

REPORT ON NEW LIBRARIANS' SYMPOSIUM

Elizabeth Beales

I attended the New Librarians' Symposium 2 held at the Hilton Adelaide after winning the registration fee in a national competition. The following is a brief synopsis of the weekend which I found challenged and inspired me to achieve more in my role and reinforced the value of what we as library staff are striving to achieve in libraries of today and tomorrow. I was so pleased to win the registration, as, even though my library manager offered to send me, it means there is now extra money in the budget for OTHER training!

Meeting other delegates, finding out how they handle their own situations, discovering other people as passionate about their work as I am and hearing so many amazing speakers made the two days an experience!

Some of the programme highlights:

The librarian who came in from the cold - Alan Smith, Director, State Library of South Australia

Alan's talk was unscripted, unrehearsed and from the heart and basically he challenged all in attendance to strive for more than they thought they could achieve. He encouraged us to love our jobs so we can be the ones who shine. He also encouraged us to be KNOWN to be a do-er not a talk-about-doing-er, described effective networking skills and gave the sage advice "plan all you like, but remember that accidents happen".

7 steps in career and life planning cycle – Helen Alms.

Another life coach, Helen Elizabeth encouraged us to search the crevices of our lives and search out our strengths in many ways. The seven steps?

* Who are you? * What do you have to offer? * What do you want?
* Create a vision * Believe in yourself * Take action *Celebrate your successes.

She then looked at the question "what if you don't know what you want?", and we did a career test to find out what sort of worker we are. (I strive to "get high" and "get balance" through work. On an aside, one potential problem of someone who "gets high" through work is: "need astute management direction to harness contribution to the company." ☺)

The Invisible Librarian – Joanna Lee & Lesley Ngatai

Librarians ARE invisible. Nobody really knows what they do. Before we can be visible to our clients, we need to be visible to ourselves. (Deep!) We were shown the four "lenses" of critical reflection, which are:

- # autobiography (who you are where you came from)
- # Students/clients/users (what do they know what can we tell them)
- # Colleagues (theories of practice and problem solving)
- # Literature (it validates challenges, contextualises and names things)

And these should all be put into place to discover who you are and what you are doing. We were encouraged to know when to be visible and when to remain invisible (i.e. Don't tell everyone what you offer, what you can do. They simply can't understand the depths of it and may be overwhelmed.) "Knowledge isn't proprietary. Share the knowledge and the skills."

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Diving into Paradise, a Vanuatu experience – Kylie Moloney

Led by a librarian who has taken 12 months off to volunteer in Vanuatu to set up libraries and librarians. She had 24 librarians attend a meeting, of these, 2 knew what Dewey was 4 had internet access in their libraries. Of the 2 who knew what Dewey was, one catalogued by Dewey and shelved by author.

She told us about how to set yourself up to do the same sort of thing, and showed slides of her new home...right on the beach.

Progressive Librarianship – Jessamyn West (US librarian)

Jessamyn hosts a website called librarian.net and has a recent book called "Revolting Librarians". She was a delight to listen to and chat with afterwards. She could be a stand up comedian!! After giving a hilariously sarcastic recount of the life of Mr Dewey, and a brief rundown on the life of Ranganathan, Jessamyn talked about the politics of librarianship. "Any place where decisions are made is political. Ratepayers pay for your decisions in the library, therefore you're political." Jessamyn gave us ideas on encouraging people into our libraries. "Everyone is yours. Not just your borrowers." She looked at the choices and unintended consequences involved in

- new technologies (find out what you actually own and what you are allowed to do with it)
- Public PCs (devise a technology plan. You don't need to be able to fix everything, just understand it. Like viruses, for example.)
- OPACs. (value added may not be what you want, out of the box configurations the same.)
- Filtering. (A lot of known consequences.)
- Copyright. (12 year olds who file share often have NO IDEA it's illegal. DRM may not be based on law. Check it out.)

Jessamyn also encouraged us to always ask "why don't you come to the library?" and at business functions "I know how much you'd like to help the library, so....."

She kept reinforcing the value of IT savvy staff...those who aren't say things like "yeah well computers are hard", which makes the library look bad and doesn't encourage your borrowers to stretch themselves.

Managing Workplace Relationships – Bill Cossey

Bill started by saying that 20% of problems are due to people, 80% due to inherent system faults. He also talked about professionals and para-professionals moving into management, and recommended looking at work practice to decide if it was for you. Professionals pay attention to the details; managers don't have the time to stay on top of all the details. Management isn't for everyone. Bill also spoke about "conspiracy theorists" in the workplace.

Harnessing the Future – Christine Foster, NLA

Christine looked at the NLA and demonstrated what they have to offer, including the massive digitisation program happening with their Australian history through Picture Australia and Music Australia, and also Libraries Australia, the new interface for Kinetica, which also includes a link to Amazon for purchasing.

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Changing Places – Liz Walkley Hall

Liz spoke about her job exchange to the UK and detailed the why, how, who, how, how, how and what (!!) of participation in this scheme. Makes my love of job and dreams of travel malleable!

Libraries are theatre, what is your role as an actor? – John Stanley.

I have heard John speak before; this talk was a slightly extended version. John looked at creating experiences in the library, building customer trust, being a consultant, being a seller, being a host, and setting up a seven step plan for successful implementation of his strategies.

I didn't make it to the Friday night Cocktail Party at the State Library, but I saw the photos... SLSA was well and truly used to it's potential that night! The Saturday night dinner was a heap of fun, and many potential karaoke and "Dancing with the stars" contestants were unleashed during the course of the evening! Our table didn't win the small "Guess the contents of the bag" competition, but we tried hard!

What is the main joke about librarians?

"I don't know, but I know where to go for the information...?"

We did that. The spices that we couldn't identify, we sent to the Hilton's chef for verification, thereby delivering that joke's bad ending! (Okay so we still got some wrong, but you get that.)

I know the NLS2 team have been congratulated and thanked many times over, but I must add my congratulations to them for the delivery of a thoroughly professional, punctual, interesting and smooth program. NLS3 have big boots to fill!

Oh and is there going to be another competition next year...or will I book with Jetstar now?