

The Australian section of IBBY and its future

IBBY — the International Board on Books for Young People — is an organisation found in some 65 countries around the world. It is strongly represented in Europe (its secretariat is in Switzerland) and South America, but it is found in all other continents as well — including Australia. Its mission is to promote international understanding through children's books and to raise the profile of children's literature throughout the world. To further these aims, it publishes a scholarly journal, *Bookbird*; holds a biennial congress (this year's is currently under way in Cape Town); awards the Hans Christian Andersen medals for outstanding writing and illustration for children; co-ordinates the Asahi award for advances in literacy; as well as being involved in other initiatives.

The Australian section of IBBY has been in existence since 1962. For most of the more than forty years of its existence, Ena Noël convened the section; after she stepped down a decade ago, Juliana Bayfield took over. For the last several years, I have been its president. The current role of the section is limited to awarding the biennial Ena Noël Award for Encouragement to a young (under 35 years of age) writer or illustrator of Australian children's books: the current award-winner is Alyssa Brugman, with Sonya Hartnett and the late Steven Woolman amongst earlier winners.

However, the section has fallen on rather hard times. I have little time and no staff — and only a tiny committee to assist me in my efforts to keep the section afloat, much less to raise the profile of the organisation in this country. Unlike most European countries, where IBBY is

the dominant children's literature organisation, in Australia the Children's Book Council of Australia reigns supreme. Furthermore, as IBBY locally falls under the umbrella of ALIA — which generously pays its (not insignificant) annual dues and other expenses — all office-bearers in the Australian section must be members of ALIA.

My fear is that, when I relinquish my position in two years (after the Beijing congress), there will be no more Australian IBBY. In writing this brief outline of the organisation and its local problems, my hopes are three-fold: to form a strong national committee; to ensure the survival of the section after my departure; and to raise its profile on a national level.

If you would like to be involved, please contact me by e-mail john.foster@unisa.edu.au, ph 08 8302 4545 or by post University of South Australia, St Bernards Road, Magill, SA 5072.

John Foster



Library leadership

8th Aurora Leadership Institute

At the request of our New Zealand colleagues, the closing date for nominations to attend the 8th Aurora Leadership Institute have been extended to 15 October. The same courtesy is being extended to Australian applicants. The 8th Aurora Library Leadership Institute will be held at the Thredbo Alpine Village, New South Wales from 16 to 21 February 2005.

The Institute's mission is to assist future leaders in the library and associated cultural and information industry to maximise their leadership skills and potential. This is done through a combination of experiential learning, group and individual exercises, and by working with a strong team of senior and experienced Australian and New Zealand mentors. The Institute program explores leadership concepts including vision, risk-taking, creativity, communication, and styles of leadership.

Nominations are sought from individuals with leadership potential and an ability to share with others their vision and enthusiasm.

Details at <http://alia.org.au/aurora/aurora.html> — follow the link to information for applicants.

The Institute takes 32 participants, and it is expected that there will be strong competition for places. Nominations close 15 October 2004.

EBSCO Information Services is the principal sponsor of the Aurora Leadership Institute. Sponsors include the National Library of Australia and the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA).

Participation in Aurora will accrue points for ALIA members participating in the ALIA Continuing Professional Development (CPD) scheme. ■

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