

## ACT

• **4/6 ACT UCRLS section.** *Margy Burn*, assistant director-general NLA, will talk on recent and projected developments for Australian collections at the NLA, 4th Floor Conference Room, NLA, 12:30–1:30pm. All welcome. Inquiries: Nancy Clarke, UCRLS secretary, ph 02 6209 1117, n.clarke@signadou.acu.edu.au.

• **5/6 APSIG Travellers' Tales.** *The speakers will be Jennifer Nicholson, Susan Woodburn and Marie Sexton*, on recent conferences and research on Pacific languages. Please note early starting time: 12–1pm. Light refreshments will be served prior to the 12pm start. Contact: Marie Sexton, ph 02 6262 1519, msexton@nla.gov.au.

• **7/6 ACT Special Librarians section.** *Librarians' libations:* all are most welcome at the Casino Canberra, from 5:30pm, for something totally different! Contact: Susan White, ph 02 6205 0391, Susan.White@act.gov.au.

• **13/6 ACT Branch.** *Council meeting.* 4th Floor Conference Room, NLA, 5:30pm, all welcome. Contact: Julie Ward, branch secretary, phone: 02 6262 1526, jward@nla.gov.au.

• **18/6–8/10 PEARLS.** *Coffee, cake and conversation*, all retired librarians welcome, and any intending to retire soon. Backbenches, Old Parliament House, 2:30pm. 18/6, 13/8, 8/10. Contact: Jon Prance, ph 02 6255 1857, prance@c031.aone.net.au.

• **23/7 APSIG** will host a lunchtime talk by *Professor Subbiah Arunachalam of the M S Swaminathan Research Foundation*, Chennai, India, at a local Indian restaurant. More details next month. Inquiries: Jeanette Regan, APSIG convener, jeanette.regan@anu.edu.au.

• **10/8 ACT Branch** *Mid-winter dinner and prize giving.* Put it in your diary now! The Branch Mid-winter dinner and prize night will held at Café Rocco in the Australian Geological Survey Organisation building at Symonston. *Definitely not to be missed!*

## NSW

• **4/6–3/12 NSW Information Specialists Division.** *NEWSTEXT.COM After5 Club*, speaker: Alan Farrelly. State Library of NSW, level 11, 5:30 for 6pm. \$5 cover charge. First Monday of every second month: 4/6, 6/8, 1/10, 3/12. *Bookings essential: limit 30 people:* Rosemary McLauchlan at r.mclauchlan@securities.edu.au or Elizabeth Swan, ph 02 9371 0300, infoedge@ozemail.com.au. See website at <http://www.alia.org.au/sections/infspc/> and e-list at <http://www.alia.org.au/e-lists/alinet.lists.html> for details.

• **19/6 NSW Branch.** *Council meeting*, all welcome. Coles Room, Level 11, State Library of NSW, Macquarie Street, Sydney, 6pm. *RSVP for catering purposes to:* Jo-anne Fuller, local presence co-ordinator, ph 02 9906 6000, fx 02 9906 5987, jojo1@ozemail.com.au.

• **22/6 NSW CYSS section.** *Pre-Bookweek Extravaganza.* Burwood Council Chambers, Conder Street, 6pm. Contact: Susan Campbell, ph 02 9911 9999.

**29/6–20/7 Indexing workshop.** (4 days — 29/6, 6/7, 13/7, 20/4). University of New South Wales, School of Information Systems, Technology and Management. Contact: Maureen Henninger, ph 02 9385 7128, fx 02 9662 4061, M.Henninger@unsw.edu.au, <http://cpd.sistm.unsw.edu.au>

• **17/7 NSW Branch.** *Council meeting*, all welcome. Coles Room, Level 11, State Library

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# Obituary: Josephine McGovern

## Parliamentary librarian

Josephine McGovern was born in Camperdown, Victoria on 14 January 1924 and while she spent most of her life away from Camperdown she always maintained close connections with that community. She first left Camperdown to undertake secondary school studies as a boarder at St Ann's College at Warrnambool and this was followed by primary teacher training at the Teacher's College at the University of Melbourne. After short teaching appointments in Camperdown, Cobden and Swan Hill she returned to the University of Melbourne where she graduated Bachelor of Arts in 1949. Then followed three years teaching at Terang High School during which time Josephine completed a Diploma of Education by correspondence

In early 1953 at the age of 29, Josephine McGovern resigned from the Department of Education ending a promising teaching career. She sailed on the Otranto to London and was there for the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II. One of the many highlights of this trip was a fourteen week tour of the Continent with friends in an old Austin London Taxicab fondly known as *Elegance*. She returned home on a French ship assisting her passage by teaching English to intending migrants.

On her return to Melbourne Josephine obtained a teaching appointment at Swinburne Technical College but soon took the opportunity to move across to the college library. There was then an appointment at the State Library of Victoria during which time she studied part-time to obtain the Registration Certificate of the Library Association of Australia and in 1958 she was appointed female assistant in the Library of the Parliament of Victoria.

Josephine was the first female professional appointed to the staff of the Library of the Parliament of Victoria. At that time there were no female MPs. The Parliament of Victoria was a man's world with almost no room for women and by 1970 when Josephine was appointed the librarian it had changed little (one female Member!). This was the first female parliamentary librarian appointment in Australia. It was a difficult environment for a woman but she succeeded against the odds, earning the respect of Members. Always addressed as Miss McGovern by the staff she was affectionately known as Josie behind her back. Among many achievements she was responsible for commencing the rationalisation of the collection with the new Monash and LaTrobe Universities being the beneficiaries, the appointment of the first research officers to the library staff and for overseeing the superb facsimile reprint of William Strutt's *Victoria the Golden* in 1981. During this time she



*Josephine McGovern*

was an active member of the Library Association of Australia, the Association of Parliamentary Librarians of Australasia and the Australian Society of Indexers. Josephine still found time to return to the family property at Camperdown to cook for the shearers at shearing time.

During her time at the Parliament of Victoria she continued to travel. Josephine loved to visit relatives in the United Kingdom and also made trips to America, Canada, Russia, China, Japan, the Middle East, India, Nepal and Turkey. She was planning another trip later this year hoping to include Portugal for the first time. Her fondness for travel and her commitment to the Roman Catholic faith is evidenced by her attendance at three consecutive performances of the Oberammergau Passion Plays that are only performed every ten years.

Retirement in 1986 provided the opportunity to pursue, even more vigorously, her interests in the arts, community activities and golf. She continued her long-term association with the University of Melbourne as a committee member of the Convocation Committee, the Graduate Union, the Graduate Association and Graduate House. Josephine was a member of the Lyceum Club, Soroptimists, Dromana Ladies Probus, Mornington Peninsula Regional Gallery and a life member of the National Gallery of Victoria. She was also an active member of three golf clubs. Josephine enjoyed good health until her sudden death at home on 2 April 2001. She is buried in the Camperdown cemetery.

**Bruce Davidson, Victorian Parliamentary librarian and Jennifer Knox, niece**