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Editorial

Thank you for downloading the latest issue of CILIP’s International Library and Information Group (ILIG) Focus journal.

The last year has been such a challenging and a unique one for so many of us that we’ve chosen to do something different with this issue. We feature three interviews with librarians from three different continents and from three very different sectors. In each case they have let us know how their working lives, and those of their users, have been differently affected by COVID-19. The contrasts are stark at times - for Billy Yeung in China, the disruption was relatively short-lived with his Library able to at least partially reopen within three months of closing. Lawrence Tarlow, in his position as New York Philharmonic Librarian, tells us how he has experienced much more severe and extensive disruption which continued for over a year. Anabel Negrín, who works in a cultural centre - El Parnaso - in Uruguay reports how she has experienced a fair amount of disruption but also a significant increase in online users.
The interviews have all been kindly been sent to us at CILIP ILIG by Dr Patrick Lo from the University of Tsukuba in Japan. Dr Lo has been a regular contributor to Focus in recent years. He has collaborated on interviews with pre-eminent librarians from around the globe. In this case he has partnered with colleagues from The University of Hong Kong and Clark County Public Library in Kentucky (USA) and we are grateful to them all, as well as the interviewees themselves, for sharing them with us.

Thanks also go to Lesley Pitman from the CILIP ILIG Committee who kindly contributed a review for this issue of a book which Dr Lo co-edited.

The world appears to be on a path which, however rocky it may yet be, is in the right direction towards some sort of ‘normal’ as far as COVID-19 is concerned. Reflecting on our experiences of the pandemic will be crucial to creating a more positive, secure and considerate future on a global scale. We welcome content about what your own experience of the pandemic has been, wherever you happen to be in the world. Please send any submissions to iligfocus@cilip.org.uk.

In the meantime stay safe and I hope you enjoy reading this issue.

Philip Segall, Editor
Introduction
Founded by American conductor Ureli Corelli Hill in 1842, the New York Philharmonic (NYP) is the oldest symphony orchestra in the United States. The NYP is one of the Big Five American orchestras and has attracted some of the world's most legendary conductors to serve as its music directors, including Gustav Mahler, Arturo Toscanini, Bruno Walter and Leonard Bernstein.

In addition to serving as the current Principal Librarian of the NYP, Lawrence Tarlow is also a former three-term President of MOLA: An Association of Music Performance Librarians. In the following interview, Tarlow summarizes his decades of experience at the NYP...

Patrick Lo (PL): Please introduce yourself.

Lawrence Tarlow (LT): My name is Lawrence Tarlow. I was born in Great Neck, New York, and grew up in Roslyn. I have been serving as the Principal Librarian of the New York Philharmonic (NYP) since August 1985. In terms of my formal training in music, I went to a local public school until the age of seventeen, but was also attending the programs of Pre-College Division of The Juilliard School\(^1\) from age fifteen to seventeen, majoring in tuba. At Juilliard, I was a student of Joseph Novotny, former Principal Tuba of the NYP. After graduating from high school, I went to the Curtis Institute of Music\(^2\) in Philadelphia from 1970 to 1974 to further my music education as a tuba major.

With regard to professional training, there is no course of study for an aspiring orchestra or ensemble librarian. We are, for the most part, autodidacts - self-taught - who learn on the job. Conservatory studies of music theory, counterpoint, and

Lawrence Tarlow was interviewed by Dr. Patrick Lo from the Faculty of Library, Information & Media Science, University of Tsukuba. This article was co-authored with: Chia-Hua Lin, Ziqing Xie, Xuehang Zhou, Zerong Xie and Dr. Dickson Chiu – all from the Faculty of Education, University of Hong Kong.
solfège were helpful, but score-reading is something I had to learn on my own. Music copying (I started long before computer engraving programs) was something I'd been doing since age fifteen - making arrangements of existing works to play with friends - and that was again self-taught.

**PL:** What is your earliest musical memory?

**LT:** At age six, I put a tambourine between my knees in music class and played it like a bongo drum. The first piece of music I fell in love with was Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony. My parents had a recording, and to this day when I hear the work, I expect the music to skip just where that recording did.

**PL:** How did you get into orchestral librarian work as a teenager?

**LT:** I was probably fifteen years old then, but I made an orchestra in my bedroom by hanging from the ceiling the names of different music instruments - imagining where they would be sitting in the orchestra. I would be sitting in the middle of my bedroom, listening to a recording conducting my own my imaginary orchestra.

Basically, I taught myself to read a score and understand the structure of a full orchestra by starting with music of the classical era… [This] is usually not so complicated because the first violins play most of the melodic line. The woodwind instruments toss the melody around or play harmony. The horns are playing with the woodwinds and the trumpets and timpani are playing only certain notes for emphasis. The top line of the score is the flutes, followed by the oboes and at the bottom of the score is the double bass. With a piano score, you don’t always know what instruments are playing, but the full score shows every line of music of every instrument.

In terms of how I discovered my passion towards the work of an orchestra librarian, when I was still in high school I was already handling the band and the orchestral music materials as a librarian. During that time, I realized that the band director had to spend a lot of time putting folders on music stands at the beginning of each rehearsal - something I found to be most inefficient. So, I proposed myself to the band director and said, “I don’t have a class before the band rehearsal. How about I come to the band rehearsal earlier and put all the folders out and pick them up afterwards,” and his reply was, “Okay, that would be nice.” Basically, I streamlined the system for handing out music at all the rehearsals. During my time at Curtis, I also served as their student orchestra librarian. It was basically how my training in orchestral librarianship began. At Tanglewood, I started to learn how to work as a proper orchestra librarian.

Even at this stage of my career, I am still learning. I think the job nature of orchestral librarianship fits my personality very well - and I absolutely love the process, esoterica, and trivia, etc.
PL: Could you describe your career path to becoming an orchestra librarian at the NYP?

LT: I served as librarian of the Berkshire (now Tanglewood) Music Center Orchestra during the summers of 1973–78, worked for the music publishers C. F. Peters Corporation and G. Schirmer, Inc., and became the Oklahoma Symphony’s first full-time librarian in 1977. During my 1979–85 tenure as librarian of the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, I also played the occasional second tuba part, including a recording of the Berlioz Requiem. I am an active member and former three-term president of MOLA: An Association of Music Performance Librarians. The two seasons spent in music publishing gave me a great insight into the other end of the pipeline, so to speak. At C. F. Peters, I was processing both sales and rental orders, picking the music to be shipped, and making packing slips and invoices for the rental orders. At G. Schirmer, I processed rental orders and public inquiries, working with church organists, high school and university conductors, and librarians for all sizes of orchestras and bands.

My final audition for Principal Librarian of the NYP took place in April 1985, and Zubin Mehta asked me in his most intimidating Music Director’s voice, “Why do you want to work for the New York Philharmonic?” I replied, “Because I’m from New York and I want my children to know their grandparents.”

And I won the job.

PL: As the Principal Librarian of the NYP, could you describe your job and areas of responsibilities?

LT: As the Principal Librarian, I am responsible for overseeing the operations of the NYP Library, from renting music or acquiring new editions, through music preparation for performance, to post-performance record keeping. There are three librarians in the section: the Principal Librarian and two Assistant Principal Librarians. We are all responsible for the accuracy, clarity, organization, and distribution of the music the orchestra performs. Indeed, we are musical sleuths who must:

- figure out which publisher to contact for any piece of music
- possess knowledge of instrumental ranges, transpositions, and arcane notational conventions
- be highly organized multi-taskers with an encyclopedic knowledge of the repertoire and an eye for detail
- … and have very neat handwriting!

In my opinion, the most important thing we orchestra librarians do is to keep track of the entire collection, and to put the right piece of paper in front of the right person at the
right time. Every piece of paper onstage passes through the NYP Library. We acquire and rent music, prepare bow markings as indicated by string section leaders, correct printing errors, and fix unworkable page turns. We also put out and pick up the players’ parts and the conductors’ scores, and occasionally the conductor’s baton. We keep performance records, and administer the database of artists, repertoire, and performances. We also disseminate instrumentation details for each work to the operations, artistic, and orchestra personnel departments; fix damaged music; offer estimated timings and durations of the pieces… and are fluent in score reading. I am proud to say that we are the second-best score readers in the building after the conductor.

When the orchestra goes on an overseas tour, the most difficult aspect of the job for us is preparing music... We must have all the music for the tour, in addition to as much music as we can carry for programs coming after, because the players need to prepare for that as well. There are four library trunks that travel together with the orchestra: the heaviest trunks… contain all the parts, some of the Music Director’s scores, music for the weeks following tour, manuscript paper, and office supplies. Usually, two librarians go on tour and one remains in NYC to help in an emergency via fax or e-mail, in addition to keeping up with the workload.

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Lawrence Tarlow following the score in the Hanoi Opera House while the New York Philharmonic rehearses Ti e n Quân Ca, the national anthem of Vietnam
As orchestra librarians, all three of us are official members of the NYP, and our names appear on the 106-member roster. Each librarian was hired by the Music Director. I was hired by Zubin Mehta, and Sara Griffin was hired by Alan Gilbert following an audition before an orchestra committee. That involved extensive oral and written examinations covering repertoire and industry knowledge, publisher information, music copying, written bowings and cuts, all orchestral instruments and their transpositions, and copyright law.

**PL:** When you were working as an orchestra librarian trainee, did you have a mentor, and what kind of guidance did you seek from your mentor?

**LT:** My mentor was Victor Alpert... Principal Librarian of the Boston Symphony Orchestra. He was the one who trained me in many different ways, and was always there to answer my questions. The telephone wires between Boston and Oklahoma City had a lot of use when I started my career!

**PL:** How have working relationships between the orchestra librarians and the orchestra players (including conductors) evolved over the past four decades?

**LT:** For the NYP players, they all come to the Library for their music, so we certainly get to know all of them, including their personal idiosyncrasies. For musicians who have poor eyesight, they want to have their music enlarged. Certain musicians only want to see the same parts they have been using in the past - no new editions.

Some would come on Saturday nights to get the music for the Tuesday rehearsals. On the other hand, there are early acquirers who want their music six or eight weeks before the performance. In other words, different musicians learn in different styles and at different paces. Nowadays, we sometimes provide music in PDF for players who use devices when practicing. For stage use, though, all music is printed, not electronic.

**PL:** Some orchestras have full-time librarians on staff, while some do not. How does the work of an orchestra librarian help improve the quality of a performance?

**LT:** The work of an orchestra librarian directly contributes to the quality of performance by removing doubt in a performer’s mind... The level of concentration required to perform at the highest level is upset when the performer wonders about the printed part. A librarian ensures that the bowings are correct, fixes errors, and can adjust page turns in a way that a performer without specialist skills cannot. When a player says he or she has made a correction in an idiosyncratic way... the question a librarian asks is, “That’s fine for you, but if you’re sick the day after tomorrow, will your substitute be able to read what you’ve done?”

There are also emergencies - a player might leave a part at home and a non-playing
librarian is able to track down a replacement part, whether from another orchestra, the Internet, or the rental library of a music publisher.

**PL:** Could you give our readers a brief introduction to the NYP, including the Orchestra Library?

**LT:** There can be no brief history of the Orchestra, since the NYP performed its very first concert in December 1842. The NYP is one of the leading American orchestras, popularly referred to as the “Big Five.”

The NYP is indeed a very large orchestra. However, I think the biggest department of the NYP is the fundraising department… usually called the development department because all American orchestras depend on private philanthropy and civic support to fuel concert programs that serve community needs. In the United States, there is very little governmental support for arts and culture. In recent years, it has become increasingly difficult for orchestras, art museums, ballet companies, and theater companies to raise enough money to survive. Hence, almost every large orchestra and opera company in the United States has a very, very large development (fundraising) department, and there is no exception for the NYP.

In terms of staffing, the NYP has about 106 musicians; that is including three librarians and 103 instrumentalists. On the administration side, before COVID-19, the NYP had about seventy-five people on staff, but that’s been reduced. With reference to the staffing structure of the NYP Library, we have altogether three orchestra librarians working full-time.

**PL:** What have been the most challenging projects at the NYP?

**LT:** It would have to be our staged versions of Broadway shows. They are not written for a symphony orchestra and we have to make them work.

**PL:** Where do the majority of the NYP musicians come from?

**LT:** The NYP players come from all over the world and have since 1842.

**PL:** From 2009-2017 Maestro Alan Gilbert served as Music Director of the NYP. Could you describe his working style?

**LT:** Maestro Alan Gilbert treated everyone with tremendous respect, and a great deal of humor. The NYP Library is next door to the Music Director’s suite. I would often go there and ask the Music Director’s assistant, “Does Maestro Gilbert have a moment? I only have a simple question for him.” The answer would often be, “Yes, he does.” For a
librarian, this sort of easy communication with the Music Director is a wonderful thing.

I will tell you a funny story. When I am sitting at my desk inside the Orchestra Library, my back is to the entrance door. For a 10:00 a.m. rehearsal, I would often come in at 7:45 a.m. - for the reason that I could get more work done when the office telephone doesn't ring. As I was sitting at my desk one morning, I heard a voice from behind me, and that was Alan Gilbert. I hadn't heard him come in. I looked down and realized that Maestro Gilbert was wearing sneakers or rubber-soled shoes. So, I jokingly said to him, “We librarians prefer that music directors wear hard-soled shoes.” The next morning, he came in with no shoes at all, just wearing socks! It was indicative of the relationship that he felt he could make a joke. However, that was something that you would not expect from the older generation of orchestra conductors.
Lorin Maazel would often want to talk about the repertoire, or even make jokes about something that had no relevance to music. The performances were always on his mind, though. He would sometimes say, “Did you hear that place [in the music] last night? Listen to it again tonight. It’s going to be different.” Different conductors have different personalities - that is why the same piece of music could sound differently when conducted by different conductors, even with the same orchestra.

**PL:** What would be the worst nightmare that could ever happen to an orchestra librarian?

**LT:** Everything stops in the middle of an orchestra rehearsal and you hear the dreaded announcement, “We need a librarian on the stage.” We have all experienced that once or twice in our career… and it is a terrible feeling. If it is a live concert and you see the conductor walking towards the stage door after turning the first few pages, because you have put the wrong score out - these could be our worst nightmares.

**PL:** Were there any emergency situations in the past when you had to make use of your professional skills and experiences to resolve them in order to keep the show running?

**LT:** The NYP was doing a complete performance of the opera Béatrice et Bénédict by Hector Berlioz. The first oboist came to me and said, “I left my music for the entire opera at home!” I said, “Oh, that is very bad indeed;” because it would take him forty minutes to drive home, and it was just twenty minutes before the call to the stage. I asked, “Is there someone at home who can bring the music, so you will at least have it for Act II?” Unfortunately, he said, there was nobody home. The librarian I called at the Metropolitan Opera couldn’t locate their music for this opera, so, I sat on the stage between the first flute and first oboe turning pages in a full score from which the oboist had to read. I also was pointing to the oboe line in the score so the player could play without having to first find his line. Another reason score-reading is a necessary skill for us librarians!

**PL:** As the Principal Librarian of the NYP, could you describe your management and leadership style?

**LT:** I treat my colleagues with respect - respect for their abilities as librarians, and respect for ideas they propose. My way to address a project is not always the best way, and if a colleague proposes what is clearly a better way, that’s the way we do it. If a colleague wants to handle a project from start to finish, once we’ve discussed the methods, I stay out of the way unless asked to weigh in. The NYP Library works at the highest professional level and I try to set an example by making certain my work is at that level. A friend said to me, “When you say something is ‘good enough,’ you know it isn’t.”

I make every effort to provide the library with the tools - software and analog - and the information we need to do our job. If an administrative department needs to be pressed
for information, I keep asking (politely) until we have the information we need. Sometimes the information is not forthcoming from the administrative side... when possible I try to get that information directly from the Music Director.

I also make certain there are not unrealistic expectations for what the library can do. When necessary, I explain the scope of a project to the relevant people in order that they understand what can and cannot be done, and how long said project will take. The library does not over-promise and by being honest and realistic, our scope of work and expected completion dates are accepted.

The library is respected because of this realistic approach, and because of the professional quality of the work we do for conductors, soloists, orchestra musicians, and administrative staff. Without this respect, we can't be as useful to the orchestra and administration as we would like to be.

PL: I understand you are an active member and former three-term president of MOLA: An Association of Music Performance Librarians. Is there any reason why a majority of the MOLA members come from North America and Western Europe, while only very few come from Asia, Russia, or Eastern Europe?

LT: First of all, librarians are not members of MOLA. Rather, musical organizations are members and their librarians benefit from the institutional membership. Some non-North American organizations are not typically joiners of groups such as MOLA. I don't know the reason for that. However, as librarians move from a MOLA organization to a non-MOLA, sometimes they convince their new orchestra to join. The Berlin Philharmonic and Vienna State Opera are examples of this. We have tremendous participation from Nordic organizations and UK-based organizations. We have member organizations in Asia, as well. Organizations from two Baltic countries are represented in our membership. Why are some regions not represented? I don't know. You'll have to ask them.

PL: Throughout your career as an orchestra librarian, did you ever have any second thoughts or regrets?

LT: Well, every one of us in our own lives has things we wish we had done differently. But in terms of my choice of career, I would say, "No!" I love being an orchestra librarian. Orchestral librarianship is about the process of music preparation, and this is something that I am most interested in. I like to find out how everything works behind the scene, and the orchestra library is where the details of music preparation come together: So, I have no regrets at all. I get to hear great music performed by great artists and I get to work closely with them also.

PL: Can you describe what it is like to be working and collaborating in such close
Lawrence Tarlow conferring with composer Peter Eötvös at Kölner Philharmonie during a rehearsal for the world premiere of Senza sangue

proximity with some of the greatest talents in western classical music - maestros from Leonard Bernstein to Lorin Maazel, and also with hundreds of other singers and musicians of star caliber across the globe?

**LT:** Knowing how to handle the different personalities of the orchestra players and conductors is absolutely important. In fact, every conductor is charismatic, and many of them are definitely dynamic figures on the podium. They simply cannot be conductors without being charismatic. An important part of my job as an orchestra librarian is to deal with those personalities… You have to learn what to say when dealing with certain personalities, and also to avoid talking and to stay out of their way because they might think you are menial and therefore don’t want to give you any time. Without being a psychologist, understanding the different personalities is vital to be successful as an orchestra librarian.

**PL:** What would you be if not an orchestra librarian?

**LT:** Probably, not the tuba player at the NYP, but that was my dream as a student!

**PL:** Could you describe your most memorable moment with the NYP?
LT: I have had many memorable moments, but hearing European rhythmic applause for the first time, on the 1988 European tour, was spine-tingling.

PL: Who is your favorite composer?

LT: Prokofiev - great use of the tuba.

The impact of COVID-19

PL: COVID-19 has turned the world upside down. How have the New York Philharmonic and you yourself been coping with COVID-19?

LT: Following the general rehearsal on Thursday, March 12, 2020, word was received that the concert that evening and the following performances of that program - Friday, Saturday, and Tuesday - were cancelled.

Immediately, I gathered the music that was on the stage level, picked up the music that had been left at the stage door for extra and substitute musicians to collect, and returned everything to the library. E-mails were sent to publishers notifying them of the cancelled performances and most publishers waived their usual cancellation fees. An e-mail auto-signature about the cancellation was made active. After that, I went home to await further developments.

It was announced on March 23 that there would be no concerts in what remained of the 2019–20 season.

Needless to say, the further developments were terrible. Eventually, New York City became a locus of the pandemic. By May 1, there were more than 10,000 deaths in New York City alone attributed to COVID-19. Certainly, this city, and the world, had been turned upside down. David Geffen Hall was closed, all of Lincoln Center’s buildings were closed, and no one was to come to any of the buildings without permission.

Finally, permission was received to come to David Geffen Hall on May 11. While there was not music to prepare for concerts, there was music to be processed: the music from the cancelled concerts needed to be removed from the stage folders and sorted again by composer and title, as did music that had been prepared and put into folders for following concerts. A list of all the music out with players had to be made, and players contacted to ask that music be returned. Rented music had to be returned, once the sets were complete, and there were invoices for shipping charges to be processed.
With no concerts, there was no music to prepare. On June 10, an announcement was made that concerts through January 5, 2021, were cancelled. Given this cancellation, it was decided that long-deferred maintenance of David Geffen Hall could be undertaken and it was necessary to empty the entire building: for the Philharmonic, this meant instruments, offices, dressing rooms, and the library. The librarians packed more than 150 boxes of music shelved in our in-building storage area plus the entire working library, including music, scores, reference materials, and accoutrements. Everything was moved to a temporary library space.

It was interesting for us librarians to have our hands on nearly every piece of music the Philharmonic had in its collection, going back to our founding in 1842. The most interesting find is a score and set of parts of an orchestration by Franz Liszt of the Andante cantabile movement of Beethoven’s Archduke Trio, which was performed in the 1870s. [Note: the score of this movement can be seen here.]6

Finally, the members of orchestra began to make videos of chamber music performances to be streamed on the Philharmonic’s website, and the library has had some involvement with this. We scanned parts to be sent digitally to the players for practice and provided physical parts for the recording sessions.

**PL:** Why do we turn to music in times of crisis?

**LT:** The use of music to comfort in times of crisis is a long-established practice, and is perhaps as old as humanity itself. It’s the documentation of such use that is comparatively recent, not the actual use. This is a question for sociologists and philosophers, not an orchestra librarian!

**PL:** How would you summarize your decades of experience and contributions to the profession of performance music librarianship?

**LT:** Well, nothing deeply philosophical comes to mind at this point, but I must highlight that it is not an easy job being an orchestra librarian. In order to become a successful orchestra librarian, one must get used to dealing with constant pressures, as well as with different personalities.

As an orchestra player, you don’t want to miss a single note in a big oboe solo, otherwise people would start to take notice right away. It is equally embarrassing for us orchestra librarians to make any mistakes even though we are not the ones actually performing onstage. I tell people that it is not a mistake until it leaves the room - meaning that we have to look at the music that we are preparing very carefully before we put it on the stage. But if you are not able to deal with that sort of pressure and anxiety, you will probably be very unhappy. Luckily, I can deal with the pressure and anxiety in a
If the job nature of an orchestra librarian happens to fit your personality, it could be great fun, and you could derive a great deal of pleasure and satisfaction from it.

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Interview with Mr. Billy Tak Hoi Leung, Functional Head of Public Access and Reference Unit University of Macau (China)

Introduction
The University of Macau was founded in 1981 as a private university called the University of East Asia. After thirty-six years, the University has made outstanding contributions in teaching, research, and community services. Since its establishment, the University has trained tens of thousands of students to serve all society sectors.

The Wu Yee Sun Library of the University of Macau has become the largest library with the most extensive collection in Macau. The library is committed to integrating technology into traditional library services. To support development in teaching and research, the library also strives to create open learning space, bringing new learning experiences to teachers and students. This innovative exploration has brought about similar improvements to higher education systems in neighboring areas.

Mr. Billy Tak Hoi Leung is Functional Head of Public Access and Reference Unit at the University and Vice Director of the Macao Library and Information Management Association. (Currently, he is Assistant University Librarian). He was interviewed by Qianxiu Liu from the Graduate School of Library, Information and Media Studies, University of Tsukuba. The piece was co-authored with Jiawen Wang, Jian Zhou and Dickson Chiu from the Faculty of Education, The University of Hong Kong.
Interview with Mr. Billy Tak Hoi Leung

Here, Mr. Billy Leung shares the valuable experience he has accumulated over the past thirty years, as well as his expectations for the future development of the library.

Liu Qianxiu (LQ): Can you introduce yourself first? Please tell us more about your career.

Billy Leung (BL): I first joined the library of the University of Macau in 1984. During this period I worked at the University Publications Center and in library administration, for instance, as the Secretary of the Library Committee and in personnel management... I joined the University of Macau Library again in 1988 and have been engaged in cataloging, acquisitions, and circulation since. In 2000, I founded the Reference and Library Instruction Unit (later renamed Public Access and Reference Unit) and then shifted the focus of my work to user services.

LQ: Why and how did you choose to become a reference librarian?

BL: Actually, it was very accidental. The library was short of staff. I applied for a job and was lucky enough to be employed. The library had only eight librarians then and the total number of students was about 300... The University of Macau's predecessor was an open college, which provided further education for
the public to obtain a degree. Therefore, I received a degree in Journalism and Communication during my employment. After graduation, I was engaged in the newspaper industry… six months later, I returned to the library in 1988. After that, I received a Bachelor's Degree in Chinese Studies from South China Normal University and a Master's Degree in Information and Library Science from Sun Yat-sen University.

**LQ:** What are the objectives of user education services in your library and what is your definition of library user education?

**BL:** We provide library guides for new students and... courses to train users to use the library. These include training on particular topics, such as retrieving materials on a specific subject and the use of databases. We also provide training on using various tools for writing papers such as citation, bibliographic management, and plagiarism prevention. Some teachers will also ask us to co-teach with them on how to use library resources… Our next goal is to plan for a credit-bearing elective course called Information Literacy.

This is particularly important because we need to find some excellent librarians… with fluent English to be teachers. English is the teaching language of our University. However, most of our Librarians in Macau are not as good as those in Hong Kong and other places in their English language, as their first language is Cantonese… most of them have graduated from library-related majors in mainland China or Taiwan without experience in studying abroad.

As for the definition and scope of user education activities, I think it is becoming wider and wider. I hope users can better use the library and develop research ability in the future through our education courses. Otherwise, they cannot improve their information literacy ability. So, we train students to use not only library resources but also tools for research activities.

**LQ:** As you mentioned, the ultimate goal is to improve users' research ability. Do you have different courses for graduate students and undergraduates?

**BL:** Generally, we do it separately. For example, lectures on how to publish papers are mainly for graduate students, as undergraduates have less demand for publishing. However, there are no restrictions on some activities, such as the use of databases. When both undergraduate and graduate students have similar needs, there are no restrictions.

We also focus on undergraduate education activities because secondary school students in Macau generally do not perform well in information search after
entering university… secondary school curricula tend to be exam-oriented so they don't need to do essays or projects. They often only know how to use Internet search engines, such as Google and Baidu, but cannot judge and use information properly. When they get into the University, they need to take the initiative to self-study. University teachers rarely teach students how to find materials and just let students search for information by themselves. However, students often do not know how to find them correctly, facing a vast volume of library materials. Therefore, they need our guidance and help.

LQ: Can you briefly introduce the educational background and job responsibilities of your colleagues?

BL: They mainly graduated in Library Science. They are all experienced librarians and have more than eight years of library work experience… which is particularly important. Now our team are all experienced, have language skills, and are professional librarians and teachers. Our library has forty two librarians and five reference librarians, including one with a Ph.D. and three with a Master's Degree. Due to the limited manpower in our library, they are not only engaged in the work of user education but also undertake reference services and promotion activities. For example, one teacher is in charge of the library system; another is responsible for acquisitions and cataloging.

LQ: Do you think user education librarians' scope and responsibilities will change in the future, or even now?

BL: I think the future change is that the library is no longer limited to a consulting center. Our library has three key objectives: teaching support, research support, and community services. Community services mean that we should go out of the campus and do some education or publicity to the public. For example, some organizations - mainly hospitals and private ones - need to train employees, encourage them to continue learning, and use our library resources. They will invite our library to provide them with lectures on using the library and a series of user education activities. For example, some hospitals require doctors to continue their advanced studies and use the library to find materials. Therefore we also provide lectures on medical databases.

The library is undergoing a process of transformation. The skills of librarians are comprehensive, while user demand is ever increasing. So we need skills in analyzing data and information, especially because we are engaged in higher education. We need to keep paying attention to these issues, collect the latest articles and comments, dig out the latest trends and situations… then analyze them and integrate them into a report. Besides, we can use some tools because there
are many databases now, and we need to analyze each subject's development. For example, we want to know the number of medical papers published by our medical faculty, their number of citations, their impact, and compare them with other universities' research to understand our strengths and weaknesses. We can use some tools to analyze these data and then report to the faculty and teachers for their reference.

This is how our university has changed in the past five to ten years. In the past, what we did was relatively simple, such as Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI) as a regular service. Last year, our librarians browsed more than 200 articles on higher education every month, selected ten of them, and sent them to relevant university leaders for reference. This year, we also provided a comprehensive analysis of the content of the articles. These are the extensive abilities I just mentioned.

**LQ:** So, are the challenges faced by librarians increasing?

**BL:** Yes. In addition, because we usually read papers in Chinese and English, language ability is also needed. Although English papers are more regularly updated, abundant, and are publishing more important research, we also need to pay attention to Chinese papers in the local and Asian contexts.
**LQ:** What are the formats of library user education activities? Are they mainly face-to-face lectures or are there other participatory, interactive parts?

**BL:** The... activities of our library are diversified. Face-to-face lectures are common for explaining how to use library resources. We also organize some special events and invite famous guests to give talks. Aside from this, we hold some book exhibitions and other exhibitions, showing our collections by various themes. Users may not know about these books and their value if they are just stored on the shelf. Our exhibitions have two levels: small book fairs and relatively large ones. For example, if a writer wins a Nobel Prize, we will display their related works so that students can easily find them at the entrance. Because our library is relatively large, students need not go to every floor to look for those books. In addition, we have exhibitions of calligraphy works... In this way we encourage students to read more books and improve their general interest...

**LQ:** We all know that the rapid development of the internet and technology has also impacted libraries. Have you seen any significant changes in the past twenty years?

**BL:** Where there were few computers in the 1980s, I did relatively few activities in the library, and basic duties were centered on cataloging, acquisitions, and circulation services, as well as some interlibrary loan services.

Gradually, we have computers, and then we can go online. We subscribed to... a lot of electronic resources, and the transformation has taken place slowly. Students originally wanted to read the paper version, but now they need the electronic version. So, with the development of network information, is there still a need for reference service?... it is convenient for users to find library resources, but many problems can be solved by having librarians... they need the library's reference service to help them save a lot of time and find resources as soon as possible. This is a great change.

Our cataloging may be relatively simplified because some companies have provided cataloging services. We can transfer the cataloging data to the library system through their systems, and efficiently complete the required work.

Our work also focuses on promoting more activities and trying our best to attract users to use the library. Our work was relatively simple in the past, and users often used the library to find materials. We were not worried that they would not come to the library because the library space was limited. Now, as we have moved to the new building with much more space... they seldom have to come to the library as they can find information at home. We need to try our best to attract users to... our library again.
In this regard, we have made some efforts. First, we should provide a good learning environment. For example, we designed different spaces for them, some independent rooms to study. In addition, we have set up different furniture for the library... In the past, students' learning styles were more traditional; just a table and a chair, and these were not very comfortable. Now we will place some comfortable sofas and other furniture for them to read books. There are also some desks and chairs which are mobile and connectable. Two or three tables can be connected to help students do group discussions and other activities.

Second, we carry out wellbeing activities. For example, when the exam period is near, we distribute some small gifts or snacks to the students to relieve their pressure. The library also distributes some small items of stationery... when the library opens in a new semester. So, students can feel that the library is very concerned about their studies, and they will be more willing to come... The library has also become a social place for them to relax and rest.

Nowadays young people have many choices, so we need to provide diversified equipment to attract them and make them feel that the library can provide a good learning environment, including different space designs... The internet cannot replace physical space... Neither can this be replaced by cafes or restaurants, because some restaurants have a relatively poor environment.
LQ: Due to the convenience of online services, such as Google Scholar, does this make the work of librarians easier or more difficult?

BL: Generally, it makes our work easier. However, because users prefer to use the Internet to search for information rather than using the library, our librarians need to do more promotional activities to attract users. In the 1970s, even when there was no Internet, American Librarians predicted that libraries would die out in the 21st century. Then the virtual library appeared. In 1992, libraries in America began to use the Internet, and The University of Macau Library connected to the Internet in April 1995. We can find out whether other libraries have some collections for interlibrary loan through this system. Before that, if we wanted to borrow books from other libraries, we needed a catalog from them or we mailed a letter to inquire whether there was such a book. Now we only need to confirm it through the internet, which is very convenient.

LQ: Has the library established a subject librarian system or a teacher-librarian system?

BL: Now, our library mainly focuses on two aspects. First, librarians actively contact teachers to understand their needs and discuss solutions and models with them. We understand their needs and provide services actively because some teachers do not realize that they need our services. On the other hand, some teachers take the initiative to seek cooperation with the library, and we can provide courses according to their needs. So, it is a two-way partnership.

Because we have a limited number of librarians, there are certain restrictions on establishing subject librarians. An important reason for developing subject librarians in American university libraries is that their librarians are not library majors in their undergraduate education but their Master's Degrees are library majors. As they have professional undergraduate backgrounds, it is relatively easy to provide subject services. However, as most of our librarians have both undergraduate and Master's degrees as library majors, they do not have other professional backgrounds. For example, some Law School teachers do not have much confidence in our librarians, because they think we do not know much about law and cannot become... subject librarians. There are also social and cultural... reasons. Some law graduates may find it difficult in the United States (US) to find a job and will consider working in the library. But in Macau, law graduates must... become lawyers and will not want to work in the library. So it is almost impossible for us to find suitable library staff with a professional law background. Some majors may be able to do so, but some majors also require a higher professional standard, such as law, engineering, and medicine... Therefore, we also have some difficulties in communication and cooperation with Medical School teachers. But our advantage is our comprehensive ability and information ability. For example, we can tell them...
about the level of Medical School teachers' research results about cancer in the whole research field. Our library can analyze the information using digital tools, but it may be difficult for specific contexts.

Another problem is that librarians without subject backgrounds may not reach their professional level to select books and journals. Therefore, we turn to the teachers to make those decisions. We have a library committee for such communication, and each faculty will send a representative... We also promote our library user education activities through this committee. Because some teachers do not know that we provide these types of course services, we can better inform them through the committee. Therefore, the library committee plays a crucial role in linking the library and teachers.

**LQ:** How do you see the effectiveness of user education activities?

**BL:** We have a systematic evaluation scheme. If it is a relatively simple activity, there is a questionnaire after each activity to obtain feedback from participants. Some users and teachers may also take the initiative to discuss sessions with us or email feedback... after an activity, including after we go to the teachers' classroom to provide co-teaching services.

In fact, it is difficult to evaluate the reference service work because we are not like companies producing products with visible profits. We... play a supporting role in helping students and teachers solve their research and learning problems, but it is difficult to quantify the results. Our information literacy courses' effectiveness is difficult to evaluate, and we can only look at their feedback. However, a key to reference service work is the library management's attitude... they realize the importance and strongly support it. But there are legal provisions in the US and more recently Taiwan: every library must have a reference librarian and a reference department.

**LQ:** Students and staff from which disciplines are the most actively involved in your user education activities?

**BL:** Student needs in every subject are not necessarily the same. For example, students majoring in History or Literature need to read a lot... I found that the Social Sciences Faculty and Health Science Faculty of our university are very active in seeking cooperation with the library. First - as they need to find materials to write papers - how to retrieve the literature is very important for them. The Health Science Faculty also needs to search... databases for special topics. But there are many medical databases, and the information is not easy to find. The most passive are the students majoring in IT Engineering, followed by Business Administration,
probably because their information is relatively easy to find. However, our library has training lectures on data analysis tools and using economic data, which are useful for them and thus quite popular. So it is not just about information retrieval, but about how to analyze and integrate information.

IT Engineering students tend to use laboratories instead of the library because their assignments involve experiments. We have also thought about attracting IT Engineering students to participate in library activities, but they mainly use electronic journals that are easier to search. Moreover, we have resources integration for electronic journals to facilitate their retrieval. They need the latest information and papers, rather than the History department students who may need older materials.

Because our course is not compulsory, students come to class because they are interested and realize that they have this need, they will take the initiative to join. With this strong motivation, there is rarely the phenomenon of students playing with mobile phones.

**LQ:** Do you think professors play an important role in encouraging students to participate in user education activities?

**BL:** Teachers are essential because some students will only come if their teachers encourage them. My best experience is when the teacher has an assignment for undergraduate students, which can only be completed by referencing library materials. The teacher then brings the students to the library, and we can teach the students how to find the materials. We will have communicated with the teacher before the class starts to give students guidance on required materials and skills. As the students will normally be engaged and work hard under such an arrangement, the cooperation between teachers and the library has an excellent effect.

**LQ:** According to your observation and experience, what is the difference between undergraduate students and postgraduate students in their information search skills?

**BL:** Postgraduate students are relatively self-conscious and active, and they are more involved in library activities. Because they need many materials for writing papers, they are more dependent on the library. Undergraduate students may not find library education activities useful and participate until their final year or until they need to complete their graduation thesis. As first-year students have just entered the University and need to adapt to the university's life and study, including the new teaching methods and curricula, they have limited time to attend library activities.
For some time, we have asked students to attend library seminars through teachers. In the past, we had an English Language Center where we would spend a class every semester teaching students to learn how to retrieve materials in the library. After that Center was removed, there was no such compulsory activity, and it is up to us to attract students. In the future, more students will be willing to participate in these library education activities once we have assigned credits to courses.

**LQ:** Are there any online consultation and virtual reference services?

**BL:** Yes, we have a library system where users can submit forms to ask questions or ask a librarian by telephone.

**LQ:** Do you think reference librarians play a crucial role in presenting a positive image for the whole library?

**BL:** First of all, I think reference librarians provide a showcase. They must have a professional image because users come to the library for help. If reference librarians answer carefully and thoughtfully, users will have higher confidence in the library and will come to consult next time. Secondly, we must respect every user. Because every user comes to the library with a specific aim, they are often curious and eager to find... materials. If every librarian can embody these two aspects, users will feel that our library can really empathetically help them.

An ideal situation is to be able to... become good friends with users. Then they can come to the library whenever they are in need. But... it is also challenging due to some librarians' personalities. So, front-line reference librarians... prefer to communicate with others and be outgoing. However, most librarians are relatively introverted and it is difficult for them to give lectures and introduce the library to students. For example, in my previous experience, I introduced the library to more than 800 students in the gymnasium, including the question and answer session. We should be confident in introducing the library... in either Chinese or English.

**LQ:** The... impression some get has always been that librarians are confined to internal activities, and the management model is relatively closed. Is this the situation?

**BL:** No - on the contrary - we outreach more often than expected. Our library has an open culture to promote communication. In fact, the library industry is the most valued in the US. I have visited more than 100 libraries. Americans love libraries very much. If you tell them that you are a reference librarian, they will give a thumbs up and show respect, because they think that librarianship is a very prestigious profession. However, if you say you are a reference librarian in
Chinese communities, their first reaction is to ask what a reference librarian is… This situation also shows that we need to continue to work hard to improve awareness of this profession. Changes have taken place in the mainland, especially in library equipment development, following… academic influences from the US. As they realize that the library plays an important role in the whole university, they have been vigorously developing the library. Previous library research in China mainly focused on cataloging and collecting books. It now focuses more on library systems and electronic libraries, including research on user information demands and behaviors.

The University of Macau favors the US management model from what I have seen of different management models. Because Macau was once a colony of Portugal, it was influenced by Portugal. The management change of public libraries was relatively slow before Macau returned its sovereignty to China. Even now, there is no large library, and the only major library is located at the University of Macau. We are open to the public, and people outside the university can also use the library.

I visited the library of the National Diet Library of Japan before. At that time, they did not allow taking pictures, even of the interior decoration. I also saw a lot of Japanese university libraries, which made me feel relatively conservative. Before the visit, we sent… a list of questions… in advance. During the visit, a colleague asked a question that was not on the list, and they had no way to answer it.

LQ: Does the University of Macau Library cooperate with other local or overseas libraries to provide user education?

BL: Yes, especially for interlibrary loans, such as with universities in Hong Kong. We also cooperate with some alliances or organizations, such as OCLC (Online Computer Library Center) and CALIS (China Academic Library & Information) in the mainland. We also jointly organize exhibitions with universities in Hong Kong and compile databases. For example, we merged the Hong Kong Journal Database of the Chinese University of Hong Kong and the Macau Journal Database… to form a Hong Kong and Macau Journal Database. This year, we jointly organized a series of activities such as Library Week with the Macau Public Library.

LQ: Does the University of Macau have a library major?

BL: Because of Macau’s small population, not many people are interested in this major. Macau students have other choices and tend to study in other places, such as Hong Kong, mainland China, and foreign countries. They want to experience life outside, but they do not necessarily choose to stay in Macau. There is also a
lack of teachers in the library profession, which restricts us in trying to establish a new discipline.

**LQ:** What are your expectations or suggestions for future librarians?

**BL:** The key issue is to be interested in this study. Many people have told me about this problem before, and they think that this subject is relatively boring. If you are not interested in this profession, it will be more painful. For example, if you are not interested in cataloging at all… you will have a headache even when you see a catalog. But if you love it, you will be pleased to do it. Secondly, it is essential to master a foreign language because the University of Macau is teaching in English. Thirdly, it is best to have some working knowledge of Information Technology. I consider these three issues to have remained unchanged since the 1990s.

Because our profession is comprehensive, we need librarians to have self-learning ability. If a librarian has varied interests, their chance of success will be more likely. Otherwise, development prospects may be limited, especially because reference librarians may need to know every subject but not necessarily in-depth. Say, if you are interested in films, you can provide more useful information to users when they ask related questions or find related information. What needs to be
deeply understood is the professional knowledge of the library. For example, the cataloging of special collections of ancient books requires professional knowledge.

The Impact of COVID-19

In order to cooperate with COVID-19 prevention and control, the University of Macau Library was closed from 3:00 pm on January 24, 2020.

During the period when the library was closed, the library's online reference service and online databases had been maintained. In addition, the return date of the borrowed books would be extended, and the books would be disinfected after they were returned. The service counters of the library has a transparent shield to physically separate staff from readers.

To facilitate study at home, the Library provided many online resources for study. The Library and Macau Academic Library Alliance (MALA) launched the Library’s Online Course for the first time during the pandemic. These courses focus on teaching how to use online resources and databases.

Due to the relief of the pandemic in Macau, the Library reopened on April 20, 2020 (it was partially open at least). The University Library was just open to staff and eligible students. Those eligible students include PhD and Master’s students at oral defence stage, PhD and Master’s Students at research stage as well as Undergraduates in the final year.

According to the pandemic prevention guidelines, the reading space of the Library has been rearranged, and the number of seats has been reduced from 3,000 to 1,500, but the concurrent number of maximum users is 500. The distance between the seats should be at least one meter according to the guidelines of the authorities. In addition, all people must measure body temperature, wear masks and present health declarations before entering the Library, and regularly disinfect public facilities (such as seats, bookshelves, computer facilities, elevators, toilets, etc.) to ensure the health and safety of staff and students.

The University Library reopened on September 1, 2020, and most of the services returned to normal.
Introduction
With a population of around 16,700, Young is a tiny town located about 120 kilometres (75 miles) northwest of Trinidad, Uruguay. Serving the recreational, reading and information needs of the local residents is Centro Cultural El Parnaso -- a privately funded, non-profitmaking library which is open to the general public -- founded by Anabella Levin-Freris – a philanthropist native to Young.

Overseeing the daily operations of Centro Cultural El Parnaso is a young and passionate librarian, Anabel Negrín, who is also a native of Young. Anabel Negrín is currently pursuing her BA in Library Studies at a university in Uruguay. Before joining Centro Cultural El Parnaso in 1999, Anabel Negrín worked as an intern in a number of public and academic libraries in Uruguay. In the following interview, Anabel Negrín shares her joy in helping local children and teenagers to develop an interest in reading. The interview also outlines the various challenges faced in maintaining

Anabel Negrín was interviewed by Bradley Allard from Clark County Public Library, Kentucky (United States of America). The interview was co-authored by Dr. Patrick Lo from the Faculty of Library, Information & Media Science, University of Tsukuba.
the services of Centro Cultural El Parnaso, particularly COVID-19 which has turned the world upside down.

**Bradley Allard [BA]:** Could we begin this interview by first introducing yourself. For example, what is your professional training and educational background? Do you come from a family of educators, librarians or avid readers?

**Anabel Negrín [AN]:** I am Anabel Negrín, and I was born in the city of Young, in the province of Río Negro, which is a city that has around 18,000 inhabitants... its economic activity is centered on agricultural work.

From ages four to seventeen, I attended the three levels of basic and compulsory education in our country, institutionalized in Primary School (from four to eleven years old), Secondary School or Lyceum (which is made up of the Basic Cycle [three years], and Diversified Baccalaureate [the last three years]).

It is important to know that education in our country is secular, free and compulsory. On the other hand, at the tertiary level, in order for youth in Young to be able to carry out their studies, they must travel or move to the cities of...
Paysandú, Salto, or Montevideo. The first of these cities is sixty kilometres from the city of Young and belongs to the province that bears the same name—bordering north of Río Negro.

Continuing north for about 180 kilometres is the city of Salto in the Salto province. And, toward the south, a little further from Young than the previous ones is the capital of our country, Montevideo. It is about 315 km away, and all of the universities that are available in Uruguay are located there. Most of the young people from Young move there during their career years, and some of them later return to their city whilst others permanently remain there.

In my case, after finishing high school, I continued with a distance course to learn how to be a Technician in Social Communication, which was run by the Aldey/Institute of Art, Design and Enterprise [IADE] schools, and, at the same time, I started my Bachelor’s Degree in Library Science in the city of Paysandú, which was at the University of the Republic. Due to a family situation (I married someone who lived in the city of Libertad in the province of San José, which is about 60 km from Montevideo), I had to continue my university training in the capital of the country at the University of the Republic. There, I finished my four-year degree. I did internships in various libraries but I was doing the final degree project when, this year, I returned to Young to the Centro Cultural El Parnaso.

In terms of my family, I have parents who are avid readers. They have worked throughout their lives in communications (working in radio, written press, audiovisual, and directing a TV channel over the air from Young city).

**BA:** Have you always worked in libraries? Could you tell us more about your career path to becoming the Librarian of El Parnaso, Uruguay?

**AN:** Yes, my work… has focused on libraries.

My first experience was here, in El Parnaso (where my taste for books and my career in Librarianship germinated) where I started working when I was seventeen years old (when I was not yet studying). After three years of working here, I got married, which led me to physically distance myself from El Parnaso. But, after finishing my studies in Montevideo, I resumed my work in the library at the center, where I travelled one day per month for five years until 2019.

In Montevideo, the capital of our country, while I was studying Librarianship, I worked in the libraries of the following institutions: the ORT University, the Departmental Board of Montevideo and in the Directorate of Education of the Ministry of Education and Culture [MEC] (with a job title of Literacy Worker in
the use of the Databases of Academic Electronic Journals, which were gathered on the “El TIMBÓ” platform, which was financed by the National Agency for Research and Innovation).

…I returned to Young in March 2020, resuming my work as a librarian at the Centro Cultural El Parnaso, Uruguay.

**BA:** Did you have any other non-library related careers, prior to entering a career in Librarianship?

**AN:** As I mentioned in the first point, I took the distance course "Assistant in Social Communication" which was run by the Aldey-IADE Institute of Montevideo, which is a private learning service for non-formal education and training in our country.

**BA:** Could you provide a brief introduction to El Parnaso, Uruguay? In addition, please give a brief account of the overall cultural and classical music scene in which El Parnaso, Uruguay is situated? What roles does El Parnaso, Uruguay have in the overall socio-cultural context of this small town?

**AN:** El Parnaso is a non-profit organization that was created in 1999… it is dedicated to the development of educational and cultural activities in its wide spectrum.

It is important to mention that since its inception, El Parnaso has been a part of the UNESCO Libraries network. It consists of a library of more than 7,000 books, magazines, and other educational materials, as well as an important collection of musical works. All cultural and educational activities and materials offered by El Parnaso are free for the entire population.

Currently its activities include: Reading Club for Children, Adult Reading Club, Parnassus Investigates, Origami, Guitar, Harmony and Counterpoint, and Greece, Lifestyle, and Greek Language.

Regarding the musical panorama in which El Parnaso is contextualized, it should first be noted that its owners and founders, Dr. Anabella Levin and economist Andrew Freris, are responsible for another foundation in Hong Kong; the “Chopin Society” (another of its non-profit foundations) which is dedicated to the development of music concerts worldwide (especially piano). They then bring the winning musicians to our country (to the Solis Theater in Montevideo and the Centro Cultural El Parnaso).
In addition, the center has an extensive music library, which brings together the entire collection of classical music from the Naxos record label and specialized bibliographic materials on the subject… these are aimed at both children and youth, and adults.

BA: What are the minimal professional qualification required for working as a school librarian or public librarian in Uruguay?... are school librarians or public librarians also expected to be holders of professional degrees or certificates in Library Science?

AN: Sadly, in our country, there are numerous people in jobs in libraries—both public and private—who have not completed their undergraduate studies, and, in many cases, they have not even completed a degree in Library Science. For a few years now, this reality has been transforming—especially in public libraries.

In private libraries, the "term contracts" are very frequent (with a duration of twelve or eighteen months) and it is not very common for these contracts to be renewed. However, in order to compete and remain in "effective" public positions, librarians who hold Bachelor’s Degrees are requested. In these contests, job candidates are given scores according to experience, additional training, or
other merits that the professional may have specified. But there are no other requirements other than... a degree that is relevant to librarianship.

As for school libraries, there are no specializations for this field. Generally, a teacher from an education center acts as the librarian of the school. For example, in the Central Pedagogical Library of Montevideo, it is accepted that the Director has the title of Teacher—regardless of whether they have studied Library Science or not.

**BA:** Could you describe the literacy rate of the overall population in this small town in Uruguay? What is the ratio between male and female literacy rates in Uruguay—particularly in this small town in which El Parnaso is situated?

**AN:** According to the last official national census (from 2011), Young has a population of 17,550 inhabitants, of which 2.3% are illiterate, and at the national level 1.5% are illiterate. When you look at gender, 1.4% of women and 3.2% of men are illiterate. (Note: information obtained from: https://otu.opp.gub.uy/perfiles/rio-negro/young1).

**BA:** What is the percentage of young people who get to go to university after finishing their secondary education in this small town in Uruguay?

**AN:** According to the same census, the percentage of young people in the city of Young who have managed to reach university is 5.6%... at the national level, 12.1% reach this level of study.

**BA:** Does El Parnaso... carry out any kinds of collaborations with the local teachers and schools, with the hope of complementing the local education system to develop human capital amongst the local population?

**AN:** Yes; since its creation, El Parnaso has a strong commitment to schools from early childhood to secondary study centers. It is interesting to note that it is geographically close to a full-time public school, a full-time kindergarten, a CAIF* (public center for infants from zero to three years old) and two private kindergartens.

These institutions normally include El Parnaso as a part of the development of their annual school agenda... the children attend our center, where multiple activities are held each week (films and documentaries, recreational spaces with... different didactic materials, reading corners, etc). Children from the rest of the educational institutions of the town also frequently attend El Parnaso... coordinating in advance... visits and development activities with the center.
This year, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we are trying to have them attend virtually through our YouTube channel and also in periodic meetings via Zoom, with activities related to reading, origami, and also activities to develop a critical and investigative spirit on the part of young people.

*[Editor’s note: CAIF stands for Centros de Atención a la Infancia y a la Familia, which translates as Child and Family Care Centers]*

**BA:** Which parts of your job as the Librarian of El Parnaso, Uruguay do you find most rewarding and which do you find most frustrating?

**AN:** As a librarian, I find it extremely gratifying to see children and young people from all social strata—but especially from vulnerable sectors of the population—who come to our center with little or no reading habits and with few ambitions. After participating in our activities, they begin to experience a change in these habits, improvement in their general knowledge, and even an improvement in their performance in school.

And, in the negative sense, I find it frustrating to deal with a population that - even for the most part - does not know or have an interest in the great opportunities and materials that are offered in El Parnaso. Unfortunately, in our town, there is still great ignorance of the role of our center... They may not be able to understand its scope.
**BA:** What kinds of non-traditional library activities has El Parnaso, Uruguay been providing for the local residents, in addition to providing books and other reading materials?

**AN:** In El Parnaso, numerous activities have been developed with the support of the bibliographic material that can be found in the center—from origami, research, chess, the life of animals, astronomy, etc. However, this year all of these programs have become virtual (except chess and astronomy due to the lack of a teacher).

**BA:** Could you provide a general profile of the end-users of El Parnaso, Uruguay?

**AN:** Regarding the profile of the users of El Parnaso-Uruguay, although there is no study referring to it, we could roughly say that it is very broad, since people from very vulnerable social levels and also from a high educational level attend the center.

It is important to bear in mind that the largest socioeconomic occupations of the city are agriculture and raising cattle. Taking into account adult users (excepting children and young people who dedicate themselves almost exclusively to their primary and secondary studies) the majority work in various types of trades (local shops, warehouses, bakeries… they are mechanics, carpenters or working...)

*Class of Chess at El Parnaso. It is never too early or too late to learn chess at El Parnaso.*
in the fields, as examples) and others are in jobs related to teaching and the schools. There are a few professionals (agronomists, veterinarians, lawyers, doctors, architects, notaries, social workers, psychologists, engineers, etc.).

In this wide range, there are also many children and young people who come to El Parnaso in search of supplementary material for their educational curricula, or they carry out activities that help with their cognitive development. Others use the bibliographic material of our collection in the hope of increasing their cultural development and to explore the different branches of knowledge from a totally different point of view than the other different cultural and study centers in our country.

Most of them only speak Spanish, but there is a percentage who speak or understand English—although it is the minority. The center is also trying to help bridge gaps in terms of difficulties with information literacy.

From this varied description, we can conclude that the... users who attend El Parnaso have wide differences in information needs and the ability to handle information, its retrieval tools, as well as reading habits.

**BA:** What are some of the challenges and difficulties that you have been facing when organizing library, literacy and music programs for all ages at El Parnaso, Uruguay?

**AN:** As I mentioned earlier, the challenges and difficulties that I have encountered when establishing programs and activities in El Parnaso are mostly ignorance and even a lack of interest. This translates into little commitment from the population with the institution and a lack of collaborators, workshops, or volunteer teachers to carry out these activities.

However, this year, with the arrival of COVID-19, the center has opened its doors beyond geographical borders—achieving greater attendance and commitment from users from other locations, perhaps... other interests and greater cultural competence, but that has allowed the Youenguense population to visualize some of the great opportunities that El Parnaso offers and to develop.

As for the organization of Library and Information Literacy Programs:

This year, due to the pandemic, the physical use of bibliographic materials by users has not been made effective. However, on a virtual level, the materials that make up the collection are being widely exhibited and are still adapting to the needs of the pandemic environment. To this extent, the library programs have had to be...
transformed into virtual programs, which is our greatest challenge today.

Also in terms of information literacy, the center is… offering several virtual activities for children, youths, and adults. In our reading spaces and through our "El Parnaso Investigates” program we provide tools to promote optimal searching and processing, as well as analyzing information for young people and adults… to help develop their informational competencies.

BA: When people talk about El Parnaso, Uruguay, what are the first things that come to their minds?

AN: Knowing the surrounding public opinion, the first thing that comes to mind when talking about El Parnaso, Uruguay, is that it is a center with many resources and materials that are different from other centers that can be found in our area. It is also a place where high-level cultural activities are developed.

The Impact of COVID-19

BA: COVID-19 has turned the world upside down. How have El Parnaso, Uruguay and you (as the librarian) been coping with COVID-19?

AN: With the COVID-19 pandemic, El Parnaso, Uruguay is developing all of its activities virtually (making the most of social networks and Zoom).

Face-to-face visits to educational centers [have become] limited, as has lending bibliographic material to users. Despite this, as we have already mentioned previously, it has not resulted in loss of attendance to the different programs — quite the opposite; it has resulted in a significant increase in online users and students, and new followers of El Parnaso, Uruguay…. They are from various parts of the country—even from our neighboring country Argentina.

On the other hand, and no less importantly, it is worth noting the strong link that has been established this year with Hong Kong, the country where the founders of the organization reside and who are assisting daily in El Parnaso, remotely, as if they were in Young.

And we are delighted to have established contact with and to have the participation of Dr. Patrick Lo regarding the knowledge and management of the library of El Parnaso and the center in general.
Interview with Anabel Negrin

BA: Why do people turn to books, reading, and music in times of crisis?

AN: I think that for all people, in times of crisis, books and music have been a place of refuge, recreation, and personal growth like never before.

On an emotional level, it can help us to regulate stress and anguish, as well as transport us to places, historical times, and contexts that are totally different from the one we find ourselves today—in this situation of confinement and social distancing.

In fact, on this last point, people have managed to connect with more people in the world and have grown culturally thanks to virtual exchange spaces linked to reading and music.

You can find more information about Centro Cultural El Parnaso here:

El Parnaso Facebook Page: https://www.facebook.com/ElParnasoUruguay
El Parnaso website: http://www.elparnaso.org

Reference


This is an unusual volume, and its strengths emerge slowly, after some initial frustrations. It comprises thirty six interviews, transcribed apparently verbatim, with staff working in libraries, archives, and museums containing important collections of East Asian material. As explained in the introduction, the interviewees are chosen for their expertise, their years of experience, and their recognition by peers. They are based in institutions scattered across Europe, the UK, North America, and East Asia – but notably not the People’s Republic of China as it proved impossible to carry out interviews with anyone there “for various political reasons”, as the editors phrase it, carefully. Fortunately, it did prove possible to carry out a number of interviews in Hong Kong which may not be permissible now.

The title is therefore somewhat misleading for two reasons, partly because it implies a wider geographical range than proved possible, but also because the focus is far more on the people and their roles than it is on the collections they look after. This makes it much more useful as an insight into East Asian librarianship outside China than a survey of the world’s major collections on East Asia. As such it is a useful and welcome addition to the limited literature on area studies librarianship.

Inevitably, in a work like this, there are questions about balance and omissions. The selection of interviewees was presumably driven by practical issues of availability and willingness to participate as much as anything else, although there is no indication of who was approached. After an initial visit to Italy and the Vatican, we find no fewer than three separate interviews with staff at the British Library and one at the British Museum. That could easily be justified by the strength of those collections, but there is no representative of the School of Oriental and African Studies in London, with its specialist library and gallery. By contrast with the four interviewees in London, there are only three in the whole of the United States: at Princeton; the University of California, Berkeley; and the Bruce Lee Foundation in Los Angeles. It is the smaller and less known collections such as this last which
are the most interesting and perhaps provide the most value to the reader. It is fascinating to read about the specialist collections in Hong Kong on contemporary art, sport, and traditional Chinese medicine, and to learn how someone goes from studying philosophy at the University of Durham to managing a digital archive on martial arts. Ultimately it is these individual stories that are most rewarding.

The selection of staff from different departments in the same institution, or from neighbouring institutions that work closely together, can lead to intriguingly different perspectives, but it also means that there is some duplication, when interviewees give similar answers to standard questions about the same collections. The questions themselves provide scope for the interviewees if they want to use it, but in the larger institutions such as the national libraries there is a tendency for standard text to be provided when asked about collection strengths or strategy. Sometimes the lack of a more penetrating follow up question is a shame. The one, joyous, exception is the now retired East Asian Librarian from the Bodleian, David Helliwell, who clearly felt free to speak his mind.

This volume has a number of goals and it achieves only some of them. It aims to draw parallels between the work of libraries, archives and museums, but in many cases interviewees reveal only that the connections do not exist or are not sufficiently exploited. It sets out to describe career opportunities in East Asian librarianship to those coming into the profession, but many of the interviewees describe reductions in staff and increased workloads, and all have been in their roles for many years. What it does do is tell the fascinating stories, in their own words, of the individuals who have chosen to devote their careers to working with infinitely varied collections from East Asia.

Lesley Pitman
(CILIP ILIG Committee member)
London

ILIG on Facebook and Twitter
If you’re on Facebook, why don’t you join us?
www.facebook.com/groups/13131232426
Make contact with librarians around the world and start networking!

@CILIP_ILIG
Follow us to get the latest updates on CILIP ILIG news and events, tweets from CILIP conference, news from CILIP and of international interest, and to communicate with us and let us know what you would like CILIP ILIG to do for you.
CILIP ILIG Business

CILIP International Library and Information Group AGM
The CILIP ILIG AGM was held online via Zoom on May 12 2021. You can find a recording of this event, as well as a talk “Dad, are you really a spy?: international assignments examined” from CILIP President Paul J Corney which followed this, here: https://youtu.be/JMoM2kVUuRE

Working Internationally Conference

Look out for the CILIP Working Internationally Conference on 25 June 2021 too. We’re really excited to be involved in this event which is aimed at public librarians around the world. You’ll find more about the Conference via this link: https://pheedloop.com/workingintconf21/site/home/

Eurotoolbox – books for schools

Eurotoolbox is a resource collection which has been put together by Eurolis, a group of expert librarians in the cultural centres of France, Germany, Italy, Portugal, Poland and Spain with the assistance of CILIP (Chartered Institutes of Library and Information Professionals) in the UK.

All the books in the collection have been specially chosen for you - they are the very best recently published in the following original languages: French, German, Italian, Polish, Portuguese and Spanish. The English language is represented as well, thanks to a donation by CILIP of the fifteen books shortlisted for the Carnegie and Kate Greenaway children’s books together with the Welsh Tir na nOg English language award winner for the current year.
**Eurotoolbox is available to borrow free of charge to libraries and schools in the UK.** Enquiries to Maria Riccobono, maria.riccobono.iic@esteri.it, Tel: 0207 396 4425

**Two CILIP ILIG Informals**

CILIP ILIG informals are open to all and free. Please book in advance via our CILIP ILIG Events pages. You will then be sent a link to join the informal by Zoom.

**Wednesday 16 June at 6pm (British Summer Time)**

**International Cataloguing Ethics: everything you always wanted to know Your chance to ask the experts**

CILIP’s International Library and Information Group (ILIG) and Metadata and Discovery Group (MDG) would like to invite you to the next informal via zoom on Wednesday 16th June 6-7pm (BST) via Zoom. Attendance is FREE but we ask you to book in advance.

The Cataloguing Code of Ethics, released in 2021, was intended to be used widely, yet international feedback was limited when the Code was drafted. The Code is the first attempt at addressing widespread concerns within the broader cataloguing community. This session is an opportunity for cataloguers worldwide to consider the Code and how it could be implemented in their local contexts. Members from the International Cataloguing Steering Committee (CESC) will be giving their views [https://sites.google.com/view/cataloging-ethics/home](https://sites.google.com/view/cataloging-ethics/home).

**Wednesday 15 September 2021 at 6pm (BST)**

**Rebuilding Beirut’s libraries**

CILIP International Library & Information Group (ILIG) extends a warm welcome to our Informal via Zoom on Wednesday 15 September. Attendance is FREE but please book in advance.

Randa Al Chidiac, Patricia Rahme and Ali Sabbagh will be talking about libraries in Beirut following a devastating ammonium nitrate blast which rocked the city in 2020. After the 4 August 2020 blast, libraries in Lebanon decided to brush off the dust, remove the rubble and glass, and tend to their injured staff and users. Librarians started looking into best plans for a return to service and the Lebanese Library Association joined them on the journey.

Randa is Vice-President & PR Coordinator, Lebanese Library Association ([https://lebaneselibraryassociation.org/](https://lebaneselibraryassociation.org/)), Patricia is a lecturer in Library and Information Science in the Faculty of Information at the Lebanese University and is the Public
library coordinator at Assabil and Ali is Executive Coordinator of the Lebanese Assabil library non-governmental organisation (https://assabil.com/).

ILIG Informals are open to all and absolutely free, but please book in advance. You will then be contacted with a link to join the informal by Zoom.

Save the date! **Personal Knowledge Management**
**Thursday 16 September 5-6pm & repeated Friday 17 September 12.30-1.30pm (BST)**

This exciting Knowledge Café discussion will draw in experts from the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) CILIP and beyond (including representatives from CILIP Retired Professionals Group [RPG] CILIP Knowledge & Information Management Group [K&IM] and CILIP ILIG).

We will be using this conversational process to bring a diverse group together to share experiences, learn from each other, build relationships and make better sense of a rapidly changing, complex, less predictable world. The aim is to help you improve your decision-making, innovation and the ways in which we all work together.

Our focus will be on keeping your knowledge live and useful.
• How we can all keep up with the constant barrage of new information, the challenge of managing data and the effective use of collaboration tools and techniques?
• How we can bring our “whole self” to work, unlock our creativity and stay healthy?

Target audience: Library, Information and Knowledge Professionals from all locations, sectors, roles and jobs. 1 CPD hour. We have tried to make this workshop as affordable as possible:

Choose your session: either Thursday 16 September from 5 to 6pm or Friday 17 September from 12.30 to 1.30pm

IFLA members; CILIP members; University of the Third Age (U3A) members - £5 Students and unwaged - free of charge (contact david.f.byrne@icloud.com)
All others - £10

Keep an eye on the CILIP events page for further details and the registration form. Contact Emma Davies emmalouiseholmes@hotmail.com

This event is supported and run by volunteers and we aim to reply to enquiries within 48 hours
The Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP) and its International Library and Information Group (ILIG) invite applicants for the **Alan Hopkinson Award 2021** to virtually attend the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) first **online** Congress from **17–19 August 2021**.

This Award enables a CILIP member in their early career (full criteria below) to experience the IFLA Congress and covers the whole cost of the IFLA conference fee.

Alan Hopkinson was an active member of CILIP ILIG from 2004 until his death in 2016, following which he kindly bequeathed a Trust Fund to support an early career CILIP member to ‘attend’ the IFLA Congress, get a flavour of different cultures, and, most importantly, begin to network with other librarians.

**Criteria**
Applicants must:
- Have a passion for international librarianship.
- Be in the early stages of their library career, with no more than 5 years library sector experience. You could be a para-professional, library assistant, library manager, someone seeking CILIP Certification or CILIP Chartership, unemployed, etc.
- Of any adult age.
- Be a current CILIP member.
- Be available to experience the full Congress from 17th-19th August 2021, with the support of your employer, if required.

**How to Apply**
Email Anna Jablkowska, **ILIG Secretary**, with both:
1. A short proposal of up to **300** words (1 side of A4) showing how the Congress may benefit them, personally and professionally, both during and post-event.
2. Attach your **Curriculum Vitae** (CV) – 1 side of A4 preferred - including the **name of a library-based referee**, preferably someone in a senior position, from a current or previous employer.

**Deadline**
Applications must be received by **30th June 2021**. The winner of the Award is required to write a short article for ILIG’s Journal, **Focus**, within 6 months of the Congress.

A judging panel will consider applications and you will receive a decision by **14th July 2021**, but, regretfully due to time constraints, **we cannot give individual feedback if unsuccessful**.

Good Luck
DATES FOR YOUR DIARY
CILIP ILIG INFORMALS AND MEETINGS

Working Internationally for Libraries Conference 2021
25 June 2021
A free, virtual conference for Public Libraries
in the UK and across the world
More information here:
https://pheedloop.com/workingintconf21/site/home/

IFLA World Library and Information Congress 2021
August 17-19 2021
The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions
86th Annual General Conference and Assembly – virtual conference
IFLA’s World Library and Information Congress will be online only for
the first time. Keep up to date with the latest here:
https://www.ifla.org/wlic2021

CILIP ILIG Informals

International Cataloguing Ethics: everything you always
wanted to know – your chance to ask the experts
Wednesday 16 June 2021 via Zoom - 6pm (BST)
Joint event with CILIP Metadata and Discovery Group

Rebuilding Beirut’s libraries
Wednesday 15 September 2021 via Zoom - 6pm (BST)
booking information for CILIP ILIG informals on the CILIP ILIG Events
page on the CILIP website https://bit.ly/2zC2TQq