

# Volunteer in the spotlight



Maureen O'Shea as caricatured by children's illustrator Terry Denton

ALIA Children's and Youth Services (Qld) began in 1996, aiming "to form a Queensland section ... which will encourage better networking between the two professional groups: Teacher-librarians and Young People's librarians ... oriented towards a regional and local area focus."

The group has held many successful seminars on themes that explored issues relevant to the region, specifically partnerships that make the services stronger for children and young people.

Maureen O'Shea is the convenor.

## Why do you enjoy volunteering for the library profession?

Librarians are such passionate and committed professionals. While our day-to-day work may have frustrating and challenging moments, the opportunity to meet and network with peers is what makes ALIA groups worthwhile. Although distance and time make meeting in person a challenge, we recognise the value of exchanging ideas and concerns through the online networks we have developed. Professional development is the constant focus, and we are currently investigating ways to employ online methods of delivering PD opportunities for members.

## What are three things you'd like us to know about you?

I live in a 'luxury cabin' with unfettered views of lake, trees, and mountains. I used to be young and enthusiastic – now I'm just enthusiastic. I have a serious problem with being serious.

## How do you ensure balance between your work, volunteering, and home commitments?

I find leaving everything to the last minute works. Everything gets done then. Seriously though, all these things are handled by having a very cooperative family and a positive set of work colleagues. We've all learned to 'go with the flow'.

## If you could have your ideal role in the world, what would it be?

The most satisfying role to me is one that provides opportunities to make a difference for people, whether students with assignment deadlines, children seeking a good read, seniors becoming tech savvy in order to write their memoirs...OR sitting on the verandah of the above-mentioned luxury cabin, ordering drinks and food.

## Which kinds of libraries have you worked in?

I have almost specialised in 'beginner' libraries – Colleges of Advanced Education sprang up in Queensland in the late 60s, and that's where I started. I have since worked for public libraries, big and small, (including the setup of one of Canberra's major branches), National Library of Australia (briefly), University and TAFE libraries in SE Queensland, a one-person library, and even a small primary school library. As a sideline to some of my university work, I also worked as course consultant with faculty staff beginning a new university.

## What are you currently reading?

*Dizzy* by Cathy Cassidy (recommended by young girls in our library). Sonya Hartnett's *Butterfly*, read by Rebecca Macauley – audio version in the car on the drive to work – a brilliant combination of beautiful writing and sensitive reading. *The literacy wars: why teaching children to read and write is a battleground in Australia* by Ilana Snyder. Sadly, this is on the bedside table currently. Do I have a life outside libraries?

## What do you currently do for a crust?

Currently working at Noosa Library, now part of Sunshine Coast Regional Council after council amalgamations in 2008. I specialise in children's and youth services.

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# Professional development

## Invest in yourself: funding your own professional development

The Global Financial Crisis (GFC) may be an opportunity to rethink your approach to your career. In times of uncertainty, with the possibility of redundancy looming, investing in your own education is a wise approach to recession-proofing your career. Maintaining and increasing your skills not only indicates to your existing employer your worth but also any future employers. What can you write on your résumé or CV that indicates your skills are current?

If you are working for an organisation that has had to reduce expenditure on staff development, a serious option to consider is paying your own way. Take advantage of ALIA membership rates to undertake online or attend courses and conferences; fully use the taxation implications of self education expenses. Many employers will come half way by accepting time attending workshops and courses as work time when you have paid the registration fee. Flex time credit may be negotiated. ALIA also negotiates free places at conferences. A well-written application may provide you and your organisation with professional development benefits.

Joining the ALIA Professional Development scheme is an effective way of tracking the maintenance and enhancement of your skills beyond your initial professional qualification, and the use of the post-nominals (CP) and the distinction of Associate Fellow indicate that you take your professional development seriously. <http://www.alia.org.au/education/pd>

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## Don't miss out on the last two FOLIOz courses for 2009

Send in your registration today!

<http://www.alia.org.au/education/pd/workshops/>

### Managing for service quality (MSQ)

Running Monday 24th August–Friday 9th October 2009

This course aims to introduce participants to the idea of managing for service quality and its related concepts, including

- Defining the concept of managing for service quality;
- Measuring and monitoring service quality in their own organisation; and
- Maintaining the quality of their library and information services, with a view to achieving service excellence.

### Maximising the impact of your service (MAXIM)

Running Monday 30th November 2009–Friday 22nd January 2010 (including a two-week break 21st December–4th January)

This course aims to equip you with the skills and knowledge required to successfully maximise the impact of your service and to effectively evaluate this impact, including

- Defining the concept of maximising impact as it relates to delivery of information and library services;
- Identifying key user groups; and
- Assessing and evaluating the needs of users.

For further information or enquiries, please email [pd@alia.org.au](mailto:pd@alia.org.au) or phone 02 6215 8216.