

News Division's International Relations Committee

In juni hield de Special Libraries Association (SIA) haar jaarlijkse conferentie, ditmaal in Los Angeles. Ook nu weer waren duizenden vakgenoten, verdeeld over tientallen Chapters, Units en Divisions, bijeen om te congresseren over ontwikkelingen in het vak en om de zeer uitgebreide leveranciersbeurs te bezoeken.

Michael Jesse, aankomend voorzitter van de News Division (gewoonte is dat iemand een jaar lang "chair-elect" is en dan heel veel werk verzet aan de voorbereiding van het congres; vervolgens een jaar "chair" is, eigenlijk in vergelijking met het vele werk uit het jaar ervoor een erebaan; en dan nog een jaar "past-chair" is, beschouw dat maar als een eretitel) altijd al een van de meest spraakmakende subgroepen, had een uitstekend en veelzijdig programma gerealiseerd. Van "trend spotting" en "pdf-archiving" tot "new ventures - research intranets". Inmiddels is veel van het gebodene op diverse sites terug te vinden. Tijdens de jaarvergadering van News Division op 10 juni

gaf ik een kort overzicht van de activiteiten en vooral van de ideeënuitswisseling en plannen die het International Relations Committee (IRC) in het eerste jaar van haar bestaan heeft ontwikkeld. De SLA heeft nu een beperkt aantal IRC's opgezet, de meeste daarvan zijn door alle ontwikkelingen in 2001 heel voorzichtig van start gegaan.

Afgesproken is dat het IRC DNWS ook in 2002/2003 voortgezet wordt. Als nieuwe leden zijn inmiddels toegetreten Joan Sweeney Marsh van Toronto Star en Sammy Alzofon van Palm Beach Post. Ook vanuit Zuid-Afrika is hernieuwde belangstelling, i.c. van Michelle Leon van Johnnic

Publishing in Johannesburg. De bedoeling is komend jaar wat meer van NewsLib gebruik te maken voor uitwisseling en terugkoppeling, aangezien dat kanaal zich daar het best voor leent. Wellicht komt er een Europese sublist voor de typisch in Europese context spelende zaken. Ook leeft de gedachte aan een "Who's who in newslibraries". Voor de Zuid-Amerikaanse collega's komt er waarschijnlijk een online cursusmogelijkheid, Freedom Forum wil dat idee overnemen. Het nut van gezamenlijk op te zetten speciale referentiebestanden wordt door steeds meer mensen gezien, op internet zijn al diverse voorbeelden te vinden. En tot slot komen er bijdragen in het kwartaalblad News Library News.

Voor de liefhebbers volgt onderstaand de oorspronkelijke tekst van het jaarverslag, zoals eind juni via NewsLib verspreid.

Report of News Division's International Relations Committee 2001/2002 (June 10, 2002)

About a year ago Jody Habayeb asked me to set up an International Relations Committee for News Division and to choose one or two projects to focus on for the near future. I had real doubts about this job, but felt very honored too, so in August I decided to accept this challenge, knowing that:

A year seems really long when you look forward, a lot can be done in just one year, but.....

Time flies, looking back there's also often the feeling that nothing really changed or happened, could we

have done much more?? Well, not for this year, international relations changed dramatically and our daily work was highly affected by Sept. 11, mostly by the uncertainty it came upon us all.

I was glad Barbara Semonche, Laura Soto-Barra, John Cronin and Izak Minnaar agreed to be members of this team. Later, Dalia Salazar requested to be a member too and of course, we welcome her.

During the past 10 months we had irregular contacts by e-mail, exchan-

ging thoughts and ideas about how to continue and where to focus on. The most important issues we discussed were:

Barbara made a list available of all international subscribers on NewsLib (Sept. 2001): <http://www.ibiblio.org/journalism/newlibinternational.htm>

Laura went to South-America on behalf of Freedom Forum and did training, courses and presentations on internet, intranet, news research etc. to journalism students, professors, reporters in Bolivia. That had a big impact for those involved and

gave her a real good insight in what's needed in the region.

I was glad to attend the summit on NewsLibraries in Crisis in Minneapolis (Nov. 2001). For me, this summit made clear that in Europe and the USA and Latin America, we all are dealing with the same kind of issues and problems, newspapers and media all over the world are dealing with the same kind of developments in society and the same kind of repercussions. Our job has a very international profile in itself, in fact borders aren't relevant anymore.
<http://www.inms.umn.edu/convenings/newslibraryincrisis/reports.htm>

The short thread on NewsLib on (international) travel by newslibrarians made one thing clear: knowing more about each other and being able to plug into someone with a special background or knowledge is a most remarkable, simple, straightforward and effective tool. Just being able to identify specialists and know-how in our own circuit and being able to contact a colleague that knows more/all about a certain subject.

The discussion about setting up and cooperate in special fact-files like "Political murders", started by Guus Bosch (Volkskrant, May 6, the night a Dutch politician was killed) was warmly received by many colleagues, proving that there is a gap to be breached.

In preparing for the Annual Meeting on June 10, we discussed about which projects and actions to develop for the forthcoming period. Our advice is to continue this Committee with focus on:

NewsLib is the most prominent place to establish international relations among news librarians. Barbara will do some effort to find out if it can be tuned for more specific areas, e.g. with sublists for South-America,

Europe etc. This could make NewsLib more useful for colleagues from outside USA and/or solve language-problems.

Is it possible to set up an "International Who's Who in Newslibraries", thus being able to contact special know-how in our own professional network?

How to realize the creation of international reference files like on "Political murders", is it possible to set up international cooperation on this and how and where to host these files?

The issue of sponsorships and grants for attendees from poor countries is partly covered by SLA and DNWS already participates in this. Having our own grant would be great, but it could be too much effort and will benefit just a few, while financial limitations will be a yearly issue. The IRC welcomes each idea of creating future sponsorships, because participation can be a great advantage for those involved.

Dalia Salazar (Freedom Forum/Miami) and Laura are going to do an online course in Spanish through IAPA on "Information in the Newsroom and its role in Reporting" for Latin American journalists. Results can be reported in the next conference. Dalia is also preparing a follow-up on the article in Hora de Cierre on newslibraries and research (in Spanish and in English).

NewsLibraryNews will be a good medium for constant attention. We're glad Leigh Poitinger enthusiastically welcomes the idea of having a column devoted to international affairs on each issue, starting in October 2002. I hope she'll be a most helpful editor, because it will be a tough job to edit my contributions into readable English.

Last but not least we think it would be wise to get more in touch with other SLA activities on international relations. So far, this couldn't get enough attention.

It's our intention to set up some real projects in the near future and I hope the division supports that ambition. I hope chair Michael Jesse and chair-elect Linda Henderson want to continue on this road. For now, I want to thank all members (Barbara Semonche, Dalia Salazar, Laura Soto-Barra, John Cronin and Izak Minnaar) for being good companions on this track during the past 10 months and I hope they will be fellows in the next step too.

Wil Roestenburg / Chair IRC DNWS