

A LITTLE BIT OF LOVE GOES A LONG WAY

February 14 was Library Lovers Day across Australia. Every year, libraries find new ways to celebrate and 2011 was no different, as these reports show. First, there were the cakes, then there were the competitions. And then there was a wedding. How romantic can you get?



Two of WA's regular Library Lovers, the Chamberlain sisters with Town of Victoria Park's treasured library lovers hearts collection.

Over in WA at the Town of Victoria Park Library, Library Lovers Day is a two week affair.

This year, our two week Library Lovers event started with Sara Foster sharing with us her journey as an author. We put up special booklist listing all the books we love to read and even the children's storytime sessions had the love of books and libraries as a theme.

We also continued our Library Lovers Week competition, through which we invited library lovers to tell us why they love libraries by filling in one of our cut-out red hearts.

In 2007 our competition received 20 entries, this year we received 112 hearts, all filled with heartfelt thanks and appreciation of the library services. We had 51 people who loved to visit us because of our wide range of facilities and services, 45 who enjoy the wide range of reading materials and 32 told us they have attended our monthly programs and would come back for more. And 40 wrote us positive notes about the helpful and friendly staff in our library. The response to this competition was overwhelming and the staff members were constantly cutting out for more paper hearts to meet the demand.

Torann Evans and Hoi Ng

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And at Central Murray Regional Library, they really raised the bar this year with their very own Library Lovers Day wedding, working with their local newspaper to create an unforgettable and very romantic day for everyone.

In 2011 we wanted to step it up and make the whole month of February one of romance, style and elegance.

The library staff had put together a beautiful display of wedding gowns and mementos, dating from the 1950s through to the current day. As we started to discuss what activities we would have on the day, one staff member said, "we need a wedding."

When the laughter subsided some of us realised it wasn't as silly as it sounded.

We rang our local newspaper, *The Pastoral Times*, and asked for their help with an editorial, seeking any community member that may be interested in getting married or renewing their wedding vows on Library Lovers Day. I think everyone thought we had lost the plot – but the community were talking about the Deniliquin Library, so what more could we want?

We were approached by several marriage celebrants wanting to participate and a wedding co-ordinator wanting to decorate the library – they all saw it as a good publicity campaign, but still we had no bride and groom.



Ido: Karen and Roger Barnes renew their vows on Library Lovers Day at Central Murray Regional Library.

Finally, with just a few days left before Valentine's Day, local couple Karen and Roger Barnes, who will be celebrating their ruby anniversary in June this year, approached us and asked if they could renew their wedding vows in the library.

The news travelled like wild fire, with radio station and newspapers wanting interviews with library staff and our loving couple. Suddenly our mobiles were running hot.

We had a wedding to organize - flowers, cake, champagne, the works!

While all this started out as a library promotion we knew this was a very special day for Roger and Karen. Local wedding coordinator Peata Smith came to lend a hand and transformed the library into a romantic setting while our manager made and decorated a wedding cake, unfazed by her lack of a kitchen at the time due to renovations at home.

When Library Lovers Day dawned, staff were excited (to say the least) as flowers arrived for the bride's bouquet, glasses tinkled as they were arranged for the guests and love was in the air.

Celebrant Murray Druitt officiated at the ceremony with 20 close friends and family in attendance and many community members listening in when the couple said, "I will". There were a few chuckles when Karen and Roger forgot which finger to put the rings on before they were once again declared husband and wife.

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