

# A Decade of the CALA Indiana Local Group

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The Indiana Local Group of the Midwest Chapter, Chinese American Librarians Association (CALA) has been in existence for more than a decade and is one of the most active groups. It may be of interest to all CALA members to learn of the history and development of the Indiana Group.

CALA was founded in 1973 and has five geographical chapters: California, Greater Mid-Atlantic, Midwest, Northeast, and Southwest. The Midwest Chapter covers 12 states, and the Indiana Local was organized in the fall of 1984 as a local group of that Chapter.

In the article entitled "Midwest Goes Local", one finds the following reports on the birth of the local groups in the Midwest Chapter:

"The Board decided to set up local groups at the state or regional level. Each group will be chaired by a Chairperson who is to organize their own activities and to function as a liaison between the chapter and his or her state members."<sup>1</sup> Among the seven local groups<sup>2</sup> established in 1984, Indiana Local is the only group that has been active, holding two meetings every year.

Initially there was one Chairperson serving a one-year term, but later the Indiana Local Group began to elect both a Chair and a Chair-elect. In the first year the Chair-elect would assist the current Chair, and the second year would serve as Chair of the Group. The first Chair was Julie Su.

It was decided from the start that the Group would meet twice a year (once in the fall and once in the spring). According to the Membership Directory compiled by Julie for the second meeting held on May 18, 1985, there were ten members from Bloomington, Indianapolis, West Lafayette, Muncie, and Greencastle. Since then, the mailing list has grown to over thirty people at times.

The Indiana Local is composed mainly of Chinese-American librarians from academic, public, and private libraries in Indiana. It also encourages participation of Chinese American Library Science students and includes them in the mailing list. Special student orientation programs were organized or incorporated in the fall meetings to introduce to the students the organization of CALA and the field of Library Science in general.

Even though the local group is a division of the Midwest Chapter of CALA, it was financially independent until November 1992. According to meeting minutes prepared by Thomas Lee, the local membership decided to "seek to receive budget support from CALA-Midwest as a source of finance for all its activities."<sup>3</sup> The Group then began to receive a subsidy from the Chapter. At the same time, the Indiana Group members discontinued the practice of paying the full cost of

lunches for student guests. From then on, all librarians attending the fall meeting would share half of the new students' lunch cost.

The purpose of the group was expressed as follows by the second Chair Marian Chou in her announcement for the fall meeting in 1986,

"Hopefully this meeting will give us the opportunity to get acquainted, to share ideas on programs for future meetings, to discuss our problems and professional concerns, and to have fun."[4](#)

In her letter to Thomas Lee, East Asian Librarian, Indiana University Libraries dated March 1, 1988, Marian Chou explained, "the goals of our meetings include encouraging better communication and promoting professional growth among members. A speech is usually scheduled as our meeting program."[5](#)

Indeed from the start, the Indiana Local Chapter members attempted to promote professional growth by sharing professional experiences with their colleagues. Joe Lin and George Hing were two of the earliest speakers. Joe Lin shared with the members his experience as a Science Librarian in an academic library, and George Hing spoke on the topic of archive materials at the spring meeting of 1985. In 1988 Ming-ming Kuo gave a report entitled, "Issues of Collection Development in University Libraries". Thomas Lee presented "From Isolation to Conformity: Bibliographic Control of East Asian Materials in North America" in the spring meeting of 1989. Philip Shih spoke on "Management and Taxation of Public Libraries" in the fall meeting of 1994.

Speakers from fields related to Library Science were also invited. Linda Finch, then the Assistant Manager of Waldenbooks, was the invited speaker at the meeting held in October 25, 1986. Her topic was good gift books available for children. Dr. Kuang-liang Hsu, an expert in computer science, presented a lecture with slides, "Introduction to Expert Systems" at the meeting of April 18, 1987.

The presentations have also reflected the increasing influence of automation in the field of Library Science. At the meeting held on April 28, 1990, Julie Su introduced the implementation of IO (Information Online), the local NOTIS system at Indiana University Libraries. At the meeting the following year, Huijie Chen reported on his research project, "Campus-wide Computing Networks and Library Positions". Most recently, Jian Liu reported on the current status and future development of the World Wide Web at the spring meeting of 1996. Xuan Ma also related her experience in designing and developing WWW services and products through commercial Internet services providers at the same meeting.

The introduction of new topics in the field of Library Science is one of the main attractions of the semi-annual meetings. Another attraction is news updates concerning members. We enjoy sharing news of employment of student members, weddings, births, awards, etc.

From the past meeting minutes, one can discover many interesting facts. For example, until November 1993 the local meetings were always held in Indianapolis because of its central location among cities where members work. With the increase of student members, Thomas Lee suggested in the fall meeting of 1993, which was the first to be held in Bloomington, that in the

future one of the two local meetings be regularly held in Bloomington. Although his proposal was not accepted right away, it was instituted later when the Group decided that for the purpose of welcoming new students, Bloomington is an appropriate site for the fall meetings.

The number of participants at the local meetings has increased over the years, with over twenty persons at our last spring meeting. In contrast, Julie Su and Marian Chou were the only two attendees at the fall meeting in 1987. The meeting was nonetheless fruitful. With four proxy votes, they elected the next Chair. Julie also proposed to send out an Indiana Local Financial Resource Survey to all members to discuss the issue of possible financial support from CALA.

With continuing support from its members, the Indiana Local remains a growing and active professional group. Its members have been heavily involved in CALA's Midwest as well as national activities. Many members also hold important posts in CALA at the Midwest and national levels. For example, Julie Su was the first Indiana librarian to be the President of the Midwest Chapter (1984-1985). Following her example, other Indiana members Ming-ming Kuo (1987-1988), Pei-ling Wu (1994-1995) and Liana Zhou (1996-1997) have also served as the Midwest Chapter Presidents. Ming-ming and Pei-ling served in addition on the CALA Executive Board.

Other accomplishments of the Indiana Local include: In recent years together with other Midwest local chapters, members participated in updating the Midwest Area Chinese American Resource Guide, and this was published in June 1995. The *Bibliography of Chinese Books in Indianapolis Area* compiled by Julie Su, Calli Hu, Pei-ling Wu, and representatives of two Indiana Chinese community organizations, was published in 1993. For the past two years, many members have joined in compiling its sequel, *A Catalog of Chinese Collections in Selected Indiana Libraries*, sponsored by the Midwest Chapter. The catalog will be posted on WWW by Telamon, a telecommunication company in 1996.

There have been major developments in the field of Library Science since 1984. Along with our colleagues in Indiana Local and elsewhere we have witnessed the changing emphasis from the increasing acceptance of MARC (Machine-Readable Bibliographic Records) Format to the increasing demand for Internet and WWW sites. The next ten years will undoubtedly bring new technological developments of interest to all of us. The local groups can help to support efforts of members to adapt to the changing profession.

(Special thanks to Pei-ling Wu and Julie Su for background on the Indiana Local Group and for editorial assistance.)

### **Notes and References:**

1. Su, Julie. "Midwest Goes Local," *CALA Midwest Chapter Newsletter* (Dec. 1984).
2. The seven local groups of the Midwest Chapter are: Illinois-Chicago area, Illinois-Urbana area, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, and Ohio.

3. Minutes of the fall meeting on November 14, 1992, prepared by Thomas Lee.
4. Fall meeting announcement from Marion Chou, dated Oct. 25, 1986.
5. Marion Chou's letter to Thomas Lee, dated March 1, 1988.

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