

SCRIPTUM:

Newsletter for Bahá'í Librarians & Information Professionals

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INTERNATIONAL BAHAI LIBRARY WEB PAGE LAUNCHED

A dazzling International Bahá'í Library web site has recently been opened on the internet. It is located at <http://library.bahai.org> and will continue to evolve as additional services and information resources are added.

Over the years, Bahá'í librarians and those who have been charged with setting up libraries at Bahá'í centers and schools have requested access to information and resources for setting up libraries, classifying and cataloging materials, physical arrangement, and the like. The Bahá'í World Centre took this need to heart and spent two years creating the Web site to begin to address those needs.

The index screen shows a beautiful montage of images, with five headings spelled out on the screen: International Bahá'í Library, Services, Policies, Cataloging and Classification, and Collections. As the mouse is placed on one of the headings, a submenu appears. The pages are all fascinating: the library's history and vision, its depository requirements and acquisitions, its classification scheme (with a how-to for applying it), searchable Bahá'í subject headings, and descriptions of special collections from the libraries of A.-L.-M. Nicolas, Alessandro Bausani, Mírzá Abu'l-Fadl, and 'Abdu'l-Hamíd Ishráq-Khávarí.

Future plans include access to the online catalog and "authority" records for the International Bahá'í Library catalogs. Downloadable versions of the classification system and its instructions will also be made available in the future.

ISIS: AN ALL-ROUND AND CHEAP LIBRARY SOFTWARE

The national Bahá'í libraries from the Netherlands, France and Belgium have been consulting

together for two years. One of the issues raised was the automation of our libraries and the choice of software. Although we are (semi-) professional librarians, our knowledge in that field is limited. Therefore we would not be able to judge or compare the quality of professional databasesoftware (for example Access) for library use ourselves. Nevertheless, we could see that public libraries and non-profit organizations mostly choose from 3 possibilities:

- professional special library programs (public and university libraries)
- D-base III or similar (school-libraries)
- ISIS (NGO's, cultural organizations, schools)

Therefore, it seemed logical to pick one of those, since at least in that case, if we had problems, we could seek help from professional colleagues. Furthermore, all three offer international exchange possibilities (limited for D-Base).

Finally, there was the cost: Professional programs are very expensive. D-Base oriented programs are cheaper (or existing secretarial software could be adapted to library use). ISIS is distributed by UNESCO and is totally free of charge. Therefore it is widely used by NGO's and in third world countries. It is available for DOS, Windows and networks.

The national Bahá'í librarian of France was the first to look into the ISIS software. She finally decided to adopt the existing secretarial software Access. The adaptation for library use is in process at this time.

We have started examining ISIS in Belgium. This will take several months, because we want to consult with other NGO's using ISIS already. If we adopt ISIS, we will probably implement it in Belgium, and the Netherlands at the same time and with the same formats.

That is the news so far from France, Belgium and the Netherlands. If there are any other colleagues in Europe dealing with these or other problems in their national Bahá'í library, we invite them to contact us by email, fax or letter. We are eager to share our experiences.

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BAHA'I BIBLIOGRAPHIC DATABASE ON CD-ROM?

William P. Collins is the author of *Bibliography of English-Language Works on the Bábí and Bahá'í Faiths, 1844-1985* (Oxford: George Ronald, 1990). He has a database of nearly 20,000 bibliographic records, which includes all the records in the printed volume, plus several thousand additional items, almost all in English. These include records for every article in most major Bahá'í journals. Mr. Collins would like to distribute the database to Bahá'ís who are willing to buy the database and database viewer on CD-ROM. Please respond directly to him at his email address if you have serious interest in owning the database. The number of assured customers will determine the price, which could be as low as \$50 depending on the demand. The price would have to increase

the price, which could be as low as \$99 depending on the demand. The price would have to recover licensing charged to Mr. Collins for unlimited distribution of the ProCite bibliographic file viewer, materials costs, and postage. An additional modest fee may be charged to those who would like to have annual updates as the database is built. Those who contribute to building the database would receive a discount on future updates. Email the author at: wcol@erols.com

ARCHIVES POLICIES: CANADA

It is our intent to present, from time to time, sample policies from Bahá'í libraries and archives. The following policy for the Canadian Bahá'í Archives is an excellent example and may be helpful to other Bahá'í archivists who are drafting policies.

Bahá'í National Centre Archives Policy Statement

A. Purpose

The Archives office of the Bahá'í National Centre acquires, preserves, arranges and describes, and makes available the records in its care. This includes the records of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Canada, its departments and offices, and its national committees. It also includes some letters of the Guardian, and some relics associated with the Holy Family. Finally, it includes the personal papers of some individual Bahá'ís.

B. Role of the archivist

The archivist is a staff member of the Secretariat, and reports to the Secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly. The archivist:

1. is responsible for establishing the authority and infrastructure within which to frame an archival program;
2. submits to the Secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly:
 - a) all policies for approval
 - b) an annual report
 - c) requests for a budget
3. develops a records management program for the National Spiritual Assembly and its departments and committees:
 - a) consults with key staff in each department about a records classification system that meets the need of that department
 - b) develops a records retention schedule for systematic transfer to the archives and/or destruction of records of the National Spiritual Assembly and its departments
 - c) submits to the National Bahá'í Archives Committee, a committee of the National Spiritual Assembly, the records retention schedule for approval.
4. identifies, acquires and appraises records and personal papers of individuals and other organizations within the Bahá'í national community, whose activities are of national import, for preservation in the archives, according to the acquisition policy
5. provides for the proper storage and preservation of letters of Shoghi Effendi, and tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and all relics associated with the Holy Family which are held by the archives.
6. provides for the preservation of all records in appropriate storage materials, in a temperature and humidity-controlled environment.
7. arranges and describes all records within the archives according to an established standard. The

7. arranges and describes all records within the archives according to an established standard. The Association for Canadian Archivists' *Rules for Archival Description* is the recommended standard.
8. facilitates intellectual access to the materials in the archives through preparation of indexes and other finding aids.
9. provides access to archives by outside researchers while protecting the confidentiality of some information and the privacy of individuals for specified records and periods of time.
10. supervises volunteers and/or archival assistants in their work, when circumstances permit.
11. consults with and obtains advice from a national archives committee in the matters of education, acquisition of personal papers, and issues related to public programming, when such a committee exists.

C. Acquisition policy

The archives exists first for the preservation of the records of the National Spiritual Assembly. Other records acquired by the archives should be complementary to the functions of the National Spiritual Assembly. That is, the records and personal papers to be acquired outside the Bahá'í National Centre, or the agencies of the National Spiritual Assembly, should be of a national character. The acquisition of all records by the archives, from either internal or external sources, should be documented. Further detail will be found in the acquisition policy, when finalized.

D. Access policy

The archives is open to staff in performance of their duties at the Bahá'í National Centre. Other research requests will be considered, upon application to the archivist or the National Spiritual Assembly secretary. Materials of a personal or confidential nature may be subject to certain restrictions. Further detail will be found in the access policy, when finalized.

E. Records management

Records management plays an important role in transferring records to the archives. The archivist and key staff in each department agree to a classification system that meets their needs, and determine the life span of each series of records. The records schedule will be adapted to meet changes in organizational structure and in functions, and will be approved by the National Bahá'í Archives Committee. Non-active or semi-active records which have been clearly documented, and are scheduled for destruction may be kept in a designated area of the archives (or, when circumstances permit, a proper records centre), with destruction dates clearly marked. Once a year, scheduled records will be destroyed.

F. Definitions

Archives are defined as the whole of the records created in the course of conduct of affairs. Such records may occur in many forms and on a wide variety of media.

Records are defined as documents which have participated in a practical activity. Such definition excludes documents kept for information purposes only.

Approved by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Canada, February 1997

LIBRARIAN POSITION OPEN IN CHINA

Librarian and Art Teacher Wanted by TEDA International School, China

Qualifications: Librarian - Has a B.A. or M.A. degree in library science and library working experience, preferably in a school environment, familiar with library automation system, good at library outreach programs with students and parents.

Art Teacher: Has a degree in Art, art teaching experience, preferably has a teaching certificate in art.

Compensation: Round-trip airfare covered by the school; US\$1,300 - 1,800 monthly salary (for 12 months) net pay (school pay the tax in China); rent-free and utility-free two-room apartment; US\$500/year professional development benefit. Note: living cost is low in China. Most of the teachers and staff at school can put away 50%-70% of their salary as savings every month.

Contract period: From August 15, 1999 to Aug. 14, 2000.

APPLY IMMEDIATELY!!! To apply, please e-mail the followings to Rubee Fuller (rfbeacon@aol.com) : (home number (847) 998-9707)

-- resume, a cover letter stating your family situation (any member will accompany you to China) and medical/health conditions, and at least two references one of which should be a Baha'i reference (LSA member or AUX Board member or others)

BAHA'I LIBRARIAN MAKES CONTRIBUTION TO MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY IN NAME OF BAHA'I OPEN UNIVERSITY

Mark Knox, part of this Bahá'í librarians' and archivists' network, sent the following letter to the Director of Libraries at Michigan State University:

1998 November 3

Mark Knox
2240 Glencoe Hills Apt. 8
Ann Arbor, MI 48108-3016
unity@umich.edu

Cliff Haka, Director of Libraries
Main Library
Michigan State University
East Lansing, MI 48824

Dear Mr. Haka:

Please accept this humble contribution to the Michigan State University library system in the name of my co-religionists in Iran, members of the Bahá'í Faith, who recently were made to endure, after over one hundred years of arbitrary persecution by the Iranian secular and ecclesiastical authorities alike, the closing of the last forum open to Bahá'ís in Iran for the pursuit of higher education, an "underground" institution of higher education known informally as the "Open University." (Please see enclosures.)

I give this contribution with the hope that it is used to enlighten anyone who wishes to know that the freedom we have to choose what we hold dear to our hearts and minds, by exploring and engaging our world through time honored and community supported institutions in our midst, such as colleges, universities, houses of worship and especially libraries, is not necessarily a prized right and responsibility enjoyed everywhere, and clearly is a right not afforded to the Bahá'ís of Iran.

Mr. Haka, I became a Bahá'í while an undergraduate at Michigan State University. In the period leading up to my conversion to the Bahá'í Faith, I made heavy and enthusiastic use of the collection at MSU exploring and searching for the "Truth" -anthropology, sociology, philosophy, mathematics, thanatology, etc. I had no idea I would end up a Bahá'í. Whether or not the Bahá'í Faith is the Truth for which I sought, an unfettered, independent search is a right I enjoyed to help me arrive at my conclusion. A library of any type, but especially, I believe, a university library, is the optimal milieu for exercising that right, and responsibility.

Please use this contribution to support the environment of unfettered exploration that is available to the Michigan State University community through its library system. And remember those, although distant from us, who do not enjoy that same simple freedom which truly can change lives.

Sincerely yours,
(Signed)Mark Knox

RECENT ACQUISITIONS AT THE WORLD CENTRE LIBRARY

Recent acquisitions will now be maintained on the Library web site at <http://library.bahai.org/gc/index.html>.

EDITIONS OF THE KITÁB-I-AQDAS AT THE WORLD CENTRE LIBRARY

Records for editions of the authorized English version of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, and translations made from that edition, will now be maintained at the Library web site, <http://library.bahai.org/gc/aqd.html>.

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