

# ..... News from the Divisions .....

## STATUS OF WOMEN IN LIBRARIANSHIP

To date, the Committee has had a busy year. There has been a highly successful evening with Patricia Glass Schuman (ALA Treasurer and publisher); our involvement in the Darwin conference with the panel session 'Women and the images of Librarianship — a feminist perspective'; as well as keeping up with the sales of *Sharing our words*.

### Patricia Schuman

Patricia Schuman had originally hoped to attend the Darwin conference but unfortunately it clashed with the ALA New York conference. She managed instead to include a short visit to Melbourne in the first week of June between New Zealand and New York!

Patricia addressed a meeting held at the RMIT Union House on feminist issues and American librarianship. As a founding member of the ALA Social Responsibilities Round Table — Feminist Task Force, her involvement in feminism and the social responsibilities of librarians in information services is very committed. She described the beginnings of the Task Force, the structure of the ALA Committee on the Status of Women in Librarianship (celebrating its tenth year), and how these organisations, plus the many State organised women's groups, have effected change in libraries. Depressingly, little has changed, yet too many people have lost the drive to confront the issues of inequity in the profession.

In the three days Patricia visited Melbourne she also addressed students at RMIT, and was interviewed on 'Broads talk' (3CR) and 'Good afternoon' (3LO, ABC). Her energy was inspirational. Both radio broadcasts and the meeting are available on tape. Send a blank tape and we will make a copy for you.

### Coming up

Future activities of the Group include a meeting at the Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne on 14 October on 'Women, Information, databases and the future!' We hope to have a demonstration of the FAMILY database, an explanation for the demise of

BIBLIOWAG, and a description of other information resources.

In conjunction with the 1988 LAA/IFLA conference we are progressing well towards holding a one-day seminar on 'Women and the power of managing information'. The seminar is to be held on Saturday, 27 September, and aims to address the issues of: neutrality of information provision; librarians as information providers (predominantly women); the information deprived (other women); and the associated responsibility of libraries. Notices of interest will soon be distributed, and we are keen to hear from people interested in presenting a paper on these themes.

Incidentally, the LAA intends to make available taped sessions of the Darwin conference as well as the published proceedings, which will capture the interesting discussion that occurred during our panel session.

Finally, our booklet *Sharing our words* is selling fast, so if you want to get a copy, don't hesitate. Send in your order now!

Jinette de Gooijer

## INFORMATION SCIENCE SECTION (NSW GROUP)

### Seminar: Optical Laser Disc Products for Libraries

On 23 July the NSW Information Science Section held a day long seminar on optical disc technology. Professor Brian Garner of Deakin University gave an informative introduction which set the scene. Subsequent presentations reviewing the state of the technology were given by Jim Stevens of Philips Communication Systems, Kim Jelbart of CLSI (Australia) Pty Ltd, and Granville May of the NSW Government Printer. An amazing display of the power of optical discs combined with microcomputers for the sophisticated dissemination of visual/textual information was also presented by Tim Becker and his colleagues of Laser Concepts Management.

The day provided an excellent sample of the possibilities of the new technology and a reminder to those present that information

comes in many forms other than text. The new technology is beginning to address the dissemination of forms other than text and librarians need to keep abreast of these advances.

As this technology is still in its infancy many questions were left unanswered; for example the problems of the proliferation of search software on CD-ROM products. In many cases it appears that software has been lifted directly from the online database environment without any attempt to capitalise on the unique features of the new medium. The products discussed seemed to be aimed at single users. As yet little thought appears to have been given to their impact on libraries whose strength is in networking.

However, the Information Science Section plans to hold a further seminar in 1987 which will hopefully address these questions as well as covering any new advances in this rapidly emerging technology. Seminars such as these provide a valuable forum for librarians to make their needs known to the technologists.

Graham Whitta

## NATIONAL SCHOOL LIBRARIES SECTION

### Darwin AGM

The Annual General Meeting of the National School Libraries Section was held on 2 July 1986, at the Travelodge Motel Darwin.

Both the President's and Hon Treasurer reports were tabled and in the absence of Ena Noel, the IBBY Report was read to the meeting by Mary-Jane Stannus. It was noted that Patricia Wrightson and Robert Ingpen had been honoured by the award of the Hans Christian Andersen Award for this year. A celebration dinner will be held in Sydney on 11 November 1986. It was moved by M J Stannus and seconded by Martha Heeren that a letter be sent to Ena Noel on the award of a MOA to the Queen's Birthday Honours List and that she also be complimented on her excellent report for IBBY for 1986.

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A report by  
MARGARET TRASK  
B.A. (N.E.), M.Lib. (NSW), FLAA

Published September 1986  
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It was agreed at the meeting that the organisation of the national co-ordination of the School Libraries Section for 1987–1988 be invested in the School Libraries Sectional Group of NSW and that consideration be given to the formalising of a meeting of Presidents of all School Libraries Sectional Groups and that General Council be approached for funding in the event of the National Section being abolished.

The Section decided to approach the LAA to assist in the mounting of an Australia-wide campaign to ensure that all schools have constant access to the services of a teacher-librarian and felt that the Australia-wide campaign should also include the encouragement of the overall improvement in the level of teacher-librarian qualifications of those persons employed in that capacity.

## LISPD

The LISPD (Library and Information Services for People with Disabilities) Special Interest Group has held two successful meetings in Sydney so far this year.

The first, in May, in conjunction with the NSW branch of the LAA, heard a very interesting report by Val Moon (Community Services Librarian of the State Library), on her Churchill Fellowship study tour to the USA, Canada and the United Kingdom. Val described some of the new technology she had seen, and emphasised the librarian's role in making sure it was used to the full advantage of people with disabilities.

The second meeting was held in August, at the NSW Society for Crippled Children. A publications display, a tape-slide presentation and a short video all emphasised different aspects of independent living, and the librarian's role in providing information to promote it. There followed an informal discus-

## LOST LETTERS FOUND

A chance conversation on a Sydney bus last year brought to light a series of Australia letters, lost for almost fifty years. Written by the poet and scholar John le-Gay Brereton, the 37 letters were presented to the National Library of Australia recently by Mr Roy Smee, of Lane Cove, in Sydney.

John le-Gay Brereton, a close friend of Henry Lawson, was the Librarian at Sydney University's Fisher Library and, later, the first Professor of English Literature at that University. The letters were written to Hesse Duncan Hall, an Australian historian who spent most of his life abroad, and apart from a break of five years in the early 1920s span the years 1915 to 1932, when Brereton died.

The letters contain comment on the reaction in Sydney to some of the vital issues in the first World War, including conscription, Archbishop Mannix, Billy Hughes and censorship. Others include descriptions of the founding of the Fellowship of Australian Writers and handwritten or typed versions of some of Brereton's poems.

Early in 1939, Duncan Hall gave the letters to Roy Smee, who was a bushwalking friend and student interested in Brereton's work. After his enlistment in 1940, Mr Smee left the letters with Professor E. Holmes who in turn, in 1942, passed them to a lecturer, A. G. Mitchell, later to be Vice-Chancellor of Macquarie University. After his return from active service Mr Smee spent a number of years overseas, and was a delegate to the International Labour Organization and the OECD.

The 1980s found Roy Smee and Professor Mitchell neighbours and acquaintances who occasionally travel into town by bus. During a conversation on one of these journeys last year Professor Mitchell realised that Mr Smee was the owner of the Brereton letters and returned the package to him soon afterwards.

Presenting the letters to the National Library recently, Roy Smee said, 'This story is evidence of how a spark struck in formative years may glow for a lifetime', commenting on his interest in Brereton, kindled first by his high school English teacher, Machin Hall — brother to Duncan Hall.

sion on databases and cooperative information sharing ventures. Alla Kamaralli, the librarian of the Society for Crippled Children has listed a number of references in *ALASLN* and *InCite* from late 1970s to mid-1980s which may be of interest to members of the group. A copy can be obtained from Alla (02) 698 9555 by sending a stamped self-addressed envelope to PO Box 10, Strawberry Hills NSW 2012.

On the national scene, an enjoyable breakfast took place at the LAA Conference in Darwin in July where librarians from all over Australia, interested in services to people with disabilities, were able to meet and get to know one another.

The Second National Conference on Information Systems for Disabled People, will be held at the Disability Information & Resource Centre in Adelaide during 2–3 October. The conference will, among other matters of common interest, discuss the recommendations of a working party on the development of standardised terminology and software.

The final Sydney meeting of the group for 1986 will be at the Special Resources Unit of the Department of Education at Parramatta in late October or early November.

Maureen Wel