

Summary

Main editor *Anna Mauliņa* in her Editor's Column **"The National Library of Latvia (NLL) on its way to a new building"** outlines the content of the emerging Latvian "Castle of Light". She draws attention to the development of open access to large collections, retroconversion, digitization and electronic resources, which will form an essential part of the library's basic contents already in the near future. Unfortunately, during the continuing recession, the NLL's budget has been cut in half, and this poses a serious threat to completion of ongoing projects and to realization of plans. In conclusion, A.Mauliņa acknowledges that an invaluable resource in the present circumstance is the inexhaustible enthusiasm of the library staff and their readiness to do everything possible so that the "Castle of Light" does not become only a monument to the memory of an ancient legend.

"World of Libraries" no.51/52 is introduced under the heading of "Librarians in Latvia and the World" by **"The lure of Latvian and German Riga"**. *Jana Dreimane* summarises an interview with Master's student *Katharina Baumann* from the Johannes Gutenberg-University Mainz Institute for Book Science, who spent March to June 2010 on placement in the NLL Rare Books and Manuscripts Department. *K.Baumann* tells about the role of books in her life, student life in Germany and about her studies at the Johannes Gutenberg-University. She expresses surprise at the richness of collections that she has discovered at the NLL, that have allowed her to widen her knowledge and given exciting glimpses into history, as well as sharing her impressions of Latvia and Latvians.

A deeper insight into studies at the Johannes Gutenberg-University Mainz Institute for Book Science is provided by *Katharina Baumann* in her article **"From the Gutenberg Bible to e-books: experiences of a student about the birthplace of book printing and Riga"**. Her studies at the Institute are particularly interesting because of their multidisciplinary and wide cultural perspective. Books are examined in ever new contexts and from varied aspects, including research into the interaction of media and society. The author describes the structure of the Institute, its study programmes and their reform, as well as characterising

possible career development of a person who has studied book science and publishing.

The section "People, events, problems" starts with a discussion of the **"IFLA Library Statistics Manifesto"**. This document emphasises the significance of statistics not only in library management, but also their value in popularising the value of libraries and in library advocacy. With the help of statistics it is possible to reveal the productivity of investment in libraries, libraries as access points to information, centres for meeting and communication, as well as places how they contribute to teaching and research for society.

In the article **"A look at library service quality evaluation systems"**, *Ilze Pētersone* introduces readers to SERVQUAL, a method of evaluating service quality that was developed 1983–1988. SERVQUAL is a method that gives empirically based answers to a number of important questions: What do clients think of us? What should we aim for? What are our weaknesses? What financial investment is necessary to avert them? In 2000, the SERVQUAL method was adapted to library requirements, creating LibQUAL+. The use of this method in evaluating library service quality has spread quickly. In 2000 it had 13 member libraries, which had grown to 206 by 2008 and among the many countries using it are the USA, Canada, Australia, Germany, Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden and France. The author emphasises that facilitation and coordination of library service quality evaluation is part of the long-term plans of the Library Association of Latvia and the Association of Latvian Academic Libraries.

Society's views of libraries are created to a great extent by the mass media and in **"The construction of an image of libraries in Latvia by the mass media (1985–1990 and 2003–2008)"** *Maija Bārbale* explores this assertion for two five-year periods. She concludes that articles published during the 1985–1990 period reflected a mostly negative image of Latvian libraries. On the other hand, in the 2003–2008 period, there was a marked difference. The library image had acquired new attributes, showing a much more positive approach, characterised by dynamism, flexibility and change. Libraries became more understood as centres of culture and education, universal spaces of learning and communication. The prestige of the library profession had also increased.

Rudīte Kalniņa's article **"The Conservation Department of the National Library of Latvia: 1988–2009"** describes its development over a period of 21 years. The most significant activities and procedures are discussed, as is its priority for the 21st century — digitization. An invaluable contribution to the development of the department has been made by its staff, who are highly qualified specialists and enthusiasts dedicated to their work.

Under the heading “Computerization, digitization, internetization”, *Jana Dreimane* discusses the fifth IFLA report about intellectual freedom (*IFLA World Report 2010*) in “**Free access to knowledge: the world situation in 2009**”. Included are: internet access in libraries, freedom of speech laws, intellectual freedom violations, use of internet information filtering programs in libraries, etc. Unfortunately, the results lead to a painful conclusion: violations of intellectual freedom were found in 109 of the 122 countries which participated in the research.

The section on “Conferences, seminars, meetings”, starts with an overview by *Marlēna Krasovska* of the “**Autumn meeting of research, special and public library directors (25.11.10) in Riga**”. As Latvia’s cultural institutions are under threat in the current economic climate, DnB NORD bank’s economics expert Pēteris Strautiņš had been invited as a guest speaker. He provided an evaluation of the economic situation and familiarized participants with various predictions of economic development. The recently published “Library development guidelines for 2011–2015” were presented and library contributions to society and the economy were discussed. There was a separate section devoted to cataloguing and other matters related to data handling.

In “**A community of sincerity and interests**”, *Ilze Karsa* summarizes activities of the 13th Summer Conference of the Library Association of Latvia (LAL) Vidzeme Branch (Alūksne, 14.07.10). The main topics were: conditions for publication and use of authors’ works on the internet, bibliotherapy, and the “Library development guidelines for 2011–2015”.

Proceedings of the annual conference of CombiLib (the Network of Combined Libraries in Baltic and Nordic countries), which took place in Valmiera (26/29.05.10), are outlined by *Jana Dreimane* in “**Crossing borders — innovations and interdisciplinarity**”. Librarians from Vidzeme, together with guests from Slovenia and the Netherlands, discussed the necessity of a new model of librarianship, where libraries would be understood as living spaces for diverse social groups with provision of varied activities, and not just as places for study of books. Conference participants considered the problems of joint use of an integrated library of a higher education institution and a public library, particularly how to determine the differing interests of user groups and service provision for them and how to ascertain the learning and teaching needs of students and academic staff. In some places, the Library Board helps, because its members include representatives of various user groups, but elsewhere this is part of the duties of the librarian. As the economic recession deepens, it is not uncommon for one library provider to decrease his part of the financial contribution at the expense of others, thus harming the overall quality of

collections and services. Managers of joint libraries need to prove the effectiveness of their libraries to all financial stakeholders and to provide for their systematic and productive communication.

An overview of the LAL 14th annual conference “**Libraries create futures: Building on cultural heritage**”, which was held in Riga (14.04.10), is provided by *Marlēna Krasovska*. As 2010 marks the 485th anniversary of the Latvian book, the first session of the conference was devoted to the interaction of librarianship and the book trade. It must unfortunately be admitted that research is not a top priority with libraries in Latvia, especially in a time of recession. As a matter of fact, it is often considered as an unnecessary luxury. The rich collections in libraries have not been sufficiently researched and, therefore, a large part of them are unfamiliar to the general public. Conference participants were sharply critical of the trend to downgrade librarianship down to the level of its most primitive functions. It was suggested that centres for the study of publishing and the book trade might be created at libraries with large historical collections. The second session was devoted to local history in libraries, and the third to analysis of the situation of libraries after local authority reorganization and to evaluation of the contribution of libraries to the economy.

Under the heading “Past times and reflections”, *Lilija Limane* writes about “**Glimpses of Mežotne library in the context of historical place and time**”. Few information remains about the first rural public libraries in Latvia. Therefore, this article is particularly interesting, by showing what is available from only episodic evidence and fragmentary documentation of the cultural heritage. Researching rarely preserved information sources, she has reconstructed this rural library’s founding and activities on a backdrop of local ancient tales.

The section “Abroad” starts by inviting readers to take a closer look at libraries in Turkey. *Sanita Burķīte’s*, *Ilga Rampāne’s* and *Aldona Volkova’s* article “**Cooperation — the driving force of library development in Turkey**” introduces the country’s library system and how it operates, as well as their professional organizations. The authors begin with a short history of the development of the Turkish library system and provide further information on the National Library of Turkey in Ankara (Milli Kütüphane), Istanbul Technical University Library (İstanbul Teknik Üniversitesi Kütüphane ve Dokümantasyon Daire Başkanlığı), and the most important public and manuscript libraries.

Jana Dreimane’s “**Overview of overseas library events (April–December 2010)**” includes information on the International Telecommunication Union’s statistical overview *The World in 2010: ICT facts and figures*, which states that in the last five years the number

of internet users has increased twice and by the end of 2010 it will have reached two billion. J.Dreimane also informs about the website Safer Internet Forum's research report *EU Kids Online*, which concludes that 39% of Europe's children aged 9 to 16 have accessed harmful information on the internet. Other topics include: the re-opening (29.04.10) of Turkmenistan public libraries; the resignation of the director of the National Library of Spain due to 15% budget cuts and restrictions on the library's autonomy; problems at the newly opened (12.10.10) Main Library of Humbolt University in Berlin; and the sale by auction of the National Library of Myanmar.

This section ends with *Jana Dreimane's "Book Culture from Below"*, which reviews the 18th annual conference of the Society for the History of Authorship, Reading and Publishing (Helsinki, 17/21.08.10). Conference paper reported on recent research: metamorphosis of fairy tales and their impact on foreign authors' literary tales; formation of Afroamerican libraries; working class book reading culture, etc. The author presented a paper on "The crisis of the public library in Latvia during the last five-year period of the Soviet Occupation (1986–1990)".

The section "The old and the new book trade" includes *Anita Goldberga's* article "**The technology of the media and the book trade in the process of globalization: Scandinavia and Latvia**", which introduces NORDICOM's (The Nordic Information Centre for Media and Communication Research) most recent research on the book trade and reading in Scandinavia. The report reveals alarming changes in the book trade of small nations, which is no longer developing, but is on a survival level. New technology, globalization of media and commercialization have impacted on the media market with negative results: impoverishment of content, depletion of investigative journalism, decline in reading popularity. The author concludes that similar trends threaten Latvian literature, language and the book trade to an even greater extent.

The final section "Miscellaneous", as in previous numbers, ends with *Marlēna Krasovska's "A review of library events in Latvia (April – December 2010)"*.

Translated by Inese Auziņa-Smith