

BOOK REVIEWS

Knitting for feminists

Sharing our words: a select list of feminist writings Status of Women in Librarianship Special Interest Group. Sydney: Library Association of Australia, 1985. 44pp. A\$5.95. ISBN 0 86804 035 5.

The ideas of feminist writers have revolutionised many women's lives. Women have earned, both through sharing their experiences with each other and through learning to make sense of those experiences in feminist, rather than in patriarchal terms, to genuinely value themselves for the first time. Yet many women are deprived of this experience because their network of friends is not familiar with, or open to, feminist thought.

Many women who would like to become more conversant with the ideas of feminist thinkers are not sure where to turn, and enrolling in university courses is often of little help in this regard, because feminist thought still very much on the margins of what are usually white male debates. Until such time as feminist thought is included in mainstream curricula, books like *Sharing our Words* are an invaluable aid both to individuals who wish to extend their understanding of their own experiences through feminist thought and for groups of women who wish to undertake together a systematic study of the literature.

The headings under which the select list of findings is compiled are very useful: feminist thought and theory, Aboriginal women, the arts, health and wellness, history, motherhood and the family, peace and war, psychology, race issues, sexuality, spirituality and religion, violence against women, women's issues, work and women, and young women are central areas of concern in feminist thought. Each of the books listed under each of these headings is reviewed in such a way that the reader can readily see where it fits in the feminist scheme of things and whether it is relevant to their own experience and thinking. The reference section, the lists of periodicals and of useful bookshops gives readers the necessary information to extend their competence beyond this select list.

Sharing our Words provides an invaluable starting point for would-be feminists or readers of feminist literature. It also performs an important action in drawing women's words together. Women's words are so easily marginalised, not noticed, not heard, forgotten. Each act of knitting back up the fabric of women's lives is a vital, even heroic achievement.

Bronwyn Davies

Senior Lecturer in Education
University of New England, Armidale

Libraries of Sydney revisited, revisited

Libraries of Sydney 1985 compiled and edited by Ralph S. Reid. Sydney: Library Association of Australia, 1985. 236pp. \$22.50 (15.00 to LAA members). (ISBN 0 86804 095 5)

It is now seven years since Alan Bundy produced his *Libraries of Sydney*, a 90-page excursion into academic, special and public libraries, modelled on the very successful *Libraries of Melbourne*. In the introduction to his 1979 work, Bundy suggested that some

NSW-based organisation might accept the challenge of producing a new edition. That gauntlet has now been taken up by the Library Association of Australia and Ralph S. Reid, a painstaking and thorough librarian and technical writer.

Reid has more or less followed the approach of the earlier edition, attempting to cover as comprehensively as possible public, special and academic libraries. School libraries are excluded, as are some 'special-format' collections (such as photographic libraries) and resource collections of ethnic associations (a pity, that). Entries include street and postal addresses, phone, telex, fax and document exchange numbers, hours of opening, collection size and inter-library loan policy. New features are brief notes on facilities for disabled people, network membership (for example, CLANN, GRATIS and HEMLOC) and online information retrieval services used.

As with its predecessor, some attempt is made to describe the subject coverage of particular libraries. Based as it is upon questionnaire responses, this is not always satisfactory, particularly in the case of larger libraries — without embarking on a mini-Tauber Report, it's hard to resolve this problem. Reid quotes the subject coverage 'as stated by individual libraries' and provides a single-hit 'collection coverage guide'. Bundy's work, you may remember, was more ambitious, with a 20-page subject guide. Despite its occasional unevenness, Bundy's guide, used judiciously, gives more leads than Reid's.

A useful feature of the Bundy edition was a listing of public libraries by suburb, which does not appear in the Reid's edition. This was one of the features of Bundy's edition which would have enhanced its appeal to the general user. I hope that future editions of *Libraries of Sydney* will reinstate this feature, (if space demands, perhaps at the expense of the lists of document exchange, telex and facsimile numbers).

All in all, *Libraries of Sydney 1985* lives up to one's expectations of its publisher (which, surely not from modesty, omits itself from the title page) and is a worthy successor to Bundy's pioneering work. It is an essential purchase for all NSW libraries and for major interstate reference collections.

David J. Jones



LAA SABRANCH COUNTRY CONFERENCE 86

The South Australian Branch's annual country conferences have proved very successful as a way for librarians and library technicians from the metropolitan area to meet country colleagues and share experiences. The programme for this year's conference focuses on three major themes — management, distance education and school community libraries. Specific aspects of these topics were suggested by librarians and external students in the west of the state who responded to the needs survey sent out by the conference organising committee.

Accommodation will be arranged at a local motel at a cost of \$30-40 per night. Morning and afternoon tea and lunch are included in the registration fee. A conference dinner, to be paid for separately, is being organised on Friday night. Transport from Adelaide will be coordinated by the committee as far as possible.

Venue: Civic Centre, Mackay Street, Port Augusta SA 5700

Time: 9 am Friday, 3 October – 3 pm Saturday, 4 October, 1986

Contact: Anne Hazell (08) 227 3241 (Convener)

Cynthia Collins (086) 42 3971 (local arrangements)

Cost: LAA members \$35.00; non-members \$42.00. Daily rate — \$17.50 and \$21.00.

Registration by 30 August, 1986.

Draft Programme Information

Goal setting — Sandra Gapper, LRDU; Keeping records — Ros Cousins, Peterborough Community Library; Distance education — Bruce King, External Studies, SACAE; Technical advances in distance education — Ted Nunan, SACAE; Library service in distance education — Bev Parker, SACAE; Establishing a new school/community library — Val Gauld, LRDU and Pam O'Donnell, Public Libraries Branch; Resource based learning — Ann Stanley, Western Area Ed Office; Literature update — Marilyn Altus, Western Area Ed Office and Anne Hazell, LRDU; Outreach, publicity — Panel from media; Education Department computing system/s — Anne Harris, Library Resource Branch.



1990 Biennial Conference Committee

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

Nominations are called from WA members for the 1990 Biennial Conference Committee to be established by WA Branch Council. The positions include: Chair; Secretary; Treasurer; two members. WA Branch is to host the 1990 Biennial Conference in Perth prior to the IFLA Conference. The Conference Chairman will be the chief administrator of the Conference.

Nominations, including a brief outline (no more than 200 words) of nominee's background and ability to fill such a position, should reach:

Mary Papachristos, C/- WA Branch, GPO Box T1844 Perth 6001 **by Monday 1 September.**

The nomination will be considered at WA Branch Council meeting on Monday 8 September 1986.

InCite

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