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university will be a new organisation and evaluation of automated systems will have to start from scratch, although realistically the choice is likely to be limited to URICA and Dynix.

The distribution of 'central' services and facilities from SACAE among the three universities will present some interesting situations. In merger documentation, as so far proposed, staff will not be compelled to change institutions or campuses against their will. So, for instance, staff in centralised technical services at SACAE Underdale Campus will not be required to move to Flinders University or the University of Adelaide. Flinders and Adelaide will, however, have a legitimate claim for a pro-rata share of the technical services staff to support their mergers with the campuses of SACAE. If voluntary staff transfer is insufficient to meet the need, as appears likely, then financial support will no doubt be necessary to achieve balance. At the administration level there is an argument about physical accommodation at the City campus of SACAE. Part of the space is occupied by central administration and is not therefore seen as City campus space to be automatically handed over to the University of Adelaide.

Issues and problems aside, merger discussions are underway in a positive way. The Flinders/Sturt merger process was successfully launched recently by an informal wine and cheese get-together for the staff of the two libraries. The close cooperative relationship which has developed over many years between the library staff at Flinders and the library staff at the Sturt campus of SACAE augers well for the future of the Flinders/Sturt merger. The Flinders University Librarian and the Sturt Campus Librarian are confident of achieving a successful outcome.

Though less closely associated in the past the other two components of the merger process are also used to working cooperatively and are similarly taking a positive approach to coming events.

Whether these things are sent to try us, challenge us, frustrate us or entertain us, one thing is for certain — there will be very little peace in the higher education libraries in South Australia for the next few years!

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Surviving a building project

Nothing in the librarian's previous experience can really prepare him or her for the shock of a major library building project: To some it is like being pushed onto a roller coaster with a group of complete strangers, to emerge, dazed and reeling, at an unfamiliar destination. Fortunately there are now a number of up-to-date works with which you can fortify yourself. There are new editions of two outstanding works on the planning and design of library buildings: Godfrey Thompson's *Planning and design of library buildings* (London: Butterworth Architecture, 1989) and Ruth A Fraley and Carol Lee Anderson's *Library space planning* (New York: Neal-Schuman, 1989). Only a few years back there was Philip D Leighton and David C Weber's new edition of Keyes Metcalf's *Planning academic and research library buildings* (Chicago: American Library Association, 1986). An now there is a completely new work by an American library building consultant with around 100 building projects under his belt.

Planning library buildings and facilities: from concept to completion by Raymond M Holt, which was published by Scarecrow in 1989, promises to provide 'a source of solid, realistic and functional information which will enable the librarian to participate fully in the facility planning process'. No mean promise, and, upon examination, no mean feat.

Holt really does demystify the necessarily complex planning processes, tracing the progress of a project, and the roles played by the various participants, through needs assessment, seeking funds, writing a brief, selecting a site, choosing a project team and surviving the design, construction and occupation stages. Issues are raised, solutions are suggested, pitfalls are identified, experience is shared.

Forty pages is devoted to a topic which is often taken for granted: how to read a plan, and not just understand it, but analyse it and spot things which a librarian knows won't work. It would take a long time to pick up all the valuable tips which this chapter provides, and during a building project, like on a roller coaster, time flies.

It's a pity that Imperial weights and measures are used throughout this work, and the index could have been better, but you will be able to cope with that, and the unfamiliarity of some of the American building jargon. For the novice, Holt provides an excellent grounding in the challenging processes of planning a new library building. For the more experienced, it is thought-provoking and a good memory-jogger. *Planning library buildings and facilities* by Raymond M Holt was published by Scarecrow in 1989 as no. 9 in the Scarecrow Library Administration Series. It costs US\$39.50. My review copy was supplied by James Bennett Library Services. (ISBN 0 8108 2203 2)

Briefly ...

Koalas, the little Australian we'd all hate to lose by Bill Phillips. At last, a substantial book about koalas for the layperson. Plenty of pictures, of course, but also maps, charts and diagrams, and a very informative text. How the koala came to Australia, the white impact, the Chlamydia problem and future prospects. Good bibliography and index. Nice production. Highly recommended. Published by AGPS Press in 1990 at \$24.95. (ISBN 0 644 09697 7)

Acronyms, initialisms and abbreviations dictionary, 14th edition, was published by Gale Research in late 1989. There are now over 480 000 terms deciphered in this massive work. Familiar to most reference workers, with its three-volume biceps-building format: volume one, which is itself in three parts, with entries arranged by abbreviation. Volume two is an inter-edition supplement (*New acronyms, initialisms and abbreviations*), and volume three is the *Reverse acronyms, initialisms and abbreviations dictionary*. It's come a long way from the 1960 edition which had a paltry 12 000 entries. Acronym coiners have a lot to answer for. What have you been doing, COCOA (Council to Outlaw Contrived and Outrageous Acronyms)? US\$208 for volume one. (ISBN 0 8103 5075 0 (volume one complete); ISSN 0270-4404).