



Patrons : Margaret Throsby & Bruce Spence

Balmain

Bookworm

The Newsletter of the Friends of Balmain Library

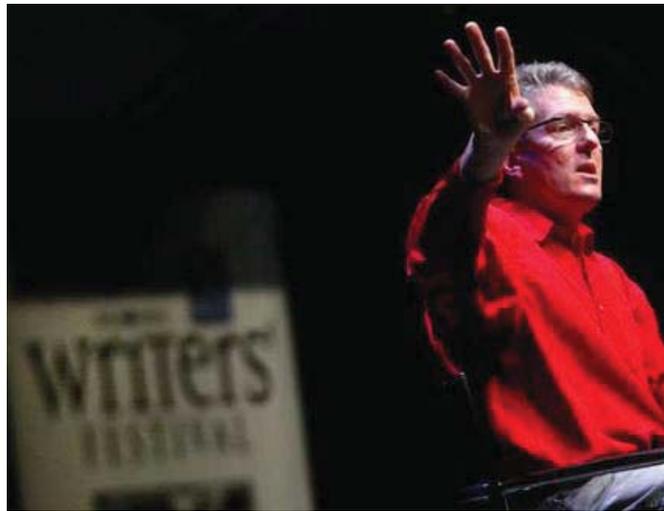
No. 40 March 2010

DAVID MARR 'Sticking with Books' Friday 19th March - 7 pm **

Our first Guest Speaker in 2010 is no stranger to controversy, or criticism. Although almost thirty years separate them, here are two examples, one cultural, the other political, of Australian journalist, author, and political / social commentator David Marr "sticking his neck out". His most recent publication, *The Henson Case* (2008), is a defence of freedom from censorship, centring on the forced closure of an exhibition, at the Robyn Oxley Gallery, of Bill Henson's photographic works. The ensuing brouhaha, over art vs. child pornography, began in the media, and quickly reached the highest levels of both State and National politics, with suggestions of a new puritanism at work. And the other, still fresh in my memory as it related to living through the Askin years, occurred whilst David was editor of *The National Times* newspaper. The first article in a series by investigative journalist David Hickie, covering allegations of corruption against the former NSW Premier, was headlined "Askin: Friend of Organised Crime". The paper came out on the day of Askin's funeral!

Controversy continued during his period as presenter of the ABC's *Media Watch*. I recall particularly two great stoushes. David Flint, then head of the Australian Broadcasting Authority, was unseated from this position thanks to the programme's "show and tell" correspondence from Flint to the shock-jock radio presenter Alan Jones. The second example, David Marr's exposure of Janet Albrechtson's false representation of a French psychiatrist's research on violence in Muslim men, unfortunately (in my view) did

not prevent the Coalition Government at the time adding Albrechtson to the ABA Board. No doubt there was a lot more "unravelling" during the two years of David's watch, but these remain as highlights in the context of "our ABC".



In a more conventional, literary, context, Marr's biography of Patrick White must stand as his most significant work to date. Winner of *The Age* Book of the Year, and the NSW Premier's Award for non-fiction, it is undoubtedly a great resource for scholars interested in Australia's lone Nobel Prize Winner in the literature category – but is also a highly readable and engaging text for all. As an almost natural consequence of David Marr's research, the biography was followed by an edited edition of White's letters, another boon to both future PhD students and a general readership.

There will be much to discover in a talk by David Marr. Given his high media profile, I suspect irony in David's title but, whether he stays close to his proposed subject, 'Sticking With Books' is unimportant as I feel sure that, whatever David chooses to cover, it will challenge our thinking, provoke argument, and probably make us smile. Certainly, this is a not-to-be-missed event but, as seats are limited, it is suggested you book early at the library. To be fair to all our members, those on email as well as those receiving *Bookworm* in the post, tickets will be available, for the first time, when the Library opens at 9.30 am on Friday 5th March.

– Herma Sieper

**** Meeting Room at Balmain Town Hall
Tickets : \$ 15 / \$ 10 concession / FOBL members
Book early to avoid disappointment !**

THE HISTORY OF FOBL - TO DATE - CONTINUES ON PAGES 4 AND 5 ...



EX LIBRIS

with Librarian Chris Giles

Looking Back, Looking Forward – an Overview

Hello again. I am back in the library after a very relaxing three months long service leave during which time I did some travelling, catching up with family and friends, and spent time soul-searching. Thanks to Bruce Carter, Indira Gonsal-Korale and Marion Saw for managing the library in my absence.

Much appreciation must also go to Balmain Library staff Sarah Wild, Hong Luu, Michelle Cinquetti, Selina Spiteri, Nathan Mortimer and Michael Senior for working so well together to keep the day-to-day library service and activities running during those months.

My time away allowed me to consider the positive changes that have happened in libraries over the last twenty years. When I started work at Leichhardt Library as a humble library assistant after living, working and travelling overseas for eight years, it was a shock to come back and start all over again in a different work environment. I had been living and working on the beach on a Caribbean island, so working in a public library was about as different as I could get! At least I no longer had to contend with sailing in stormy weather.

Bookplus with its ugly black screen was the library management system in use at the time and it was “clunky” to say the least. That was before the days of widespread internet use and online library management systems, with their increased functionality and online catalogues allowing for interaction with library patrons. Users can now search the library catalogue from home and they have easy online access to other libraries’ catalogues and online databases.

Twenty years ago, Leichhardt Libraries had no public PCs. Now Balmain has a total of eight public PCs, six in the adult section and two in children’s. This has changed the nature of what a library is about, providing PCs with internet and Microsoft programs, wireless internet accessibility, and printing, photocopying, faxing and scanning services. Audio-visual materials form a large and well-used part of our collection as talking book CDs, music CDs and DVDs prove that libraries are no longer just about books!

Community information is more readily available as we now have one large community information noticeboard, two council noticeboards and a FOBL noticeboard, all efficiently maintained by Hong. You may also access the Leichhardt Council’s website for “what’s on” at both Library and Leichhardt Council at www.lmc.nsw.gov.au, or give us your flyer for display if it is for a non-profit community organisation in the Leichhardt LGA.

I enjoy working at Balmain because I am interested in the local and maritime history of the area and am always learning something new about the peninsula. I particularly

appreciate the historical photos which are in the local history collection which identifies the photographs. I really also enjoy reading the local history blog, with comments and questions from those with a common love of Balmain and the Leichhardt area. The local studies area has a state-of-the-art microform reader and printer which is a wonderful asset! Thanks must also go to local studies staff Bruce, Amie, and Alison for their fabulous work.

Looking back over the years, one of the highlights for me was the Balmain Library’s 25th birthday party and launch of the “Old Balmain” art and photographic exhibition, held on 30th April 2003 in the library. There was no shortage of important guests and local celebrities, including: Nette Griggs, Director of Community Services and Policy; the former Mayor of Leichhardt Maire Sheehan; former Mayor of Balmain and local identity, the late Issy Wyner; and local artist, the late Klin Sullivan, whose work formed part of this popular exhibition. The Issy Wyner Collection is now housed in the Local History Archives at Balmain Library.

FOBL author talks and evenings have also been a stand-out over the years. The memorable *Dinner with the Stars* was a great success and a marvel of planning and ingenuity. FOBL has been working to support the library for many years. The professionalism, great ideas, “can do” attitude and tireless devotion to the library service, is a credit to all FOBL members, especially its committee members. Thanks also to the recent FOBL *Book Boost* initiative, which involved the community in choosing some fabulous new and lovely books for the library.

Now the library also hosts author talks. Paris Cutler, author of “Planet Cake”, did a fascinating talk about her new work in progress on Wednesday 17th February in the Library Reading Room, which was followed by a fabulous demonstration of cupcake decorating by Paris’s assistant Anna Maria. Thank you Selina and Sarah for bringing “Paris” to Balmain!

Our beautiful Reading Room has also been host to Local History, photographic and art exhibitions and is a great space to display your talent. Contact the library for an Exhibition Space Application Form. All applications are subject to approval by the Leichhardt Libraries Manager.

Now that the library is in the beautifully refurbished building on the ground floor of the Balmain Town Hall, we have a lovely children’s section featuring locally crafted glass panels and the added bonus of a collection of interactive educational toys. The children’s service is undergoing a renaissance with the wonderful Michelle, Selina and Nathan, all doing a great job in delivering Baby Bounce and Story-time sessions. It is fabulous to see how the youngest

Ex Libris – with Chris Giles

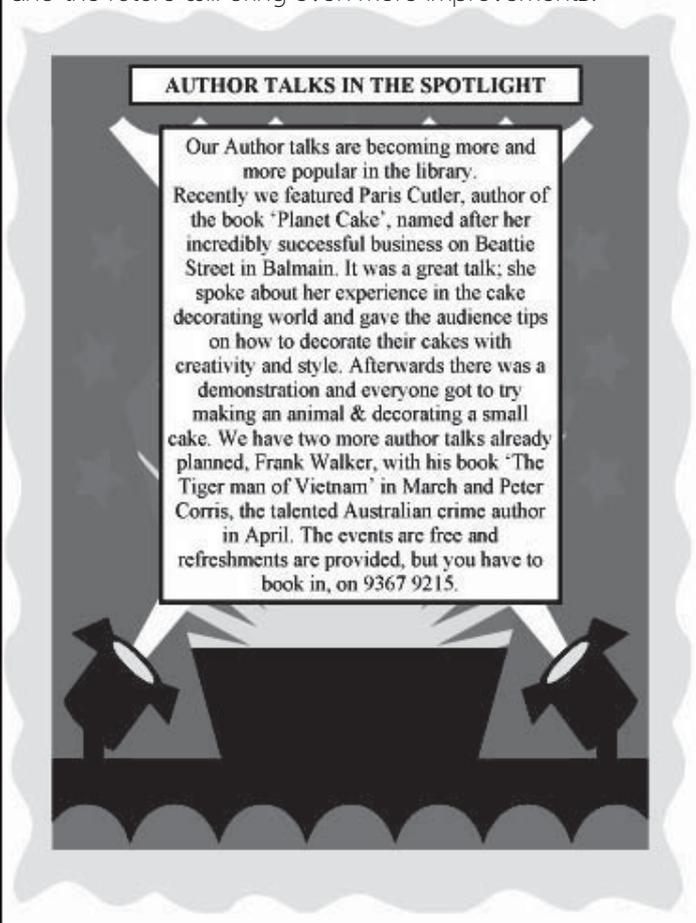
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members of the community have really embraced the children's area and our new children's programmes.

For young adults, the "Chill out room" is a great place to just hang out, relax on the comfy bean bags, check out the graphic novels, CDs and DVDs or join in the Wii challenges in school holidays. There is also a large noticeboard that provides information of particular interest to this age-group.

And, finally, congratulations and welcome Selina! I am happy to announce the appointment of Selina Spiteri as our new Library Technician. Selina has been doing casual hours at Balmain for six months as a Library Assistant, working on the circulation desk, assisting with Baby Bounce and children's holiday activities, as well as performing various other tasks with enthusiasm and attention to detail.

Everything about the library is so much better than before, and the future will bring even more improvements!



AUTHOR TALKS IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Our Author talks are becoming more and more popular in the library. Recently we featured Paris Cutler, author of the book 'Planet Cake', named after her incredibly successful business on Beattie Street in Balmain. It was a great talk; she spoke about her experience in the cake decorating world and gave the audience tips on how to decorate their cakes with creativity and style. Afterwards there was a demonstration and everyone got to try making an animal & decorating a small cake. We have two more author talks already planned, Frank Walker, with his book 'The Tiger man of Vietnam' in March and Peter Corris, the talented Australian crime author in April. The events are free and refreshments are provided, but you have to book in, on 9367 9215.

Balmain Library Opening Hours

Monday :	9.30 am – 5.30 pm
Tuesday :	9.30 am – 8.00 pm
Wednesday :	9.30 am – 8.00 pm
Thursday :	9.30 am – 5.30 pm
Friday :	9.30 am – 5.30 pm
Saturday :	9.30 am – 4.00 pm

Actors' Forum

Neil Simon's *I Ought To Be In Pictures* is the first offering in the *Actors' Forum* 2010 programme. Directed by Ron Ferrier, Paul Bertram, Elaine Hudson and Augusta Miller shall provide an acted reading of this popular play.

Made into a film in 1982 starring Walter Matthau, Ann Margret and Dinah Manoff, it is both a poignant and humorous portrayal of Herbert Tucker, Hollywood scriptwriter bereft of ideas for his next film. In a comfortable relationship with girlfriend Steffy, Herbert lives in a house as dishevelled as himself. Along comes nineteen-year old Libby, ready to confront the father who walked out on his family when she was just three, and demanding her father's help in launching a career in acting. However, nothing is ever quite as expected!

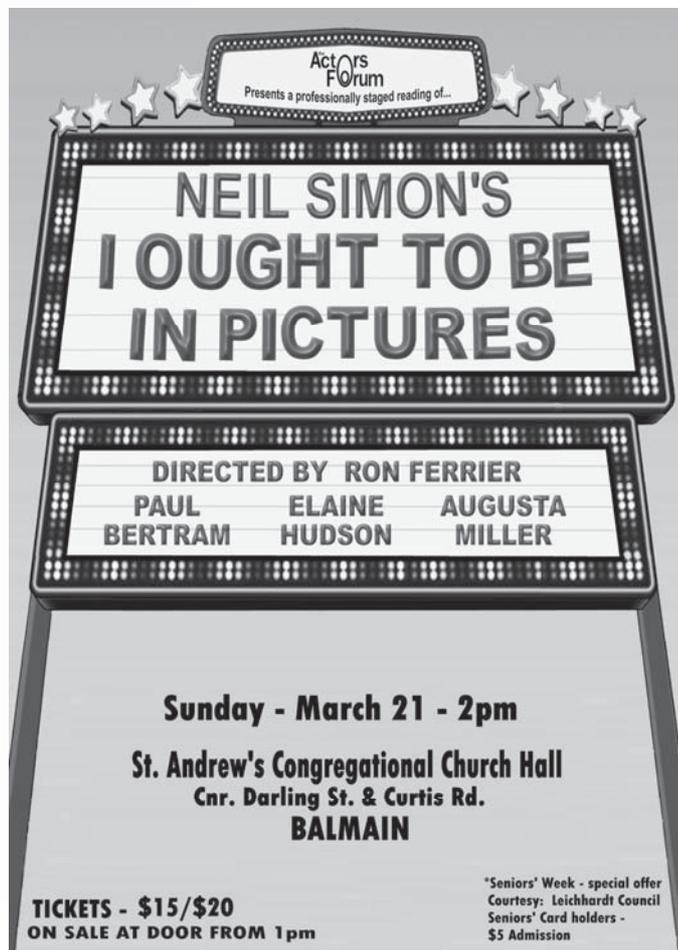
Venue : St Andrew's Congregational Church Hall
(cnr. Darling St. & Curtis Rd.)

Date : Sunday 21st March at 2 pm

Price : \$ 20 & \$ 15 (conc.)

NB : A Special Price of \$ 5.00 for Seniors Card Holders
– Courtesy of Leichhardt Council for Seniors Week

Tickets on sale at door from 1 pm



Actors Forum
Presents a professionally staged reading of...

**NEIL SIMON'S
I OUGHT TO BE
IN PICTURES**

DIRECTED BY RON FERRIER
PAUL ELAINE AUGUSTA
BERTRAM HUDSON MILLER

Sunday - March 21 - 2pm
St. Andrew's Congregational Church Hall
Cnr. Darling St. & Curtis Rd.
BALMAIN

TICKETS - \$15/\$20
ON SALE AT DOOR FROM 1pm

*Seniors' Week - special offer
Courtesy: Leichhardt Council
Seniors' Card holders -
\$5 Admission



The Agony and the Ecstasy

by HELEN COLMAN - FOBL's Public Officer
and Past Chair (1999 - 2002)

Victory

I ended the last instalment of this FOBL history with a description of Jan Aitkin's work in lobbying the council in an effort to bring the new library to fruition.

With the knowledge that the library was on the way, and despite our sense of achievement, there is no doubt that we emerged from this period slightly bruised and battered. Nevertheless the committee knew that it was important to remain a close-knit group, to keep its eye on the ball, and to honour its commitment to our many donors and supporters by providing something which would enhance the new library. With the continued careful management of Annette Waterworth we had managed to increase our former financial target from \$ 20,000 to \$ 50,000.

Although at first reluctant to take a front seat, Pam Dingle proved an ideal chair to hold the group together. She was particularly good at keeping committee members in touch with each other by e-mail and in maintaining a flow of information to and from council in the crucial period leading up to the opening of the new library. It was fortunate that, in addition to some of the old stalwarts, she had the assistance of computer whiz Gillian O'Mulloy and of Mariella Totaro-Genevois, of whom more later. Pam had been a library enthusiast and reader from childhood and, as part of her professional background, had training in assisting the literacy of children with delayed learning difficulties. She was therefore keen to see the new library provide increased computer access and associated study areas for young people.

As was the case with Jan Aitkin, lobbying and maintaining a good relationship with Leichhardt Council's central library management took up a good part of Pam's time. Nevertheless she and the committee kept up a steady flow of writers and speakers for our enjoyment, and the quality of suppers, of course, remained superb. One of the attractive social events for the committee was the celebration of the 90th birthday of Nola Harris at a lunch at Pam's house. Nola, our ever energetic sommelier, continues to help with the folding and distribution of *Bookworm* and for some reason is totally dismissive of her achievements.

Writers in this period were notable, from the ever popular Geraldine Brooks, and three unrelated Hamiltons - historian Paula Hamilton who gave a lively and practical talk about oral history; Glen Hamilton's talk "It's our ABC"; and Maggie Hamilton on "What Men Don't Talk About". At a later date, Maggie's quite confronting discussion "What is Happening to our Daughters" was

held at the Hannaford Centre while work began at the Town Hall. Her book should be mandatory reading for all parents. Jennifer Cooke, journalist and crime writer, also entertained us - talking about writing about the rather dangerous occupation of investigating real crime.

In August 2006 Pam introduced Dr Alan Bundy, the distinguished president of Friends of Libraries Australia, whose AGM we were delighted to host. In addition to discussing the Friends movement around the world, he confirmed our view that the modern library had become a community oasis where people could connect with each other and where a sense of community was reinforced.

**Part 3 in the series of
FOBL's inaugural chair's
reminiscences on the trials,
tribulations and terrific
fun of the early years.**

He also provided an interesting history of libraries in ancient times. We were pretty shocked when he provided statistics proving that the amount of support given by the NSW Government was far less than other states. At this meeting we were delighted when Mariella was invited to join the FOLA Board.

The Curtain Goes Up

Perhaps because of her membership of FOLA, but perhaps also because of her interesting background and love of the arts, Mariella Totaro-Genevois was becoming increasingly involved in the library. Born in Naples, with an Italian mother and French father, she is fluent in three languages. Following a law degree at the University of Turin she received an MA from the University of Sydney and a PhD from Monash. Her particular interests were language and linguistics and the use of language in society. She taught Italian full time at Sydney University from 1978 and, following her retirement, wanted to become more involved in community work. She soon joined the committee and was a keen supporter of our glass competition project when that idea originated. A number of us visited the Sydney College of the Arts and discussed this idea with the teachers and senior students, who were enthusiastic about the idea. The plan was to run a competition for a glass artist to design and manufacture a number of stained glass panels for the new children's library. We proposed awarding \$ 3000, plus costs, to the winner. The competition involved obtaining advice from the glass artist who guided the project, writing a brief, discussions with the lecturer in glass, finding judges, liaising with the Council and architects etc. - not an easy project, but one which proved well worth the effort.

Mariella took over the chair from Pam in 2008 and guided us toward the opening of the library in March 2009 - 11 years after our inception, and 10 years after we were formally constituted. We watched the work on the

The Agony and the Ecstasy

continued ...

renovations with increasing excitement and were pleasantly surprised with the speed of progress.

Although we had a good audience for Maggie Hamilton's talk, holding events in the Hannaford Centre proved surprisingly difficult. Nevertheless we persevered and invited Jane Ward to speak on "What Makes a Community" at our 2008 AGM; and Vivienne Hatton to talk at a function and book exchange for mothers and children. One success for the Rozelle area where the Hannaford Centre is located, was the Open Book Group started by Jan Aitkin in 2007 and held at 1 pm on the second Tuesday of the month.

At FOBL's AGM in 2009 Mariella reported on a project we had tried to start but unfortunately couldn't get off the ground. This was a home tutoring program called YOUTUTOR, designed for students from years 6 to 12 to help them overcome study problems by accessing teachers on-line. Our research revealed that it had been a great success at other municipal libraries, and we were prepared to provide funding to set it up and run it for the first year. Unfortunately Council declined to support it.

At last the great day arrived! Firstly an official opening by the Mayor, Jamie Parker; then a party and ribbon cutting at the Town Hall on March 19, 2009. FOBL presented the glass prize and officially launched the new windows on March 27. Danielle Sellers' works were much admired and she explained the ways in which the history and environment of Balmain had inspired her. We also had the chance to see the designs of the other entrants. What great talent in our community!

The Future

After the euphoria of the library opening, the committee started to think of the future. One concern was that the collection was still pretty limited. Accordingly, we devised a special event in conjunction with *Hill of Content* bookshop. They provided thousands of books from which readers could choose their favourites, and FOBL provided \$ 10,000 towards their purchase.

While we did not want to diminish the importance of Council providing a healthy bookvote, we saw this as a sort of celebratory donation for the new library, a move which was certainly much appreciated by our dedicated branch librarian, Chris Giles, and her staff.

Mariella and the committee are very keen to involve more young people in the library. Mariella's professional work emphasised bridging the gap between school and university, and she is very aware of the way the demography of Balmain has changed, since many of us had moved here. We were now the "old guard", and awareness of the baby-boom in Balmain - with its accompanying pressure on pre-schools and kindergartens - is critical. While the Library runs an excellent program for mothers and toddlers - hosting some one hundred events a year - there is difficulty getting older children involved. Are computers perhaps taking over? What is the future, considering the development and advancement of E books?

Our committee, led by Mariella, has therefore decided it is time to focus particularly on promoting an interest in reading, in writing, and in the magic of literature - that is what libraries have to offer - amongst more young people. One project that they are currently promoting is a new writing competition, specifically, on this occasion, for year 5 and 6 students. The wish is to involve young children, and to excite them at an early age. Again prizes will be given, and we have been much encouraged by the support of the Rozelle/Balmain Community Bank, which has endorsed this project with sponsorship of over \$ 2,000.

Of course the committee will not neglect its adult followers, and a programme of interesting speakers shall continue to be offered, as in the past - starting this month with well-known journalist, social commentator, and Patrick White biographer, David Marr.

The future is looking very bright indeed !'



'WRITING THE PAST' HISTORY FESTIVAL

The NSW Writers' Centre is delighted to announce the first in its annual program of festivals for writers, **Writing the Past**. The emphasis of this one-day festival will be on writing all kinds of histories - from the personal story, to memoir and biography, as well as local and family histories, and historical novels. As with all NSW Writers' Centre events, we have invited the finest writers to pass on their thoughts, expertise and advice. Included are :

Novelist JAMES BRADLEY discussing his best-seller, *The Resurrectionist*

Award-winning poet ROBERT GRAY on his memoir *The Land I Came Through Last* and

Novelist DELIA FALCONER on her personal history, *Sydney: Haunted City*.

Attendees will also find out "How to write history that people want to read" with the noted historian ANN CURTHOYS, and hear local historians talk about how to research the past in your area.

'Writing the Past' History Festival

When : Saturday 13th March, 9.30 am - 5 pm

Where : NSW Writers' Centre, Callan Park,
Balmain Road, Rozelle

Bookings :

www.nswwriterscentre.org.au or 9555 9757

And for interviews contact : Julia Tsalis on 9555 9757

Miscellaneous Matters

FOBL's "Book Boost" went exceptionally well! Over two days, a steady stream of Balmain readers selected over \$ 10,000 worth of books to add to the Library's collection. With the co-operation of Library staff – Hill of Content Bookshop (who provided the stock) – and FOBL volunteers – this innovative project proved a great success. Everyone seemed to enjoy the experience – and being like "kids in a lollyshop" – spending ages browsing the possibilities before having the pleasure of choosing a few books. Library staff also had smiles on their faces as they wheeled each trolley-load to the backroom, "licking their lips" over the array in store. Look out for books with the distinctive sticker inside the front cover - "Donated with funds raised by FRIENDS OF BALMAIN LIBRARY" – you might just come across the one that YOU chose!



Our newly-designed Membership Leaflets are now available throughout the Library. Professionally designed and printed, the form covers our philosophy, membership benefits, achievements, and activities. Contact details for e-mail and our web-site are included, as well as a membership application / renewal section. We have included an optional questionnaire alongside as the committee is keen to receive feedback from our members regarding functions and activities for the future. Even if you are currently a financial member, please take a leaflet to share with friends and acquaintances who might be keen on joining our growing organisation.



Balmain Library has been hosting a series of "Conversations" since re-opening last year. In March, Frank Walker will discuss his new book, *The Tiger Man of Vietnam*, which recounts the two years Australian war hero Barry Petersen spent heading a covert CIA mission to train up a paramilitary force deep in the Vietnam jungle. Soon after, in April, well-known crime writer Peter Corris, will introduce his two most recently-released novels : *Wishart's Quest* – and another in the Cliff Hardy series *Torn Apart*, in conversation with Irina Dunn, former director of the NSW Writers' Centre in Rozelle. Light refreshments will be served – the events are free – but bookings are essential, as numbers are limited.

Details :

- * Frank Walker Wed. 10 March at 6.30 pm
- * Peter Corris Tues. 13 April at 6.30 pm

Have you heard of the 'Living Library' ? Begun nine years ago by a Danish youth organisation "Stop the Violence", it has spread throughout the world. The concept is quite simple really : to have people meet face-to-face with their own stereotypes and prejudices in a one-to-one conversation with people from all walks of life. Participants choose to become part of the Living Library Catalogue – and borrowers make an appointment for a close encounter within the library building. In the words of Ryde Library, which has recently embarked on this concept, "it is a simple yet powerful strategy for building social cohesion between diverse community members who wouldn't ordinarily meet". Currently included in its catalogue are : a Lupus sufferer; the mother of a gay child; a trans-gender woman; migrants from China, India, Hungary, and Armenia; the head of a non-profit organisation set up to improve the lives of widows and orphans of Afghanistan; and a man who worked with more than 1,000 immigrants on the Snowy Mountains Scheme.

Perhaps this is something our Library could encompass ? Please send us your views and thoughts by mail or e-mail.



FOBL's "Open Book Group" has a great programme for 2010. Meeting at 1 pm on the second Tuesday of each month – in the Library Meeting Room (to the left just inside the entrance) – all are welcome to come and discuss a classic :

The Outsider ... by Albert Camus on Tuesday 9th March

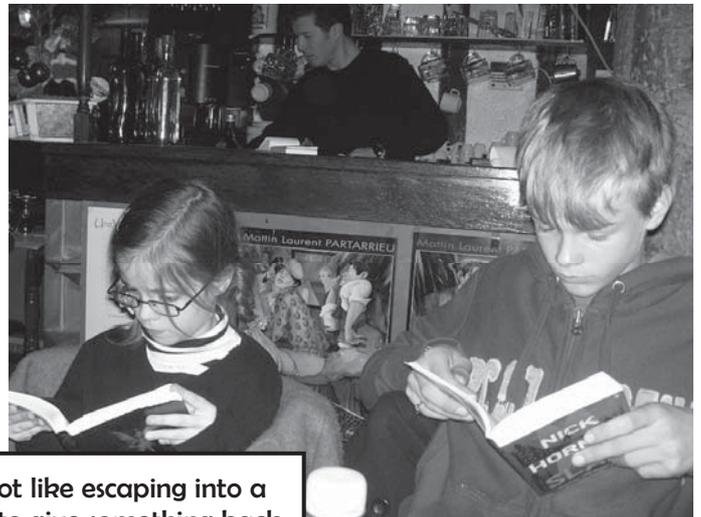
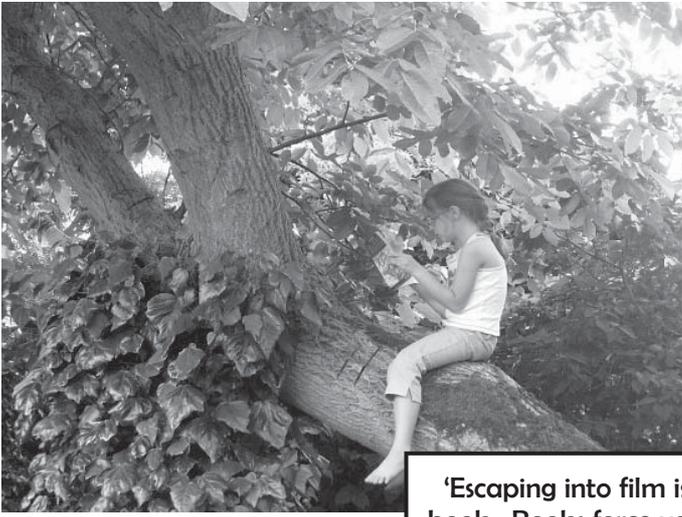
Three other very interesting works that are scheduled in the first half of the year are :

Emergency Sex (and other desperate measures) - True Stories from a War Zone ... by Kenneth Cain, Heidi Postlewait & Dr. Andrew Thomson 13th April

The White Tiger ... by Aravind Adiga 11th May
and

Purple Hibiscus ... by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie
8th June

All members are requested to update FOBL's records by forwarding their current e-mail address details to Gillian O'Mulloy at gillianomulloy@optusnet.com.au
...Thanks



'Escaping into film is not like escaping into a book. Books force you to give something back to them, to exercise your intelligence and imagination, whereas you can watch a film – and even enjoy it – in a state of mindless passivity.'

Paul Auster : *Man in the Dark*



SEND US YOUR FAVOURITE PHOTO OF A YOUNG READER AND WE WILL PUBLISH A SELECTION IN FUTURE EDITIONS OF *BOOKWORM*

FOBL'S BENDIGO BANK - SPONSORED WRITING COMPETITION

With the beginning of the school year comes a new writing competition for primary school students in the Balmain area. The Friends of Balmain Library (FOBL) are inviting year 5 and 6 students attending any of the following schools in the Rozelle / Balmain area : Orange Grove, Rozelle, Balmain, Birchgrove, & Nicholson Street Public Schools, as well as Father John Therry and Montessori Schools – to compete for prizes in two separate categories.

The first category is for the *Best Original Short Story* – and must include one or both of the words BANK and LIBRARY. The second category is for the *Best Book Review* of a book published this century – that is, since the year 2000.

This competition will run during Terms 1 and 2, with all entries due by Tuesday, 15th June 2010.

Total funding for this project has been generously provided by the Balmain / Rozelle Community Bank.

Balmain / Rozelle

Community Bank[®]

Branch  Bendigo Bank

Prizes will be awarded as follows:

**** Schools :**

Each and every school that has students entering the competition will receive a \$ 250 book voucher.

**** Individuals :**

The first prize winner in each category will receive a book voucher to the value of \$ 100 – plus a Bendigo Bank account to the value of \$ 100 !! Across both categories, there will also be seven highly-commended prizes of \$ 50 book vouchers.

All book vouchers are for *The Hill of Content* Bookshop in Darling Street, Balmain.

In addition, a shortlist of up to six (6) finalists – in each category – will be selected to attend a half-day writing workshop with Balmain author Maggie Hamilton. Should Maggie be unavailable, we will endeavour to substitute a published author with suitable expertise in writing for young people.

These awards will be presented at a special FOBL function held early in Term 3. It is hoped that a selection of winning stories and book reviews will be published or displayed by a variety of means in the community, including *Bookworm*, the Library, and our sponsors Balmain/Rozelle Community Bank.

INTRODUCING Selina Spiteri

by Herma Sieper

Although Selina has only just secured a permanent position at Balmain Library, the last six months working as a casual means her face is quite familiar to regular borrowers, particularly those under five years of age. Over coffee, Selina confessed to knowing adults only as "Tom's mum", or "Sara's dad", and as our conversation progressed, it became clear to me that Selina's new responsibilities in the children's section realise a long-held desire to work in this area.

Commuting from the Sutherland Shire – her partner works at Mascot Airport and rents are cheaper down there – is something new for this inner-city girl! Growing up in Glebe and Leichhardt, Selina did not venture too far from home when she chose to study hospitality, beginning her working life at Star City in Pyrmont as an hotel desk reservationist. But she soon became jaded and decided that this was never going to become an ongoing career. So, when an aptitude test suggested librarianship as one option on a short-list of suitable paths of study, Selina immediately felt that this was the right course for her.

As a child, Mem Fox and Doctor Seuss were favourites, but after her primary school years at Forest Lodge, Selina went through a "too cool to read" period at Glebe High School until, at age 20, she "discovered" Nora Roberts. One after another, this author's list of titles passed through her hands and, from this, reading became a habit that she now believes is set for life. Chick-lit and romance fiction still dominate, and crime novels provide a good escape, but Selina is also discovering some inspiring biographies and enjoys trawling through travel guides.

Spiteri is a common Maltese name – her father was born in Australia of Maltese immigrant parents – and her mother comes from Maori and English stock. Perhaps this mixed heritage has inspired Selina to travel as, although still quite young, she has been twice

to Europe, visited about twenty-five states in the US, as well as a separate trip to Hawaii, and spent time with family and sight-seeing in New Zealand. Although she lived in Melbourne for a year, and has holidayed in Queensland's Great Barrier Reef, Selina prefers overseas trips. Expressing a strong desire to see the pyramids in Egypt, she laments the fact that visitors must be content to be on the outside looking in, as they can no longer enter these amazing structures.

With her Library Technician qualification just completed, it will be at least a year before Selina is ready to continue into tertiary studies. Meanwhile, her new position looking after the paper-back collection and working in the children's section, will provide lots of experience and challenges in 2010. Selina's colleagues are delighted with her appointment and have given her lots of encouragement during her months as a casual staff member. I asked her "What is the best part of your new position?" and Selina's immediate response was "The kids!" During January, Selina had a wonderful time assisting with a special Pirate Storytime, and is now looking forward to lots more similar activities, involving craft preparation and involvement with young borrowers.

Just before leaving the café, Selina and I spoke of our shared concern about the problem of keeping high-school-age children interested in their local library. A good start is that libraries have changed so much in recent years: they no longer have that silent, sacrosanct atmosphere of former times; computers, compact discs and DVDs complement the traditional book collection; and a separate space for "young adults" has become a feature of many branches. Selina would love to find new ways to keep teenagers enthusiastic about their local library through those critical post-primary years. As she embarks on her professional journey, I for one wish her luck in achieving this admirable goal, as well as success and pleasure in the coming year.



Don't forget to recycle your 'Bookworms' by giving them to friends and relatives – and encourage them to become a FOBL member!

BALMAIN BOOKWORM:

Editor : Herma Sieper
Layout & Design : Martin Sieper