Where Do I Begin?

After several months of discussion and consideration, I was appointed Executive Director by IBBY’s Executive Committee in Bologna this year. Since that spring day, I have been overwhelmed by kindness and support. For this, I would like to thank all IBBY members who have written or emailed me. In many of the messages, I have been asked to explain my reasons for having applied for the position. Three stand out.

The first is the high esteem that I hold for the association. In the twenty years that I have worked with children in international schools, I routinely encountered IBBY’s important work in the service of books and children. Many times its publications and programs provided me with access to excellent resources that supported my work to develop knowledge about, and an understanding of, children’s literature around the globe.

The second reason is that in my work with children and in libraries I have increasingly confronted the tyranny of technology, which claims that in order to prepare children for an increasingly complex world we must, above all else, make them computer literate. While computer literacy is an important tool, my conviction is that we must continue to nourish children’s minds and imaginations with stories that enthrall, enchant and promote personal discovery. IBBY’s work is about this critical responsibility. The opportunity to achieve this goal while working at IBBY is a privilege.
Finally, IBBY and I were born in 1953. Celebrating fifty years is an exciting milestone! IBBY celebrated this achievement in Basel where I had the pleasure and good fortune to attend its Jubilee Congress. At a half-century, institutions, like human beings, look back on their lives filled and fulfilled in many ways. This is a fine thing. But I think that IBBY must re-define itself so that it continues to be an indispensable voice in the world of children’s literature.

In many ways, IBBY today is facing the same challenges that confronted Jella Lepman in 1945. As I write, our world is torn by more than forty conflicts in thirty-five countries. Children all over the world are victims of fear and injustice. IBBY can help rebuild the world of each of these children if it remains true to its commitment to develop mutual understanding through the hope and wonder that fill good books. I am determined to do whatever I can to help make this happen. So, things are changing…but not that much!!!

Kimete Basha

IBBY Worldwide—Travel Impressions of the IBBY President

In March, 2003, I visited Indonesia and Singapore. My host in Indonesia was the Society for the Advancement of Children’s Literature, which was founded in 1987 by Ms. Murti Bunanta, President of the Society and former member of IBBY’s Executive Committee. Through her efforts I was given the chance to present IBBY’s aims and objectives to the members of the Society; Mr. I Gede Ardika, the Minister of Culture and Tourism; and to Dr. A. Malik Fadjar, the Minister of Education. The members of the Society work to promote Indonesian and international children’s literature in the country. I joined one of the events where the group was preparing textile picture books for a public presentation. Further meetings took place with the members of the Indonesian Book Publishers Association and a visit to the Jakata Publishing House Gramedia.

The main purpose of my visit was to strengthen the ties between the Society and IBBY. Both of the Ministers promised their help, and the Society is now preparing to re-establish its membership as a National Section of IBBY, which it had withdrawn in 2001.

Preparation of textile picture books.

In Singapore I met Mr. R. Ramachandran, Chairman of the National Book Development Council of Singapore and Deputy Chief Executive of the National Library, and Ms. Joyce Tan, Executive Director of the National Book Development Council. I paid a visit to the National Library and the Library@Orchard and found an extraordinary example of a well situ-
ated modern public library, built at the center of a busy shopping mall and focusing its activities on young people. We discussed the possibility of IBBY participation in Singapore’s annual Asian Children’s Writers and Illustrators Conference, as well as the forging of closer ties in the future.

In May I accepted an invitation by the 16th Tehran Book Fair to attend the opening of the exhibition of the IBBY Honour List 2002. A varied program was organized by the Children’s Book Council of Iran (CBCI), the Iranian IBBY Section. I was welcomed by the Secretary General of the Section, Ms. Noushine Ansari, and attended a meeting of its officers and members. Also present were Ms. Touran Mirhadi (IBBY Liaison Officer) and Ms. Mansooreh Rai, both of whom are former members of the Hans Christian Andersen Jury. They told me about the progress CBCI has made with the Iranian Encyclopedia for Children and Juveniles. In all, twenty-four volumes are planned. Already volumes one to seven are in reprint, volumes nine to twelve are in production, and the remaining twelve are work in progress. Altogether 1,400 people and institutions are involved in the project!

During a reception given by the Ministry of Culture/International Iranian Publishing, Mr. Ali Asghar Ramazanpour, Head of the Tehran International Book Fair, presented me with a diploma expressing appreciation and gratitude on the occasion of IBBY’s participation in the 16th Tehran International Book Fair and our endeavor toward the development and strengthening of mutual cultural relations.

Mr. Behrouz Gharibpour, Director of the Iranian Artists Forum and Honour List nominee for writing 2002, invited me to the House of Artists for a guided tour. This cultural center, a converted barracks, hosts exhibitions, houses a library as well as meeting and performance rooms to be used by individual artists and artists associations. It was good to see a former military building in cultural use and supported by the government.

Another day began at the Book Fair with a full audience for my speech “IBBY Past and Future.” Ms. Noushine Ansari kindly acted as interpreter into Farsi. This was followed by the opening of the IBBY Honour List exhibition at the CBCI stand. I made a tour of the children’s books hall, answered many questions, and was interviewed by several journalists. A frequent and important question was how to increase internationality in Iranian publishing. A significant step in that direction would be to broaden Iran’s participation at international book fairs and to sign the international agreement on copyright. The Book Fair showed a rich national system of publishing and attracted many people from all over Iran.

Later, I visited a remarkable exhibition presented by the Institute for Research on the History of Children’s Literature on the development of literature for children and juvenile readers in Iran from the pre-Islamic period to Iran today. The exhibition was organized by a group led by Mr. Mohammad H. Mohammadi and Ms. Zohreh Ghaeni, a member of the current Hans Christian Andersen Jury. I believe that the exhibition would be of interest worldwide and a translation of the attractive catalogue would certainly attract collectors.

During my visit I learned that the Children’s Book Council of Iran is one of the oldest NGOs in the country and works closely with about thirty other NGOs, all related to children’s welfare, most of which were founded with the help and advice of CBCI.

There are the activities of the Centre for Cultural Development of Children, directed by Ms. Homayouni. The Centre had begun as a project directed at the Correctional Institutes for Juvenile Delinquents. With the help of CBCI, the Correctional Institutes were first approached with gifts of books. The staff were asked to work with the juveniles and to set up a library structure to be run by the children themselves, thus helping
them to re-learn social skills. The next step went further: to the root of the problem. As in many places, juveniles who live in bad conditions on the edge of the big cities are more prone to become delinquents. Their families are often from less developed rural areas, are poorly educated, and have few chances of finding employment. The Centre for Cultural Development established local libraries in the poorest regions of the country. The communities provide the building, the books are given by CBCI, an unemployed but educated young person from the region is employed and trained as the librarian. The Centre also runs courses for the teachers showing them how to work with the books.

MAM (Modern Attitude Mothers) focuses on several areas, such as: self esteem of women; introducing parents to thoughtful plays for children; negation of violence; protection of the environment; books and reading. I also met Ms. Lili Hayeri-Yazdi, Cultural Advisor of the Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults (Kanoon). She presented their book collections and children’s artwork exhibitions. The Institute also publishes books, and one of their books won the New Horizons Award at the Bologna Book Fair this year: The Anecdotes, rewritten by Hossein Moalem and illustrated by Bahram Kaef—the Iranian Honour List nominee for illustration 2002. At the Association of Writers for Children and Young People I took part in a discussion on reading habits and reading promotion.

During a special ceremony honoring Ms. Touran Mirhady, I conveyed IBBY’s congratulations for her extraordinary work for Iranian children’s literature.

The Fair and surrounding events gave me the chance to meet artists, many of whom have had close contact with IBBY over the years: Mr. Farshid Mesghali, Andersen Award winner for illustration in 1974; Mr. Hooshang Kermani Moradi, who was a Hans Christian Andersen Award Highly Commended candidate in 1992; Mr. Noureddin Zarrinkelk, who designed the International Children’s Book Day poster in 1993.

After the Book Fair I had the chance to visit Isfahan in central Iran. In this ancient capital of Persia I met a newly founded local group of CBCI, an independent NGO established in April 2002, directed by Ms. Fahimeh Aghili. The aims of the Isfahan Council of Children’s Books Followers are: priming quality reading materials for all children, encouraging and contributing to the growth of national literature, keeping in touch with international experiences, organizing and encouraging interested individuals and groups to promote reading book aims. There are three committees involved: Book Criticism, Children’s Literature History, and Book and Storytelling.

The Iranian IBBY Section gave me an overwhelming impression of what can be done within the international network that is so much a fundamental part of IBBY. There is also hope that a National Section will soon be re-established in Indonesia and that a Section could be formed in Singapore. The discussions during my visits demonstrated the wide interest in regional contacts and collaborations not only within IBBY but also with IBBY. There are remarkable efforts in reading and in book development in these countries. I came home with the wonderful feeling of being a member of the worldwide family of IBBY.

Peter Schneck

Don’t Read This!

In 1996 the anthology of ghost stories and spooky tales, Lees dit niet, was launched at the Groningen Congress as a fundraising project for IBBY. The Dutch publisher Jean-Christophe Boele van Hensbroek at Lemniscaat produced the book and supervised its distribution and sale. Although it seemed to be selling reasonably well, it was clear that the book would never make the best-seller list.
So you can imagine our astonishment when earlier this year a statement for the sale of foreign rights dropped into the IBBY mailbox for 16,000 Swiss francs. It was like hitting the jackpot. We immediately called Lemniscaat to make sure that there was no mistake, and were told it was indeed true! The book had been sold to publishers in Britain, Canada, Germany, Japan, Spain, and the USA and Lemniscaat had agreed that all royalties from foreign editions would be given to IBBY as well as 6 percent of all sales. It appeared that *Fingers on the Back of the Neck—Don’t Read This!*—*Lesesgeführlich*—*Dedos en la nuca* was a far greater success than anyone had imagined.

The idea for the publication was first put forward in 1993 by Rindert Kromhout who was then a member of the IBBY EC as well as Congress Coordinator for the Groningen Congress. As a member of the Fundraising Committee he proposed that the IBBY National Sections search for authors to contribute to the book. Many did. In the end eleven stories from renowned authors were chosen. Margaret Mahy (New Zealand), Charles Mungoshi (Zimbabwe), Susan Cooper (UK), Roberto Piumini (Italy), Klaus Kordon (Germany), Eiko Kadono (Japan), Paul Biegel (Netherlands), Kit Pearson (Canada), Bjarne Reuter (Denmark), Uri Orlev (Israel), and Jordi Sierra i Fabra (Spain) all contributed stories. After its publication, the book was distributed among the IBBY Sections and they in turn were asked to contact publishers and offer them the chance to buy the rights.

IBBY would like to thank most sincerely Lemniscaat and especially Jean-Christophe Boele van Hensbroek and Susanne Padberg for their continuing support and generosity. We would also like to thank those friends who arranged for the different editions to be published. And, finally a big thank you has to go to Rindert Kromhout for having had the idea ten years ago!

*Liz Page*
Hans A. Halbey In Memoriam

Hans A. Halbey was an art historian and a pioneer in picture book research, who, in 1957, at the age of 35, took over as director of the Klingspor Museum of Modern International Book Art in Offenbach, Germany. There he organized a number of exhibitions on book art and calligraphy. His attention was soon directed to children’s book illustration, manifested in the celebrated annual picture book exhibitions “Bunte Kinderwelt” (Colorful Children’s World). The posters announcing this exhibition have meanwhile become sought-after collector’s items.

Soon Hans Halbey was invited to lecture on book illustration at universities at home and abroad, an academic career crowned by an Honorary Professorship at the Johann Wolfgang Goethe University in Frankfurt. In 1987 he became Director of the Gutenberg Museum in Mainz, the world’s leading museum of printing, where he served until his retirement in 1987.

Being an outstanding expert in picture-book art, it was no wonder that Hans Halbey was invited to become a member of the first-ever BIB jury in Bratislava in 1967, and to serve on the three subsequent BIB juries. His involvement with international IBBY coincided with the 20th anniversary of IBBY when a successor was being sought for the then President Niilo Visapää. Hans Halbey agreed to become President in 1974 on the condition that he could rely on having a permanent Secretariat in Basel instead of the more or less voluntary services of Leena Maissen. This was the moment when the step was taken to rent a very modest office for IBBY in Basel which became the nucleus of the present Secretariat.

Hans Halbey’s presidency (1974–78) was characterized by the optimism of the seventies. Even during the Cold War, IBBY meetings and congresses were platforms for encounters of children’s book people from East and West. It was during his presidency, in 1976, that IBBY participated for the first time in the Bologna Children’s Book Fair with a stand of its own. At that time, UNESCO played a significant role as a coordinator and catalyst for book activities. IBBY was invited to prepare an International Directory of Children’s Book Institutions and Organizations, funded by UNESCO. This was later followed by an International Directory of Children’s Literature Specialists and other publications in collaboration with UNESCO. UNESCO actively consulted its International Book Committee, consisting of Presidents of NGOs dealing with books, and in this way IBBY Presidents were active in co-drafting UNESCO’s programs, such as the Charter of the Book, the International Year of the Child or the World Congress on Books.

Hans Halbey was sought after as an expert on children’s book illustration. His keynote speech on Maurice Sendak’s In the Night Kitchen—then a brand-new and controversial publication—was one of the highlights of the IBBY Congress in Athens in 1976. He was instrumental in establishing the separate category for illustration on the IBBY Honour List, in 1974, followed by the category for translation in 1978.
As much as he was a man of visual arts, Hans Halbey was a word artist. He had a great sense of humor and wrote poems, limericks, picture book texts, and nonsense verse for children and adults. Some of these have become classics and are included in German school textbooks. Hans Halbey had a great affinity with the humor of Dr. Seuss and translated some of his works into German—unfortunately they were not a commercial success in Germany.

Hans Halbey was looking forward to seeing his friends and colleagues at the IBBY Jubilee Congress in Basel in 2002. Sadly, shortly before this, he suffered a stroke. After a long illness he died in Mainz on 8 May 2003 at the age of eighty. His warmth and spirit will be greatly missed by all those who knew and were fond of him.

Leena Maissen

IBBY Honour List

The IBBY Honour List is a very special collection of books in many ways. The books are chosen, not by the IBBY Secretariat nor by the Executive Committee, but by members of IBBY National Sections worldwide who consider the selection representative of their country’s best literature for young people. In 2002 the Honour List presented 129 books from 47 countries in 37 different languages. While this does not give a full picture of a national market, it does give us an insight into what children are reading around the world.

As the books arrive at the Secretariat, it is always exciting to discover how the universal themes of growing up and childhood are explored in different regions. We learn how many translations of Harry Potter there are and which of the many titles become enduring classics, being translated time and time again. For example, books by Astrid Lindgren have been honored for their translations most years since 1980, into Brazilian, Bulgarian, Croatian, Czech, Estonian, Hebrew, Indonesian, Lithuanian, Norwegian, and Russian.

Every two years, seven sets of the Honour books are collected by the Secretariat. Since 1986 one set is regularly sent to the International Youth Library in Munich. Our colleagues there give invaluable help and advice about transliteration, bibliographic data and the subject index. Another set goes to the Japanese Section of IBBY, JBBY, in Tokyo. This set is shown all over Japan in public libraries and other locations. The Japanese section also translates the catalogue to accompany the books. The Northwestern University Library in Evanston, Illinois is now building a collection of the Honour List books. The Honour List 2002 will be deposited and catalogued there after they have been displayed at the 5th USBBY Regional Conference, in Chautauqua, NY. Another set is kept as a deposit at Bibiana, the International House of Art for Children in Bratislava, home of the Slovak IBBY section.

New interest in the Honour List is being shown in the Philippines. The 2000 collection went to the
International School of Manila and the 2002 collection was sent to the Early Childhood Learning Centre in Laguna, just outside Manila. This set will be exhibited at the IRA World Congress in Manila in 2004. Yet another set was exhibited at the St. Petersburg International Book Fair in June and then again at the Moscow International Book Fair in September. IBBY’s own deposit is stored at the Swiss Institute for Child and Youth Media (SIKJM) in Zurich, the Swiss Section of IBBY.

The 2002 IBBY Honour List was first exhibited at the Jubilee Congress in Basel. The books were subsequently displayed at the Bologna Children’s Book Fair in April where they always attract many visitors who discover and rediscover favorite authors and illustrators. In May the Honour List was exhibited at the Tehran Book Fair. (See the report by Peter Schneck for his impressions of this event.) At the same time another set of the books was shown once again in Basel during the first Basel Book Fair and Literature Festival, re-affirming IBBY’s presence in its home town on the “knee” of the river Rhine.

The Honour List has become one of most important activities of IBBY. It gives the National Sections the opportunity to show their best books to the world and a chance to study and review the production of books for young people. To broaden the Honour List audience further, plans are being made to make the complete catalogue available at the IBBY website.

Liz Page

Books for Africa
29th IBBY Congress 2004

Preparations are steaming ahead for the first IBBY Congress to be held on the African Continent. Mpho Ndebele, in charge of African Liaison, has confirmed contacts in twenty-five African countries. These contacts have already identified possible speakers and would-be delegates. IBBY sections around the world are helping publicize the Congress and many are giving extra support in the form of donations and projects. The Spanish section of IBBY, OEPLI, has launched a project which pairs artists and writers in Africa and Spain. The project will culminate in an exhibition that will be shown in Cape Town at the Congress and afterwards is scheduled to tour Spanish embassies around Africa. IBBY France has launched an initiative to ensure that at least one delegate is present from each French-speaking country of Africa. Illusafrica, an association of Pan-African authors and illustrators based in Brussels, Belgium, will sponsor the attendance of a group of African illustrators.

Registration deadline: April, 30 2004

Registration fees:
- US$ 490.00 (IBBY members in categories I and II)
- US$ 350.00 (IBBY members in categories III, IV and V)
- US$ 200.00 (Accompanying persons)

For up-to-date information see:
<http://www.sacbf.org.za>

Registration forms and information flyers are also available from the IBBY Secretariat (email: ibby@ibby.org).

Congress Organizer Jay Heale and his team are happy to answer any questions.

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