

Aoraki Newsletter June 2003

At the end of February Canterbury SLANZA invited all school library support staff in the area to attend the meeting, using the list serve, individual mail outs and emails, personal contacts through telephone trees etc.

16 members only attended. While numbers were small it did provide an opportunity for individuals to get their own personal circumstance and questions answered.

Jennyth Spence, NZEI field representative, spoke about support staff's rights in school libraries. Jennyth stressed that all support staff have basic rights (respect, fair treatment, health and safety issues, professional development), which may be able to be changed or improved through membership of a union. (In this case for most it would be NZEI).

NZEI field reps are available in every area to advise members, to assist them as necessary to improve their working conditions and salary. She showed her understanding of, and background working in a school library, through her definitions of possible stress situations (e.g. sole charge of a whole library full of pupils) and changes to workload situations (e.g. introductions of technology, loss of non contact time, NCEA workloads).

Jennyth stressed that any group or union, including NZEI and SLANZA, could only act on its members instructions or questions. If we want the organization to act for us we need **to become actively involved**, rather than look upon the organization as an "ambulance service". For NZEI this means putting forward library staff as the support staff representative at school, local area, regional and national levels so that our concerns can become known to the organization as a whole. She used the example of physiotherapists who actively campaigned as a group for changes.

Problems within any school should be discussed with the NZEI representative, or perhaps with SLANZA if they are of national concern. It is important to act and marshal information and support before any national conferences (September?)

All support staff should obtain and read the official "Support Staff in School Collective Agreement 2001-2003" and the Guide to Changes published by NZEI.

For some people it may be worth considering changing the class they work under; from Associate Class to Administration Class adds at least 5 salary steps as well as changing the rate of salary from a maximum of \$14.70 per hour for Associate Class to a maximum of \$18.25 for Administrative Class. Such changes need the support of your NZEI representative to negotiate.

Jennyth may be contacted at jennyth@chch.nzei.org.nz.

At the close of the meeting we expressed our thanks to Jennyth for her generous sharing of time on a Saturday morning, and to Merrilyn Smail for organizing the venue at Riccarton High School.

Top of the South organized an informal afternoon with their local field rep to discuss issues relating to all school library employees. This session enabled those who attended to discuss their own personal issues as well as look at the library staff role in general. A particular issue for them was the pay scale being related to grading for administrative staff and where individual library workers fitted into these grades. They will now all look at job descriptions to see if they reflect the actual work they do.

Canterbury's next planned event is a web page creating seminar to be held at Lincoln High School on 28th June. Niki Waterhouse will lead discussion on "Why have library web pages". She will also lead those who attend through the creation of web pages. This is planned as a practical session, which will, hopefully, benefit a wide range of members.

Top of the South have planned a **seminar for 9th August** focusing on **Literacy in Libraries**. They have organised Vince Ford as one of their guest speakers. Those who wish to know more details should contact Jo Williman (jw@waimea.school.nz) or Dinah Warren (dinahwarren@garincollege.ac.nz) for more details.

On **13 August the Aoraki Region** will be holding their **AGM and "What do we buy? Who do we buy it from? What discount should we ask for?"** This is an opportunity for us to pool our collective buying power and try to get the best deal for all school libraries in our region from large to small, primary, intermediate, secondary. Details about the venue will be posted on the list serve as well as emailed to all Aoraki members. At this meeting there will be elections for officers for the region, including a new Chairman, as I will be giving up after over two years on the job. If you would like to join the Committee in any capacity or you know someone who would be an active participant please let me know. Nomination forms will be posted as requested or available at the meeting.

Conference.

Early registration for the **2003 Powerful Partnerships Conference** close at the end of June. After that date while you may still enroll it will cost you more. Details on line at www.slanza.org.nz

As part of the National Executive grant to each region we held a lucky drawer for two places at the Conference. Mandy Ditzel from Henley School, Nelson, and Jill Taylor from Mackenzie Library, Fairlie, won these. The region also had another lucky winner when Dinah Warren from Garin College won a sponsored place from Auckland College of Education. Congratulations to all these people. I hope you will consider joining them, and the conference team, in September.

Thank you to all those who are active members of SLANZA. If you know of any one who has not yet renewed their membership please remind them to do so. From this date the national newsletters will only be sent out to those who are 2003 registered members. If you are not sure if you are currently a member please contact me at mforbes@ihug.co.nz

Margaret Forbes
Aoraki Chairperson.