

Summary

Main editor *Anna Mauliņa* in her Editor's Column **"Are libraries approaching the bottom of Maslow's pyramid?"** heralds a situation in the library sector in Latvia that matches the government's economic recession 'survival formula': diminish, scale down, make redundant, re-structure, reform, abolish, close. Contrary to this, there are increasingly louder calls to preserve what has been carefully developed and enhanced over the years: the library network, its infrastructure, staff. Conviction is spreading that economic crisis is a time for real structural changes, reforms and innovation. Besides development projects in individual libraries, tighter coordination of library work is necessary at national level. Unfortunately, the fact that isolation has a high price is not understood by some libraries at regional level, who wish to withdraw from the joint library network or regional union catalogue. Such actions could lead to internal breakup and a return to fragmentation and lack of uniformity and, because of this, to an irrational use of resources or even bankruptcy. *A. Mauliņa* emphasizes that today's libraries cannot be 'lonely islands'. Nor are they in a computer game, where someone can give them nine lives...

"World of Libraries" no.48 is introduced by *Jana Dreimane's* article **"Ian Wilson: reformer of Canada's memory institutions"** that makes a short excursus into the life and work of *Ian E. Wilson*, President of the International Council on Archives (ICA) and Ex-Director of the Library and Archives Canada. It is followed by an extract from his keynote address **"The Gift of One Generation to Another"**. It reflects the unique experience, services and functions of the National Archives of Canada and the National Library of Canada. *I. Wilson* emphasizes that in the digital era all cultural heritage or memory institutions have one aim, that is, to ensure access to their contents, and he invites these institutions not to create new institutional walls and boundaries online in the way that has been done in the physical world, splintering the holistic entirety of the past. The convergence that is characteristic of the WWW allows territorial and institutional boundaries to be overcome, offering the possibility to unify details, knowledge and experience of the past that are stored in different memory institutions to be presented through Web 2.0 in an understandable way. *I. Wilson* also debates the significance of access to historical evidence in the context of developing society in the future.

The role of libraries in society is also discussed in *Sabīne Jefimova's* article **"The evaluation of Gulbene library by its community"**, which presents the results of a survey run from the end of 2008 until June 2009. These results show that the image of the library is changing rapidly, with libraries becoming recognised as places to acquire information and knowledge, with competent and responsive staff. Nevertheless, library users and non-users alike are still unaware of the many opportunities offered by the library or don't understand how essential they are. This means that more needs to be done to popularize and raise awareness of library services, providing consultations and encouraging library visitors to take advantage of them. The survey results also revealed the community's assessment of the library's infrastructure, the quality of its collections and services, the reasons for using its computers and internet provision, and the popularity of the library's website. Questions of reader education are discussed and some reasons for non-use, as well as suggestions for further library development.

The theme of libraries and society is continued in **"A library for those without a home"** by *Daina Ģeibaka*, who describes the activities of the Riga Central Library branch that has been created in a Riga City Council daytime care centre for people who are homeless and needy. The article emphasizes that public libraries are for everyone, so information services for those who are socially disadvantaged and their integration into society has been put forward as one of the basic principles of Riga Central Library. At the care centre, people can read books and magazines, watch television, use the internet and e-mail for free, receive advice on information searching from professional librarians as well as getting current information about social services from various institutions; informative and social events are also held in the library. There are plans for cooperation with social services organisations, so that interest group activities and consultations with a psychologist can be made available in the library. This is the second social project in which Riga Central Library has been involved. Since 2006 there has been a library loan service at the Children's Clinical University Hospital and in the near future a similar service is planned for Brasa prison.

Under the heading "Computerization, digitization, internetization" *Ruta Emerberga* writes about **"Local history — 'value added' at small rural libraries: building, developing and using local resources"** and describes how work with local history materials has evolved in pagasta libraries in Latvia. ICTs have facilitated new forms, methods and directions of work (creation of digital local history collections and databases; provision of local history resources on the WWW; electronic document supply, etc.). Nevertheless, a problem remains that distant users have still not been sufficiently considered as potential clients of these collections, because the majority of librarians think that local history materials have only local significance. It is emphasized that rural librarians need training and

support in digitization, creation of databases and copyright issues in order to provide new and modern resources. On the other hand, more also needs to be done in decreasing the digital divide in society, in order to increase the usage of local history collections.

The section on “Conferences, seminars, meetings”, starts with an article by *Māra Jēkabsons* on “**Libraries — towards cooperation, understanding and creativity**”, which summarizes the activities of the 12th meeting-conference of the Vidzeme branch of the Library Association of Latvia, held on 15 July 2009 in the Arona rural district of Madona region. A recurrent theme was that, in a time of economic crisis, librarians shouldn’t give up, but should search for new ways of extending their work, taking into account that readers need not only information, but also emotional support. Ways of counteracting stress and burnout syndrome were revealed, as well as ways of improving sensitivity. Ideas were exchanged on how to work under circumstances of restricted financing and the importance of a feeling of accomplishment at work. The cultural and recreational part of the programme revitalized and heartened participants.

In “**Libraries without borders: navigating towards global understanging**” *Marlēna Krasovska* gives an overview of the 13th conference of the Library Association of Latvia (LAL), held 15 April 2009. As legal protection for libraries is weakening in the current economic climate and drastic cuts are made in library budgets, the role of the LAL in representing the interests of libraries and the rights of society to protection of information has suddenly increased. The economic crisis has affected more or less the entire library system. There has been a sharp increase in the number of visitors to libraries (e.g., in the first three months of 2009, library visits increased by more than 30% and internet use doubled), but library budgets have been considerably decreased. Because of lack of funds, free of charge use of the internet is under threat. Libraries of educational institutions have been particularly seriously affected and in many staff hours have been cut to a bare minimum, many are in danger of being closed. Even though there is a strong, three-layered library system in Latvia, a unified library information system and large sums have been invested in libraries, their future is unclear. This situation creates concerns that, after the end of the economic crisis, very large amounts of money will need to be invested to renew what has been destroyed.

Jana Dreimane’s article “**The ‘castle of light’ at Tukums**” summarizes the main topics discussed at the 2009 Spring meeting (6–7 May) of directors of research, special and public libraries. There was hot debate about implementation of the school library information system “Skolu ALISE”, which is carried out in cooperation with public libraries. Even though the majority of public library directors supported the idea of implementing the system and administering it, they admitted that they could not undertake this function

without local government financing. Cuts in staff working hours and the trend to close school libraries have also affected the viability of implementing the system. Other current problems discussed were: the need for closer cooperation between libraries; development of new, individualized library services; library marketing; and advocacy at local and national level. Analyzing visitor statistics, the National Library of Latvia (NLL) was able to identify its “average” user, who is an independent and focused young person, looking for answers to questions about management, marketing, law and similar practical question. It was stressed that, in order to improve strategic planning in libraries, educational institutions, the media and publishers, it would be useful to have a comprehensive sociological research study on the motivation to read and reading habits. Unfortunately, the Ministry of Culture has not found the funding for this since renewal of independence.

Under the heading “Children and young people in libraries”, *Marlēna Krasovska* provides a review of the International Children’s Literature and Librarians’ Conference “**Across the bridge**” (Riga, 15 May 2009). The conference took place under the auspices of “Holland Days for Latvia’s Children” and was dedicated to the 15 years of cooperation between the Latvian Section of the International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY), the Children’s and Youth Literature Council of Latvia, the NLL Children’s Literature Centre and the IBBY Netherlands Section. Truusje Vrooland-Löb, president of this section, visited Riga and opened the Netherlands exhibition of children’s book illustrations. She provided an insight into the Dutch approach to children’s illustrations and introduced Dutch writers Hans Hagen and Jacques Vriens. As every year, new literature for children and young people in Latvia was evaluated. Thanks to competitions for such literature, submissions for 2008 had increased over previous years, particularly in the area of publications for teenagers, which had been low before. An overview of NLL Children’s Literature Centre activities in 2008 was provided by staff of the centre.

In collaboration with the Goethe Institute in Riga, the NLL Library Development Institute organized a further education seminar (7 April 2009) for school librarians on “Facilitating information literacy in school libraries”. *Māra Jēkabsons’s* article “**School libraries in Germany**” describes how Eva von Jordan-Bonin and Hanke Sühl, representatives from the Frankfurt am Main Public Library School Libraries Centre (SLC), participated in the seminar and shared their experiences. The school library situation in Germany is complicated. There is no library law, nor is there a uniform library system. As a result, establishment and maintenance of school libraries is voluntary. There are fully fledged libraries in less than 20% of German schools; of the 165 schools in Frankfurt am Main, only 75 have libraries. The SLC was established in order to improve the situation. The centre’s task is not only consultative, but also practical (including

financial). There is in-depth information on how it supports the local school libraries, their organization, arrangement and maintenance.

The article **“The school library as an adventure”** is linked with the previous one. Hanke Sühl, one of the specialists from the Frankfurt am Main Public Library School Libraries Centre gives a list or recommendations that have been approved for use by the centre. She emphasizes that a library is an integral part of a school, a partner in acquisition of learning and also in development of everyday skills. H.Sühl identifies four skills that are improved by the library: (1) reading ability, (2) information literacy, (3) media proficiency, (4) application of methods. It is important that these skills should be acquired in a creative way, so the SLC has developed a large choice of activities that they offer to school libraries in Frankfurt am Main. They include: an introduction to the library by throwing dice; rally through the library; book and shelf art; creative writing workshop; reading card, reading file and reading tree; poetry bingo; picture book movies. These are just a few of H.Sühl's recommended ideas, which have already been put into practice by school librarians in Latvia.

Under the heading “Past times and reflections”, *Maija Krekle* writes about Milda Laukgale in **“All my life — off to my Misiņš Library”**. M.Laukgale spent her childhood in a faraway village in Siberia, but returned to Latvia. The article shows happy moments from her youth, love and family, as well as the years that she devoted to the library job that she loved. When she retired on 21 January 2009, bidding farewell to the books that she had been together with for almost all her life, M.Laukgale admitted that her life had been fulfilled.

The section “Abroad” introduces readers to the results of a study on school libraries carried out by the US publication *School Library Journal* in an article by *Jana Dreimane* called **“US school libraries in the 2007/2008 academic year”**. Even though the economic crisis has not hit the US as hard as Latvia, school libraries there have felt its effects. Decreased funding for collection development and lack of progress in development of technological infrastructure are just two examples. Nevertheless, almost all schools are well provided with the internet, access to WiFi has grown, programs for computers have significantly increased, and funding for online resources has not been cut. Almost 85% of pre-schools and more than 95% of primary schools and middle schools have full time librarians with higher education qualifications in library and information science. In the USA, the main school library strategy in a time of crisis has been a careful choice of priorities and creating a positive self-image. Because it is not widespread in school libraries, there has also been discussion of whether Web 2.0 technologies might be a new area of activity.

Jana Dreimane's “Overview of overseas library events (April–September 2009)” starts with a report on the earthquake in the Abruzzo region of Italy (6 April 2009), in which tens of cultural institutions were wrecked. This is followed by details about restrictions on dissemination of information in Venezuela. For ideological reasons, in 2007 to 2008, about 15% of publications were removed from public libraries in the state of Miranda. On the other hand, there is also good news. In the autonomous region of Catalonia in Spain, 61 new or renovated public libraries were opened during 2006 to 2008, but 17 in 2009; 33 million euro were earmarked for renovation and building programmes. There is a short summary of the launch of the World Digital Library (WDL) on 21 April 2009. The WDL includes digitized manuscripts, maps, rare books, films, sound recording and photographs, all of which characterize unique features of different cultural regions of the world. The overview ends with a review of the activities of children's authors, publishers, teachers and librarians in Great Britain, whose aim has been to achieve professionally managed school libraries mandated by law.

Rudīte Kalniņa shares her impressions of the 75th annual IFLA World Library and Information Congress **“Libraries create futures: building on cultural heritage”**, held 23–27 August 2009 in Milan, Italy, and reveals the wide range of papers that were read at the congress. The dominant theme of the proceedings was digitization and R.Kalniņa was particularly interested in the work of the IFLA Section on Rare Books and Manuscripts and the Section on Geography and Map Libraries. Her report gives an overview on papers related to digitization of maps and newspapers, library experiences with digitization and the most interesting projects in this area. Delegates to the congress were introduced to the experience of digitizing maps for a CD at the National Library of Latvia through a paper by R.Kalniņa and Inese Auziņa-Smith: “Facilitating access to the fascinating past: technical issues in creating the CD “Riga in cartographic images 1621–1710””.

The section “Miscellaneous” has a list of people presented with awards by the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Latvia for exceptional achievements in 2008 in the field of librarianship and intangible cultural heritage. *Marlēna Krasovska* provides **“A review of library events in Latvia (April–September 2009)”**. The section also includes *Kristīne Deksnē-Jerohina's* and *Elita Vīksna's* list of selected new acquisitions in the LIS Reading Room of the NLL Library Development Institute **“Recommendable new acquisitions in library sphere (April–October 2009)”**.

Translated by Inese Auziņa-Smith