

Summary

Main editor *Anna Mauliņa* in her Editor's Column **"Contraction of library functions: what not to do in a time of crisis?"** outlines the dilemma faced by libraries in Latvia during the current economic crisis: while people's demands for library information services are increasing exponentially, financial support for such services are decreasing just as exponentially! The constant decrease in finances forces everyone to adjust to the circumstances and review library functions at state, regional and local levels in order to decide which services should be cut, which ones restricted, and which ones to "put on hold". Nevertheless, all institutions — including libraries — have their 'crisis threshold'. Most alarming, according to A.Mauliņa, is that restrictions on library functions are often decided by non-librarians, so information professionals are left outside the circle of decision makers.

"World of Libraries" no.47 begins with an article called **"Does the book have a future?"** by *Angus Phillips*, the well known consultant on publishing and the book trade, Director of the Oxford International Centre for Publishing Studies and Head of Publishing Department, Oxford Brookes University. He explores the possibilities of books surviving in the digital age, when our hurried, overburdened lifestyle prevents us from enjoying literature in daily life. Countless studies in the UK and the USA have described the disastrous drop in reading as a leisure activity; for example, one third of people living in the UK do not buy a single book in a year. There seems to be a wholesale switch to use of electronic information sources, with the primary one for many people being Google. Nevertheless, in most countries, there are more books being published than ever before. The author's conclusion from this is that digital opportunities help books survive and even draw people to them, encouraged by initiatives such as *Open Access* and *Creative Commons*. Many publishers are providing more texts online, e.g., LexisNexis, "Encyclopaedia Britannica". Digital technologies facilitate print on demand, which widens possibilities for publishers to produce and disseminate books as well as gives individuals a better chance to get a book that interests them or even to publish their own. It is possible for the majority of authors with printed books to have them published on the internet as well. The success of reading groups has proved that reading continues to be a meaningful social activity. People like to read, participate and discuss.

In **"Sisyphus un Columbine"** *Dmitrijs Zinovjevs* shows readers Jeļena Antimonova's (1945-2002) magical world of bookplates. The artist's *ex libris* images, symbols and subjects captivate viewers with depictions from art history and their free and creative interpretation of episodes from classical literature.

She brings alive the world of ancient Greek myths, carnivals of the Middle Ages, characters from Eastern stories, themes from gothic art and court theatre. In the 1980s, J.Antimonova's delicate and sensitive images made her one of the best known creators of erotic bookplate art in Europe. With virtuosity she adapted computer graphics to bookplate design and became active in popularizing this approach to bookplate production. The National Library of Latvia (NLL) Department of Graphics and Small Prints has the largest and most significant collection of J.Antimonova's works.

The section on "Computerization, digitization and internetization" starts with *Gaida Pavārniece's* article **"The image of public libraries in the virtual world"**. Increasing numbers of readers visit libraries through the internet. Therefore, good library online services, which provide communication with society, help to form a successful virtual image of a library. The author examines library websites and the use of blogs, Twitter, wikis, social tags, the social media site "Shelfari", RSS technologies and podcasts in libraries. Website quality criteria are outlined, with examples from the *Minerva's Handbook for quality in cultural web sites* and experience from the National Library of Australia's website management. Basic principles of website design are discussed, together with an evaluation of public library websites in Latvia and recommendations for their development.

In **"Electronic ordering, reservation, delivery and due date extension of documents through the union catalogue of research libraries"** *Gunta Kosīte* describes a survey of readers and staff at the University of Latvia Library and the Research Library of Riga Technical University 16-26 April 2008. The survey studied frequency of use, search methods, choice of search criteria, user satisfaction and user search skills (from a library perspective). It was concluded from the results that training of users and librarians should be increased and that great attention should be paid to raising the level student information literacy.

Under the heading "Conferences, seminars, meetings", the first article by *Jana Dreimane* gives an overview of the University of Latvia Department of Information and Library Studies conference on **"Current trends in library and information science"**, held 12 February 2009 under the auspices of the University of Latvia 67th Annual Conference. Presentations included: the influence of IT on children and young people and its use in attracting them to libraries; library website design; the best models of regional library cooperation; relations between local government libraries and public libraries; the future of rural public libraries; problems of subject analysis; trends in library and information science education. The wide range of conference topics shows that library professionals in Latvia, including educators and students, are open to new ideas and able to adjust to

the unending changes of the information world.

In **"Public libraries in 2008"** *Marlēna Krasovska* summarizes the round-table discussions of the meeting of directors of regional main libraries, held 17-26 February 2009. The participants described the most significant events in their libraries and agreed that 2008 had been a year of growth and development, thanks to the activities of the "Trešais tēva dēls" project, library accreditation and increases in library budgets. Many libraries had been able to increase staff and opening hours, start outreach programmes and other new services. Construction of new library buildings had continued, as well as renovation, repair and maintenance. Reader registration and library visits had increased. A focal point of library attention in 2008 had been services to children and young people, thanks to the activities of the NLL Children's Literature Centre. One of its activities was a reading encouragement programme for 2-3 years olds called "First meeting with the library". Even though 2008 was considered a successful year for libraries, a large number of problems were also discussed.

"Promotion of reading in Finland" by *Marlēna Krasovska* in the section "Children and young people in libraries" describes the activities of the virtual reading network "Netlibris". Creatively using ICT, it promotes reading to people in Finland, among which are thousands of children and young people. The main aim of the programme is to encourage interest in reading and a deeper understanding of literature, combining reading with the use of ICT, cooperative teaching methods and individual distance learning, as well as providing facilities for communication to millions of book lovers. The article emphasizes the significance of assuring good literacy skills in school children. This is in the context of concern about the low literacy competence level of Latvian school children revealed by research results from studies by the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

Under the heading "Past times and reflections", *Anžela Avdeikina* and *Ilgā Rampāne* reflect on **"The historical collection of the University of Latvia (LU) Faculty of Economics and Law library: literature on civil rights"**. The former LU Faculty of Economics and Law collection became part of the LU Legal Sciences Library in 1998, and includes books on the history of law published in the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. The library is evaluating and re-cataloguing the collection. The authors discuss the historical development of the collection, the effects of political changes on its preservation, and provide information on the most valuable items and their use today.

Continuing her theme of Soviet censorship from previous issues of "World of Libraries", *Aina Štrāle* provides evidence of **"The censors against patriotic**

poetry in the Latvian SSR: the twofold spiritual annihilation of the poet Atis Ķeniņš". For her article, the author made use of materials from the State Archives of Latvia, which reflect the ways in which the censors condemned the poet's collection *Under the rainbow*, thus prohibiting its publication. This is an outstanding example of how the literary specialists of the time, complying with the dictates of Soviet ideology, were forced to obediently eradicate any signs of patriotism from Latvian poetry.

The section "Abroad" starts with *Annas Mauliņa's* article **"A small nation in a big, blue ocean: Republic of Maldives"**, in which the author shares experiences of a visit to the islands in the Indian Ocean. She describes its exotic natural landscape, history, economy, religion, language, culture and traditions. The Maldives have 80 public libraries, 5 university libraries, 79 school libraries and 13 research libraries of national importance. Internet services are provided by 41–60% of public libraries, the internet is accessible in 21–40% of school libraries, 61–80% of university libraries and 81–100% research libraries. The library system is still in starting stages, with world standards being little known.

Jana Dreimane's **"Overview of overseas library events (January–March 2009)"** starts with a report on interesting discoveries from a British online survey during that period to discover British attitudes to books. For example, results show that two thirds of Brits lie about reading books in order to impress those to whom they are talking; 62% fold down the corner of a book page instead of using a bookmark; 41% read the end before reaching it; 48% read a book themselves before giving it as a present. There is also information about the most frequently read authors in British public libraries, with translations of the titles of their works in Latvian.

In order to emphasize the significance of open access to information in education, science and research, as well as social life, several Dutch universities and research organizations declared 2009 as the Year of Open Access. Those participating in this initiative are National Library of the Netherlands, Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences, the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research and the Dutch higher education sector. Open access policy guidelines will be defined in the framework of the initiative; the legal standards will be determined; the digital information infrastructure will be developed and improved; mutual understanding between professionals operating within the information environment will be facilitated.

The overview ends with news about libraries that have suffered as a result of conflict in the Gaza area, the crash of the Historical Archive of the City of Cologne, and the closure of the Johannes a Lasco Bibliothek in Emden, one of the foremost theological libraries in Germany.

Under the heading "Old and new book trade" *Rudīte Kalniņa* writes about **"A slow conflagration"**

in the library, or, What you need to know about preservation of collections". Bad quality of paper, unsuitable storage conditions and careless attitudes by users of documents. These are the main reasons for worry by those who deal with preservation of library collections. The author makes practical recommendations for preservation. She discusses reasons for degradation of paper, the negative effect of light on documents, hygiene standards, recommended temperature. There is also advice on the correct way to shelve documents and how to exhibit them carefully. Activities for preserving and protecting materials during repair and maintenance of premises are described as well. R.Kalniņa emphasizes that all library staff should be trained how to act in the case of fire or flood, biological attack, and theft or vandalism.

The section "Miscellaneous" has an article by *Māra Jēkabsons* on "**Vilnius Region Adam Mickiewicz Public Library receives the 2009 Draugu prize**", which is an award given by the Literature Translation Federation of Lithuania. The prize was inaugurated in 2006 and is presented to a person or organization for achievements in translating literature or professional translation accomplishments. The first prize winner (2007) was the magazine *Gimtoji kalba* [Native language]. In 2008, the Lithuania Section of the International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY), together with the magazine *Rubinaitis* received the prize. *Rubinaitis* is the only periodical in Lithuania that is devoted to children's literature. Each year the prize is a diploma and a sculpture by the Lithuanian artist Arvydas Ali ankas.

Marlēna Krasovska provides "**A review of library events in Latvia (January–March 2009)**". The section also includes *Kristīne Deksnē-Jerohina's* list of "**Recommendable new acquisitions in library sphere (January–March 2009)**" for the same period.

Translated by Inese Auziņa-Smith