

A LIFE TO CROW ABOUT: ARTHUR MORTIMER

South Australian library and information professionals have marked the passing of Arthur Mortimer, longtime library services lobbyist and founder of CROW (Concerned Residents of the West), a devoted band of supporters for the development of municipal library services in that state.

Arthur's professional career began in 1949 and led to a wide variety of roles in the (now) State Library of SA, as Director of the Northern Territory Library Service, at the Weapons Research Establishment (forerunner of today's Defence Science and Technology Organisation, DSTO) and the South Australian Institute of Technology (SAIT, now University of SA).

Arthur Mortimer knew the power of the media and a community voice better than most library professionals back when CROW was created in the early 1970s. At that time, SA had only six municipal libraries and the western suburbs were particularly poorly served. Arthur and his fledgling radicals were an early example of the power of public relations as we recognise it today, concocting a series of political ploys such as setting up a demonstration library on the SAIT campus during Library Week in 1974 and another in an old shoe shop for Library Week 1975 and, in 1977, threatening to borrow all the books from the State Library and transfer them to the book-deprived Port Adelaide area.

Using Dr Seuss' imagery from *Horton Hatches the Egg*, CROW sent dried egg powder and origami elephants to several federal politicians and finally convinced Premier Don Dunstan to give a book reading of *Horton*. It is said that Dunstan later told Jim Crawford, then Chairman of the Library's Board, "Here, take \$2m for your public libraries, but get Arthur Mortimer off my back!"

Arthur kept at the federal pollies, sending chocolate Easter eggs to the likes of Malcolm Fraser and Bill Hayden in 1979 and much, much more. He was still writing letters to the editor about library funding late into his life, long after his lifelong devotion to libraries and his achievements were recognised in 1996, when he was awarded a Merit Award by ALIA.

According to Arthur, if it is necessary to have a revolution, it should always be in fun. And if today's library and information professionals are smart, it's a rule, and a man, we will long remember.

Prepared from material supplied by John Mellowship

FAREWELL TO QUEENSLAND'S STATE LIBRARIAN

The State Library of Queensland is farewelling State Librarian Lea Giles-Peters after ten years in the role.

Chair of the Library Board of Queensland Emeritus Professor Roly Sussex said Lea had led the transformation of the State Library to its current nationally and internationally recognised role as a pace-setter.

Lea will finish in October and said she would be seeking other challenges but will continue to take a great interest in the ongoing success of the State Library.

A selection panel is being established to begin the recruitment process for Lea's successor.

OUR MOST IMPORTANT CLIENT IS YOU



Lane Cove Library – Stephenson & Turner



Randwick Library – C K Design



Australian Institute of Management Library – C K Design International

Abax is all-embracing, all-encompassing and all inclusive, promising to provide a solution for every possible requirement a client may have.

Kingfisher™ offer the most comprehensive and sophisticated solutions for your Information Resource Centre. Recognised as Australia's most trusted and renowned library systems for over five decades. Discover how Kingfisher will transform your library today.



t. 1300 300 369 | f. 1300 300 676 | info@abax.com.au | www.abax.com.au