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meetings. Location: The Coffee Shop, Alexander Library Building, Perth, WA, 5pm on 23/4, 28/5, 25/6, 23/7, 27/8, 24/9, 22/10. New committee members and/or observers/visitors to Perth, welcome. Contact: Joyce Steveni, ph 08 9366 4746, fx 08 9366 4779, stevenij@eec.com.au

• **2/4 WA Branch.** Mentoring soiree/information evening. 5:30pm for 6pm. Rosie O'Grady's, upstairs, 205 James Street Northbridge. RSVP: Margaret Jones, ph 08 9360 2513, mjones@portia.murdoch.edu.au

• **8/4 WA Specials section.** Library of the month — Water Corporation Library Information Services. Venue: 629 Newcastle Street, Leederville. Time: 5:30pm for 6pm. RSVP: Janet Megarity, ph 08 9420 2865, library@watercorporation.com.au

• **22/4 WA Specials section.** *Intranet forum.* 3 guest speakers. Venue: Tiwest Joint Venture, Technology Park, Bentley. Time: 5:30pm. Cost: \$15 Specials, \$20 other ALIA members (includes refreshments). RSVP: Ling Heang, ph 0418 941 861, HEANGSL@bigfoot.com. Payment must be received by 3/4.

• **27/4-16/11 WA Special Libraries section.** Committee meetings. 27/4, 25/5, 29/6, 27/7, 31/8, 28/9, 26/10, 16/11. 5:30-6:30pm. Venue: To be advised. Contact: Ling Heang, ph 0418 941 861, HEANGSL@bigfoot.com

• **3/5 WA Local Studies section.** *Australian Library Week* — Pinjarra coach tour. Departs 8.30am, Heritage House, Mends Street, South Perth. South of the river pickup point at Murdoch Park and Ride Station at 8:50am. Lunch included. Cost: \$30 ALIA members, \$35 non-members. Contact: Jenni Woodroffe, 9/85 South Terrace Como, WA 6152, ph 08 9367 4759. RSVP by 22/4.

• **8/5 WA Specials section.** *Library week breakfast.* Mystery Speaker. Venue: CoCo's, Southshore Centre, 85 The Esplanade, South Perth. Time: 7:30pm. Cost: \$20. Contact: Natarsha Lakomski, ph 08 9314 1695, cobrn3@icenet.com.au (attn: Natarsha) and then send cheque to PO Box 7582, Cloisters Square, WA 6850. RSVP by 6/5.

continued next page...

Making news around Australia

Selected reprints from newspapers and magazines in recent months...

The cerebral shame of boys games
Christopher Bantick, *Courier Mail* (Brisbane), 19 March 1998

With four million Australians using computers at home and more than \$1 billion dollars spent annually on toys (with the top two sellers being Nintendo 64 and Sony PlayStation), a question being frequently asked is, 'How is this affecting Australian children's reading habits?' In 1996 the Australian Broadcasting Authority and the Office of Film and Literature Classification commissioned a survey into children's leisure activities. They found that while twenty-nine per cent of boys and eighteen per cent of girls played computer games, forty-six per cent of girls read, while only eighteen per cent of boys do so.

Stephen Matthews, a former teacher-librarian, Primary School principal and now a children's literature consultant, says that the primary danger of computer games is that they promote the erosion of children's imaginations, through a 'point-and-click' approach, rudimentary and unsubtle storylines and gratuitous violence.

Computer games are designed to hold attention and do not encourage a sense of reflection and thoughtfulness. For boys, this is a critical issue, he says.

Irish honour vindicates Aussie author

Murray Waldren, *The Weekend Australian*, 14 March 1998

The glade within the grove, by Australian novelist David Foster, has recently been short-listed for the world's richest literary prize for fiction.

The International Impac Dublin Literary Award, worth AUD \$200 000, has announced that the Australian book is among ten novels selected from 85 titles submitted from around the world. The award is now in its third year, having been won in 1996 by another Australian, David Malouf, for his novel *Remembering Babylon* while last year's was awarded to Spain's Javier Marias for *A heart so white*.

The winner of this year's award will be announced on 18 May and the winning author flown to Dublin for the ceremony. Foster says he is delighted to be short-listed, saying that it answers to a coterie of critics here who complained that his book was too difficult.

State library pounces on new technology

Southern News, 5 March 1998

The State Library of Queensland will receive a \$2.7 million computer platform to create an on-line information network for the state.

Des Stephens, Queensland state librarian, said that the platform will enable the library to decentralise its electronic resources and digitise parts of the print- and photographic-based cultural heritage collections.

Library still the home page for the young

Rod Boucher, *The Hobart Mercury*, 10 March 1998

The recent summer reading campaign, *Chill out this summer at your local library*, run by the State Library of Tasmania, showed encouraging habits among young readers.

More than 600 Tasmanian children participated in the program, which had them visiting their local library a number of times during the summer and maintaining a reading log book. Siobhan Gaskell, Tasmania's library services director, said that some of the smaller libraries had far better responses than expected and that the success of the program indicates that books are still popular with the young.

Ms Gaskell further said that contrary to popular belief, on-line information and computer technology was actually encouraging book reading and the use of the library system.

Next summer, the State Library will introduce a technology-based program for young readers during the school holidays.

Feminist writer liberates women's books

Diana Thorp, *The Australian*, 9 March 1998

Professor Dale Spender marked International Women's Day by donating more than 1000 books from her private collection to Sydney University's Women's College.

She described her books as her friends, saying, 'These books were my life in the 1970s and 1980s. All I did was research, write and help promote and publish women's knowledge. I had the best private collection of women's books in England. But I don't use them any more.'

She says that this collection of women's

knowledge is too valuable to allow it to deteriorate or dwindle away.

Professor Spender is currently helping the University of Queensland transform from a print to a digital culture and says that she believes that books such as these will no longer be printed and that women's information and knowledge will no longer be disseminated via print.

This is why she says women must be movers and shakers in the new digital information revolution, likening the plight of the computer-illiterate to previous generations of print-illiterate people.

Seminar in Paris

Courier Mail (Brisbane), 10 March 1998

Later this month, Judy Humphreys, University of Southern Queensland librarian will present a paper at an international seminar in Paris on tertiary education. Ms Humphreys will discuss the advantages of co-operation between the academic and public sectors, highlighting the joint venture between the university and Hervey Bay City Council to share a library building at Wide Bay. This joint-venture library is the first of its kind in Australia and the subject of intense international interest.

Funding puts country libraries on line

Toowoomba Chronicle, 27 February 1998

The Queensland State Government has allocated more than \$2.3 million to assist with providing computers and Internet access to Queensland country libraries.

State public library consultant, Bruce Monley told librarians from

across the Toowoomba region that the state project is working in conjunction with the federally-funded BUSH.CONNECT program, which was designed to connect rural libraries to the Internet. More than sixty installations are expected to take place within the next year.

ATSI library in Cairns

Cairns Sun, 25 February 1998

The Queensland state government has selected Cairns as the site of a new Indigenous Libraries Unit, which was opened recently by state treasurer Joan Sheldon.

The State Library will trial the service to promote library services and information technology to ATSI communities through the North and Far North, Ms Sheldon said.

Staffed by two ATSI field officers, the facility is in the process of extending its resources out to all communities during the next month. ■

And in case you didn't know already...

Tim Fennell, *Cleo*, January 1998

Yes, among the top-15 turn-ons for men (according to journalist Tim Fennell and his pub jury of mates) are librarians (who said the image of the profession was in trouble?).

Tim Fennell explains, saying that while over-hyped strumpets with big box-office appeal have their place, the thought of a prim and proper librarian type suddenly rocketing from field mouse to raging lioness is much more fun. Or, as he eloquently phrases it, 'Imagine stepping into a Mini expecting it to plod along, only to find that it accelerates like a Ferrari. Be honest. You'd be excited wouldn't you?' Also included on his list were glasses, long skirts, bicycles, no make-up and plain white undies but significantly no other occupation rated a mention!

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Conferences

• **25-30/10 ALIA 5th Biennial Conference.** *Pathways to knowledge.* Adelaide Convention Centre. Contact: Di Booker, ph 08 8207 8634, fx 08 8207 8434, dibooker@tafe.sa.edu.au, <http://www.alia.org.au/conferences/adelaide98>

• **19-21 January 1999 Information Online and On Disc 99 conference.** The ninth Australasian Conference and Exhibition. ALIA Information Science Section. Sydney Convention and Exhibition Centre, Darling Harbour. Contact: Wael Foda, ACMS, ph 02 9332 4622, fx 02 9332 4066, online99@acms.com.au, <http://www.acms.com.au>

National

• **3-9/5 Australian Library Week.** Theme: *Libraries: pathways to knowledge.* Further information available from ALIA national office, PO Box E441, Kingston 2604, ph 02 6285 1877, fx 02 6282 2249, enquiry@alia.org.au

7-8/8 Australian Society of Archivists 1998 Conference. *Place, Interface and Cyberspace: Archives at the Edge.* Keynote speaker: Margaret Hedstrom. Further information available from: Jocelyn Thomson, ph 08 9361 9304, aigwa@opera.iinet.net.au.

6-9/9 Records Management Association of Australia 15th Convention. *Making Information Work.* Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre. For further information, please contact: Judy Lederle, ph 07 3369 0477, fx 07 3369 1512.

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• **bullets indicate activities organised by ALIA Divisions**