



American Library Association Annual Conference 2006



New Orleans, Louisiana

In June, more than 17 000 librarians met in New Orleans for the American Library Association Annual conference. As one of 200 international librarians in attendance, ALA was a great opportunity to meet librarians I'd only ever 'met' online. Faced with overwhelming choice in every session, and thousands of programs to attend, I focussed on those offered by the New Members Round Table (NMRT) and the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL).

NMRT hosts a conference orientation, committee meetings, programs, an exhibit booth, and several social events. NMRT members are very interested in the work being done by the New Graduates Group and NGPAG in Australia. For first-timers at ALA, they are welcoming, encouraging, and do their best to help you make sense of all the acronyms, meetings, and sessions.

NMRT held an inspiring session, 'Leadership through publication: making a difference with scholarship', which shared reasons to write, including to share ideas and make an impact at any level of the profession.

'Shaking the money tree: grant writing for librarians' from ACRL centred on the fundamentals of applying for public, private and non-profit grants for library projects. Is your idea unique? Have you discussed it with the grant program officer? Have you ensured the match funding to your project? These basics and more were discussed by two of the largest library grant-making bodies in the USA, the Institute of Museum and Library Services, and the National Endowment for the Humanities.

'Vanilla collections: have alternative viewpoints disappeared from academic libraries?'

from ACRL asked what 'alternative' actually means, and outlined how academic libraries currently find information about new publications including alerts, approval plans, catalogues, and recommendations. It was noted that some libraries have actively sought out publications by small, independent presses and have seen larger than average circulation statistics for those items.

'Catalogue transformed: from traditional to emerging models of use' featured an overview of North Carolina state's use of Endeca to power their catalogue with faceted browsing, relevance ranking and spell check.

The ACRL President's Program, 'The Emperor has no clothes: be it resolved that information literacy is a fad and waste of librarian time and talent', debated the relevance of information literacy. Highly entertaining, but few were surprised that the negative of this resolution won!

ALA was the first major conference held in New Orleans since Hurricane Katrina in August 2005. Several programs focussed on the recovery efforts, services provided by libraries after the storm, and the personal stories of local librarians. Although the French Quarter and the convention centre itself have been repaired, there is still considerable damage throughout the rest of the city and funds are greatly needed to rebuild libraries and collections.

If you have the opportunity to attend ALA, go! It is an amazing experience to attend an international conference of this size, and one that has exceptional programs and support for new graduates.

Fiona Bradley

Information Services Librarian, University of Technology, Sydney

New EEI column co-ordinators

Energise >> Enthuse >> Inspire will have two co-ordinators in 2007. Kate Davis and Naomi Doessel will step up to the wicket on behalf of New Grads.

My thanks to Kate Watson of the University of the Sunshine Coast library, who is retiring from the co-ordinator position. Kate has been a wonderful woman to work with. She never missed a deadline, and produced a range of consistently interesting contributors.

Kate Davis

Kate Davis is a Reference Librarian at the National Library of Australia. She completed the Graduate Program at the Library in 2005. Kate is a recent graduate of the QUT



GradDip in LIS, and has research interests in virtual reference and the role of the Gen Y librarian in the future of the library profession. Contact her at kdavis@nla.gov.au.

Naomi Doessel

Naomi Doessel is also a recent graduate of the QUT GradDip in LIS. After working as a Reference Librarian at QUT for two years she moved to London. Naomi currently works as a researcher at a major investment bank, and spends her time getting to grips with business information and the London transport system. Contact her at nomesd@yahoo.com.au.



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...gives a voice to the new generation of library and information professionals. If you have any suggestions or topics for this column, please contact the column co-ordinator, Kate Watson, kwatson@usc.edu.au.