

FEEDBACK

SCHOOL LIBRARIES SECTION NSW GROUP

Conserving and preserving

Sixty school librarians had a chance to benefit from the expertise of Helen Price, LAA Bicentennial Conservator, and to consider their role in the preservation of school and local history documents at a recent seminar held at SCEGGS, Darlinghurst. The seminar provided insights into the range of documents needing preservation and practical preservation processes.

Helen Price described her work in the wider community and showed a series of slides which illustrated the many problems faced in the maintenance of archive materials: light, dust, insects and mould. Sticky tape is definitely out!

Workshop sessions covered the use and benefits of acid free paper and provided excellent practical advice on storage ideas and preservation of special documents.

Jim Fletcher, Historical Research Officer for the NSW Department of Education, entertained the group with some wonderful excerpts from school histories. He urged school librarians to be proactive in historical record keeping and provided the following thought-provoking assumptions about school records:

- What should have been kept, hasn't.
- What's supposed to be kept, isn't.
- What should be kept in the future, won't be.

- If you don't keep it no one else will.
- Just keeping things won't be enough.

Avril Condren's session tackled the rationale behind collection development — basic requirements and selection criteria.

As we reflect as a nation this year on our past and future, teacher-librarians might well consider how they can contribute to their clients' sense of belonging and continuity. The Group was pleased to provide financial assistance to two of the country members who attended the seminar.

Alison Glasscock

HEALTH LIBRARIES SECTION NSW GROUP

The first meeting of the year was held on 16 February and an activities program for the year was devised. Yet to take place will be an address by two psychiatric hospital librarians on library services for the mental health area on 27 July. At a management seminar to be held at the NSW Department of Health on 2 November it is hoped to have a 'creative' management consultant as guest speaker and for this to be followed by a workshop.

The first general meeting was held on 22 March. Moira Bryant spoke about 'Healthlink' — an information service provided to patients, out-patients and their families at Westmead Hospital. The service provides pamphlets free of charge, sells small booklets and books, and acts as a referral point for further information for clients. All the information provided is checked by qualified health personnel before being distributed. The gathering was well attended with approximately 25 people present. A short tour of Westmead Hospital library was also conducted.

Previously known as the Medical Libraries Section, the Section has now metamorphosed into the Health Libraries Section. This has been a nationwide change to reflect the growing number of allied health resource centres and libraries involved in activities. The Section will publish two newsletters for members in 1988 in May and October.

Bronwyn King
Secretary

PUBLIC LIBRARIES SECTION NATIONAL

General Council

Two items of particular relevance for public libraries were discussed at the recent General Council meeting in Sydney.

Standards: the Public Libraries Standards Revision Committee, convened by Lee Ellis had requested additional funding to complete revision of the draft Standards document, which has now been workshopped in every state except Tasmania.

General Council approved the funding request, but also provided an additional amount to enable distribution of the penultimate draft for final comment. It is expected that the distribution list will include all Public Libraries Sections, public library departments in each State Library and other relevant bodies. Following that process it is hoped that the final document might be ready for ratification at the General Council meeting in August.

Interlibrary Loans: General Council passed a resolution that the LAA assist in any project designed to collect information from State Libraries on the effect of ILL charges on public libraries in time for the Australian Libraries Summit. This information gathering exercise is currently underway with a view to there being some hard data available (who's charging? how much? reduced ILL traffic patterns?) by June.

Libraries bill

The new Libraries Legislation in Victoria went through the Second Reading Stage in the Legislative Assembly on 14 April. It is anticipated that it may pass through both houses and become law during this Autumn session of Parliament. Several features of the bill will be of interest to public librarians in other states:

- Funding/advice/support for public libraries is removed from the State Library's Consultancy and Public Libraries Services division and transferred to the direct control of the Ministry for the Arts i.e. the State Library of Victoria will no longer have any specific statutory involvement with the municipal library system.
- Most 'professional' safeguards that were part of the Library Council of Victoria Act, 1965, are removed. Specifically, the requirements to provide free library service (as limited as that was in the old legislation) and the obligation for a library to be headed by a professional librarian (this requirement is removed as well for the new position of Director of the State Library — the old State Librarian position is removed). There are many other features of the bill and these will be the subject of a detailed report from the Victorian Branch elsewhere in *InCite*.

An interesting provision of the bill relates to membership of the two new bodies that would replace the existing Library Council of Victoria:

one [member] shall be a professional librarian selected from a panel of not less than three names submitted by the Library Association of Australia (Victorian Branch)...

Victorian public librarians would be aiming for at least one of the three Branch nominees for each body to be a public library representative.

Ross Gibbs
President

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ACT BRANCH

Libraries and lobbying

At the Branch's Autumn dinner on 20 April Senator Bob McMullan (ACT), a former secretary of the ALP, spoke on the topic 'A Politician's View of Libraries'. He broke down the topic into two major parts, how he saw libraries and how libraries fitted into the present political process.

While Senator McMullan saw libraries as essential to his work it was the second part of his talk that was of most interest, especially in view of the forthcoming Information for the Nation campaign. The major points of his talk were:

Economists vs the Rest — The economic view is at present dominant in government circles and in a time of economic restraint it is difficult to get public funding. If the public library funding proposal of the '70s were to be presently considered it would compete with other priorities such as — the National Museum, a better family welfare package, or subsidising the first home owners scheme. Tough decisions have to be taken. Arguments based on the 'Soul of Australia' are important but are not likely to carry much weight with the Department of Finance and arguments based on efficiency and effectiveness have to be put.

Interventionists vs Free Marketeers — This relates to the role of government in resource allocation and the supply of information — where? for whom? what? A precondition of success is to state the merits of our case, as libraries rely on a measure of government intervention.

Campaign overview — the major points that could be addressed are:

- Theme (not to be confused with a slogan!) The important point is in deciding what to achieve, a slogan follows from this.
- Contribution of libraries — in the supply of information, education about sources of information and access to information.
- Australian identity — the contribution to heritage and culture, particularly things Australian.
- Equity and access — the ease of access of citizens to information.

Objectives — in any campaign these must be narrowed to a manageable few. For example, a narrow agenda was set by the conservation lobby in the recent elections. Even though the movement had many objectives *only* four were chosen, in this way the campaigns were manageable and reactions able to be evaluated.

The objectives of a campaign must be achievable in political terms. The present level of overseas aid is 0.36 percent of the GDP, it would be unrealistic to demand the UN norm of 0.7 percent since this is just not viable at present and would be rejected. An increase over four years from 0.36 percent to 0.38 percent would seem reasonable and yet increase aid by a substantial amount in this period.

Politicians as targets — the relationship between politicians and libraries is complex since libraries are seen as a source of useful information and even as a source of pleasure, but they are also seen as expenditure. Librarians should not necessarily accept a present agenda, eg in the ACT librarians should not necessarily accept the proposition of 'no casino, no library'. Politicians do like to be seen laying foundation stones and getting favourable publicity. Libraries must always be seen to be relevant to those to whom the case is put.

Michael Evans
Secretary

harbour views. For further information contact: Marian Morgan (02) 250 0257, or Jacie Scherer (02) 950 3285.

Marian Morgan
Secretary

LIBRARY TECHNICIANS SECTION — SA GROUP

The first function of the year was held at the Adelaide College of TAFE on 21 March. Lindsay McAdam from the Public Service Association was invited to speak on the classifications for library technicians employed by statutory authorities.

Lindy, and Margaret Hunt from TAFE, gave details and answered questions on the new integrated library structure of the SA public service and the current situation concerning SAIT, SACAE and TAFE Colleges.

Recognition of the library technician grade in SA state government school awards was also discussed. The Group is actively looking at problems in this area. If this situation concerns you, please contact Margaret Rowe for details and give your support.

The major thrust to come from the meeting was that nothing will be achieved if library technicians and technicians in training do not work actively towards their goals. Members are encouraged to contact the PSA or the SALT committee to discuss just where library technicians are going in these areas and just why it is taking so long to get there.

Alison Potts
Secretary

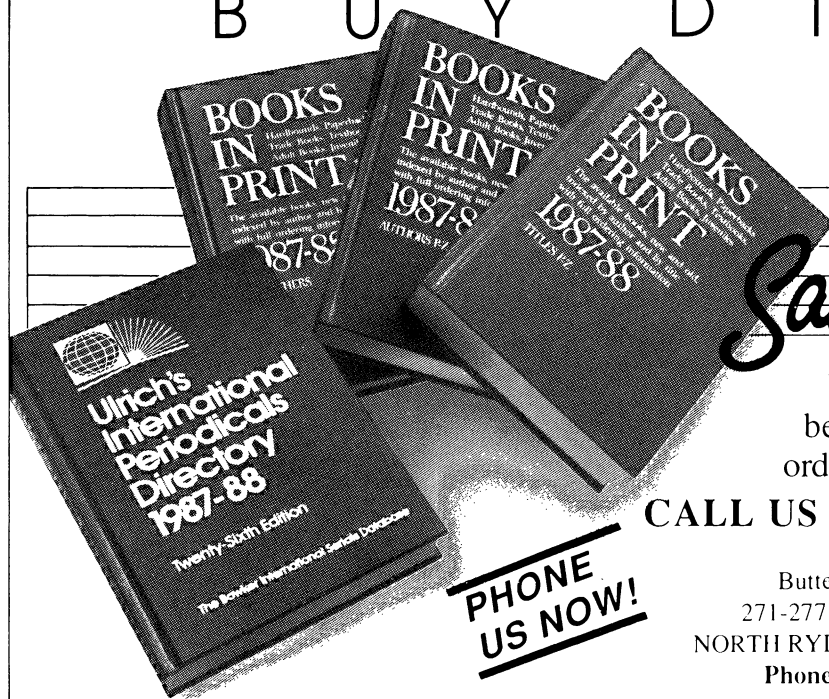
LIBRARY TECHNICIANS SECTION — NSW GROUP

The Group will be presenting an 'Online' seminar on Monday 4 July 1988 at Cumberland College of Health Sciences, Lidcombe. Cost is \$65 LAA members, \$80 non LAA members. This includes lunch, morning and afternoon teas and lots of hands-on experience. The seminar is a repeat of the successful program held at the College in February 1987. Pam Pitkeathly is again co-ordinating the seminar. For further enquiries phone Jan Harris, Carringbah Library (02) 524 3803 or watch for the forthcoming ad in *InCite*.

Don't forget the National Section conference dinner to be held at the Watersedge Restaurant, Pier One, Walsh Bay, Sydney. Cost is \$27 for a three-course dinner, complete with

The *Australian Library Journal* is about to launch a new feature. It's called the 'Student Page'. If you're a student of librarianship or information management or any related field, your contributions will be carefully considered. Contributions will be published anonymously if you wish. Let's not beat about the bush — if the LAA isn't winning students, it's losing. Even if you're not a member, we'd like to hear from you. The column starts with the August 1988 issue, and space is reserved for YOU.

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