



Public Libraries Section

# Newsletter

Number 35  
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## Public Libraries around the World



Jaswant Singh's library in Punjab India attracts the locals



Mpumalanga branch library near Pietermaritzburg South Africa



Missouri Regional Library Service Bookmobile at ABOS in St Louis USA



Counter Area of striking new Library/Museum in Albury New South Wales Australia



Public Libraries Section  
Photo Section



Mobile library Australian style  
complete with Kangaroo bars  
MacQuarrie Regional Libraries



Attractive Children's section  
at Wodonga Library Victoria Australia



Brand new mobile library from North West  
Regional Government Dept. of Sport Art  
& Culture.  
Seen at WLIC Durban 2008



Torny Kjekstad chairs her last Public  
Library Section meeting in Durban



## Public Libraries Section

### Newsletter 35 2008

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#### Editor's chat

Welcome to Issue 35 In this issue you will find articles about Public Libraries right round the world. We go from Southern Australia to Southern America then across to Europe and into North America. I am setting up some databases, on the website, and would ask for your help in expanding these.

There are features on the Caterpillar project which is working well on a very low tech basis but there are also glimpses of high tech. Bradford City Library Mobile service now uses solar panels which cut fuel bills by one third even in the UK! Albury Museum Library in Australia is a fine example of joint working mixing hi tech modern technology with traditional services. The result is an eye-catching and successful design.

Finally our thoughts go out to librarians caught up in natural disasters in China and Burma, but to end on a high note June Baatjes simple phrase THEY HAVE BOOKS AND CAN READ for me sums up the very basis of our profession.

Ian Stringer, Editor

#### Updating the IFLA Public Library Guidelines

The Public Library guidelines are now being updated. I hope that they will be re-launched in March 2009. Many of the websites are now out of date, and technology continues to alter basic library requirements. Watch this space for further details.

Editor



## Public Libraries Section

### Public Library Section Programme for WLIC Quebec

#### WLIC Quebec Canada

Wednesday 13 August from 13.45 - 18.00

#### **Public Libraries and Advocacy in the Political Arena: Public library leadership and influence on the decision making process**

1. Creating a Common Agenda with Government: Canadian Applications of Library Advocacy by **Wendy Newman**, Senior Fellow, Faculty of Information Studies at the University of Toronto Canada.
2. Developing Community-Led Libraries by **Sandra Singh** National Director, Working Together Project and **Annette De Faveri** National Coordinator, Working Together Project of the *Working Together Project* : Vancouver, Canada.
3. There will be another speaker, from Canada, on the theme: Advocacy in the political arena in support of public libraries and their services and programmes. This will be delivered by someone from the City of Montreal, full details not available when going to press.
4. Library Advocacy: the NLB Singapore's Experience by **Ngian Lek Choh**, Director and Deputy Chief Executive, The National Library Board of Singapore and National Library Board.
5. Public Libraries in the Arab countries: Between governmental agenda and popular demand by **Emad Abu Eid**, Library Advisor, Dubai Public Library, Dubai, United Arab Emirates.
6. La Entrada de las Bibliotecas de Barcelona en el "mapa" cultural, o de como hacer de la necesidad, virtud. (Positioning Barcelona's Libraries in the Cultural Landscape, or how to make a virtue of necessity) by **Marta Clari I Padros** Executive Director and **Merce Munoz Creus** Consorci de Biblioteques de Barcelona both from Libraries of Barcelona and Institute for Culture, Barcelona City Council. Barcelona, Spain.
7. Advocacy on behalf of Public Libraries in Australia by **Vicki McDonald** Director - Client Services and Collections State Library of Queensland, Australia.



## Public Libraries Section

### Satellite meeting

#### **Navigating with youth: In these days of technology, how can public libraries attract and keep their young clientele?**

This satellite meeting is being organized by the association Les Bibliothèques publiques du Québec, in collaboration with the following sections of the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA): Public Libraries, Children and Young Adult Libraries, and Management and Marketing. We gratefully acknowledge the financial support of the ministère de la Culture, des Communications et de la Condition féminine, TD Bank Financial Group, McGill University, the School of Information Studies, the ministère de l'Éducation du Loisir et du Sport, the Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec and the Secrétariat à la Jeunesse du Québec.

#### **General Information**

The satellite meeting will be held at McGill University on August 5 and 6, 2008, in Montréal, Québec, Canada, with the support of the School of Information Studies. French and English are the two official languages; simultaneous translation will be provided. The objective of the meeting is to conduct a survey of the services offered to children and young adults from 10 to 17 years of age in public libraries around the world and to highlight the most recent and successful initiatives.

Registration fees are CA\$175 until April 30, 2008, and CA\$200 after April 30, 2008. Students receive a CA\$25 discount. We will only accept Visa and Mastercard credit cards as forms of payment. Registration is limited to approximately 280 delegates; please note that 100 places are reserved for delegates from Quebec. An online registration form is available at [www.bpq.org/satelliteifla2008](http://www.bpq.org/satelliteifla2008).

#### **Montréal to Québec City Tour**

A two-day excursion is planned for delegates on August 7 and 8, 2008, at a cost of CA\$470 per person based on double occupancy and CA\$530 for single occupancy. Day one begins with a tour of the Grande Bibliothèque, after which you will board a deluxe coach that will thread its way through Montréal, the Montérégie and Lanaudière regions, and along the Saint-Lawrence River. Arrive at your hotel in the Mauricie region, Le Baluchon, a resort in the heart of nature that offers exquisite regional fare as well as a host of summer activities. On day two, discover the Cité de l'énergie theme park located in the Shawinigan region, and the city of Trois-Rivières, regional capital of the Mauricie and birthplace of Québécois poetry. The coach then travels along the King's Road (Chemin du Roy) to your final destination: Québec City and the main IFLA World Library and Information Conference.



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### Please Note

For all the details on the meeting program and how to register, as well as other useful information, please visit [www.bpq.org/satelliteifla2008](http://www.bpq.org/satelliteifla2008).

### IFLA Success Stories database

The IFLA success stories database is a tool for the implementation of the Information Society by the way of the libraries around the world. With the examples you'll find in it, you can find arguments to defend your libraries projects in your region or find collaboration with similar projects. The news version is very easy to use. Try it.

The New Version of Success Stories Database is open  
<http://www.tribalpixel.ch/ifla/>

With the new version of the database you can directly online put your story in the database in English, French, Spanish, German. It's very easy to do.

**First step**, you choose your language.

**Second step:** select add to database or similar in your selected language .  
If it's the first time you must select "not a member? Register here."  
You have a form to create your account. You will receive an email to confirm your registration and a second email with your username and your password.

#### How to add your Success Stories?

- \* After login you have access to the form to fill.
- \* You fill the form in the language of your choice.
- \* If you can make the description in multiple languages it's better.

Note that before your success stories will be published, it's checked by moderators to valid the content.

A translator team will do the translation of your project description in the others languages of the database in the second part of 2008.



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### The Public Library Section Language database

I am starting up a language database for useful phrases that you can clip out to use as signage in your library. So far I have only a few phrases but would welcome additions. I will be putting the list on the website. Send them to me at  
E-mail: [ianmstringer@googlemail.com](mailto:ianmstringer@googlemail.com)

#### English

We have books in Polish	Mamy ksiazki po polsku
This library has books in French	Cette bibliothèque possède des livres en français
This library has books in German language	Die Bibliothek hat Bücher in deutscher Sprache
This library has books in Estonian	Minu raamatukogus on eestikeelsed raamatud
We have books in Danish	Vi har bøger på dansk"
This library has books in Malay	perpustakaan ini ada buku dalam bahasa Melayu.

I have also found two very useful sites for help with different languages

<http://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/pls/multicultural/>

[http://www.norfolk.gov.uk/consumption/idcplg?IdcService=SS\\_GET\\_PAGE&nodeId=260](http://www.norfolk.gov.uk/consumption/idcplg?IdcService=SS_GET_PAGE&nodeId=260)

Ian Stringer, Editor



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### Jacksonville Public Library hosts visit for Jax Reads The Big Read!

Community-wide reading initiatives are a trend in the U.S. Major cities and small towns across the U.S. are encouraging their community members to read the same book and participate in book discussions and other programming. Jacksonville, Florida's community-wide read, Jax Reads. The Big Read encourages its community to read and discuss one book in September and October each year. Customers checked out over 1,900 copies of this year's Jax Reads title, *Their Eyes Were Watching God* by Zora Neale Hurston.

*Their Eyes Were Watching God* tells the story of Janie Crawford, a young African-American woman navigating life in Florida during the early twentieth century, a setting very familiar to Hurston. African-American author Zora Neale Hurston also grew up in early twentieth century Florida.

As a student at Barnard College, Hurston conducted ethnographical research on the African-American Southern dialect. Hurston travelled throughout the Southern United States collecting and preserving African-American folk songs and folk tales.

With the help of a Big Read grant from the U.S. National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), JPL was able to fund 50 programs, including book discussions, musical performances, dramatic presentations, historical lectures, a keynote address and finale celebration. Two of the Jax Reads The Big Read's important events were the kickoff event in early September and the keynote address in mid-October.

Actress Phyllis McEwen kicked off Jax Reads The Big Read with her one-woman show, *Zora Live!* on September 5th at the Main Library. Ms. McEwen wowed over 200 people with her 45-minute presentation in the public area of the Main Library's first floor.

"All you all," McEwen exclaimed in the language of the day when referring to the audience while in character as Zora. Zora (McEwen) went on to explain to the audience about the social gatherings in her day, her anthropological research on American folk songs & tales and many aspects of her (Zora's) life.

The next day on September 6th, Ms. McEwen toured several area public schools. Ms. Ewen received a warm welcome at all the schools she visited, but was especially well received by the drama students at the local arts magnet school, Douglas Anderson High School. "All my interactions with students were engaging. The dramatic arts students not only were interested in Zora, but asked questions about my acting. It was a wonderful discussion," said McEwen.





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Lucy Anne Hurston, niece of author and anthropologist Zora Neale Hurston was in Jacksonville October 7th and 8th as the keynote speaker for the Library's Jax Reads! The Big Read program. Her first stop was Jacksonville's Historic Mt. Zion African Methodist Episcopal Church.

Several life-long Jacksonville residents in the audience had direct connections to Zora during her lifetime and one shared the events of an overnight visit during her childhood. Ms. Hurston, an Assistant Professor of Sociology at Manchester Community College in Hartford, CT, also discussed the inclusion of Zora's work in high school reading requirements and brainstormed about ways to increase reading in general for our youth and, in particular, reading other Hurston works.

Ms. Hurston visited Raines High School Monday morning where she worked a wireless microphone through an auditorium of almost 400 students taking their questions face-to-face. During the two-hour program the conversation was part motivational, part historical and all fact-filled surrounding Zora, education and contemporary social issues. Occasional outbursts of laughter mixed with spontaneous applause indicated students enjoyed their time with her. "I was most impressed with the caliber of questions posed to me by the student body," Lucy said. "These are the thinkers, shakers and movers of the next generation and I feel proud!"

Later that evening, Ms. Hurston appeared at the Florida Community College at Jacksonville Wilson Center for the Arts for her keynote address. What was intended to be a 1 to 1.5 hour address ended up as an intimate chat and question and answer session that ran over two hours. No one wanted to leave! Invitees were treated to hearing Zora's voice on CD from a 1943 radio interview included in Lucy's book, *Speak So You Can Speak Again*. The formal portion of the program ended with hearing Zora's rendition of the bawdy folksong "Uncle Bud" as Lucy retreated to the lobby for informal chats during her book signing.

"The NEA grant really allowed us to engage more people in Jax Reads this year with innovative programming featuring subject matter experts, such as Zora's niece, Lucy Anne Hurston and actress Phyllis McEwen," said Keith McLaughlin, Assistant Director for Partnerships and Communication. Over 1,600 customers attended 70 book discussions and programs at public libraries and other venues around the Jacksonville community.

At press time, JPL had over 100 reservations for the Jax Reads The Big Read grand finale in early November. The grand finale includes a return of actress Phyllis McEwen, blues music, southern cuisine, dramatic readings and a period exhibit of ladies' hats from a local department store.

Thanks to Barbara Gubbin and Jacksonville Library staff for this article.



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### **IFLA World library and Information Conference Quebec**

#### **Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation Access to Learning Award (ATLA) 2008**

All delegates are invited to attend the announcement of the annual Access to Learning Award which recognizes the innovative efforts of a public library (or similar organization) outside the United States to connect people to information through free access to computers and the Internet. Now in its ninth year, the award has honoured ground-breaking projects around the world that are improving people's lives through access to technology. This year's award will be presented by William H. Gates Sr., co-chair of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, with an open reception to follow ,on Wednesday 13th August 16.00-18.00.

### **My Personal view of the World Library and Information Conference Durban South Africa 2007 by the Editor**

I was privileged to attend the WLIC in Durban in August. It was my first visit to Africa and proved to be a memorable conference. I travelled with fellow Public Library section committee member John Lake and we were joined by Ayub Khan of the multicultural section for the journey.

After about 18 hours flying, we finally arrived in Durban and were immediately warned that there was a good deal of danger in the city. Unfortunately there was problem at the hotel with our booking. As an experienced IFLA officer I knew what to do to pass the time and soon found some fellow IFLA delegates and within 10 minutes we were chatting like old friends. This is for me one of the joys of the conference, the networking. You can walk up to people from any part of the planet, of any religion, age or sex and strike up a meaningful conversation.

As a committee member, my conference starts a day early and I attended a good Public Library section meeting. This was the last time Torny Kjekstad was chair, she has done an excellent job. We had very positive progress on all our projects.

Sunday saw the opening ceremony, which was one of the best I've been to and gave us great hope for a good conference. The speech by Albi Sachs was especially moving and inspiring. He told us that in his darkest days in solitary confinement that the only thing that kept him going was the books sent to him weekly by an anonymous librarian at the local public library.

Later, I attended the opening of the exhibition; this was smaller than previous ones but was very lively and for many of the African delegates a first chance to see Western products. There was a good selection of local food and the atmosphere was great.



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Monday saw me at a session on Social Inclusion chaired by Alex Byrne and included Aboriginal and South African viewpoints. In the afternoon, I went to the Bill and Melinda Gates award. This is an annual library award and sees the recipients get a cheque for \$1,000,000. This was won by an Australian outback service, which pleased me as I had been out on a mobile in the outback two months ago and had seen how important the service was to the local community.

Straight from the awards, I attended the beach party. There was an immense police presence, that felt quite oppressive, but once in the beach compound things changed and we had a great event. A local band gave an enthusiastic performance and soon had people of all nationalities dancing together. The catering was excellent and I had a good time meeting up with old friends and colleagues.

I thoroughly explored the exhibition and got details from some of the stalls especially on MP3 downloads. I spent all of the afternoon at the *Libraries Serving the General Public* group sessions, I particularly enjoyed a Finnish presentation on dyslexia from the very progressive library at Tampere.

One evening, we decided to go to a jazz club advertised in the local guide. This proved to be wrong and we found ourselves in a bar where we the only white people. However, we were made most welcome and found out that our fellow drinkers were all Zulus and professionals such as lawyers. We had a fascinating night and found out about Zulu life in the 21st century, and what it was like living in a family where your father has five wives. This custom is now dying out. In the 19th century, it was quite necessary as many of the men were warriors, there was a great death toll, and so the practise of multiple wives enabled the women to be part of a family and thus looked after.

It was a great pity that the fear of violence prevented us from meeting more of the locals, as we had been able to do in Korea last year. This was the *Libraries Serving the Public* joint day. I gave out copies of the group's newsletter and information sheet. During the lunch hour I staffed the poster session stand for the group whilst John did the lunch time sessions.

My own contribution came at the end of a very long day but I managed to keep interest high and did a little audience participation in the form of some simple origami. So late in the day this was well received by delegates. Our final act was some Malaysian dancing, everyone joined in and as we had hoped, all the delegates left on a high.

I had opted for a trip to see Pietermaritzburg library and so was up very early to catch the coach from the ICC for the two hour drive north. As this was an all day trip, this meant missing the closing ceremony, which I have now had to do at the last three conferences. However, it was well worth it, for we stopped en route at



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Mpumbalanga township library. We were greeted by the local school choir, singing gospel and the school dancers who performed enthusiastically for us. The library was in a very depressed Zulu area but was a shining beacon and was incredibly well cared for. Such was the enthusiasm that the staff and a group of users grew vegetables in the library grounds and sold them to buy books with the proceeds. 'Beetroots for books' was their slogan.

We were shown round the well-stocked library by the enthusiastic staff and I was particularly impressed with the large print collection, all from England.

Again, in Pietermaritzburg library we were greeted by very enthusiastic staff. The library has just had a makeover having had a Carnegie grant. It was good to see what a world of difference a big grant can make and by the amount of usage, it was obviously money well spent.

I managed to visit a local Market with three colleagues, and was made most welcome. Most of the citizens are ever so friendly and really want to make their city a good tourist area it's a just a tiny minority who are living at starvation level who make the city so unsafe.

In the afternoon I attended the Public Library section meeting and we had a very productive meeting under new Chair John Lake. At last a day out to see the real Africa. We did this I style by taking a three-hour coach ride north to Hluhluwe Game Reserve. We passed through many Zulu villages and saw sugar and eucalyptus plantations. The animals in the game reserve were spectacular especially the family of white rhinos. So, despite the problems I felt it was a very successful library conference. It was good to see so many African delegates and I went home feeling I had had the proper African experience.

Ian Stringer



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### Mobile Library News

#### Caterpillar Report

June Baatjes, now working for the Dept of Arts and Culture on a National Level dealing with Children, Families and the Disabled has sent me an update on the IFLA funded Caterpillar Project.

#### **THE NEW CATERPILLARS**

The funding sent was used to manufacture five new Cats as we affectionately call them for 5 Adult Basic Education Centres (ABET) in the rural areas of the Western Cape. I am very pleased to enclose the launch pictures. These are for Malmesbury, Piketberg, Clanwilliam, Porterville and Bitterfontein. Please note this has been a collaboration with the Piketberg centre Manager Lilian Van Louw who has won the ABET centre manager of the year award in South Africa.

I received books from Pearson Education a subsidiary of Maskew Miller Longman who has supported all the other Caterpillar projects along with Biblionef SA.

There are 19 Baby Cats with names like Tiger, Moomfie and others for the pre-school group. The Proto-Type, the real heavy one is still at Tonko Bosman, a farm school in Stellenbosch.

#### **DESIGN**

Major changes have been made to the original diagram that Ian Stringer sent. We now use a lighter wood and some brakes were added as falling Caterpillar is a hazard. All are mobile and the size depends on the clientele. The baby Cats have a white board on the side for the teacher to use while seated on the carpet I have been able to get for all the projects.

I hope you like our IFLA LOGO. I have a miniature of the CATS so as to promote them wherever I go. I wish to thank the Public Library section and say that the 25 Caterpillars in the Western Cape has made a change in the lives of the Adults and the tiniest learners in our rural society. They HAVE BOOKS AND CAN READ. Thank you IFLA.

#### **On the BBC World Service**

I was pleased to be invited by the BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation) World Service to do a 10 minute slot on mobile libraries around the world. In this, I mentioned boat libraries motorcycle libraries and also camels and elephants. The BBC kindly(!) supplied sound effects for each of these, even the camel!

Ian Stringer



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The BBC later did another article on the mule library service in Venezuela. A brief précis of this follows

### **A university in Venezuela is using a novel method to take books into remote communities and encourage people to read**

Chiquito and Cenizo are two mules. Mules are too tough to bother being sweet. They do a hard job which no other animal or human invention can do as well. But these mules are rather special. They are known as *bibliomulas* (book mules) and they are helping to spread the benefits of reading to people who are isolated from much of the world around them.

They work the Valley of Momboy in Trujillo, one of Venezuela's three Andean states. These are the foothills of the Andes but they are high enough, especially when you are walking.

The idea of loading mules with books and taking them into the mountain villages was started by the University of Momboy, a small institution that prides itself on its community-based initiatives and on doing far more than universities in Venezuela are required to do by law.

On a typical visit Calembe, is the first halt. Anyone who was not out working the fields - tending the celery that is the main crop here - was waiting. The 23 children at the little school were very excited.

"Bibilomu-u-u-u-las," they shouted as the bags of books were unstrapped. They dived in eagerly, keen to grab the best titles and within minutes were being read to by Christina and Juana, two of the project leaders.

"Spreading the joy of reading is our main aim," Christina Vieras said "But it's more than that. We're helping educate people about other important things like the environment. All the children are planting trees. Anything to improve the quality of life and connect these communities."

### **Internet plans**

As the project grows, it is using the latest technology. Somehow there is already a limited mobile phone signal here, so the organisers are taking advantage of that and equipping the mules with laptops and projectors. The book mules are becoming cyber mules and cine mules.

"We want to install wireless modems under the banana plants so the villagers can use the internet," says Robert Ramirez, the co-ordinator of the university's Network of Enterprising Rural Schools.

"Imagine if people in the poor towns in the valley can e-mail saying how many tomatoes they'll need next week, or how much celery.



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"The farmers can reply telling them how much they can produce. It's blending localisation and globalisation The book mule team played noisy games with the children, listened to them read and lunched with the adults, discussing over a hearty soup and corn bread how the community can develop the scheme. One idea was using the mules to transport medicines which can be so hard to get hold of here.

Everyone - both adults and children - was full of enthusiasm.

"It's great," said 12-year-old Jose Castillo. "I love reading books and we get told some really nice stories."

Javier Sulveran, a young, bright man in his twenties, says that the village is very supportive of the project:

"The children are really motivated to read and we are too. A lot of the adults are reading more. It's great that they come up here."

The university has acquired a new mule. They are going to keep it in Calembé under the care of the locals, something Javier really approved of.

The mule will be able to get further into the mountains and spread the word to more villages that so far remain too remote.

This four-legged mobile library is not just keeping this place alive but making it thrive.

## More TV and Radio

As Information Co-ordinator and newsletter editor I get lots of requests from around the world. I have done replies on mobiles to Australian TV a reporter in Chile. I am currently helping a German TV producer Beatrix Schwahm and her assistant Katrin. She is hoping to do a documentary on unusual mobile libraries. Here is her letter:

'My name is Katrin Hensel-Ovenden from Bremen in Germany. I am doing research for the German filmmaker Beatrix Schwahm about mobile libraries from around the world. Beatrix Schwahm is a Grimme-Price-Award winning documentary producer and is interested in finding four very different mobile libraries from around the world to make a documentary about. Beatrix is looking for mobile libraries that are unusual and based in different countries, for example a camel library, elephant library, boat library, bicycle library... or other uncommon ways of transporting books, computers, internet and knowledge to people (children, youth and adults) in rural, poor or little known areas of the world.

So far she is already in contact to mobile libraries in Kenya and Thailand. Beatrix Schwahm is very fascinated by the mobile libraries and her aim is to show how important it is to provide people the fundamental right of literacy and education and to show how creative people around the world are with providing this gift of education to others.



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If you know of any mobile libraries that may be interesting for our documentary we would be very happy to hear about them? If not perhaps you have contacts, articles, photos or information that may be of assistance to us? Any help or just letting us know that you can't help would be very appreciated. Thank you very much for your attention.

Katrin

### **Mobilemuster Bermagui New South Wales Australia Saturday 21st July 2007 by Editor**

I was invited to speak at the Australian Mobilemuster in July and so found myself flying from Sydney in a small propeller plane and dropping into a field at Merimbula which turned out to be the airport. There was a wooden hut, a garden and a car park and not a security guy in sight.

I met up with Cathie Richards from New Zealand and we travelled together the 200 km to Bermagui up the coast in a rental car.

The muster was at an excellent location, but because of the great distances, only 5 mobiles were on show. However, these were well worth looking at and had features not found on your average UK mobile.

Expanding pods were shown and operated by my host Margaret Ross. She is the mobile driver from Upper Murray Regional Library Service. This enables a sideways counter as the staff area is within the pod. Roo bars were also displayed and the librarian from Dubbo told me unfortunately they were very necessary in the parts of the outback travelled by his van. He also told me that his vehicle travelled 420kms from base, (that's about London to Liverpool, to go home at night!)

The social evening was enlivened by the awards ceremonies. Unlike the UK where we give awards to vehicles, the Aussies give awards to people. It is good to see a mobile librarian of the year award and special awards by coachbuilders. Margaret won one of these.

See [www.mobilelibraries.com.au/Conf2007.htm](http://www.mobilelibraries.com.au/Conf2007.htm) for full details of conference papers.

After the muster was over, I travelled back with the Upper Murray Regional Library Service mobile to their base at Wodonga a mere 500km away. This was a fantastic journey over the Australian Alps in the depth of winter which meant we travelled through snow at the top of the pass.





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I then had two days out on the Upper Murray mobile, which included a stay in the Laurel Hotel, in Mitta Mitta. Rather like something from a Crocodile Dundee film, I was entertained by barman Troy and his mother in Aussie style and offered the house speciality Digger Pie. This was excellent.

Another halt was at Mel Gibson's home village of Tangambalanga, where all the locals had their own Mel Gibson story. I met lots of émigré Brits on the route and 'Old Harry' from Spennymoor was overjoyed at hearing a northern English accent again and kept asking me to say more just to hear the accent again. It was very comforting to find out that people 10,000 miles away speak the same language, drive on the correct side of the road and read just the same books.

Whilst I was there the new Harry Potter was released at I thought I might steal a march on my sons by reading it first, but the Aussie launch wasn't till 9am (i.e. midnight back in the UK) Even so, by mid afternoon kids were coming in the van, and telling us the ending!

My presence in Wodonga was recorded by the local press who were surprised that someone had come right round the world to see their mobile libraries. But, all publicity is good publicity.

Finally I ended my Aussie trip with a journey down to Melbourne to stay with another librarian from the New Zealand conference and look at the city.

Editor

## St Louis Bookmobile meeting

Here is a quick report in true Aussie style from Bruce Myers of Swan Hill Library in New South Wales G'day over there. Wrapping up the 3-day Association of Bookmobile and Outreach Services (ABOS) conference here, and thought I'd zap some pics.

Good crew. 177 delegates, with only 3 non-Americans: Gayle Rowden and me from Australia and a librarian from the Dutch East Indies.

Presentation about the OH&S stuff was taken well - they have nothing similar, so the 50 copies I posted were gone in one go. Got positive feedback about how good the bm website in Oz is, as they all loved the Mongrel concept and the info about the various vehicles we use. They're all very small over here - even the trailer versions are like extended horse floats towed by big ford and chevy utes/pickups - We blew them away with our Aussie bookmobile monsters. Both Gayle's and my sessions became show and tell - in many ways we're ahead of them so was good fun.



## Public Libraries Section

Anyway here are a few snaps. There have been 4-5 different vehicles each day for viewing. St Louis County has a FLEET of 10 bookmobiles. As Cathie Ritchie from New Zealand can attest, this mob are just like the mongrels at home - good people with an occasional fanatic (*the Australians vote for the best mobile librarian each year who then is called a mobile library mongrel. It's a great honour to be a mongrel. The name is from the very faithful Australian dog that has no pure pedigree but a bit of good blood from lots of different sources editor!*).

### How to retire without really retiring (part two)

Jaswant Singh has contacted me to say he has a web page, which contains further information on his Punjabi mobile library

[http://www.nriinternet.com/NRI\\_EDUCATION/India/Jaswant\\_Singh/index.htm](http://www.nriinternet.com/NRI_EDUCATION/India/Jaswant_Singh/index.htm)

### Useful addresses

**Chair:**

John Bruce Lake  
Librarian, Barbican Library  
Corporation of London, Silk Street  
LONDON EC2Y 8DS  
United Kingdom  
Tel. +(44)(20)73827098  
Fax +(44)(20)76384141  
E-mail: john.lake@cityoflondon.gov.uk

**Treasurer:**

Klaus-Peter Boettger  
Director General  
Public Library Mülheim an der Ruhr  
Friederich-Ebert-Str. 47  
D-45468 MÜLHEIM AN DER RUHR  
Germany  
Tel. +(49)(208)4554141  
Fax +(49)(208)4554125  
E-mail: klaus-peter.boettger@stadt-mh.de

**Secretary:**

Barbara Gubbin  
Director, Jacksonville Public Library  
303 North Laura Street  
JACKSONVILLE, Florida 32202  
United States  
Tel. +(1)(904)46301994  
Fax +(1)(904)6301343  
E-mail: bgubbin@coj.net

**Information Co-ordinator / Editor:**

Ian Stringer  
3 Spring Garden  
Hensall,  
Goole DN14 0QL  
United Kingdom  
Tel. +(44)(1977)663143  
E-mail: ianmstringer@googlemail.com



Public Libraries Section  
Photo Section



Caterpillar Box



Caterpillar Box



Something different. Solar panels to heat  
your mobile library City of Bradford UK



Public Libraries Section  
Photo Section



Eye catching new mobile from Ljubljana Slovenia



The Bessie Head Library in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa. An exciting exterior gives a spacious area inside. Bessie Head is the most important writer from Botswana