
Danish Research Librarians' Association

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A report on the Danish association's 13th annual conference.

Expecting the 13th annual conference of the Danish Research Librarians' Association to be a mini-version of the annual ALA smorgasbord turned out to be something of a misconception, but it was an interesting conference all the same. The style of the Danish meeting was as different from the American as its scale. There were no professional exhibitions and exhibitors, no simultaneously scheduled sessions, no crowds, no press and stress.

The conference was held June 12–13, 1990, not in the convention facilities of one or another hotel in a big city, but in the green hills and forests of east central Jutland at the Vingsted Center. It was clear that Danish research librarians want to get out and experience nature whenever they can get away from their libraries. Approximately 120 research librarians and employees of research libraries took part in the conference, little more than a tenth of the association's membership. Prominent among the participants were librarians from the two national libraries, the Royal Library in Copenhagen and the State Library in Aarhus, from the country's five university libraries, and from various technical and special libraries.

It was my pleasure, personally and professionally, to be present as the ALA representative to the conference. The outside world was also represented by the presence of library colleagues from Norway and Sweden.

The theme of this year's conference was "Internationalization," but before attention could be given to this topic, there was a considerable amount of national politics and economics to be discussed. In essence, the Danish Research Librarians assembled this year not to discuss the development of integrated systems, online catalogs, and CD-ROM indexes, but rather to analyze the implications of the conservative government's desire to reduce public expenditures and to "privatize" as many public sector services as possible. To analyze these developments and plan ways to cope on the one hand, and to make clear to civil servants from the Ministry of Culture who were present exactly what those budget cuts will mean in terms of library service on the other hand—these were the concerns of our Danish colleagues.

Each session began, as do so many gatherings of Danes, with a song. Danish voices, a capella, raised in celebration of the fatherland, of Jutland's physical beauty, of nature, and of life itself. One participant suggested more than half seriously that Danes are ready to sing on every occasion because their language, so filled with glottal stops, flows more smoothly when it is sung than when it is spoken.

The first morning's sessions were given over to organizational reports and discussions of the plans for next year's conference. The afternoon sessions on the first day were filled with reports from the president of the association, from the chief of

Denmark's library service, and from the rector of the country's only library school. The reports and the panel discussion that followed involved much consideration of how research librarians could cooperate with other colleagues, especially the politically more influential and much more numerous public librarians, in stopping the planned reductions in library personnel and funds. Many participants predicted that research libraries would be forced to close their doors to, or at least reduce their services to, their non-academic, non-research oriented users—members of the local community, high school students, and others who come into the research libraries—rather than go to the more appropriate public libraries.

Dire predictions were made and difficult questions posed throughout the afternoon. The civil servants from the Ministry of Culture could do little more than promise to carry the various concerns back to Copenhagen. The Minister of Culture had been scheduled to speak at the conference but canceled out at the last minute because of an "urgent budget meeting" in the capital.

The second day's proceedings revolved around

the theme of "internationalization." The featured speeches tended to be, from my perspective, as abstract and vague as the previous day's discussions had been practical and hard-hitting. This abrupt shift in focus from the relatively bleak Danish library future to the promise of costly international projects required more than a little adjustment on the part of some conference participants.

Much of the program involved considerations of how Danish and European libraries and librarians could extend useful help to their counterparts in the Third World, the countries of Eastern Europe, and the less prosperous countries of the European Community. In this connection, there was some discussion of what Europe could contribute that would complement rather than conflict with the American and Japanese efforts.

While the scope and style of the Danish conference contrasted with the American, the substance was clearly similar: the political dependence of publicly funded libraries, the need for intranational and international cooperation among libraries, and the call for the funding of practical, useful library projects. ■ ■

ALA Library/Book Fellows for 1990–1991

Nine individuals, six of them from academic institutions, have been confirmed to represent the American Library Association and U.S. librarianship as Library/Book Fellows overseas. The joint program of ALA and the U.S. Information Agency places U.S. library and publishing professionals in institutions overseas for up to one year.

Wendy A. Simmons, senior indexer at the National Security Archive, Washington, D.C., will be teaching cataloging, classification and indexing to second-year diploma students and postgraduate students at the University of Botswana's Department of Library and Information Studies. Her 12-month appointment in Gabarone will end in August 1991.

Mary M. Wagner, chair of the Department of Information Management at the College of St. Catherine, St. Paul, Minnesota, will design and create a catalog and index of the Institute of Southern African Studies Documentation Division's collection and will train staff to implement the project. She will be working in Roma, Lesotho, from March 1991 through June 1991.

Thomas Connors, consulting archivist with the Bancroft Group, Los Angeles, will be conducting seminars and workshops on archival theory and practice; the organization and management of archives and records; and archival reference service in Islamabad, Pakistan. He will be working at the

Pakistan Department of Archives from October 1990 through March 1991.

Anne Mustain, cataloger at the University of Virginia Law Library, Charlottesville, will supervise and coordinate a retrospective conversion project and establish an online catalog and CD-ROM-based catalog at the University of the West Indies Faculty of Law Library, Bridgetown, Barbados. Her appointment runs for 10 months through July 1991.

J. David Martin, business librarian at the University of Iowa, will teach online search and retrieval techniques, conduct a course on developments in information services, and lead a seminar on enhancing the exchange of information between the United States and Latin America. His 6-month assignment at Simon Bolivar University's Graduate Program in Management of Information Services, Caracas, Venezuela, will be from January to July 1991.

Lucinda Covert-Vail, senior assistant librarian at San Francisco State University Library, will teach a full courseload in online searching of U.S. databases, and the use of databases and basic reference tools at the Universidad Complutense de Madrid. The appointment is from September 1990 to June 1991.

James Krikelas, professor in the School of Library and Information Studies at the University of



Library Fellows, 1990–1991: Front row, left to right: Donald Hausrath (chief, USIA Library Programs Division), Thomas Connors, J. David Martin, Wendy A. Simmons, Mary M. Wagner, Alicia Sabatine. Back row, left to right: Anne Mustain, Bodil Gillian (regional library officer, USIA), James Krikelas, Robert P. Doyle (ALA), Lucinda Covert-Vail.

Wisconsin-Madison, will advise and oversee the installation of an automated library system network; recommend appropriate uses of automation technology; and present seminars on library automation and networking. He will be in Rethymnon at the University of Crete from January to July 1991.

Michel S. Perdreau, director of library and media services at Ohio University's Southern Campus, Ironton, will conduct a variety of seminars and workshops on technical services, serials management and outreach services at the National Library of Haiti in Port-au-Prince. His 6-month appointment will end February 15, 1991.

Alicia Sabatine, former library information specialist at the Jefferson County Public School, Golden, Colorado, will continue her teaching assignment at the University of the West Indies in Kingston, Jamaica. This is the first time in the program's history that a continuation has been granted.

Positions available for 1991–1992 will be announced in late December 1990. When these positions are announced, interested candidates (U.S. citizenship is required) should submit a resume

and cover letter briefly stating foreign language skills, subject expertise, and the desired position. The deadline date for applying for 1991–1992 will be April 15, 1991.

For more information, contact Robert P. Doyle, Director, Library/Book Fellows Program, ALA, 50 E. Huron St., Chicago, IL 60611; (312) 280-3200. ■ ■

Copyright update

The ACRL Copyright Committee is planning a program on the development and implementation of in-house library copyright policies. If your library has such a policy, please send a copy, along with a brief description of its development and applications, to one of the following Committee members:

Deborah Fairbanks, Acquisitions Department, University Libraries, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL 32611; (904) 392-0355; fax, (904) 392-7251. Cheryl LaGuardia, Reference Department, University of California Library, Santa Barbara, CA 93106; (805) 893-4316; fax, (805) 893-4676.

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