

# News from the Divisions

## SCHOOL LIBRARIES SECTION NSW Curriculum Change and the School Library

The School Libraries Section's second Saturday seminar for 1982 was held on June 26 at Strathfield South Public School. The topic this time, 'New Curriculum Directions - Which Way for School Libraries?', dealt with the issue of the school librarian's role in school-based curriculum development.

As any NSW teacher knows, curriculum change seems to be occurring at an increasing rate with not only new curricula for established subjects, but also new programs, often concerned with complex social issues or living skills. As areas such as Aboriginal Education, the Talented Child, Non-Sexism, Transitional Education, Multiculturalism and Mass Media enter the range of curricula, schools are increasingly faced with the need to develop programs appropriate to their own needs.

As one of the seminar speakers, Bruce Kemp, Assistant Director of Studies in the NSW Department of Education, explained, curriculum development in NSW operates at three levels: the 'Centre', where broad policies and support materials are developed in consultation with the educational and general community; at the school level where the practical application of such curricula means development of programs, strategies and lessons which implement the concepts in a manner appropriate to the school; and, in between, at the Regional level where many support services are based. The speakers at the seminar seemed to agree overall that the teacher librarian's role in school curriculum development as the primary resource person in the school is an essential and completely desirable one, but one which is often overlooked or tacked on at the last stages of a project.

The first speakers of the day were Dr Christine Deer and Noelene Hall, both of Macquarie University School of Education, and they looked at curriculum development in terms of its intention and its reality. An overview of NSW Department of Education curriculum policy and its developments was followed by a closer look at the impact on the school and the possibilities for Teacher Librarian involvement.

In the second session of the day, the levels of operation of curriculum development were examined by Bruce Kemp and by Mandy Tunica, an inspector with the Central Metropolitan Region of the Department of Education. Jean Hart, the Head of the Education Department's Library Services unit, explained how Library Services officers become an integral part of curriculum development project teams as well as having input to the Boards of Studies which set up requirements for external examination in NSW.

After lunch, curriculum implementation and its support at the school level was looked at by Bev Stubbs, a consultant with the St George Region, and by Damien Ellis, English Master at Macquarie Fields High School.

Both being involved in the implementation of new curricula at this level, they were able to discuss some of the practical and human issues of implementing change and increasing librarian involvement.

The day culminated in a panel session involving two school principals - Philip Kidner (Concord West Public) and Doug Heard (Model Farms High); and two teacher-librarians - Jane Harris (Lewisham Public) and Lea Curnow (then on maternity leave from Strathfield Girls' High). All could speak by experience of the opportunities for, ways and means of, and limitations of teacher librarians' involvement in the planning and implementation of school programs.

The level of interest in the topic was evident in the fact that on this not unpleasant but nevertheless midwinter's day, over 100 teacher-librarians and other teachers and administrators packed into the large classroom used for the seminar. Refreshments and displays were held in the school library, one of the 70 or so 'Homestead' style libraries conceived, designed and erected in well under 12 months in the 1980-81 financial year, in one of the most remarkable (and successful!) building programs in NSW public works history.

To follow up to this successful seminar, it is proposed to publish the speakers' papers in co-operation with the Continuing Education section of the NSW Department of Education's Division of Services.

*Graham Spindler*

## INFORMATION SCIENCE SECTION (WA GROUP)

### PLATO - 20th Century Style

Members and friends of the ISS (WA Group) were fascinated by a talk and demonstration of PLATO held at Control Data on 23 June 1982.

Ibrahim Abdullah of Control Data introduced the audience to PLATO. No. Not the ancient Greek philosopher, but the twentieth century Programmed Logic for Automated Teaching Operations. So popular was the topic that additional demonstrations were arranged for other interested groups.

PLATO is a computer-based education delivery system, originally developed in the University of Illinois and 'commercialised' by Control Data. It comprises the hardware (including touch-sensitive VDUs), software and COURSEWARE (the curriculum and lesson material). PLATO is used in a number of countries around the world and in Australia since 1981, centred in Melbourne. There are plans to have a local system in Perth soon.

There are two parts to PLATO: the CMI (computer managed instruction) which looks after the paper work and record-keeping associated with any teaching course, giving a current and accurate picture of a student's progress; and the courses themselves. While the main use has been for remedial education for adults, the courses available range from basic skills to flight simulation for pilot training, and can be used for children as well as adults. Attachments to the terminal, such as slide projectors, digitising tablets (for creating lessons), and sound facilities, make PLATO a multi-media educational system for self-paced learning.

*Louise Jones*

## SCHOOL LIBRARIES SECTION SA

The LAA combines with the Resource Centre Teachers' Association and ASLA branch in SA, the Society for the Mass Media and Resource Centre Teachers (SMMART) for activities devoted to teacher librarians. Thus we rationalize meetings and each group assists with the ideas and arrangement. We

have a meeting each term which we share, one AGM each and a combined conference over 1½ days, annually. A co-ordinating committee meets regularly and addresses itself to organisation and the airing of issues in school librarianship.

Our joint conference on June 18 and 19 was attended by 80 people including many country librarians for whom this is a valuable meeting time. There were two themes, 'Back to Books' and 'Into the Eighties'.

Country visitors were taken to local bookshops and schools during Friday morning and at 3.15 pm they met with the Adelaide conferees to hear a panel of speakers on topics connected with books and reading. At 5.30 pm we all motored through heavy traffic to Rigby's very pleasant bookshop for the launching of Christobel Mattingley's 20th book, *Brave with Ben*. Christobel herself spoke and Kim Lardner, a professional storyteller entertained us. It was a fun evening.

The next day, Saturday, was business-like and valuable. Into the Eighties is the theme of the Education Department's curriculum policy and we were addressed on that subject and our role in curriculum by a number of speakers. Finally, a plenary session gave opportunities for some sharing of experience.

It seems that evening meetings are not as popular as they were but regional group meetings during the day serve better to inform librarians and to keep them together.

This year the SA division is serving as the National co-ordinating body and we hope to welcome many visitors to the Conference. There will be a meeting place for all school librarians at the South Australian College of Advanced Education, Kintore Ave, 4th Floor, Schulz Building, so do come and be sure of a warm welcome.

*Barbara Crompton*,  
National President, School Libraries Section

## TASMANIA

Prior to the May 15 State Elections, the Tasmanian Branch of the LAA wrote to all 157 candidates reminding them of the importance of libraries and requesting them to state their attitudes towards library issues if elected.

Replies were received from over half of the candidates and have been kept for future reference.

The Association was particularly pleased to receive a reply from the new Premier, Mr Gray, in which he invited the President of the Branch to meet with him or his Minister responsible for Libraries. Mary Walker, Tasmanian Branch President, is to have an initial meeting with Mr Max Bingham, the Minister responsible for Libraries and hopes to be able to meet the Premier at a later date.

*Peter Fagan*

## NEW ENGLAND REGIONAL GROUP

The development of the Australian Bibliographic Network was the topic addressed at a meeting of the Regional Group in Armidale, NSW on 23 June.

Janet Robinson, a NSW General Councillor of the LAA was the guest speaker at the meeting, which was attended by about 25 people, on the University of New England campus.

Over the past 18 months Janet has been directly involved in the ABN Pilot Project and the implementation of ABN, by virtue of her association with the NSW Office of Library Co-operation. She outlined the capabilities of the system and provided comments on its current application in OLC libraries. This interesting talk on a subject of growing significance stimulated a wide ranging and informative discussion session.

*Karl G. Schmude*