

4/6 Blackwell's technology evening Overview and demonstrations of new WWW systems: *Electronic Journal Navigator*, *Serials CONNECT* and *Collection Manager for Monographs*. Rydges Capital Hill, Corner Canberra Ave and National Cct, Forrest, 4pm. Contact: Margaret Shoebridge or Rhonda Lelliott, ph (02) 9948 7300, 1800 251 699, shoebridge@blackwell.com.au, lelliott@blackwell.com.au. *RSVP 30/5*.

NSW

1-30/4 Technology Access Program. Web Page Design (2-3/4, 17-18/4, 28-29/4); Excel (11/4); Internet for Teachers (14/4); Internet for Health (23/4); Internet for Reference (30/4). ABN courses. For course outlines and bookings, ph (02) 9273 1550, tap@ilinet.slnsw.gov.au.

• **8/4 NSW TAFE section and NSW Branch.** An evening with Phil Teece, personnel and industrial services manager, ALIA. OTEN, 51 Wentworth Road, Strathfield 2135. 6pm for 6.30pm. Contact: Judy Ryan, ph (02) 9715 8330, fax (02) 9715 8311, judy.ryan@tafensw.edu.au.

8-10/4 Insearch/Knight-Ridder Information seminars. Introductory Dialog (8/4), Company Intelligence (9/4 am), Chemical Searching for Non-Chemists (10/4 am). Sydney contact: (02) 9212 2867, krinfo. aus@uts.edu.au.

• **9/4-5/11 NSW Schools section Committee meeting dates.** Leichhardt Primary School, Joint Council Rooms. 7pm. (9/4; 7/5; 2/6; 15/7; 6/8; 8/9; 14/10; 5/11). Contact: Andrew Barber, ph (02) 9519 1544, fax (02) 9519 1657.

• **16/4 South Coast Regional group reactivating meeting.** Wollongong City Library Theatre, Ground Floor. 5.30-7pm. We invite you to come and network with colleagues in the region and contribute ideas for future meetings. Dinner to follow at the International Centre. Members/non-members welcome. RSVP: Helen Mandl, ph (042) 21 4637 or helen_mandl@uow.edu.au.

• **17/4 NSW Special section.** *International Special Librarians' Day breakfast* 7.30am Continental breakfast at Christensens, 45 Philip Street, Sydney. Two speakers. For further details contact: Jackie Slee, ph (02) 9229 1317, fax (02) 9223 5002 or Christine Benneian, ph (02) 9257 7118, fax (02) 9257 7756. *RSVP 14/4*.

• **18/4 NSW CYSS** *Boys and Books*.

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The very last word on the 96 Biennial Conference

A report on the conference from Anastasia Govan

Librarians were 'Reading the future' at the celebration of 100 years since the 1896 Library Association meeting in Melbourne at the World Congress Centre in October 1996. Warren Horton introduced the conference proceedings by illustrating the developments in the profession since 1896. Of particular interest was a picture of 1896 delegates indicating a male domination of the profession — it was very apparent to me that the 1996 delegates were predominantly female, professional, and no longer represented the thick glasses, bun and tweed skirt stereotype.

The conference structure was divided into 'Solution sessions' (four separate panels in different locations simultaneously presenting topics with time allocated for discussion), 'Plenary sessions' (single guest speakers delivering topics), a debate (by non-librarians), special groups and section meetings and a large trade exhibition of ninety-seven active displays.

Min Min Chan (director, library of the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology) was one of four international speakers. She described the electronic information delivery emphasis of the library. Users can surf the internet, access abstracts from networked CD-ROMs, print full-text journal articles and view 20 000 pages of scanned lecture notes from the University network. Problems encountered in providing such access to technology have included holding twenty-nine training sessions for students on search techniques per month, negotiating the holding of back copies of electronic journals and subscribing to printed and electronic journal titles simultaneously because the on-line format is up to six-months behind publication of the printed format.

Colin Baker's (ISA Australia) presentation described the inflexibility of legal tender documents and the necessity of libraries to ask many questions of tenderers while not using the tendering processes to identify the available products. In solution session B2 John Nieuwenhuizen (24 hours) and Paul Mercieca (Informit) argued that the current copyright laws were restrictive as they dictate creativity (due to certain subjects and formats of writing selling better than others) and that abstracting services are expensive (due to producers individually negotiating the cost for using article abstracts). Janette

Wright (State Library of New South Wales) offered an alternative view; arguing that intellectual property resides with the author of any format and that income should be derived from creativity.

Many questions were generated after the solution session 'Income generation from entrepreneurial services'. Sheena Cuthbert (State Library of Victoria) described the supply of documents related to the Victorian Certificate of Education syllabus on a cost recovery basis to subscribing schools. Janice Nitschke was the most motivating of the session by illustrating that 'facilitation of the preservation, sharing and equitable access to information and resources' can be achieved whilst generating income through the use of information technology by small, regional public libraries such as the one at Millicent. The library will charge dial in access to the internet for community users, develop a telecommuting centre (based on internet access and charges), charge for use of scanners, coloured photocopier and homepage creation for businesses and development of corporate libraries for small to medium sized enterprises lacking finances to establish their own library.

The conference was an excellent professional developmental exercise for me as networks, trends, library building trends and agency products could be sampled simultaneously. Reflecting upon the value of the conference I found that personal contact with suppliers and ability to see online subscription services by new companies to the Australian market (such as Swets) was invaluable. The environment of the conference was very professional and business orientated; portraying a positive status for the library profession. Visits to the State Library of Victoria, the Ballarat Mechanics Institute and the new Ballarat Public Library building provided stark contrasts in service, buildings, preservation and future developments.

On reflection, there were also three negative aspects to the conference. These were the lack of sessions catering to librarians beginning their careers, the persistence of stereotyping during the debate and the fact that many papers did not appear in the conference proceedings. I thank the Northern Territory Branch of ALIA for making funding available to me to attend such a professional development exercise. ■