



Natasha outside the Chateau Laurier hotel in Ottawa

Canadian libraries, floods and hoe-downs: a fellowship experience

Natasha Simons, National Library of Australia

In June I travelled to Canada as a recipient of the Kenneth Binns Travelling Fellowship Award from the National Library of Australia. The Fellowship commemorates the significant contribution of Kenneth Binns' work as chief librarian of the Commonwealth National Library from 1928 to 1947. The award is designed to provide a National Library staff member in the early stages of his or her career with a significant professional development opportunity. Mrs Alison Sanchez, Kenneth Binns' daughter, donated funds for the Travelling Fellowship. In this inaugural year, the Library contributed additional funds to enable two awards to be made.

My project for the Fellowship was to make a selective study of resource sharing among Canadian libraries in order to make comparisons and draw differences with the resource sharing models shared by Australian libraries. I visited various libraries in Ottawa, including Library & Archives Canada, the institution recently created through a merger of the National Library of Canada, the National Archives and the National Portrait Gallery. I also attended the 60th Canadian Libraries Association conference in Calgary.

Through the experience, I learnt to appreciate the differences in resource-sharing models between Canada and Australia. A more centralised structure for resource sharing exists in Australia through the National Bibliographic Database, accessed through Libraries Australia, and an interlending system such as that provided by Libraries Australia Document Delivery. Canada has a more province-based model for resource sharing which lacks a national interlibrary loans utility but encourages more cross-sectoral library co-operation. One example is The Albert Library Card project, which enables you to access any library in Alberta province, university or public, using the one library card and paying the one membership fee. Another example is the Sm@rtLibrary Project, which brings together in a single portal the library catalogues of Library and Archives Canada, the Canada In-

stitute for Scientific and Technical Information, Carleton University, the University of Ottawa and the Ottawa Public Library, and allows users to borrow items from the participating university or public libraries using the one library card.



Barbara Clubb, Ottawa City librarian and incoming president of the Canadian Library Association

Staff at Library and Archives explained the provincial approach as 'the Canadian way'. The provinces joined the confederation at different times in Canadian history and are surprisingly diverse. In Ottawa, Ontario, Gothic architecture dominates and the official languages are French and English. While in Calgary, Alberta, there are cowboy hats, skyscrapers and the largest concentration of US citizens living outside the United States. In Nunavut, many people speak only the Inuit language. Such diversity of language, culture and history appears to have influenced the resource-sharing model of Canadian libraries.

The tornado warning was lifted the day I flew into Calgary but I did arrive in time for the '1 in 200 years' flood. Yet the official state of emergency failed to dampen the spirit of the Canadian Libraries Association conference. The theme was 'Rediscover the library movement' and highlighted the need



Staff of the virtual reference project, Libraries & Archives Canada



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to learn, network, connect and discover through fruitful exchanges with other librarians. There was even some cowboy action and librarian line dancing during the conference hoe-down at Calgary Olympic Park!

Throughout my travels, Canadian librarians showed a warm and generous spirit, allowing me to share their knowledge and experiences. As a librarian in the early stages of my career, the Binns fellowship gave me a rare opportunity to learn and grow both professionally and personally. I can't thank the Binns family, and the National Library, enough for giving me the experience. ■



The Canadian Parliament, Ottawa. The Parliamentary library is currently undergoing restoration

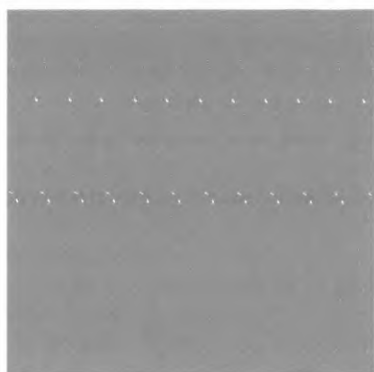
Gift helps libraries focus on information literacy

Being information literate can best be described as knowing how to access, assess and integrate information properly, keeping in mind the rules of copyright and fair use, according to James Mullins, Purdue's dean of libraries. The university has created what may be the USA's first endowed chair in information literacy. An endowed chair in the field of information literacy would help push the concept to the front of library instruction.

The original idea for the position started with a member of the Dean's Library Advisory Council, Wayne Booker, who was always 'very concerned that our students are information literate,' Mullins said. Booker is donating \$2.5 million for the position, to be granted upon his death. Libraries will support the position until the donation matures.

Amber Scott

Edited version of an article originally published in Purdue's independent student newspaper, The Exponent, at http://www.purdueexponent.org/index.php/module/Issue/action/Article/article_id/1640.



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