour by park wardens to view the animals with the help of a big torch. This was something I have never done before, and it was really an exciting and worthwhile experience. Thereafter we were all treated by the director of the Zoo to a typical South African braaivleis and pap dinner and everyone joined in the dancing - relaxing after a day of presentations.

On Friday, we left the hotel very early to catch our flight in Johannesburg. On the way back to Cape Town I only had good memories and thoughts of the wonderful experiences I always have at LIASA conferences...

2007



Left: Delegates from the Western Cape branch of LIASA

Left centre: Many long hours of concentration during the day

Left below: Attending an evening cocktail party were - (ltr) Yvette Esterhuizen, Beulah Isaacs, Neville Adonis, Natalie Lewis, Ethney Waters, Tifi Thobeka and Marcolene Roach



Excitement for first time delegates

First-time congress goers, Andile Koti (left) from Knysna Library and Rhodes Henene, librarian at Sedgefield Library and in charge of the Smutsville Depot Library with HOD of Knysna Libraries, Gillian Carter. Both Andile and Rhodes reported back on the journey, describing it as 'a breath-taking experience, very nervous, yet excited about our first flight ever'.

