

NAVIGATOR: COLORADO LIBRARIES AND THE WORLD

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Better Together: The Power of Global Library Connections



In early March, the second International Library Conference hosted by the Colorado Association of Libraries: International Libraries and Cultural Exchange Interest Group took place. This conference was co-hosted with the Colorado School of Mines. The purpose of this conference *Better Together: The Power of Global Library Connections* was to inspire and motivate participants to support and participate in international librarianship. The first day of the conference was virtual with over 100 attendees.



Highlights from this day included an inspiring keynote from Dr. Jesús Lau, Professor at Universidad Veracruzana, Veracruz, Mexico emphasizing the importance of global connections. Colorado School of Mines has multiple international connections with universities and featured their Stem Partnership with the China University of Mining & Technology and the Nazarbayev University Library partnership in Kazakhstan. In addition, Leroy R. Allala, Sister Cities International President, spoke of his goal to make 500 sister city connections in Africa this year. Diana Price, Library Manager at Charles E. Beatley, Jr. Central Library in Alexandria, VA, presented the current partnership with a sister library in Dundee, Scotland. Diana explained how her library has been holding virtual book-clubs for adults in both countries and are in the process of creating programs for children. In addition, Linda Tillson, Director of Flagstaff City-Coconino County Public Library and Kate Mapp, librarian from Park City Utah, presented about Park City Utah's partnership with the Bimal Library in Nepal. Overall, it was amazing to see how much international interest and participation there was in this virtual conference.

The in-person conference, held the following day, featured a different inspiring keynote from Dr. Jesús Lau emphasizing the value of professional development opportunities through partnerships. The second day of the conference focused primarily on different Colorado international library partnerships at various degrees of involvement. The Patrick A. Lucero Branch of the Pueblo City-County Library District has a library partnership in Vietnam, where their Friends Foundation provides donations so the locals can buy books in their native languages. The Poudre River Library District (Ft. Collins) has a partnership in San Juan del Sur, Nicaragua where the library was initially in need of a circulation system and Victor Zuniga, for Poudre River, established a platform and most recently added Koha – an open-source integrated library system.

Brianna Buljung from Colorado School of Mines presented about her experience as a Fulbright Scholar teaching in Taiwan during the pandemic. In addition, Janet Lee, Dean Emerita at Regis University, also spoke about her Fulbright experience.

Continued on page 2

Inside this issue:

Better Together: The Power of Global Library Connections	1
Changing of the Guard: Meet Shannon and Kathleen	2
Kindle Early Language Learning in Sudan	3
For Everything there is a Season	4-5
Journey School of Costa Rica, Tamarindo	6

Save the dates:

- CALCON 2023, Loveland, October 12-14, 2023
- LibLearnX: The Library Learning Experience, Baltimore, MD Jan 19-22, 2024
- ALA Annual, San Diego, CA, June 27-July 2, 2024

Better Together...continued

rience in Axum, Ethiopia and her collaboration with the African Storybook Project encouraging the publication and use of stories written in first languages. Jamie LaRue, Garfield County (Colorado) Public Library District, described his experience with libraries in Bulgaria, Russia, and Norway highlighting the varying degrees of intellectual freedom around the world. Lastly, there was a presentation on Sister Cities International highlighting the activities and opportunities to collaborate with Denver Sister Cities. Overall, it was inspiring to see the drive to have library partnerships on a worldwide level and learn about various ways to be involved.



A post-conference reception was held at the spectacular Mines Museum of Earth Science among the vast array of gems, stones, Miss Colorado's tiara, and moon rocks from Apollo 17. Special thanks to the ILCE-IG team, Carol E. Smith of Colorado School of Mines, the presenters, and participants.

More information can be found at ILCE website: <https://ilceig.com/better-together-the-power-of-global-library-connections-welcome/>

Contributed by Shannon Brennan

Photo caption: Conference committee planners and keynote speaker: Carol Smith, Nancy Bolt, Shannon Brennan, Kathleen Robertson, Janet Lee, and Jesús Lau.

Changing of the Guard: Meet Shannon and Kathleen



I have always been passionate about early literacy and education. As an undergraduate majoring in human development, I focused most of my studies on child development with a minor in gerontology. After undergraduate studies, I worked as a literacy advocate with military families in Hawaii. When I returned to Colorado, I began work at Denver Public Library and decided to pursue a MLIS focused on children's services. Upon graduation, I worked as a school librarian to promote the love of literacy and support teachers. I also had the opportunity to promote the love of reading with Foreign Service families in Washington D.C.

Now as a children's librarian, at Bemis Public Library, I enjoy conducting story times to children ages birth through five years with my ukulele; providing reader's advisory to parents and kids; as well as ordering the JFICTION, E-READER, and Parenting collections of Bemis Library. I have been a member of CAL's ILCE-IG for about 5 years and graduated in August from the CALLI (Leadership Institute) Program. I look forward to expanding my leadership skills as a co-chair of ILCE. **Shannon Brennan**



When my husband brought home a job posting and suggested I might like working in the library, little did I realize he was pointing me towards my life's purpose. I have spent nearly 20 years in Library Land, working my way through all the public-facing jobs at suburban public libraries of different sizes: I was a page, and then a library specialist, and then a lead library specialist, and then a co-supervisor. Currently I supervise a small branch, Sheridan Library, in the southwest corner of Denver. I was proud to earn my master's of library science from Emporia State University in December of 2023.

Connection, expansion, and service are my strongest values. Librarianship speaks to all three, and international librarianship offers even more opportunity for expansion and connection. I believe my interest in other cultures makes me a better librarian—more aware, more understanding, more tolerant, more inclusive. I look forward to advocating for cultural exchange as co-chair of the International Library and Cultural Exchange Interest Group. **Kathleen Robertson**

Kindle Early Language Learning in Sudan Recipient of a RUSA 2023 BEST Emerging Technology Application Award



Reference and User Services Association (RUSA) has announced Janet Lee (IRRT and ILCE-IG member) and Tegest Hailu, M.D. (founder of the International Society of Better Health Access: ISBHA) are the recipients of one of two 2023 ETS Best Emerging Technology Application Awards for the Kindle Early Language Learning project for serving children in the Hasheba Refugee Camp in Sudan. The \$3,000 Best Emerging Technology Application (BETA) Award is sponsored by Chatstaff and LibraryH3lp.

For applying existing technologies in novel ways that benefit the library and patrons. Kindle Early Language Learning is an innovative way of replicating the library and its resources for children living in difficult conditions in Sudan's Hasheba Refugee Camp, helping them learn reading, writing, and languages in engaging ways. – Award Committee Statement

The Kindle Early Language Learning Project in Hasheba Refugee Camp in Sudan introduces first language resources to refugee school children in a joint library/classroom through the use of Kindle technology. The children, many of whom are orphans, fled from the Tigray region of Ethiopia, when conflict broke out in November 2020 forcing them into exile in Sudan. As basic housing and health services were implemented in the camps, housing over 60,000 refugees, it became apparent that the children needed educa-

tional resources and a sense of normalcy that a school would provide. An agreement was made among the refugees, NGOs and the Sudanese government to share classroom space with existing Sudanese students. Among the refugees were Ethiopian-certified teachers, taking up the charge of teaching the students. Since resources such as books and supplies are scarce, printing costs prohibitive, and shipping expensive, the project introduced the use of specially configured Kindle devices that were loaded with storybooks and first language reading aids in the languages of Tigrinya, Amharic, and Arabic. The Kindle device is ideal because it can hold hundreds of book titles in a variety of formats, is easy to hold, emulates a print book, and can handle the script of Tigrinya, Amharic, and Arabic. Since the storybooks are downloaded, access to the books is available offline. In a remote area of the world such as in the refugee camps in Sudan, with little access to Internet and few print resources, the Kindle Early Language Learning Project provides needed resources in an attractive and affordable way.

Outside of the grant, ISBHA also established a Chromebook lab linking devices to a RACHEL server, availing the students to a wealth of databases including the Ministry of Education, Ethiopian curriculum. Among the refugees were a number of certified teachers who were able to put the equipment to good use.

Janet Lee presented with other awardees at the 2023 RUSA ETS Technology Showcase at the American Library Association Monday, June 26th, 2023.



Students using laptops linked to a RACHEL server.



Dr. Tegest Hailu



Janet Lee

For Everything there is a Season: Reflecting on Great Women recently in our Lives contributed by Janet Lee and Jane Mirandette

Throughout our careers great women have touched our lives and our work. They have inspired us. They have guided us. They have changed us and the world. Sadly, sometimes unexpectedly, their time has come, and they left the world a better place for all. We, the authors, reflect on four women who passed away this year, all who believed in libraries, literacy, and education, and devoted their lives to these great causes. We can only hope to aspire to a measure of their greatness and now hope to inspire others to lead lives that matter.

Patricia Wand (1942-2023)



We knew Pat Wand as a stalwart leader in our meetings with the International Sustainable Library Development Interest Group (ISLD) of the American Library Association, which was formed of librarians who are Returned Peace Corps Volunteers. She served as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Colombia from 1963-65 and later as staff in the Eastern Caribbean in 1969 and later served Vice-Chair of the National Peace Corps Association board. Like many of us, she blended her professional work with her extensive volunteer experience. She was the University Librarian and Professor Emerita at American University and the Dean of Library and Learning Resources at Zayed University (UAE). Her enthusiasm was boundless when she announced her latest project at our meetings, founding and organizing the Peace Corps Museum for which she became the first President.

On Tuesday April 25, 2023, Pat arrived in Spain to finish walking the Camino de Santiago, an ancient pilgrimage route stretching from France to Santiago de Compostela in northwest Spain. Ever the adventurer, she had been training for months and planned to walk the remaining 240 miles alone. Shortly after arriving Pat suffered from a stroke at a hostel and passed away on April 8, 2023.

Multiple memorial services were held on both coasts, each remembering Pat in her various roles, family member, librarian, Peace Corps Volunteer, committee member, educator, or adventurer. Her death was a shock, but we take solace at the outpouring of love and gratitude for the impact of her life on others.

Marta Gabre-Tsadick (1932-2023)



It was exactly thirty years after Janet Lee left Ethiopia as a Peace Corps Volunteer that she returned on a healthcare/education service-learning trip to Project Mercy in Yetabon, Ethiopia and met the founder, Marta Gabre-Tsadick. She was returning home.

Marta led an incredible life, as is chronicled in her memoir, *Sheltered by the King*. As was custom, she married young, but was given an opportunity to attend Adams State University in Colorado. Shortly upon her return, she was informed that her husband had passed away. She caught the attention of the Emperor Haile Sellasie and was appointed to several different government positions, ultimately becoming the first female Senator in the Ethiopian government. Her close ties to the Emperor put her in peril and when it became evident that there would be a coup, she and her new husband and children traveled overland under treacherous conditions to Kenya where they became refugees.

Unknowningly Janet and Marta's paths may have crossed as Janet was in Addis Ababa at the time of the coup and the subsequent military government.

Ultimately Marta, her husband and children relocated to Ft. Wayne Indiana and vowed that when conditions allowed, they would return to Ethiopia and in 1991 returned to Ethiopia with Project Mercy, complete with a grade school, high school, dormitory, hospital, adult literacy, and animal husbandry program. As years passed, her son, Bete, took over the leadership of the foundation. As oftentimes life comes round full circle, Janet is working with Bete on establishing Tenacity Worldwide, which has set up learning labs in schools and is enhancing English language Ministry of Education textbooks.

Anne Pellowski (1933 - 2023)



In early 2011, Janet received an email from a former New York Public librarian, Anne Pellowski, suggesting that she do a cloth book workshop in first languages in Mekelle, Ethiopia at the library Janet had helped set up during her recent sabbatical. She helped Anne with the arrangements, answered thousands of questions, and sent her on her way. Only after the workshop was completed did it dawn on Janet that she should have Googled her. Little did she know who she had been corresponding with this whole time. Not only was Anne an author of dozens of books, but had a Fulbright, and had traveled to nearly all the countries in the world giving workshops.

Janet mentioned to her that she should visit Nicaragua, where Janet's friend Jane

For Everything there is a Season *continued*

Mirandette had established a library. Receiving a second recommendation to visit Jane from IBBY (International Board on Books for Young People), she headed to Nicaragua. Janet knew she had to go to meet this woman and visit Nicaragua for the first time.

Anne was even more than what Janet expected. She wanted to be her "when I grew up!" While there she conducted a workshop in Managua and also San Juan del Sur.

It was not too difficult to convince Janet to travel back to Ethiopia with her and with the help of Peace Corps Volunteer, Jennifer Miller, they set up a workshop in Addis Ababa, and two more workshops in Mekelle. And somewhere along the line, Janet traveled back to Nicaragua to help with a couple more workshops in San Juan.

When Jane met Anne Pellowski at the San Juan del Sur Biblioteca in Nicaragua the first time, she was amazed at her energy enthusiasm for children and education and her vast experience and that she would so graciously share all of it with everyone and in such heartwarming and engaging ways. Their deep friendship and Anne's mentorship began on that first trip with her unflagging energy and generosity as shown during the 5 workshops given with reading to children in between. Anne provided annual workshops over a span of seven years and as her health began to keep her closer to home, they maintained their friendship and her mentorship until a few weeks before her passing. Jane had the privilege of attending Anne's funeral and speaking at the graveside and representing the gratitude of the international world she served so faithfully and delightedly with her stories and tall tales. In 2018 a film producer who had traveled extensively with Anne presented a documentary of Anne's experiences entitled "Storyteller to the World," which received the People's Choice Prize at the Frozen River Film Festival in Wenona MN.



Janet with participant in Addis Ababa workshop

Georgia Crowell, (nee Wurzelbacher)1933—July 30, 2023



Georgia Crowell and Jane Mirandette

Jane's relationship with Georgia was short, only two and a half years but immensely rich. Georgia was an independent, unconventional, highly intelligent woman, graduating as an architect in 1957. She was a world traveler. Over the years, she had owned several businesses but most dedicatedly had owned and run Aims Foreign language bookstore for forty years in Cincinnati Ohio providing materials in 37 languages. As her health failed, she sought not to sell the business and the books but to donate them, especially the Spanish collection that filled half the bookstore and most of the warehouse.

Family friends of Jane's in Nicaragua told her about the HJH Libraries for All Project and the library projects in Nicaragua. Through these mutual friends who offered to "send us some books," Jane arranged to travel to Cincinnati. Their connection was immediate, they were likeminded with a singular purpose and vision.

Georgia was a strong willed, strong minded well-traveled woman. Her passion for providing opportunities and education for the world's children was clear from their first meeting. Her idea to provide the HJH Foundation with the ability to share the wealth and her embrace of the solutions and ideas the Foundation could come up with has made a majorly significant difference in Jane's life, vision and mission.

Her memory will live on in the continued work of literacy programs as far reaching as El Salvador, Peru, the US borders, and Nicaragua.

We have been blessed to have met and worked with some extraordinary women.

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Who We Are

The International Library and Cultural Exchange Interest Group (ILCE-IG) grew out of the American-Bulgarian Library Exchange Project (1996-2011), which sought to create connections and cooperation between American and Bulgarian libraries. The ILCE-IG has extended its scope to encourage projects that foster relationships between Colorado Libraries and those of other countries, to help build and maintain libraries in communities overseas, and to celebrate non-dominant cultures across Colorado.

We're on the web:
ilceig.wordpress.com/

Focus on a Project

Journey School of Costa Rica, Tamarindo



Consultation, collaboration, and networking are the hallmarks of the International Library Cultural Exchange Interest Group attracting like-minded library professionals across the world. It came as no surprise when Jennifer Mora Zuniga, a Returned Peace Corps Volunteer (Costa Rica, 2010-12) and current resident, reached out to librarian and fellow RPCV, Janet Lee (Ethiopia, 1974-76) about her burgeoning library project at the Journey School of Costa Rica in Tamarindo, Costa Rica. (<https://www.journeyschoolofcostarica.com>) Concurrently, she reached out to a colleague at Shenandoah University in Winchester, VA. Both conversations led her to the neighboring HJH Libraries for all Foundation in San Juan del Sur, Nicaragua, founded by Jane Mirandette, an ILCE-IG board member.

Jen is well on her way toward her goal of 3,500 volumes by school year 2023-24, with an emphasis on materials in Spanish. Jen found that the HJH Libraries for all website was a wealth of information. Her RPCV connections are also bearing much fruit. Jane has offered Jen her choice of Spanish language books recently gifted to her by the late Georgia Crowell, owner of Aims International Books Inc. in Cincinnati, Ohio, most of which are currently housed in Colorado (shipping not included). Jennifer and her team will also visit the SJDS Biblioteca during its anniversary in November to observe the nuts and bolts operations of a well-run library.

Volunteers are always welcome!

