



## Editorial

Dear Friends,

ITLA is having a very special birthday – 25 years! This is an important milestone for an organisation.

I remember the first time I attended an International Toy Library Conference. It was held in Melbourne in 1993. I had founded the South African Toy and Leisure Libraries Association a few months earlier – and was so excited to meet with colleagues from around the world.

Our newsletter following the Conference was full of enthusiastic information about the presentations, the various countries that also had toy libraries and the types of toy libraries that existed. This international contact helped to shape the way in which toy libraries developed in our country. It inspired us to hold our first National Toy Library Conference in 2001 which resulted in a surge of new toy libraries throughout our country.

Over the years, I was fortunate to attend conferences in Switzerland, Japan, Portugal, France, Brazil and Korea. At each one, the different ways in which toy libraries function, the philosophies behind them and the way in which many National Associations had gained the support of government inspired me (and all the participants) and broadened my perspective of what can be achieved. In 2005, the International Toy Library Conference was held in South Africa. The main reason for bringing the conference to our country was to enable local toy librarians to experience the joy of an international exchange of ideas with colleagues from different countries and continents.

Without ITLA's coordination, regular International Toy Library Conferences involving an average of 25 countries would just not happen. The ITLA newsletter and website continue to share information, articles, photographs and reports of World Play Day. It's important to remember that ITLA has achieved everything through the commitment of its board members who not only serve without remuneration (as board members are supposed to) but who personally pay for international travel to attend board meetings.

To sustain the board and therefore ITLA, what is needed is the support of members. Support in the form of compliments about the newsletter and website – just acknowledgement of receiving the newsletter would be appreciated. Comments

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## Editorial (cont.)

and debate are encouraged. Support through writing articles for the newsletter and providing news for both the newsletter and the website. What you might think is a small, irrelevant happening in your toy library world is very likely to inspire someone in another country. Organise World Play Day events where you advocate for play and toy libraries, promote ITLA and write reports for the website that reflect the numbers of children and adults that benefited from the event. Encourage toy librarians to join ITLA. A membership fee is the only regular source of income for the organisation. With more funds, ITLA could do more for YOU. Perhaps engage someone to fight for the recognition of toy librarians internationally – so that financial support for toy libraries could become universal. Or perhaps professionally investigate different toy library training courses around the world to create a universally accepted standard. What about translating all the interesting books about toy libraries (Brazil has so many in Portuguese) into a language that more people can understand (probably English)? What would you like ITLA to do for you? Support the board by telling them what your needs are, your challenges, your successes. With the current structure, a board member represents your continent. Communicate with your representative. Make sure that your continent's interests are represented at board level. Insist on regular feedback. Invigorate the board by challenging them to strengthen ITLA so that it lives up to its potential as a respected international force for toy libraries. When you, the toy librarians and national organisations are apathetic, the board becomes discouraged and ITLA will never become the force it can be.

Having served on the ITLA board for 9 years, I know how hard it is to achieve anything when board members are spread across the world. Different time zones make even a Skype conversation difficult, let alone a conversation between at least 9 board members!

For 25 years ITLA has made sure that International Toy Library conferences happen every 3 years, that newsletters with information about toy library models and other interesting information are written and circulated, that the website has current news and articles of interest. However, with members that are supportive and engaged, not only will ITLA be sustained for another 25 years, but it will become a force to be reckoned with.

Kind Regards,  
Cynthia Morrison  
Past President of ITLA



*Mary Clark, Monica Juarez e Cynthia Morrison*

# ITLA's memories from Japan

Congratulations on the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of ITLA. It's my pleasure to share with you some of my fond memories of the ITLA conferences I attended.

I first joined an ITLA conference in 1987 in Toronto, Canada. Then JNCTL director Ms. Ruth Kobayashi and Ms. Kotoko Suzuki were with me. Ruth made a presentation on how she started toy library activities in Japan.

The next conference (1990) was held in Turin, Italy. Toy library members from various parts of Japan joined the conference with us. One of them was Mr. Yasuo Higa. He is a wheelchair user and he talked about his own experience in his toy library.

In 1993, we visited Melbourne, Australia. Nearly 20 people from Japan organized a tour and attended the conference. They were young adults with disabilities and their families. One of the mothers was Ms. Kayo Shikahama. It was at this conference that Japan gained a seat on the ITLA board.

The next conference was held in Zurich. We enjoyed fresh air and beautiful scenery in Switzerland. Ruth, Kotoko and I made a presentation on toy libraries in Japan. We were happy as participants from other countries got interested in our activities. Japan was designated to be the host of the next conference.

Japan hosted the 1999 conference. Then-Director Ruth led the conference to a successful conclusion. Then-ITLA president Dr. Freda Kim provided advice and encouragement before and throughout the conference. Japanese participants introduced many kinds of handmade toys that children enjoy at toy libraries. We were glad to see participants from Japan and abroad share their experience and knowledge relating to toy libraries.

The conference in 2002 was in Lisbon, Portugal. Ms. Akiko Matsuyama and late Ms. Sanae Fujii made a presentation. Ms. Katsuko Saito also attended the conference and we showed "apron theaters" that Akiko had prepared.

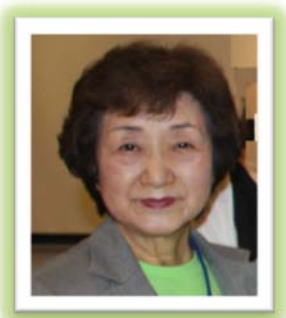
We visited Pretoria, South Africa in 2005. It was the first trip to the country for all the Japanese participants. At the conference, we were impressed by the hard work of young volunteers and their hospitality. Along with presentations by Mr. Ichiro Maruya and Ms. Matsuyama, we also exhibited handmade toys that Ms. Junko Yamada and her group had prepared. Also, Ms. Sue Yamada led *origami* workshops.

The next conference was in Paris. We learned about professional aspects of toy library activities. We also enjoyed artistic, colorful displays at the conference venue. Ms. Michi Matsubara and Mr. Yutaka Takamura participated in the conference from Japan. I was pleased to have an opportunity to visit beautiful areas on the outskirts of Paris.

At the conference in Brazil in 2011, we introduced how we celebrate World Play Day in Japan. Also, we had handmade toy workshops, apron theaters and origami workshops. We enjoyed music and dances of young conference volunteers.

The next conference was in Seoul, South Korea. It was my great regret that I was not able to attend the meeting due to my health conditions. However, I was happy as well to learn that other Japanese members, especially those in younger generations, actively participated in the conference.

I believe ITLA conferences are wonderful opportunities for everyone to learn about toy libraries around the world. I hope the activities of ITLA and toy libraries around the globe continue to grow to serve children even more. Last but not least, ITLA conferences have provided me with precious opportunities to nurture friendships that have lasted for a good long time.



Dr. Noriko Minejima  
*Past Board member of ITLA and Japanese National  
Council of Toy Libraries*

# ITLA's memories from Japan

ITLA's 25th anniversary. Congratulations!

In 1978 at the 1st London Conference, a colleague of Aichi Prefecture took part.

Then the toy library activities of Japan began. After that, we were able to learn a lot of things from many friends in the world.

We hope for the healthy development of all children.



*(Ventriloquist Doll and blind child) (Seoul Conference) (Phnom Penh HHC)*

Yutaka Takamura  
Japan

# ITLA's memories from Japan

My memorial days in ITLA

Congratulation on 25th anniversary of ITLA!

I'd like to show my deep gratitude for your kindness. I am very glad to be able to join ITLA of various countries. In 1999, "The 8th International Toy Library Association Conference" was held in Tokyo. Seven of us joined it and enjoyed talking and learning together with people from 28 countries.

At that time, I met Ms. Roma Lear, the leading authority in the field of handmade toys in the world. The encounter with her gave the dream and guide to our activity.

She made me a present of a woolen hand puppet. It became my special treasure.

Her youthful and wonderful smile, a gentle and warm personality made us so happy while we were being with her.

At the meeting, "The world Contest of handmade toys" was held. We made a tapestry, "Sea Paradise".

It was selected from 30 items as representative of Japan and was exhibited.

It was seen by many participants and was presented to the Toy Library of Korea after the meeting.

After that, I participated in the International Conference in Portugal, the Republic of South Africa, France, Brazil, and Korea.

Now, children of many countries are playing with our handmade toys.

It is our great pleasure that children who have different nationalities and speak different languages can play together. On earth, there are over 200 countries. We dream that all of the countries will be filled with the smiles of children who are playing with the toys made by us.

We'd like to continue our activity for that.

I'd like to join the next ITLA conference. I am looking forward to seeing all of you, my dear friends.

Thank you so much.



Akiko Matsuyama  
*Toy Library "Kisya-Poppo"*



# ITLA's Special Member: Roma Lear

Greetings to Toy Librarians throughout the world!

I have been asked to tell you my toy library story.

We have a saying. "From little acorns great oak trees grow." I think this can apply to toy libraries.

One wet and gloomy winter's day I was preparing to meet my children from school when I chanced to hear a radio talk given by a remarkable lady, Jill Norris. She knew two children with very special needs and she belonged to the local society for children with learning difficulties.

She was a kind and generous lady and she started lending her children's outgrown toys to other parents. In return they lent her children their toys – and so the idea of a Toy Library was born.

Jill did her homework and gave much thought to the planning of her new idea. She organised many fund raising events and then went shopping. She thought about the ages and abilities of the children she knew would borrow them and spent her money wisely. On her list were games and toys which would be helpful to the children and perhaps helping them develop skills like sorting, pairing, and stacking. She included toys for imaginative play like a model farm, a garage, and a dolls house. As well as their possible therapeutic value all the toys were FUN to play with.

In 1947 I was ready to start. I wrote to all the teachers and therapists in my town and we had a meeting at my house. I explained the toy-lending plan and asked them their opinion and what they would like from the service. I wanted to make sure I spent my money wisely on toys that would be popular and unusual. At the end of the evening everyone left with a smile on their face and the date of the first real meeting was arranged.

I was offered cupboard space in my local Quaker Meeting House which is in the middle of the busy town, a perfect home for the next 44 years!

Sadly the Kingston Toy Library no longer exists. I made the mistake of running it as a "Queen Bee" toy library. I was responsible for everything – with occasional help as needed on cleaning days and for special events. When the old Meeting House was sold and we moved into our lovely new one, the toy library, sadly, had to go. The toys were distributed among the parents and special schools. All that now remains of our lovely toy library is the happy memory and an album full of photos!

My very, best wishes you all. Keep up the good work!



*Roma's finger puppets*



*Roma Lear and Brenda Lockley*

*Roma Lear*  
Life Member of ITLA

# Farewell to our 25th anniversary

## Note from the Editor

It is time to say farewell to ITLA's 25th anniversary year.

Thank you to all who shared their memories of ITLA's 25 years with us. We have enjoyed the journey with you.

It is also time for me to say farewell. For personal and technological reasons I will be unable to continue as Media Assistant / Newsletter Editor.

I have had 2 very happy years working with ITLA. I have enjoyed very much to have contact with our members all over the world. I have learned a lot and will miss the work and the people – YOU! It has been exciting to have new members join ITLA and we hope to hear about the work that is being done in your countries.

It is a good time for a change - we are hoping to make the ITLA newsletter more accessible for the many languages represented by our members and will need your support and enthusiasm to help us.

My special thanks go to Monica Juarez for her friendship and support; to Lissette and Fernando for their website work; to the IAC team for their patience and skill in putting the newsletter together each term and Debbie for her great work for WPD.

I wish the new Media Assistant / Newsletter editor a happy and successful time with ITLA and look forward to seeing ITLA grow and prosper.

Thank you, Gracias, Merci, Obrigado, Dank je, Danke, Ngiyabonga

I hope to see you in the Netherlands in 2017!



Mary Clark  
ITLA Media Assistant

# Happy Holidays!



The best present you could have given us this Christmas is your presence. Thank you for being by our side and for making way for a bright and peaceful new year.

Merry Christmas!  
Happy New Year!

**Itla Board of Directors**



# It can be YOU in this section next time!



Join ITLA and be part of the association of toy library organisations and individuals from all over the world. Experience and advances in one country can quickly benefit your organisation through information exchange, conferences and sharing resources. Belonging to a world-wide community enhances your motivation to improve your services, brings great opportunities of new learning and new friendship.

**ITLA warmly welcomes you to our international play room!**

## We need your help!

What topics or information would you like to see included in the newsletters?

Send us your inputs to [mediacommunication.itla@gmail.com](mailto:mediacommunication.itla@gmail.com)!

Thank You!

## Next Issue:

- Thoughts from Sweden
- ITLA's Conference in 2017

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**Published by:**

International Toy Libraries Association

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Look us up on

