

perhaps 'reactions' is to be preferred to 'opinions' for that very reason) must be preferred from purely non-verbal behaviour patterns. The interpretation of such behaviour by a watching adult is a tricky task, as we ourselves learned in several years of observation of a young child (see our *Prelude to Literacy*, published by Southern Illinois University Press in 1983). Especially when the adult knows the child well — as we presume Melissa knows Christopher — it is extremely easy to assume that one *knows* what the child is thinking or feeling when it lingers on one illustration, or wriggles uncomfortably when tending to a particular line of prose or verse. In fact, the adult can do no more than make an informed guess at the meaning of the child's reactions. Such guesses should never be stated as unqualified assertions that this is the child's opinion. And they should wherever possible be supported by the actual behavioural evidence (a wriggle, fixed gaze, inattention, or whatever) that constitutes the basis for the guess.

In the light of these principles, Melissa's representation of Christopher's reactions to the hard books under review is questionable, to say the least. We imagine that some indication

of distaste or lack of interest on the child's part lay behind statements such as 'Christopher was disappointed in the books', 'he found them slightly repetitious' and 'he was confused by the role models portrayed in *My Daddy* and *I Want My Mummy*'. But Melissa has gone far beyond this evidence, reading into it what looks suspiciously like her own, adult opinions. Most of us, reading books with a young child, naturally hope that the child's response will agree with our own (and indeed, we can so act as to bring that about!) but often it does not. Those who seek confirmation of this should examine Virginia Loew's 'Books and a Pre-Verbal Child' in *Orana* for 1975 (Volume 11, Nos 3 and 4), and Dorothy Butler's *Cushla and her Books* (Hodder, 1978), as well as our own work.

It may seem that we are making a great fuss about a trivial matter. Many readers of *InCite* may well consider the whole idea of a baby having a response to a book a ridiculous one. It is because we ourselves do not consider it ridiculous that we are writing this letter. As it stands, 'Melissa and Christopher's' review does the cause of child reviewers a serious disservice.

Hugh and Maureen Crago

Directory of Collection Strengths in Victorian Libraries

The Victorian Group of the Acquisitions Section has just launched this new publication.

The Directory is arranged in Survey order and contains some 300 entries covering 97 libraries throughout Victoria. The price is \$30 for non-members and \$20 for members and enquiries should be directed to Philip G. Kent, CSIRO Central Library, 314 Albert Street, East Melbourne Vic 3002, (03) 418 7246.

Writing & Illustrating for Children September 27-28

Sponsored by the Children's Book Council, ACT Branch. Speakers will be Terry Denton, Nadia Wheatley, Morris Lurie, Sue Williams & Jane Covernton (Omnibus publishers) and Lynne Babbage (judge, book awards). Cost: \$10-\$20. Further information: Dr Belle Alderman, Liberal Studies, CCAE, PO Box 1, Belconnen, ACT 2616, (062) 52 2062 or Margaret Stone (062) 52 2312.

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIP REVIEW

The Board of Education has proposed that the present policy on Associate (professional) membership be changed by introducing a currency component for new applicants and widening eligibility criteria.

The proposals have been circulated to Divisions and other interested parties for comment. They have been endorsed by the Corporate Plan and Review Committee, and General Council will be considering them at its meeting on 21 and 22 November. They are outlined in a discussion paper prepared by the Board — *Professional membership: a review of Association policy*. Copies of the paper are available from Sue Phillips at the LAA Office, phone (02) 692 9233 or (008) 22 1481.

Comments on the proposals should be forwarded to the Association by 21 October 1986.

Grand Prix at the Library

A group of librarians who attended the LAA continuing education seminar on Marketing Libraries were positively inspired to follow through the marketing plan devised there to promote libraries among the 18-35 age group by linking Australian Library Week and the Adelaide Grand Prix events. With Margaret Moxon of the Public Libraries Division as convenor, a Committee of librarians in public libraries, the State Library and the South Australian CAE was set up.

The group came up with several projects — some short term, some longer term — and are following these through. Some are proving difficult without some minimal funding, others are going ahead.

A poster has been designed and will be on sale at about one dollar — an attractive focus for SA library displays. The State Library Bookshop will have Grand Prix postcards and 1936 Adelaide Grand Prix photograph reproductions.

Input is welcomed from other librarians. Contact Margaret Moxon on (08) 332 8266.

Who's where

Anne Whyte, formerly Assistant Librarian — Technical Services at the Queensland Conservatorium of Music, has recently taken up appointment as Acquisitions Librarian at Griffith University.

Veronica Sims, of Griffith University Library's Cataloguing Section, has been appointed to the post of Lending Services Librarian. Veronica worked for several years at the Queensland Institute of Technology Library in various positions, before going to QGU two years ago.

Bruce Edwards
Technical Services Librarian

Raeo have moved to new premises at 62 Atchison Street, St. Leonards (02) 439 2739.

Who's where

Don't forget to send details of staff changes, new appointments etc for listing in this column.

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