

# ALIA Children's and Youth Services Section (NSW)

AGM and one-day conference: 'What's so funny?'

Over 100 librarians, teachers and others interested in children's literature attended the ALIA Children's Youth Services Section (NSW) Annual General Meeting and one-day conference *What's so funny?* at the New South Wales State Library on Friday 30 April. As expected, the line up of speakers: Judith Clarke; Kerry Millard; Jonathan Appleton and Richard Tulloch, delighted us with their explanations, through their works, of what they find so funny.

Judith Clarke's readings from her books which reveal exploits of her teenage hero Al Capsella illustrated her belief that it is necessary for the reader to be able to relate to a situation before the humour can be appreciated. Judith also remarked on the elements of sadness

that often, like in life, underlie humour, and noted that it is the author's task to ensure that pathos doesn't overwhelm the reader.

Kerry Millard entertained us with her lightening quick cartoons showing us how she adds artistic dimension to the books she illustrates. She indicated in graphic ways the techniques that she uses to incorporate humour into her work and treated us to an insight into the illustrators tools of trade—right down to the knitting needle she uses on her dried out bottles of Liquid Paper.

Jonathon Appleton made us green as he told us about the rich and famous and funny authors he has known (well, famous and funny, anyway) as he explained to us the importance of the authors skills of observation and use of language.

Richard Tulloch needed little introduction as he works extensively with groups of children and many in the audience had been involved in his storytelling sessions previously. Richard used his storytelling skills, on the day, to illustrate what he sees as important aspects of his humorous writing, in particular the use of patterns, rhythm and timing that build up an expectation in the audience then either repeating the pattern or breaking that pattern to make the reader, or audience, laugh.

The participants to the conference certainly enjoyed many laughs—from all the speakers, but more importantly were left with a heightened awareness of just what works for children in the genre of humorous literature.

## Achieving excellence

CPLA conference report

The Country Public Libraries Association of New South Wales held its 5th Annual Conference in Queanbeyan during the first week of May with the theme of 'Achieving Excellence'.

Keynote speaker was Gerry Grace, 'the man who made McDonald's marketing magic a reality in Australia', a Director of McDonald's Australia and the principal of the business consultancy Grace Marketing Connections Pty Ltd. He believes that 'none of us is as good as all of us'—librarians have a vital role to play in the community and delegates should encourage excellence in their business and personal life.

Barry McIntyre of RMIT discussed the concept of an 'Excellence Index' for libraries, identifying user-perceived benefits, revising standards, designing key indicator reports, telling stakeholders (users) what to expect and so on, using the resulting evaluation to improve, rather than just prove.

Other speakers included David Jones from the Roy Morgan Research Centre, Margaret Coffey, Director of Management Services

for the State Library of NSW, Kathleen Bresnahan of the Legal Information Access Centre at the State Library; Jane Gornall, Deputy Chief Librarian of the Lane Cove Public Library, and Nora Stewart, ALIA Training and Development Officer.

The President of the Australian Local Government Association, Alderman Peter Woods, addressed the Annual General Meeting affirming that 'The LGA recognises that libraries are a major community resource for education, recreation, economic and community development. the role of libraries, especially in rural centres, as agents of information support is becoming more vital, particularly in the context of the 'clever country' concept.' He urged the State Government to take long-range policies and actions to 'relate the concrete

importance of libraries to the well-being of the community.

Alderman John Martin of Maitland City Council was re-elected President of CPLA and Alderman Sue Whelan of Queanbeyan City Council was returned as Vice Chairman. The conference attracted over 200 librarians and Aldermen, and clearly was a great success.

The 1994 Conference will be held in Deniliquin, NSW.



Left to Right: Keynote Speaker Gerry Grace; CPLA President Alderman John Martin

Queanbeyan: Agri