

# FRONT L I N E



Kay Poustie, WA Branch President

It's a sad indictment on us as a profession that we seem to spend much of our precious time on that Australian pastime of knocking our colleagues and our profession when we should all be working towards the goal of alerting the community to what library and information professionals have to offer. A strong, united professional group can always achieve so much more and become a strength in the community.

Unfortunately we seem to have a proclivity towards defining ourselves as 'types' of librarian and branding ourselves — I'm a public, special, schools, academic. While we continue to do this we are also failing to listen to each other in order to learn from the problems we all face and the solutions we reach in our isolation, yet many of the basic issues we face today are the same in all streams of the profession. A recent opportunity to speak to students on issues facing the profession gave me the impetus to identify some of the major issues we face together:

- reduced funding combined with a high demand for materials and services
- performance measures
- award restructuring
- image of the profession
- continuing education for the profession
- education for the profession

Every library manager is grappling with these issues and while solutions will be tailored to the individual library, we should be sharing and listening and using our united talents. Aiming towards solving our problems and then moving to collectively raising the consciousness of the community to the skills of the information professional in this the information age should be our united goal.

Hand in hand with this goes the lifting of the image of ALIA, our professional association. Our move to Canberra has in one sense given us a higher profile politically, yet I believe that we cannot leave the work to Head Office. Raising ALIA's image and status in the community is the responsibility of each Branch and in fact, of each individual in their own working environment. It is important that decision making bodies who govern areas where library and information workers are employed are alerted to the fact of ALIA's existence and where possible that ALIA is represented on them.

Two recent achievements in Western Australia have been the inclusion of an ALIA representative on the Municipal Officer's Association Award Restructuring Working Party and an invitation to Branch President to attend the Western Australian Municipal Association Local Government Week Conference in the capacity of President, with registration fee exemption. In addition, the Branch President and Vice President were invited to make an oral submission to a Committee of Enquiry into the status of the Western Australian College of Advanced Education.

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These three opportunities have given ALIA a voice in areas pertaining to some of the issues facing the profession. Certainly it means that members of the profession are giving up their time to attend these meetings on behalf of ALIA because we do not have Executive Officers in each State. However, who better to represent ALIA than those of us working in the field with the knowledge of the challenges and the opportunities facing us.

A further challenge facing many of us is to take a more active role in our total organisations. Librarians normally operate, not in isolation, but as part of a larger corporation. Many of us tend to see our libraries as the centre of the organisation but we are the only people who see things this way. Until we are prepared to actively take part in our wider organisations our libraries will be ignored and we will be seen as stand-offish and narrow minded and with little organisational loyalty. Yet we have so many skills to offer the total organisation! Most of us are in the people business because we belong to a service industry. Therefore we have communication skills, we can evaluate information, we are creative and often technologically advanced and we have skills which enable us to store and selectively retrieve the information that is required by our organisation to function efficiently. If we use our skills to assist in the management of our total organisation we will find that our image as a profession will be raised as will the organisation's perception of the service we offer. Conversely, most of us can learn from other managers in our own organisation with alternate professional skills or well honed management techniques.

Finally, I come back to my original theme. We must work together and stop publicly and privately criticising and putting down our colleagues. I cannot put this plea any better than in a quote which another colleague has placed over her desk. This quote is from the *Library Association Record* and is not referenced. However the intent is clear:

'Each individual librarian makes a commitment to stop criticising the profession and speaks positively about being a librarian!'

On a totally different note, I'm sure that the members of WA Branch and all Western Australian members would wish me to say that we look forward to hosting our colleagues at the Conference this year and promise a warm welcome to all who are coming to Perth in 1990.



## The New Managing Editor of inCite is Peter Judge



Many members of ALIA will already know Peter. He has a first class honours BA and MA from Cambridge University, and was subsequently a research student there. After 2 years of teaching biology in a London school, he joined the Operational Research group of a steel firm in Birmingham. From there he went to the Science Policy directorate of OECD in Paris, and in 1964 was responsible for setting up the Information Policy Group, which he led for 10 years. He was awarded a Fellowship by the Institute of Information Scientists for this work.

In 1974 he was recruited by CSIRO as Officer in Charge of its new Central Information Library and Editorial Section (CILES) where he remained until this section was split up in 1986. In 1988 he resigned from CSIRO to pursue consultancy activities. These have included analysing the survey of Commonwealth Public Service Libraries and the Department of Veterans' Affairs library reader survey.

He is now managing a project for the Department of Education, Employment and Training, looking at an experimental training module in non-English languages for library students at the University of Canberra, where he is also teaching the Information Dynamics unit in the Centre for Library and Information Studies. He is a project team leader for an AIDAB technical cooperation project setting up an agricultural education information centre in the Nanjing Agricultural University. Currently he is also running visitor surveys for the National Science and Technology Centre.

Peter has been a member of the LAA, then ALIA, since coming to Australia. He was largely instrumental in setting up the LAA Information Science Section, and as the foundation President of the Section served on the LAA Council for 6 years. He was convener of the LAA Future Committee and has been a member of other LAA committees and working parties. He has been involved with the International Federation for Information and Documentation (FID) since 1968 and was a Vice-President of FID and the President of FID's regional Commission for Asia and Oceania, FID/CAO. He has been a member of most of the government committees on national information policy since 1974, and was the Minister of Science's representative on ALIC during the life of that body, from 1982-87. He was a member of the National Commission for UNESCO 1977-84.

Peter can be contacted at the ALIA office on Mondays, Tuesdays and Fridays until further notice.

## ALIA President PhD

Lynn Allen has recently had her PhD conferred, for a thesis entitled *Lives of obscure women: Polyphonic structures and the presentation of women in the fiction of Christina Stead*.

Lynn's thesis examines the fiction of Christina Stead. Her hypothesis is that Christina Stead is a writer creating unique variations of literacy form which make her texts highly structured works of art. Stead's narratives explore a range of issues pertaining to the position of human beings in communities uniformly portrayed as unforgiving of any weakness. Cosmopolitan in her approach to life and literature, she depicts Australian, European, British and American society with equally ironic perception.

The thesis considers how female protagonists are presented, concentrating on discourse analysis to show the interrelationships among the various narrative voices in the texts. The thesis moves to demonstrate how the authorial narrator tends to identify in later works with the female personae.

Lynn pursued a double goal in focusing the narrative analysis on the author's consistent attention to the roles of women: an investigation of Stead's narrative techniques as well as her vision of available social and emotional roles for women. With this twin perspective acting as critical frame the thesis addresses the author's whole published output, with shifting emphasis and detail as considered relevant, and in so doing attempts to fill a significant gap in the research on Christina Stead available to date.



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