

# A Community Need— information services for young people

**PUBLISHED SOURCES of information for youth in NSW are fragmented and lack continuity. Useful directories have been compiled but suffer from one year funding, or a limited market, as in the case of Horan, Hall and Walker's *Sydney Inside Info* (1977). As a result, they have neither adequate distribution nor the facility for up-dating.**

Invaluable large scale projects which include youth information have foundered from financial cuts, such as the Community Based Information Service. Pamphlet material is still available but some agencies have charged for some time — notable here is the information in high demand published by the Family Planning Association. Funding for community agencies and youth projects is constantly under scrutiny.

The outlook is bleak. Public librarians could relieve the situation, in co-operation with other workers concerned with young people, by contributing an on-going service and investigating effective ways to package and distribute information to this group.

Librarians interested in starting a youth information service should, initially, find out about similar services provided by other community agencies, and identify gaps in resources and distribution. Youth counselling services, for example, are geared to particular problem areas or crisis situations. Information is provided face to face, requiring young people to be confident in their approach. Not surprisingly, the anonymity of a telephone service is often preferred. The library offers another anonymous distribution point for both printed information and telephone referral services based on a community information file.

Youth workers are usually well aware of many services which can help young people, but the demands of their job, which is action-oriented, leave little time for documentation of information to distribute to youth.

Since youth information provision has a tendency to suffer from a high level of duplication and little co-ordination, it is important to check with the following personnel and agencies, before starting: local council youth officers, social workers, community arts officers, Community Youth Support Scheme workers, C.E.S, student counsellors and amenities officers in TAFE Colleges, local transitional education programmes, life skills and personal development teachers, community radio workers, counselling services, neighbourhood centres, press, and publishers of local directories. Some of these can be contacted through inter-agency meetings; the council youth or social worker can advise where and when these take place.

It is important that young people themselves be consulted at each stage of plan-

ning and implementation. The simplest way is through schools, with the co-operation of principals and life skills teachers, or through youth centres.

Youth workers particularly operate under considerable pressure so offer them every co-operation when making initial approaches. Obviously their priorities lie in communicating with young people.

## What sort of information needs can be predicted?

Survey results about information needs are useful here. Some of these are available for loan through the Public Libraries Division's Evaluation and Review Centre (240 4380).

The most likely fields to be addressed are personal development, including interpersonal relationships, sex education, family problems, unemployment and employment issues, emergency accommodation and housing, legal rights, further education, leisure activities, entertainment (free if possible), health, crisis situations, government benefits, clubs, societies, and groups. If your library has a community information file using the LOCOM system most of these

areas should already be covered. The LOCOM manual gives simple and comprehensive guidance on how to organise and information file and collect information, and also has an invaluable list of directories at the back. Supplementary material is available through the Public Libraries Division.

## Packaging the information

Youth information can be presented in many formats. The simplest is a single sheet listing key agencies in areas of need, what they do, and a contact person. This may be useful for youth workers and teachers.

Directories are more expensive to produce, and date easily. Successful directories and youth newspapers have often involved young adults in preparation, writing, and production. At the very least, they should be shown to a group for comment before going to press. Key points to remember when compiling a directory are: (1) too much information will not be read (2) language should be clear and colloquial (3) only one unit of information should appear per page (4) graphics should compose at least 33% of the publication (5) typeface should be clear,

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## John Balnaves Prize awarded



John Balnaves, formerly the foundation principal lecturer in librarianship (now retired) at Canberra CAE presents the prize named in his honour to Arthur McConnachie. The prize is for the student with the best overall academic achievement in either the undergraduate or graduate diploma course in librarianship at Canberra CAE. Arthur McConnachie has a BA in anthropology and a DipEd from the University of Sydney. A resident of Goulburn, he commuted to Canberra College for three semesters to complete the requirements for the graduate diploma. He is now teaching literacy skills in the Goulburn community through Outreach funding.

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## Profile on Peggy Sullivan

Dr Peggy Sullivan, Dean of the College of Professional Studies at the Northern Illinois University, will be a guest speaker at the 1984 LAA-NZLA Conference to be held in Brisbane from August 27-31.

Dr Sullivan's qualifications include a Bachelor of Arts from Clarke College Iowa (1950); a Master of Library Science from the Catholic University of America in Washington DC (1953); and a PhD from the University of Chicago which she completed in 1972.

Her very distinguished career began in 1952 with the position of Librarian in Service to Children in Public Libraries in various parts of the United States, a position she held until 1961. Since then, Dr Sullivan has worked in a variety of positions including that of Director of the Knapp School Libraries Project, American Library Association, from 1963 to 1968; and Director of the Office for Library Personnel Resources, American Library Association, from 1973-1974. In addition she has also held many interim and part-time faculty appointments in library education programmes at various academic institutions in the United States. From 1974 to 1977 Dr Sullivan was Associate Professor and Dean of Students at the Graduate Library School, University of Chicago.

An active involvement in professional memberships and societies has been another

## CONFERENCE NEWS

feature of Dr Sullivan's career. In 1970 she was a UNESCO consultant on school libraries in Australia. She has also held numerous positions in the American Library Association, including that of President in 1980-1981. Not surprisingly, Dr Sullivan has been the recipient of many honours in the course of her career; these include being Tangley Oaks Fellow in 1969 and a delegate to the White House Conference on Library and Information Services in 1979.

Dr Sullivan anticipates being in Australia for the Conference and a further two weeks, participating in Continuing Education programmes. She is combining her visit to Australia with travel to IFLA in Nairobi, a hectic schedule which unfortunately means that she will not be able to visit New Zealand.

**LAA-NZLA Conference  
Brisbane, 27-31 August 1984**

## Childrens Book of the Year award

THE CHILDREN'S Book of the Year award has gone to Victor Kelleher for *Master of the Grove*, published by Penguin. The winner receives a Literature Board Award of \$1100.

Highly commended was Eleanor Spence's *The Left Overs* (Methuen Australia), with a Literature Board Award of \$750.

Two titles were commended, receiving Literature Board Awards of \$350 and \$300. These were *Five Times Dizzy* by Nadia Wheatley (Oxford University Press) and *Toby's Millions* by Morris Lurie (Penguin Australia).

This year's winner of the Picture Book of the Year Award was Pamela Allen for *Who Sank the Boat?*. This title was published by Nelson Australia and receives a Visual Arts Board Award of \$1150. Highly commended was *The Train* by Witold Generowicz (Penguin Australia); a Visual Arts Board Award of \$700 is given for this title.

Two picture books were commended – *Tin Lizzie and Little Nell*, by David Cox (Aurora) and *Turramulli the Giant Quinkin* by

## Youth information services

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fairly large, and paragraphs should be short and well spaced (6) the cover should be attractive (7) the directory should fit into a pocket! (approx. 15 x 20 cms).

Other ways of packaging information include videotape and the generation of data base service. Both of these formats have proven to be highly acceptable to young adults, but sadly both are expensive to produce. It would be useful if librarians could produce short segments on youth information on videotape for running in a general area of the library.

## Distribution

Word of mouth – the grapevine – is generally acknowledged as one of the most effective ways of transferring information, if not the most accurate. Talking to the community about what services you are offering on a personal basis and through local radio and press is vital.

Another way is through young people themselves. If they are involved in what you are doing, perceive it as valuable, and have the good will of their peers, they will spread the word better than anything else will.

Dropping off the information and talking about it in places where young people are – schools, pubs, youth centres, at local gigs, is also useful.

To a very large degree, to be effective, information work with youth must be done outside the library.

Finally, if you are doing successful work with youth information, please document it. We all need to know more about effective strategies.

*Rosemary Moon*  
Children's Libraries Consultant  
Public Libraries Division

Dick Roughsey and Percy Trezise, published by Collins. Visual Arts Board Awards of \$350 and \$300 respectively were made for these.

The classification Junior Book of the Year was won by *Thing* (Oxford University Press). The author, Robin Klein, and the illustrator, Alison Lester, each receive Children's Book Council of Australia medals.



**Library Association of Australia**

### GENERAL COUNCIL

**Election of Executive Officers and 1 member of General Council to hold office in 1984 and 1985.**

### CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

The Association's By-laws provide for a General Council consisting of the Executive Officers, the Chairman of the Board of Education, one member appointed by each Branch, and two members appointed by the membership of the Association.

In accordance with Divisions F and H of the Regulations, nominations are now called from financial members of the Library Association of Australia for the following positions:

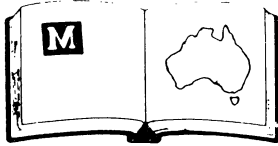
- Vice-President 1984 (President-elect 1985)
- General Secretary 1984 and 1985
- One member of General Council elected by the membership of the Association to hold office in 1984 and 1985.

Candidates and nominators should read the relevant Regulations carefully. Please note that nominations shall be

- in writing;
- signed by two financial members of the LAA;
- accompanied by the written consent of the nominee, who shall supply a curriculum vitae and a statement of professional concerns (each of no more than 100 words).

Nominations must reach the Executive Director, LAA, 376 Jones Street, Ultimo 2007 by 5 pm on Thursday, 1 September 1983.

Susan Acutt  
Executive Director



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