

BULGARIAN/COLORADO LIBRARY PARTNERSHIP INTEREST GROUP
Colorado Association of Libraries
November 2002

You probably know by now that we were privileged to have eight librarians from Bulgaria visit us this summer. They have all returned home now and are sending me reports of their activities since their return. The trip to Colorado made a huge and positive impression. Here are some of their comments.

From Rositsa Poparkova, Gotse Delchev,

Our library is pleased to be a partner with the Arapahoe Library District. They have been sending us books. The total is: 515 books including children's books, encyclopedias, dictionaries, reference books, etc. This helped us to enlarge Foreign Languages Department in our library and at this time this is one of the most popular departments of the library. Students, both school and college ones, and teachers are interested in the books. Our partnership is still in the beginning and I believe that after that hearty welcome of yours and the wonderful days spent together with you in Colorado our partnership will grow. Moreover I was given a gift for the department of Art for our library- a CD player, as well as other things for the library. Thank you for your initiative and help on this project, as well as for the opportunity to visit our partners in Colorado. This gave us a chance to visit American libraries, to make our contacts live and real, to exchange ideas and the best of our experience with our American colleagues librarians. The project helped us to start new programs in our work with the readers. We were introduced to an extremely large amount of programs on our visit in the USA. We use some of them in our everyday work but I was impressed by the program for readers 0 to 5 years old. Using American librarians' experience we developed some new programs and I hope we'll have very soon good results. Your work with volunteers is also very interesting and useful and I'd like to try it here too.

My suggestion is to share programs, methods of work and ideas with our partners that we can use in the libraries, which will be very nice and useful for both sides. I also think that your help for the automation of the libraries and donating books is of extremely big importance at this stage of work for our library.

I am pleased to let you know that from September 29 thru September 26, 2002 the conference 'The Public Responsibility of the Public Libraries and Their Part in a Democratic Society' was held in Varna. The librarians who visited the USA talked about our visit and their impressions and the results. They also talked about the partner project between Bulgarian and American libraries. The presentation was supported by photographs and video tapes. Several people read their reports- Emilia, Elena, Neli and Rositsa (me) and the reports were various and on different topics. The presentation was very successful and interesting and now a lot of libraries in Bulgaria are acquainted with the project of partnership and our part in it.

From Emilia in Varna

I find the Sister Library Partnership a very useful and beneficial practice. My trip to the USA helped me to gather impressions and knowledge about American libraries and their experience and successful practice. The contacts and meetings with colleagues from our sister library in Boulder were the most interesting and fruitful for me. I was really impressed by the organization of the library processes there and the library activities as a whole. I must confess that I'm a little bit 'jealous' of Boulder colleagues who managed to combine otherwise 'conservative' library duties and modern innovative technologies, friendliness and fresh air of nature and up-to-date architecture. The idea to find some space and create an original art gallery is also praiseworthy. It's not strange that the Boulder library finds great respect and approval among its users who no doubt enjoy visiting its spacious departments, communicating with the friendly librarians and studying the vast knowledge the library offers through its collections. I find the free access very well and easy to use arranged and it offers a great variety of books, audio-video materials in many fields of science and fiction. I appreciate a lot the library lending system that gives children opportunity to loan library materials by themselves using only their cards. I had very useful conversations with the library director and vice-director who shared their experience in making contacts and communicating with the local government and creating a strong 'library' lobby.

From Diana in Sofia

About my work after our American trip - there are two directions. I've been asked from our children's department head librarian for another meeting with their staff. They are interested in organization of work in American children's departments. I began to collect this information but it is too broad. So our final decision is me to write not exactly an article but kind of with information in brief - tendencies, programs, ideas. I'm working on it now, using my notes, materials from America, Internet etc. When it is ready, we will discuss it with my colleagues and maybe will search more information from Internet or from the librarians in Colorado.

With Tricia we correspondent regularly. When I was in America we decided to organize pen pals club like our colleagues from Veliko Turnovo and Eagle. We decided it to include not only students but people from every age and profession. I have about 10 addresses for the time being. Younger girl is 10 years old and older is 47. For me personally one of the results from this trip is that I have been studying English again. I have lessons twice a week.

I also asked them what they see as the future of the project. From the several answers, here is the one from Kalina in Veliko Turnovo.

For the future development of the project and common activities we offer the following ideas:

- 1. Books and periodicals necessary for completing foreign language reading rooms;*
- 2. Computer technique;*

3. *Visits of lecturers on certain preliminarily determined subjects. For example in Regional Public Library "P. R. Slavejkov" will be carried out a seminar "The automation and the software equipment for the library processes in educational libraries" in November;*
4. *Round tables or discussion groups, working on the problems of the modern library services;*
5. *Exhibitions affecting landmarks, important dates and events in U.S.A.;*
6. *Interchange of catalogues of outstanding modern American and Bulgarian artists;*
7. *Publishing a common literature collection of poetry and prose with works of modern American and Bulgarian writers, illustrated by artists from Veliko Turnovo region and Colorado;*
8. *Specializations of Bulgarian librarians in American libraries (if there is such possibilities);*
9. *Visits of American librarians in Bulgarian libraries and introduction to the cultural and historical heritage of our country;*

I think it's obvious that the trip made a real difference in the lives of our Bulgarian friends