

# Front Line



Margaret Strickland  
President, School Libraries Section

in infants, primary and secondary schools, in special schools and in school/community libraries. They work in government and non-government schools. A teacher-librarian may be the sole member of the library staff or a member of a library faculty. I have worked as a teacher-librarian 0.2 time in a small, country primary school and as part of a faculty of 8 in a large, suburban high school.

*...we are concerned that many teacher-librarians are not used to their full potential...*

It takes considerable time for a new teacher-librarian to develop the appropriate skills and professional maturity to be able to balance the interdependent nature of the educational, librarianship and management aspects of the job. And this is often while trying to cope with an

abundance of clerical work, for which so many schools are understaffed. Such understaffing is quite destructive, because it means that other staff and students see the teacher-librarian in a clerical or para-professional role. If you are a teacher-librarian, you must not allow your job to be narrowed to the point, where it is only to 'look after the library' or 'get the resources organised'.

As a professional body we are concerned that many teacher-librarians are not used to their full potential, that their qualifications and experience are often under-valued and the school library marginalised in terms of the school curriculum. Time management is a challenge with which most teacher-librarians wrestle every day to avert this situation.

We are lobbying school administrators and fellow staff to become more involved in working with us to develop programs, which incorporate resource-based learning. We want teachers to make better use of the variety of resources and children's literature in the school library as well as using the range of resources in the wider community. In some States we are already seeing wider use of community resources with the changes taking place

*continued next page...*

How difficult it is to write a Front Line, which purports to speak for teacher-librarians across Australia! We form a large group within the librarianship profession, undertaking a complex and diverse job.

Perhaps I could best describe it as like having one foot firmly planted in librarianship and the other in education, yet having to manage the job as a single entity with librarianship and education necessarily interdependent. The manner in which we manage resources needs to derive from the educational philosophy of the school and the educational role of the library.

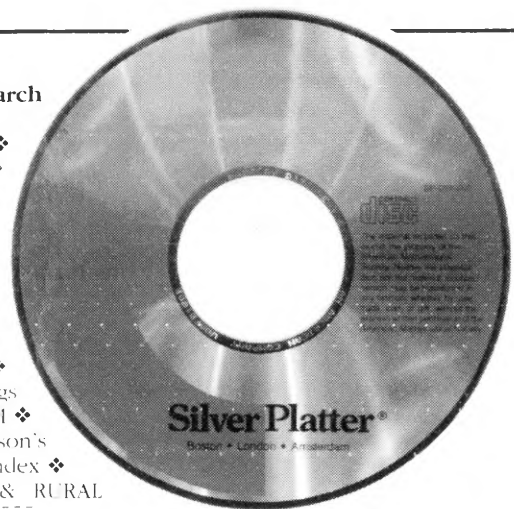
There are teacher-librarians working

## SilverPlatter®

### ALL FOR ONE and ONE FOR ALL!

With Release 2 of SilverPlatter's unique search software, you can now search any one or all of the following leading reference CD-ROM databases.

A-V Online ❖ AGRICOLA ❖ AGRIS ❖ AIDSLINE ❖ Biological Abstracts ❖ Biological Abstracts RRM ❖ CAB Abstracts ❖ CANCER ❖ CHEM-BANK ❖ CLAIMS Patent ❖ COMLINE ❖ CORPORATE & INDUSTRY RESEARCH REPORT (CIRR) ❖ CRIS/ICAR ❖ Cross-Cultural ❖ Disc America-Residential ❖ EconLit ❖ EINECS plus ❖ ERIC ❖ Excerpta Medica (EMBASE): Anesthesiology - Cardiology - Drugs & Pharmacology - Gastroenterology - Immunology & AIDS - Neurosciences - Obstetric Gynecology - Pathology - Psychiatry - Radiology and Nuclear Medicine - The Excerpta Medica Library Service ❖ FSTA ❖ Gale GlobalAccess: Associations ❖ GeoRef ❖ GPO ❖ HealthPLAN ❖ ICONDA ❖ LISA ❖ MathSci Disc ❖ MEDLINE Express ❖ MEDLINE Professional ❖ MEDLINE Standard ❖ Meyler's Side Effects of Drugs (SEDBASE) ❖ NTIS ❖ NURSING & ALLIED HEALTH (CINAHL) ❖ OSH-ROM ❖ PAIS International ❖ PEST-BANK ❖ Peterson's College Database ❖ Peterson's GRADLINE ❖ POPLINE ❖ Predicasts F&S Index plus Text ❖ PsycLIT ❖ Psynex ❖ SEC Online ❖ sociofile ❖ SPORT Discus ❖ TOXLINE ❖ TROPAG & RURAL



Please provide me with further information on CD-ROM Databases in the following areas...

- business  education  food & agriculture  health & safety  
 health sciences  science & technology  social sciences

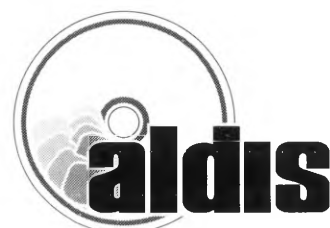
Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Organisation: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_



Aldis Pty. Ltd. (ACN 006 426 679)  
Private Bag 16, PORT MELBOURNE VIC 3207  
Telephone: (03) 647 9724 Facsimile: (03) 647 9799

continued from *previous page*...

in curriculum emphasis in Years 11 and 12. If you hear or see the expression CPPT — Cooperative Program Planning and Teaching — you have a succinct statement about the professional role, which teacher-librarians need to take up.

The time is past for teachers to send their classes to the library for a 'library lesson' each week, so that their students will learn 'library skills'. Children learn to use a library and its resources by having a real purpose for their search or a research need, which is an integral part of their school program. The longer I work as a teacher-librarian, the more I am convinced of the ineffective and downgrading result, which the 'library lesson' has on promoting, resource-based learning, information literacy and children's literature. It reduces the teacher-librarian's potential role in the school and it devalues libraries and librarianship.

This year the National School Libraries Section is working with our colleagues in the Australian School Library Association to produce a school library planning document, which will support teacher-librarians in the development of effective school library programs. We need to replace the outdated 'Books and beyond' and

address the important issues of programs, personnel and facilities. The complexity and diversity of the job make this a daunting task, but it must be tackled. The reference group and the eventual consultants for the project will need to consult widely in order to produce a document, which will be able to support teacher-librarians and school libraries throughout Australia.

---

*There are some wonderful programs being developed in Australian school libraries...*

---

Over the last few years we have seen great developments in centralised cataloguing services with ASCIS — Australian Schools Cataloguing Information Service — available throughout Australia. The ASCIS subject headings have provided a much improved classification system for Australian children. Many automated systems are now available, from which

teacher-librarians may choose. Computerised acquisition, cataloguing and circulation facilities are becoming more widespread. In some larger schools electronic security systems have also been installed. As the economy tightens, teacher-librarians will need to present stronger arguments in favour of such technology; educational budgets are decreasing and we will have to work hard to protect the advances made in this area.

How a school views the role of its teacher-librarian(s) and its library is a great measure of its understanding of children, learning and curriculum development. It is a great indicator of the value, which a school apportions to the concept of life-long learning and to academic and intellectual achievement. If you have children and you are choosing a school for them, don't forget to ask about the role of the teacher-librarian and the school library. Schools which have introduced a whole school approach to developing the school library program love to talk about their initiatives with conviction and confidence. There are some wonderful programs being developed in Australian school libraries and many excellent, hard-working teacher-librarians, who will need the support of the entire library profession in the immediate future. □

---

*Cover story continued from 1...*

generation has been raised, not on text and print as many of us had been, but on moving images on television and in video games. They get their news and information, not from newspapers and other text, but from images: first the picture, then the words. They have come to expect a multimedia presentation.

'Although younger people approach computers with little fear or hesitation, more and more adults are becoming comfortable using them. Some older adults have been hesitant to use the new technologies, because they have had little or no experience with them in their past. At the University of Pittsburgh we have been working with Vintage, a neighbourhood association for older adults, to teach people to use computers. Many of these people are interested in returning to the workforce and they have found that they lack the computer skills needed. We have found that having people of the same generation teach each other, after a special training session, is very effective and more comfortable. It removes some of the fear and provides a peer group positive influence.

The other group that has been helpful is the grandchildren. It seems to be less threatening to have a grandchild teach a

grandparent, because the two generations share a common bond...

'Even though some people years ago predicted a paperless society, we have found that people are actually using more

---

*...there is not the same tactile pleasure that one gets from holding a book.*

---

paper, in part for electronic publishing and photocopying. I think that people still want to hold that document in their hands. With something like Sony's new product, we will be able to carry text with us in compressed form. However, it's not that easy for us to read on small screens and there is not the same tactile pleasure that one gets from holding a book. At the Australian Society of Archivists conference, Peter Manning referred to the pleasures of a new book. He loves books for the sense of being able to hold them, for the content and for the smell of them.

'One of the courses I teach in our school is Ethics in the Information Society — a topic I consider to be extremely important. Many ethical issues are related to the use of information — who gets access to what information, how do we protect privacy, how do we protect intellectual property and many others. This course encourages the students to consider the ethical implications of the library and information work they do and teaches them some of the important questions they need to consider in their work.'



### **Permanent and Contract Library Staff**

- Consultancy services
- Staff training

**FREELANCE LIBRARY & INFORMATION SERVICES P/L**

27 Kasouka Rd, Camberwell  
Victoria, 3124

(03) 813 1925 FAX (03) 882 4274

INC 1/4