

## LOOK BACK with OPTIMISM and in ANGER *Continued from page 3.*

the teeming mass of ones own kind. The desperate foray to ensure that everyone has been catered for and there is always one who hasn't.

Most of the people I know are spending Christmas in Darwin having exhausted their financial ability to travel elsewhere earlier in the year. The holiday is bound to be a cosy time as it always is in the Top End with humidity running at 90% and the temperature hazing at 33 degrees C. Distant in the mind the threat of cyclones adds to the tension. In Alice we can look forward to that delicious wall of heat that almost knocks a person over as he or she

walks out the front door. Inside it is all sleigh bells and tinsel on the tree. Odd business Christmas in the Northern Territory.

Christmas day is to many lawyers a testing time. Their forensic skills are called upon to be applied to the instructions that accompany the toys that Santa brought, but which Santa did not foresee would require the skills of a mechanical engineer to put together. Over warm champagne the lawyer labours until the comforting words "Don't worry darling we'll get some glue and fix it tomorrow", are uttered. Often that is followed by a

gentle Christmassy discussion between the lawyer and his or her partner which ends with "But I thought you were going to buy the batteries". A sortie in hope of an open service station is the next step usually in the company of a little person clutching an inanimate object that only electricity will bring to life. If there is rain everybody stays inside together which is wonderful for the first two or three hours until it becomes necessary to remind oneself that it is Christmas after all and it beats making an application for an urgent interlocutory injunction.

Finally, this year has seen the passing of one of the great gentlemen of the law in the Northern Territory. James Muirhead or just Jim as he preferred to be called touched all who met him with his warmth of spirit and irreverent sense of humour. He liked people and they liked him. He was a practical judge who was patient with counsel and there was a lot of call for that trait in his time. Always a courteous man, he looked for the best in people and where he could help he did. I remember the twinkle that he got in his eye over a beer and when he sang "You are My Sunshine" on stage with a country and western band in Alice Springs. Some years after he had acquitted me of a charge of contempt upon appeal on grounds that the words didn't interfere with the cause of justice he asked me: "Did you really intend to say what you did to that Magistrate?" When I answered yes. He said "I thought so. At another time I might have said the same thing myself". That was Jim Muirhead.

Well, go ahead and enjoy your Christmas. I certainly will. But think of pulling a few dollars out of your pockets and giving to the Salvos. They make Christmas for a lot of people and it feels good to be able to be a part of it. I will leave you with a thought for the new year, in the words of Moshe Dayan; *It is better to struggle with a stallion when the problem is how to hold it back, than to urge on a bull which refuses to budge.*

A safe Christmas and New Year to each of you and your families.

### New Civil Registrar at Magistrates Court

**The Darwin Magistrates Court has appointed Paul Mossman as the new Civil Registrar.**

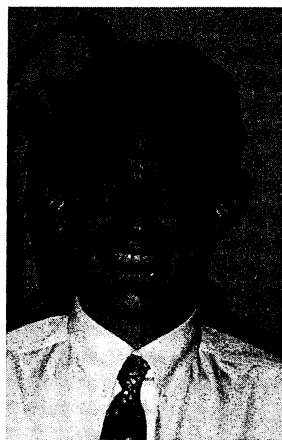
Mr Mossman comes to Darwin with his wife Marina and young son Nathanael from NSW where he worked within the NSW Local Courts.

He began his career with the NSW Attorney Generals Department at Wollongong Court House in 1990, moved to the position of Circuit Monitor at Taree Local Court in 1993, followed by a promotion to Registrar at Gloucester Court House in 1995. Mr Mossman covered the area from Newcastle in the south to Maclean in the north and Narromine in the west. In 1998 he was appointed a Coroner for the State of NSW.

Whilst working at the Local Courts in NSW Mr Mossman was part of a quality team who developed policies relating to the implementation of risk management and the minimisation of checking. This strategy saved the Department some \$4.5 million per year by freeing up 150,000

hours in senior graded officer's time to deal with client services initiatives.

"I am a client-focused manager and believe in team leadership and empowerment of staff. I have an open-door policy so please; any matter you wish to discuss, just call me. If you have any ideas in improvements to client service within the Registry also give me a call," said Mr Mossman.



"I am enrolled in the Northern Territory University in a Diploma of Human Resource Management, and I am hoping to continue a career in this field. I believe that the best asset anyone can have is a well-trained motivated team - with this, you can achieve any goal."

Mr Mossman's hobbies include rugby league and photography. He has refereed rugby league in front of 40,000 people at the Sydney Football Stadium and enjoys chasing storms with his camera.

The Law Society welcomes the Mossman family to Darwin.