

7th International Toy Library Conference – Switzerland

Zurich, 26 – 30 August 1996

Main Theme : Every place is play space



The Themes of the Conference were:

- Multicultural play
- Social interaction through play
- Play as a link between generations
- Training in play/play in training

Toy librarians returned to their roots at the Technical University in Zurich and spoke of toys and games. They reflected on the nature of play and on the "transition zone" it occupies between people and cultures, and even played a little. New classification systems, a database for toy libraries and packs of toys and books for specific purposes were demonstrated. There were sessions on play for adults and children with learning disabilities, illiterate and deprived groups. New countries were represented Romania, Hungary, and Colombia... Plenary sessions were translated between English, French and German and afternoon presentations were in their original languages only. Visits were made to superbly equipped and organized Swiss toy libraries which are mainly run by volunteers. A family, leaving the one in Wettingen, was heard to wish that there was a similar service in their native South Africa. Cynthia Morrison in the visiting group assured them that South African Toy Libraries did exist! As in Sweden there was an evening dinner cruise on a beautiful lake with much animated conversation and fun. The closing session was enhanced by traditional storytellers from Mali. Denise Garon of Canada and Rosemary Meadows of Australia were elected to the Board of ITLA.

"I attended the Zurich conference with the help of Switzerland Toy Library for accommodation and registration. I thank them. For us from Eastern Europe is very difficult and expensive to travel in west countries. In Romania average month income is

100 USD. I know that it is difficult for you to realize the difference of prices and incomes between you and us, but there are different worlds. If I tell you that to participate to the conference I spent 600 USD (visas assurance, travel cost...) is nothing. But if I tell you that I spent all my income on half a year for a week you tell me that I was crazy. No, I enjoyed very much the conference and for me was a wonderful experience. Except of (apart from) money there were problems to pass borders" (Ioan Garboan, Romania)

Glenys Carter resigned after working from 1984 as secretary of ITLA and Annetine Forell resigned as editor of the Newsletter in 1996. The association owes its existence and shape to these indefatigable workers and their colleagues.