

ALIA and senior vice-president (global research business strategy) at the Gartner group; Kate Sinclair, the first recipient of the ALIA Metcalfe Award, which recognises high achievement by a personal member in their first five years of practice; Natasha Griggs for her pioneering work on the *Finding MY Place* program; and MusicAustralia, a federated online music service, launched in March 2005 and internationally lauded for its ground-breaking comprehensive access to the nation's musical resources and information. For more details, visit <http://alia.org.au/advocacy/stars/>.

Principal sponsor of LIW 2005, NetAlert Ltd, joined with ALIA in supporting and educating the community about the safe use of the internet, with the launch of the National Libraries Project. The National Libraries Project will provide a range of materials to assist librarians and library users in using the internet safely at public libraries. Participating libraries will receive a copy of the *Librarian's guide to internet safety*, an internet safety tip card and computer 'wobbler' for display on internet terminals.



Gardiner Library Service staff sporting commemorative 'Tomb or Treasure' T-shirts

Libraries can also access web-based resources at <http://netalert.net.au/library/>. For more internet safety information, advice and resources, contact NetAlert ph 1800 880 176 or e-mail [enquiries@netalert.net.au](mailto:enquiries@netalert.net.au).

## Calling all librarians

US librarian Nancy Pearl, a guest of the Sydney Writers' Festival, held a session for librarians sponsored by the City of Sydney on 26 May. Fiona Bradley, information services librarian at the University of Technology, Sydney, was there...



It was a full house when one of the library world's most recognisable figures took the stage at the Sydney Writers' Festival. According to Nancy Pearl, the scariest question a patron can ask is, 'Can you recommend a good book?' And with that question, Pearl began her talk on the importance of readers' advisers in libraries.

For the next hour she focused on two questions, why is it people like the books they like; and how do we as librarians help patrons find books they will like? According to Pearl, everyone reads for a different reason and people's likes are based on different appeal characteristics, which provide 'doorways into a particular book'. The skills of a good librarian are being able to understand why patrons like certain books and to recommend a book you hated or haven't even read — 'that's where you step in as a magician'.

Pearl believes that readers' advisers will not only help a library to remain at the centre of the community, but 'readers' advisory is key to what will keep our profession meaningful ... if we define ourselves solely as information providers, others will do it better'.

Pearl is a librarian with little time for 'information'. When asked to donate to her alma mater, the School of Information at the University of Michigan, she replied, 'I'm not giving you any money until you change your name back to something with "library" in it.'

Believing that librarians put too much emphasis on new books and bestsellers, Pearl suggests a new layout for libraries, like a supermarket, with the new books at the back, since 'any book someone hasn't read is a new book for them'.

Pearl talked about books she loved, books she hated, and the first lines she adored. Describing what attracted her to libraries and books as a child, Pearl spoke of the library as being a sanctuary and books as a means of escape into other worlds. Concluding her talk, Pearl remarked, 'there is no other place you can both lose yourself and find yourself as in a library and a book'.

Passionate, funny and witty, Pearl was a highly entertaining and motivating speaker for more than 100 librarians in attendance. A librarian for more than three decades ('I got my library degree in 1967, I was like four years old'), Pearl was the director of the Washington Center for the Book until 2004. She now hosts a weekly book show on Seattle radio station KUOW and travels the world to speak about books. She is best known for her books *Book lust* and *More book lust*, the 'If All of Seattle Read the Same Book' project (spread throughout the world as 'One City, One Book') and an action doll bearing her likeness.

## National Library Technicians Day

National Library Technicians Day (NLTD) on Tuesday 24 May saw a host of breakfast, lunch and dinner events take place around the country as an opportunity for library technicians to promote ALIA, the profession and their role in libraries, and to celebrate their many achievements.

ACT technicians held a breakfast event with a guest speaker, Andrew Shiels from CIT, introducing a new training package. Library technicians in Alice Springs went out to lunch, leaving the librarians and AOs staffing the libraries! In Darwin, NLTD was celebrated with an evening event at the Darwin Sailing Club. West Australian techs held a breakfast at Ascot Quays, and in Tasmania library technicians celebrated with a dinner at Launceston's Newstead Hotel.

In Queensland, technicians celebrated with the ALIA Qld Library Technicians annual dinner at Brisbane's Skyline Restaurant. The guest speaker for the night was Barb Ewers from QUT and during the evening the Queensland Library Technician of the Year Award was presented to Margaret Mowberry from the Drug Arm Resource Centre, Brisbane.

In Victoria, the Box Hill Institute celebrated with the opening of an annual display of posters created by first year students of Library Promotion and Display (a subject in the Diploma of Library and Information Services). Diane Panjari, community liaison librarian from Yarra Plenty Regional Library, judged the best poster, while students and staff voted for the winner in the 'people's choice award'. Selected posters will be available for viewing in the Showcase section of Box Hill Institute's website.

National Library Technicians Day is also celebrated annually in the Library and Cultural Studies Program at Victoria University. This year Gail Schmidt and Linda Nottley from the State Library of Victoria, Trisha Murray from RMIT and Bradley O'Brien from Melbourne University gave insights on their career choices and the current state of the library technician field for employment.

Committee members of ALIA's Victorian Library Technician Group spoke of the importance of having a strong technician presence for ALIA and the need, for students especially, to network to find out about employment opportunities and professional development. ALIA Victoria Group representative Margie Anderson presented Susan Coffey, a recent graduate of the Victoria University, with the outstanding graduate award.