

Spiderman celebrates Australian Library Week

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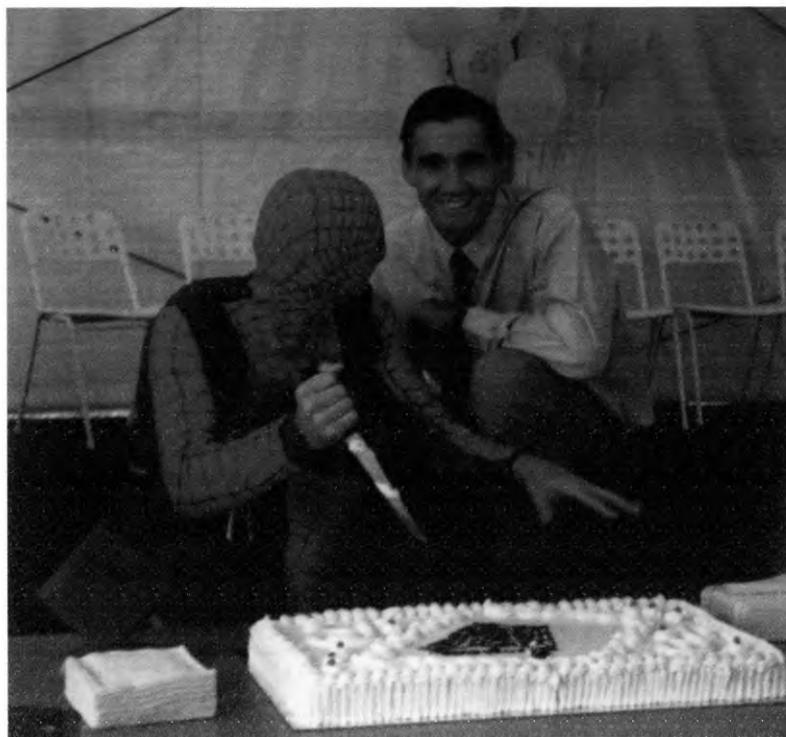
With an Olympian and a superhero overseeing the activities, the Queensland launch of Australian Library Week on the Sunshine Coast was a guaranteed success. After more than a week of rain, even the weather co-operated and the launch was held in the sunshine on Tuesday 6 May at the Sunshine Plaza Riverwalk stage in Maroochydore. Local Channel 7 sports reporter, Justin Veivers was the master of ceremonies and did an excellent job of praising the diversity of services provided by libraries. Olympic Gold medallist and successful Ironman competitor, Clint Robinson, delivered the keynote address to a crowd of approximately one-hundred people. Clint captured the attention of young and old alike as he spoke of the benefit that he has gained from libraries. Even with a busy training schedule, Clint manages to use his library not only for recreational reading but also for research. Clint told the audience of his research into the life and mysterious death of one of Australia's greatest athletes, Phar Lap.

At this point, all attention was directed skywards as Spiderman abseiled from the adjacent clock tower with a laptop computer donated by computer companies, Future and Toshiba, to launch the Sunshine Coast Australian Library Week Web site. Following the presentation of the Queensland Library Promotion Council grants and awards, Clint and Spiderman served cake. Invited guests, shoppers, and the media were then entertained by a local barbershop chorus, as they strolled among ten different library displays, including free Internet demonstrations provided by Access One.

The Sunshine Coast built on the national theme to reflect the region's relaxed lifestyle, 'Libraries a web of information for living and leisure.' This was a true community effort that recognised and promoted the diversity of libraries on the Sunshine Coast. Representatives from public, school, and academic libraries all participated in the planning and launching of Australian Library Week.

All participating libraries offered a range of special events during the week. Some of the highlights included: a literary lunch with Venero Armanno,

one of Australia's hottest new writers; a free parent seminar with professional storyteller John Shields; the launch of the SunNet virtual Web site; CoastLines, an art exhibition at the Sunshine Coast University Library Gallery; and the publication of a regional library directory. Local computer company, Future and computer supplier, Toshiba demonstrated their support for libraries by generously donating a Toshiba laptop computer as part of the Australian Library Week festivities. The computer was on display throughout the launch day at the Sunshine Plaza. More than 5000 people entered the free draw for the laptop simply by visiting their favourite library and completing a ballot. The draw for the computer took place at the final event of the week, a literary evening held at the Sunshine Coast University Library Gallery, on Friday 9 May. Brisbane authors, Mary-Rose MacColl and Robbin Lappan entertained more than seventy people at the gala event. Ms MacColl's first novel, *No safe place*, was runner-up in the 1995 Australian/Vogel Literary Award. She spoke with great humour on the 'Writer and the library' and read significant passages from her first novel. Ms Lappan gave the audience a pre-



Let them eat cake! Spiderman with ironman Clint Robinson at the official Australian Library Week launch on the Sunshine Coast

view of her first book, *Along came the sky*, due to be launched at the Brisbane Writer's Festival in September. With good authors, a wine and cheese reception, an art exhibition, the draw and presentation of a laptop computer (won by a thirteen-year-old boy who entered at his local high school library in Gympie), all held in the award winning new library, this event was a true crowd pleaser and a fitting end to the week long celebration of Australian Library Week.

Local media coverage of Australian Library Week was positive. There were at least nineteen print articles on the week's events including two major features — a full-page feature on the day of the launch and a three-page feature in the Sunday edition of the local newspaper. In addition, local television station, Channel 7, covered the launch and three radio interviews aired during the week of the launch. Hosting the launch, was a great co-operative effort among local libraries and gave all libraries on the Sunshine Coast the opportunity for further promotion. ■