

FRONTLINE

Christine Frey

The Tasmanian Branch began 1988 with the task of establishing priorities for the year. As a result of attempts by the Tasmanian State Government to increase local government contributions to funding, a State Library Service Committee of Inquiry was established in late 1987, so the promotion of public library services was an obvious first priority.

I reported to the March meeting of General Council that the Branch had established a Working Party to prepare a submission for the Inquiry into State Library Services, which was to be chaired by John Levett. In early June it was announced that the inquiry was not to proceed and that the funding arrangements for the State Library Service were to revert to the previous arrangement. This involves a 0.25% levy from local government, with the remainder of funds coming from the Tasmanian State Government. The Premier also announced that there was a need to further prune the budget of the State Library, which now represents a meagre 0.99% of the total state budget. Further, he said that the public library service was a Rolls-Royce, which the state could no longer afford.

This kept the Branch officers very busy issuing media releases, writing to the Minister, speaking to reporters for the local newspaper and ABC radio. John Levett and I appeared on the ABC's '7.30 Report' and an article written by John featured in *The*

Mercury (reproduced on front page).

It is obvious that the Government has targeted libraries as non essential and the local public service union (TPSA) and the Branch have spoken out in protest. With state budget preparations for 1988/89 underway it is important that our voices be heard, and loudly.

The Branch's priority this year is to promote public library services, and aside from responding to events we are also:

- preparing a lobbying package, which is intended to provide our 'targets' with information on the Association and the nature of the work of librarians and technicians. We have identified the issue of charging as the most important topic on which to lobby, in the first instance, and we are drawing up a kit with details of how to lobby for our 'advocates', facts and figures on the issue, what to say at interviews, and how to follow up. We are also informing those we meet with about the nature of public library services. We are all fairly new to this business and intend holding roleplaying sessions in order to develop our expertise! This package was finalised at a joint meeting with our Northern Regional Group on 25 June and we hope to approach our 'targets' by the end of July. Wish us success.

- approaching political parties for copies of their policy statements and offering to assist in reviewing them, so we have the best chance of having party statements with which we can work.

- asking for a meeting with the Minister to discuss issues relating to the provision of public library services. He agreed to meet with us to discuss our submission to the inquiry and was amenable to information

exchange meetings from time-to-time. We think that the 'time' is now.

- considering encouraging the establishment of a 'Friends of the Library' group in Tasmania, to provide a focus for support for the State Library Service outside the profession.

Our Membership Officer, Brigitte Russmann has also been lobbying lapsed members, inviting them to return to the fold.

Aside from these fairly time-consuming activities our tradition of new members' dinners continued this year with Alison Crook speaking to a meeting of 50 members on 'Tough times: implications for librarians and library management'. Alison's address was full of useful advice and observations.

The Branch has also begun a local lobbying campaign with regard to FOI legislation. A private member's bill was reintroduced in State Parliament in April by Dr Bob Brown and we are working to increase support for FOI legislation in Tasmania.

In early March a successful continuing education workshop was run in Hobart by John Kaye on the topic of communication. This was very well received but numbers were small, as they are for so many of our continuing education activities. Tasmania looks forward to discussion of the proposal submitted to the March meeting of General Council of subsidising costs for small states and regional groups.

Our Northern Regional Group (NARG) is active and held a successful workshop on the conservation of library materials in April. On 21 April I visited Launceston and spoke with NARG on advocacy and publicity strategies.

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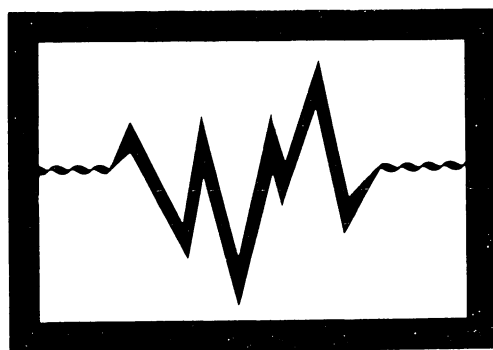
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IN THE NEWS

FOI Spreading . . . at last?

Following the proposed introduction of Freedom of Information Legislation by the Greiner Government in NSW, the Opposition Leader in SA, John Olsen, now appears to be supporting FOI.

The SA Branch will be seeking a meeting with Mr Olsen to convey the LAA's strong support for FOI in all states. John Olsen said, in an address to the Australian Suburban Newspapers Association (reported in the *Adelaide Advertiser*, 28 May) that the availability of most Government-held documents was a fundamental right of a democratic society. 'Having access to information is a sure way of keeping any government accountable'.

Managing hi-tech

Ms Rona Wade, Executive Director of CLANN Limited, has been awarded a NSW Bicentennial Fellowship in Management by the NSW Bicentennial Council. Rona's proposal concerned the management of high technology in a co-operative structure. She will use the \$10,000 Fellowship to visit networks overseas which have integrated systems similar to that of the CLANN network to study how they are managing growth and planning future development.

Nonbook union catalogue

The NLA has decided to produce a Union Catalogue of Nonbook Materials on microfiche on a trial basis in the second half of 1988. If there are sufficient sales to recover costs, there could be a second edition in 1989.

The union catalogue, tentatively entitled NUC:N National Union Catalogue Nonbook Materials is estimated at this point to contain 80,000 entries with about 110,000 holdings. It will occupy about 30 fiche. It will include catalogue entries and locations for cartographic materials, motion pictures and video recordings, sound recordings, film strips, music scores, pictorial materials, slides, transparencies, kits, manuscripts and computer software.

The LAA's Audiovisual Services Committee considers that this important initiative will significantly increase the availability of nonbook materials in libraries in Australia and recommends that libraries seriously consider purchasing a copy when it is released later in 1988.

1989 Professional Development Program

It might seem like a long time to 1989, but if the Association is to offer members a good range of professional development activities next year we should already be thinking about this.

In *InCite* Vol 9 No 5 of 15 April, Twila Herr, Convener of the Association's Professional Development Committee, asked members and Divisions to begin identifying priorities for activities to be included in the national program.

So contact your Divisions now about activities you wish to be offered in 1989. Divisions are to advise the Professional Development Committee now of their priorities, so that a schedule of activities for which tenders will be called can be drawn up by the Committee at its next meeting on 30 June.

Sue Phillips

Membership Services Manager.

LAA Conference Program Highlights

The plenary session of the conference is scheduled for 10.00am — 11.30am on Sunday, 28 August 1988. Entitled 'People, Persuasion and Power — Keys to Professional and Organisational Success', it should be a stimulating and thought-provoking session.

The speakers are Anne Deveson, Director, Australian Film Television and Radio School who will take a media view, Rodney Cavalier, former NSW Minister of Education who will speak from a political point of view and Caroline Taylor, Director, Corporate Vision, who will present the marketing viewpoint. The moderator for the plenary is John Levett, Head, School of Librarianship, University of Tasmania.

Dagmar Schmidmaier

Convener LAA Program Sub-Committee.

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Last, but certainly not least, the Branch held a function on 18 May to honour the recipients of the LAA Student Award. Ms Nicolie Tuan received the Award for the student with the best overall results in the Graduate Diploma in Librarianship course at the University of Tasmania, and Mrs Lyn Reeves received the Award for the best overall results in the Library Technicians Certificate Course at Hobart Technical College. We congratulate Lyn and Nicolie and wish them well in their careers.

Our program for the remainder of the year is filling quickly, with Tom Wilson from the University of Sheffield visiting in August and Ernie di Mattia of Ferguson Public Library, Stamford, speaking on advocacy strategies in early September. With the IFLA/LAA conference in between August and September look particularly busy.

In summary the Tasmanian Branch is finding 1988 a stimulating and challenging year.

Christine Frey

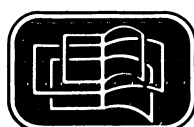
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