

Promoting your library!

Brenda Simpson, Regional Librarian at Mitchelton, Queensland, describes a big outcome to a project run on a shoestring

THE STAFF of the Western Region of the Brisbane City Council Library Service (BCCLS) scored a coup last October when they won an inaugural grant of \$200 from the Queensland Library Promotion Council. They decided that a greater long-term effect would be realised by providing a forum where the actual mechanism of library promotion could be explored. They proposed a two day seminar to train library workers to improve their library promotion.

The grant gave staff the impetus, and provided seed money, to turn the proposal into a reality. The seminar was held at the Mt Coot-tha Botanic Gardens Auditorium on the 12-13 May 1992. Inquiries were received from library workers from Weipa to the Gold Coast, and participants represented school libraries, hospitals, public libraries (both BCCLS and other local shire and city library services), law firms, state government departments, TAFE colleges, etc. Attendance averaged 80-90 each day.

The seminar was officially opened by Jennifer Cram, ALIA Vice President. The keynote speaker, Daniel Ferguson, City Librarian, Altona, Victoria and Vice President of the Library Promotion Council of Victoria, explored concepts which he has utilised to raise the profile of his library service. One of Daniel's most successful promotional activities is 'Friends of the library'. This joint undertaking between the library service and various business organisations within the community has proved profitable for all parties.

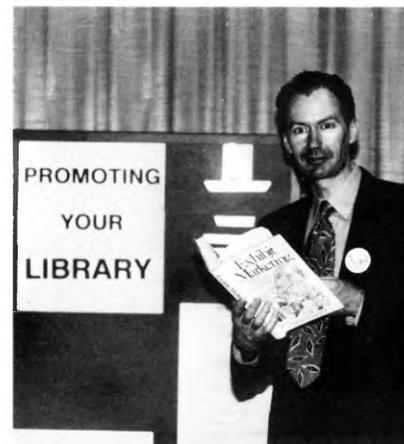
Other speakers included Chris Fitzgerald (Lecturer in Marketing and Management - TAFE); Jane Bieger

(BCC - jobskills Personnel Officer) who discussed motivation in all its forms; Jan Novak (Associate Librarian - QUT) who had conducted a survey on current marketing practices in Queensland libraries; and Diana Rylatt (Librarian - Dept of Health, Housing and Community Services) who confronted everyone with the popular phrase, 'just a librarian...'. Perhaps the most powerful presentation came from Bettina Nissen who held her audience spellbound as storyteller *extraordinaire*. It was really quite difficult to believe her when she said that we could all tell stories as well as she does - with a little practice!

The seminar also offered three workshop electives for the two days, with each providing a theoretical and a hands-on component. These workshops covered the 'how to' of Activities and Events, Advertising and Brochures, Displays and Exhibitions, with participants gaining knowledge from experts in each area, ie. the Display Officer from Brisbane City Council, the Editor of the local newspapers, and a demonstration of desktop publishing.

To break the day, optional extras were offered at lunch time. These included a tour of the Mt Coot-tha Botanic Gardens Library with the Branch Librarian. The library is a special collection library for Council officers, which is unique in being also a full access public lending library. Tours of the gardens were also conducted by the Curator, Ross McKinnon and Volunteer Guides.

Seminar participants completed an evaluation for each day. Their comments were very positive, many asking for other seminars on related



Daniel Ferguson - keynote speaker. City Librarian, Altona, Vic; Vice-President LPC of Victoria

topics.

Under the guidance of Brenda Simpson, Pam Fisher and the staff of the eight libraries which make up the Western Region of the BCCLS, this seminar gave library workers a much needed opportunity to learn about a subject which is often taken for granted. Assistance from the three other Regional Librarians in the workshop sessions is gratefully acknowledged.

Libraries do not manufacture anything, nor do they sell a profit-spinning product, so it is not always easy to find promotional ideas which work. Those who attended this seminar would certainly have gained an insight into library promotion, what to aim for, how to achieve it, and how to evaluate the outcome of the project.

The 'Promoting your library' seminar was successful both in imparting knowledge to colleagues, and in raising the profile of the Brisbane City Council Library Service. The staff of the Western Region certainly value the experience gained in presenting this seminar and look forward to having the opportunity of participating in another in future. ■



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