



# NEWSLETTER

## JESSIE STREET NATIONAL WOMEN'S LIBRARY

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### TWELFTH ANNUAL FUNDRAISING LUNCHEON

#### GUEST SPEAKER: HELEN REDDY

*Building a Better World towards a More Feminine Future*

We are very pleased to announce that Helen Reddy has agreed to be guest speaker at our Fundraising Luncheon at Parliament House on 18 September.

Helen Reddy was born in Melbourne into a well-known Australian show business family, and has been performing professionally since she was a child, beginning at the Tivoli theatre in Perth in 1946. She worked in radio and TV and gave live performances, before leaving for the USA in 1966 after winning 'Bandstand' contest.

Helen is best remembered for her song 'I Am Woman' that became her first number one record and for which she won a Grammy award. The song is now recognised as the anthem for the feminist movement.

More top ten singles followed and songs like 'Leave Me Alone', 'Angie Baby', 'Delta Dawn' and 'You and Me Against The World' led to Helen's international multi-media career. Her television specials have been seen in over forty countries, while her starring

role in the Disney film Pete's Dragon, continues to attract new generations of fans.

After these successes, Helen returned to the theatre and won great acclaim for her roles in productions both on Broadway and in the West End of London. However, she continued to appear in concert and with symphony orchestras.



Helen has always been active in community affairs. She served for three years as a Commissioner of Parks and Recreation for the State of California, but the honour of which she is most proud is having a tulip named for her in Holland. Back in her home country, she serves on the

Board of Directors of Sydney's Royal Hospital for Women foundation.

Helen retired from live performing in 2002 and returned to Sydney to live. She now practises as a clinical hypnotherapist. Helen's memoirs, with the evocative title of *The Woman I Am*, has become a best seller.

### JSNWL FUNCTIONS

#### Lunch-Hour Talks

**Venue:** The Lady Mayoress' Rooms, Sydney Town Hall, George St.

**Date and Time:** Third Thursday in the month from 12 noon to 1:30 pm.

**Entry:** \$15 (members)  
\$20 (non members),

Sandwich lunch included.

For catering purposes, please let us know you are coming.

**To Book:** Phone (02) 9265 9846 or email [info@nationalwomenslibrary.org.au](mailto:info@nationalwomenslibrary.org.au)

#### May – Thursday 18th

##### Jenelle Brangwin – Not Mad Just Sixty

As a retired librarian Jenelle, aged 60, drove in 2001 with her husband and another couple in two Kombi vans from Lahore to London, following the old Silk Route. As a result of this trip, she wrote her book *Not Mad Just Sixty*. Jenelle talks about the excitement and dangers of the journey through Pakistan, China, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Iran and Turkey and discusses the historical background of these countries. She also mentions the activities of the Taliban and issues such as religion and the position of women.

#### June – Thursday 15th

##### Olive Briscoe – Working as a Volunteer in Tanzania

Each year Olive and her husband do volunteer work overseas. She discusses how they decided what work to do and where to go and talks about their experiences in different environments, particularly a month they spent in a village in Tanzania, where they are returning this October.

#### July – Thursday 20th

##### Suzanne Baker - Back-to-Front

##### Career: One of the Positive Results of the Second Wave of Feminism

After a long career of 'firsts' (first Australian woman to win an Academy Award, first woman producer at Film Australia, made the first western documentary film series on China) Suzanne talks about the arrival of the second wave of feminism and her capacity to seize the opportunities offered. At 67 Suzanne has just graduated with honours in history from the University of Sydney.

ANNUAL FUNDRAISING LUNCHEON  
MONDAY, 18 SEPTEMBER

BOOK NOW  
to hear  
HELEN REDDY, GUEST SPEAKER

Members are being given the opportunity to book before invitations are sent to the general public. Booking form enclosed.

## JESSIE STREET NATIONAL WOMEN'S LIBRARY

The Library is open to the public Monday to Friday, 10 am to 3 pm

*Australia's national women's library is a specialist library with its focus on collecting and preserving the literary and cultural heritage of women from all ethnic, religious and socio-economic backgrounds.*

### Aims

- to heighten awareness of women's issues
- to preserve documents on women's lives and activities
- to support the field of women's history
- to highlight women's contribution to this country's development

### Borrowing Policy

The public may borrow items on interlibrary loan. A loan collection is available to financial members.

**Location:** Ultimo Community Centre  
523-525 Harris Street, Ultimo

### Public Transport Services

**Trains** Central Station or Town Hall Station

**Buses** No. 501 from Railway Square (Central Station) or George Street (opp Town Hall Station)



## RENEWAL OF SUBSCRIPTIONS

We thank all members who renewed their membership for 2006 so promptly, and all those who had overlooked their 2005 subscription but who answered a request by paying the two subscriptions together. Receiving membership subscriptions early in the year makes budgeting for expenditures easier.

If you haven't yet renewed, please complete and send in the Membership / Renewal / Donation form on p 11 of this newsletter.

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The AGM was held on 25 March in Seminar Room 1 at the Ultimo Community Centre.

After welcoming those attending, Jozefa Sobski, Chair of the Board, summarised the Annual Report for 2005, drawing attention to the two most important highlights of the year, which were establishing priorities for the future of the Library and dealing with the financial position, which is very tight. The move to Ultimo had been costly, with over \$20,000 being drawn from reserves, but with support

from members, women's organisations and the community in general the Library should be able to reverse this situation.

The Auditor's and Treasurer's reports were then moved and adopted.

### Raising of Membership Subscriptions

The motion to raise annual memberships from \$45 to \$50 for full members and from \$20 to \$25 for concessional members was passed. The new subscriptions will take effect from the beginning of 2007.

### New Board

The following were elected to the Board for 2006

#### Executive

<i>Chair</i>	Jozefa Sobski	<i>Vice Chair</i>	Marie Muir
<i>Secretary</i>	Pauline O'Connor	<i>Treasurer</i>	Robyn Harriott
<i>Board Members</i>	Olive Briscoe		Beverley Kingston
	Ruth Davidson		Christine Lees
	Sybil Jack		Jane Pollard
	Shirley Jones		Penny Street

Shirley Jones was appointed Public Officer and Jann Skinner was appointed Honorary Auditor

## OUR NEW WEBSITE MANAGER

Our new website has had most of its problems ironed out, thanks to Vida Redoblado, a student at the University of Technology Sydney (UTS) who did the new design for us as the final project in completing her degree in Communications (Information Management). We thank Vida for also carrying out the regular updating of the site while we looked for a Website Manager.

### Appointment of a Website Manager

The Library recently advertised for a Website Manager in the Helpdesk column in the Sydney Morning Herald and had an immediate and good response. The four applicants were all extremely well qualified, which made selection difficult. We have asked Jessie Lynn to fill the position.

Jessie has a bachelor degree in English and Women's Studies from the University of Adelaide and a Graduate Diploma in Information Management from UTS. She

is currently completing a masters in Information Management, and is a member of ALIA, the Australian Library and Information Association. In her working career she has been a volunteer at the Women's Community Centre in Adelaide, web manager with the Australian Taxation Office in Adelaide and, while overseas in 2003-2004, she was database assistant at the Toronto East General Hospital in Canada.

Jessie is currently Website Project Manager at Woollahra Municipal Council in Sydney. The project involves managing and helping implement the reorganisation of the council's current external website.

We are certain that the JSNWL website will be greatly enhanced by Jessie's contribution, particularly in links to other women's libraries and in ease of access to our catalogue.

## NOTES & QUOTES

Dr Roger Seymour, an Adelaide zoologist says 'A mammal doesn't need a good lung to be born — it's just passively squirted out into the world.'

Men may soon be able to take responsibility for contraception via tri-monthly injections of testosterone... Only one person involved in the worldwide study fell pregnant.

Taken from articles in the *Sydney Morning Herald*

### LIBRARY NEWS

#### Progress in the Library

After months of upheaval – the move to new premises and coping with the National Library's new data system – the cataloguers are now dealing with quite a backlog of work and pleased to be organised again. They appreciate the pleasant work environment with lots of natural light, and the lively scene outside with all the Ultimo Community Centre activities.

The JSNWL book collection is presently being intensively examined with the aim of better reflecting our Collection Development Policy and ensuring that the lives and experiences of Australian women are the focus. Inappropriate material will be removed and this will provide more room for important items in the Research Collection.

One advantage of our move has been the exposure to a new community in Ultimo and this has brought new volunteers to the Library. A local resident, Pam Scott, has worked hard on a grant application; Clare Daly has brought the Obituaries File up-to-date, and Helen Ye, who is currently studying Information Management at UTS, is proving an asset in database searching.

#### Visitors to the Library

A number of interesting people visited the Library over the past three months. These have included Geraldine O'Brien, an ABC researcher updating details on Jessie Street for inclusion in a book of selected Dynasty programs. Three TAFE students who have chosen JSNWL as the subject for their project on a specialist library, came in to gather material.

#### Jessie Street Association Collection

We have a small collection of books which were in Jessie's personal library. They are signed copies, most of which had been given to her by various women activists and writers, among whom were Katharine Susannah Prichard and Dymphna Cusack. The collection was donated to the Library by Belinda Gemmell, Jessie's granddaughter. We have added to this collection, the copy of *Why Wars Must Cease*, signed by Carrie Chapman Catt. These books are now housed in the special bookcase donated to the Library by the Armour Family.

#### Donations

Large donations have recently been received from Susan Geason, and from the ABC Sound & Reference Library that, like all libraries must do from time to time, has been culling items from its

collection. We appreciate that such an organisation thinks of us before disposing of material they no longer require. All the books are in as-new condition and many are hard copies, which are preferable to paperbacks in both our research and loan collections.

We have also received a collection of material from the Immigrant Women's Speakout Association NSW, made up of videos, DVDs, CDs, Annual Reports and Newsletters. At the moment we have no equipment on which to allow researchers to view the visual material, but if we are successful in our application for a Local Community Grant, we will be purchasing viewing material and researchers will have access to all our visual material (see Grant Application on page 00).

*Jane Pollard, Senior Librarian*

#### DONATING BOOKS

We are always grateful for donations of books – in fact we rely on them. We have no acquisitions budget and all our material is donated BUT we would be even more grateful if, instead of bringing all your books into the Library, you could SEND US A LIST of what you wish to donate. We can then let you know which books we already have. This saves you time and effort. It also saves the Library having to find room to store duplicate copies.

PLEASE TAKE NOTE.

#### ARCHIVES NEWS

##### Donations

The Association of Civilian Widows (NSW & ACT), which started in 1957, is closing down and has offered us their records. These include Minute books from branches that have closed over the years, State Conference Minutes, State Council and Officers Meeting Minutes. We are certainly interested in this collection and I have asked whether there are records from the Association in other states that could be added. We are waiting on a reply.

Vince Dale, librarian from Lake Macquarie Library has sent us a collection of 25 diaries written by an anonymous woman and dating from 1955 to 2000. From a quick cursory reading of some of the diaries the author appears to be an English migrant to Australia. The diaries document fairly mundane domestic matters and we are trying to glean more information regarding the writer.



#### Community Heritage Grant

Through funding from a previous Community Heritage Grant, I have had professionally treated and restored ten of the Pine Gap series of collages. These are from material produced by the women from Canberra who attended the Pine Gap women's peace movement in 1983. We have 25 more of these collages which need to be restored and I have applied for a further grant of \$10,000 to enable us to complete the restoration of these story boards. If awarded the grant, we can look forward to holding displays of our Pine Gap material, especially a display to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the movement in 2008.

#### Request for Information

We have recently had a request from a member of the Bartlett family, now living in the Richmond River area in South Australia, who is compiling a family history. She has asked to look at the original material we have on Betty Hart, nee Bartlett. The document we have is a memoir, written in 1986 by 87 year-old Betty and covering two world wars. It is part of the Canberra Women's Archive that we hold. Volunteer Bridget McKern has transcribed the document and made it into a small booklet, a copy of which has been sent to the Richmond River Historical Society to be added to their local history collection.

#### Illuminated Addresses

The late Val Buswell, a former member of the Library and extremely active in women's affairs and in Business & Professional Women Ryde Hunters Hill, is now commemorated in the Library. Through a donation from members of this group, we have had two beautiful illuminated addresses restored and framed by International Conservation Services. They have been hung on the wall behind the reception desk and are a fitting tribute to Val.

*Beverley Sobinow, Archivist*



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**FEBRUARY LUNCH-HOUR TALK**  
**SPEAKER: DR BEVERLEY SHERRY**

*Australia's Historic Stained Glass*

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*On 16 February Dr Beverley Sherry gave a fascinating and informative talk on the history of stained glass in Australia, illustrated by 60 slides from houses, public buildings, and churches; her commentary focused especially on houses. Without the illustrations, the summary of her talk does not do it justice.*

There is a wealth of stained glass in Australia, mainly dating from 1850 to 1914 when stained glass became part of the general fabric of architecture. The building we are in today, the Sydney Town Hall, is a good example. The foyer – the original Town Hall – has a stained glass dome depicting twelve female figures representing the four elements and eight virtues. Two spectacular windows were designed in 1888 for the main (centennial) hall, with the Captain Cook window on the north side and on the south side a weird-looking woman who represents Australia. She has rams horns coming out of her head, carries a miner's lamp and a trident, and is surrounded by various Australian emblems.

The 19th century saw a revival of stained glass in Europe, with England and Scotland leading the way. Its influence spread to the antipodes via stained glass artists and architects who emigrated here. At that time there was unprecedented wealth in the Australian colonies because of the discovery of gold and continuing pastoral prosperity. Sir George Brookman, for instance, made a fortune on the Kalgoorlie goldfields, and Adelaide owes its fine collection of Morris windows to him.

In the Sydney suburb of Double Bay is a house called 'Fairwater'. which was built in 1882 by the architect, Horbury Hunt for a newly married couple, Sydney stock broker, Francis Joseph, and his wife, Isabella.. Just about all the ideals that an educated family in the 1880s would be expected to uphold are there in stained glass. In the Victorian period, people were not averse to announcing their values this way. They had to live with the windows permanently of course as, unlike pictures, they couldn't take them off the wall. 'Fairwater' has glass that represents family loyalty, hospitality, peace, the arts and sciences, and marriage. An English firm made these windows, but there were a number of Australian firms making stained glass too. Here is a slide of the front door at 'Fairwater'. This demure lady of the

manor represents 'Hospitality'. Family loyalty and hard work are also portrayed through coats of arms above the door. Francis Joseph's motto is 'Always Faithful' and Isabella's motto is there too, 'Task Without Blemish'.

The next slide depicts the visual arts. This is in an imposing house called 'Stonnington' in Toorak in Melbourne. It was built in 1890 for John Wagner, a partner in Cobb and Co. who made a fortune in Mount Morgan gold. The central figure represents painting, the one in the corner drawing and the one on the right sculpture, so everything to do with the visual arts is depicted here.

The next slide is of a Shakespearean heroine. It's from a house in Brisbane, now a school.. It is one of a series of four life-size figures installed in 1889 – Beatrice, Viola, Rosalind and Portia. This is the work of William Montgomery, a leading Melbourne artist who arrived in Australia in 1887, at the height of the economic boom. Within two or three years he had windows in every state. He regarded this next window as his best work. He called it 'Hunting Scene – First Light'. It's just before the sun comes up. It was made in 1899 for a Melbourne residence and is signed, which is most unusual.. It's in a dark-panelled hall and as you go in there is a blaze of colour from the window.

Other popular themes were the seasons. This is my favourite, in a house in Croydon in Sydney. Here is Spring, holding a sprig of buds in her hand. It is the work of Lyon & Cottier who opened in 1873 in Sydney. Their seasons were a set of Pre-Raphaelite female figures – Summer a blowzy woman with a fan in her hand, Autumn with wheat and a reaping hook, Winter an old woman carrying fire wood.

Many men in public life wanted to put into their houses great figures from history. This example from a house in Darling Point in Sydney, 'The Swifts', shows the signing of Magna Carta in 1215. The owner of the house was Robert Lucas Tooth, a brewer from Kent originally. He was a member of the Legislative Assembly and had the architect design him a house that looks like Government House, turrets and all.

Another historical figure was chosen by John Stevenson, a Scot and a member of the Legislative Assembly in Queensland. A life-size Robert the Bruce is in this window with an axe in his hand and a



shield with the Lion of Scotland. Stevenson went back to Scotland, had the stained glass window made there and brought it back with him to install in his 'castle' in 1889. This building is now Queensland's Government House.

The next slide is one panel of the 'Captain Cook' window at 'Cranbrook' in Sydney. Here are the botanists, Dr. Solander and Sir Joseph Banks, looking at a botanical specimen. And here are Cook's officers completely mystified at the sight of a kangaroo. An excellent artist did this window, but his kangaroo looks more like a big rat.

This next is in 'Yanko' in the Riverina, home of the great wool king Sir Samuel McCaughey. The window depicts a shepherdess and merino sheep. McCaughey was knighted for his contribution to the Australian wool industry. The window dates from 1902 and expresses a feeling for the land and the nationalism of the Federation period. Around the border are oranges from this district too.

Now for some public buildings. The elaborate windows in the University of Sydney's Great Hall, completed by 1858, are still a landmark of stained glass in Australia. These are English-made and show scientists, explorers, and men of letters – Captain Cook is there, Shakespeare, and the kings and queens of England. Before these windows were made, all the designs were shown to Queen Victoria. When they were completed, they were taken by barge to Windsor and shown to her before being dispatched to the colony. This was written up in the *Illustrated London News* in 1859.

This next window is in the Parliament House in Brisbane and was made in 1868 by Chance Brothers of Birmingham. It is Queen Victoria in close up, looking rather sombre, and in the background Big Ben and the towers of Westminster – a reminder of the Mother of Parliaments.

*Transcription by Helen Ruby*  
*Abbreviated version by Shirley Jones*

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**MARCH LUNCH-HOUR TALK**  
**SPEAKER: YOTA KRILI**  
*Poetic Responses to the Journeys of Life*

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*Yota Krili read numerous poems to a large and enthusiastic audience at the Lunch-hour Talk on 16 March. Many were from her newly published book, Triptych, and some were new and as yet unpublished. Many members of the audience were from Greece, Yota's home country, who felt a great sense of nostalgia when she read. Space does not allow most of the poems to be reproduced, but perhaps this will induce readers to buy a copy of Yota's book and read the poems for themselves.*

'At Sydney's Fish Market'

*A pelican stood imperiously at the entrance of the shop/ moving slightly on his webbed feet/ his long neck turning/ as he viewed eagerly the fish display/ with his beady, yellow-ringed eyes/ nodding sagely his huge pink beak/ unperturbed by the presence of humans.*

*The shop owner scoffed/ shooing him away/ 'Go and fish your own, lazy bird!' Yet the pelican stood his ground/ and I fancied/ that he had arrived there/ on a different agenda/ and not just for leftover*

*Surely he had come/ to claim his own share of the catch/ to register his protest/ for the plundering of the seas/ that leave his pouch empty.*

After I arrived in Sydney 47 years ago, I met the women's peace group. The warmth, friendship and support of those women made me feel that I had arrived in an oasis of humanity. Lucy Woodcock, a retired school mistress and a founding member of the NSW Teachers Federation offered me free English lessons. I mention this because when I first visited JSNWL I felt the same spirit among the women volunteers who run this library.

I tend to be serious by nature with a great passion to explore the world to find the meaning of life. This passion led me to a rather unorthodox path of life as a first generation migrant woman in the early '60s. Instead of marrying, I went to night school and many years later I became a high school teacher. My life's journey has been arduous and not conducive to writing. Poetry and writing need time for reflection and I was always very short of time. Many of my poems have happened while I was busy doing other things.

A friend recently emailed me: 'Life is not measured by the number of breaths

we take but by the moments that take our breath away.' I can relate to this. It's moments like these that have become the inception of many of my poems. A rare miraculous incident inspired me recently to write the poem, At Sydney's Fish Market, which I read at the beginning of my talk.

The next two poems reflect the human condition and the rocky journey of humanity. The poem 'The Wolves' is prefaced by a proverb, 'Whoever becomes a lamb is eaten by the wolf.'

*The number of wolves/ has increased throughout the world./ Some appear disguised/ as the grandmother of Little Red Riding Hood/ but the fairytale has exposed their deception./ Others wear a grey cloak/ and shoot the rainbow./ Those who have absolute power/ disguise themselves absolutely.*

*Often they cry, 'Wolf!' and throw the flocks into commotion. / Wolves thrive in the fog./ While the lambs frolic/ grazing in reality shows/ strutting in meadows/ exploring cyberspace/ the wolves are conspiring.*

Each one of us carries the poetic heritage and when some of us engage in writing, that heritage is like a well. We draw a lot from it, by being inspired, by making allusions, by quoting. I carry a rather heavy and rich heritage from my childhood memories of World War 11 and the Civil War in Greece, as well as the experience of migration, displacement and establishing a new life in Australia. Those conditions and forces have shaped my life and influenced my view of the world, my empathy for injustice and my vision for social change which are often reflected in my poems.

Although I have spent over two-thirds of my life in this country, the first third belongs to my formative years in Greece. At this point I'll read more poems. Most are set in my little village Kerastari in Arcadia which has been almost abandoned, but it remains a point of reference for me as I reflect on life and history. (The poems Yota read were Summer, The Cheese Maker, Pedalling, The Epilogue, Memory and Hitler's Playground. We have room here only for Memory.

'Memory'  
*Memory's sensual triggers/ often catapult me into times of old/ at my parents' home being elated/ by the wafting of mother's freshly baked bread/ at my father's vineyards craving/ the*

*taste of muscats/ at the meadows/ in the month of May/ to savour/ the wind's velvet touch/ the nightingales' singing/ the aura of wild flowers.*

*Cities sprawl./ Parks and seashores/ become less year by year./ In the natural world/ more becomes less/ by the minute/ while less becomes more and more/ piling up like mountains in shopping malls.*

*I wonder/ how sensual memory will fare/ into the tomorrow's vastness of a concrete insentient world?*

When I studied English literature as part of an arts degree, it was William Blake's poetry that captured my spirit. I was stunned by his portrayal of social evils. The poem, London, which seems so contemporary still, conveys the downside of life in such a powerful, damning way. My poem Lament has been directly influenced by Blake's poem The Tiger. which is a hymn to a pure being. Mine is a lament to an endangered creature.

Here is the poem 'Lament' and the next lines are Blake's.

'Tiger! Tiger! burning bright/ In the forests of the night,/ What immortal hand or eye/ Could frame thy fearful symmetry?'

*Tiger! Tiger! dead and stuffed/ jewel of wilderness/ in the lounges of the rich and vain/ what rapacious hand could extinguish/ the burning fire of your eyes?*

*What ignoble creature/ could dismember/ the sinews of thy heart/ your divine, fearful symmetry?*

*Tiger! Tiger! panic-stricken/ in your shrinking habitat/ what malevolent force/ marked out your extinction?*

In my book *Triptych* the first section Patchwork is prefaced with a line from Gerald Manning Hopkins' poetry, 'Glory be to God for dappled things' which reflects the diversity of ideas. The second section, Memory, is prefaced with a line from the poet Sbigniew Herbet. 'Let us not allow the dead to be killed' which is a powerful comment on the theme of memory. The last section is prefaced with the proverb, 'Everyone takes wood from a fallen tree' which implies that when a person is weak, everyone takes advantage of him/her and

*continued on page 9*

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## APRIL LUNCH-HOUR TALK

**SPEAKER: KATHY BAIL**

### ***From DIY Feminism to 'The Bulletin': Confessions of an Editor***

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*On 20 April Kathy Bail, editor of 'The Bulletin', gave a most thought-provoking talk about her career. The audience were extremely interested in her comparison of the women's stories in her book, 'DIY Feminism' published in 1996, and the present situation for women. This aspect of her talk drew a tremendous number of questions afterwards and a lot of comment and personal stories from members of the audience.*

It's good to talk to a group associated with Jessie Street National Women's Library. When you consider what Jessie Street achieved, it was a life of many 'firsts'. I can't claim any 'firsts' in my professional life. When I was at secondary school, I knew I wanted to be involved in journalism and publishing. This didn't run in the family. Both my grandmothers devoted themselves to family life, in a traditional marriage, where the men were the bread-winners. My mother was committed to her three children, though she worked as a teacher and librarian, juggling different jobs. In today's jargon, she was multi-tasked. My professional life has followed a more linear path.

When I look back over my 20-year career, it looks like it was planned, but at the time I just went from one job to another, choosing jobs with potential.

After graduating from Melbourne University, I got a job on a film magazine and from there I moved to 'The Australian' newspaper, then to 'The Independent Monthly'. From 1993 to 1997 I edited the Australian edition of 'Rolling Stone', covering music, culture and politics for the youth market. Then I became editor of HQ. In 1999 I was asked to become deputy editor of 'The Bulletin' and I became editor in 2002.

The Bulletin is 126 years old, Australia's oldest continuously published magazine. It was founded by JF Archibald who made it into one of the most electrifying publications of its time. Archibald was fearless, obsessive, erratic and, for some years, judged insane. His name lives on in the Archibald Prize and the fountain in Sydney's Hyde Park. When Archibald ran 'The Bulletin' it was an all-male crew. Unfortunately, not that much has changed at the top in the media business. Only 15% of media executives are women. It's not that women are deliberately excluded. Most media outlets feature a lot of blokes sledging

each other, and the more they sledge, the more they get paid.

I was more optimistic about women's status in Australian society 10 years ago. In 1996 I edited a book called *DIY* (do-it-yourself) *Feminism*. For this collection I encouraged different women in their 20s and early 30s to tell personal, anecdotal stories about their lives and give their opinions about their role as women. The book was in part a response to Helen Garner's controversial book *The First Stone*, the story of a sexual harassment case at a Melbourne university college and the debate surrounding it, which characterised young women as narrow-minded and puritanical and emphasised a 'victim' strain in feminist politics. The stories in my book gave another view, suggesting there were new brands of activism emerging. Many women were constructively negotiating political issues in their day-to-day life. Many of them weren't signing up to a political party before they acted – they were getting on with it. I summed this up as *DIY feminism*.

This generation inherited three basic feminist beliefs: women should not be discriminated against on the basis of their gender; women should earn equal pay; and women should have the right to control their fertility. While they recognised how fortunate they were to have inherited these rights from older generations of women, who fought damned hard to get them, they questioned feminism and some did not even want to call themselves feminists. Their main concern was getting the right result, whether or not it was backed up by a theoretical or party political platform. They also didn't want to identify with a movement that showed them to be at a disadvantage. Basically, they were a bold, gutsy group, which made me feel positive about how they'd deal with their future public and private roles.

Most of the women in the book didn't have children and had not thought through how a family would change their lives. They believed they would find a family-friendly workplace. They assumed government and business would continue to develop policies for a new era in which men's and women's work would be equally valued. They were unaware of the obstacles they were about to face when they had children. If I talked to these women now, a decade later, I'm sure they would tell a different and more complicated story.

Today, there's nothing as definite as a 'club' that overtly excludes women. In some ways it would be easier to fight back if there were. If anything, it's men's shared familiarities—the way they talk about sport, about sex and about deals—that create barriers for women, rather than any formal group opposition. There is also a lingering sense that women can do the work and men can make the decisions. We may not talk about it, but I come across it all the time. It's easier for most men to get ahead professionally. People assume that men can do the job, that they can step up into a more senior role. If a woman is being considered for a position there's still a degree of doubt about whether she can do the job. Being a woman can sometimes be a neutral factor, but it's rarely a positive one.

How do we get more women to get to the top of their fields? A stealth takeover obviously suits the times. Those of us in senior positions have to keep hiring the best people and they're often women. In the media industry we need to increase the number of women buying magazines and newspapers and going to their websites. We have to push for changes that suit women with families. A decade ago, I imagined this sort of discussion would be history by now. Unfortunately, it has become even more important to understand these workplace issues and try to work out what to do. Just as the remarkable Jessie Street did in her time.

*I have added some of Kathy's comments in response to questions. Ed*

The cost of childcare was spoken of as a reason why many women could not return to work. Kathy said: Childcare is a major issue. I just can't understand why governments don't put it right to the top of their list of priorities. But companies are at fault too. The company I work for employs mainly women but there's no onsite childcare. The pressure is always on to get back to work, but how do you do that when you can't find places for your children?

To the question of flexible hours for working mothers, Kathy said: I've worked with a lot of women with children who want flexible hours and they work so hard. You get more out of them in three days than you get out of a lot of others in five because they appreciate that flexibility.

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## CANBERRA NEWS

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### MAY LUNCH-HOUR TALK SPEAKER: JUDY HORACEK *A Conversation with Judy Horacek*

On the 2nd of March we were thrilled to enjoy the company of Judy Horacek, one of Australia's finest cartoonists.

Judy has been widely published both in Australia and overseas. Horacek cartoons are found on fridges and toilet doors throughout the world and her cartoons have appeared in numerous books, magazines and newspapers. She began cartooning as a way to try and change the world, and her work has always been concerned with feminism, women's issues in general, social justice and the environment.

In this wide-ranging conversation the audience availed themselves of the opportunity to ask Judy questions relating to her art and her feminist practice, resulting in some great discussion. We were privileged to gain an insight into Judy's views on everything from censorship of artists to the logistics of running a business and the creative process itself. Copies of Judy's books were also available for signing on the day, much to everyone's delight.

We sincerely thank Judy for her frank and open conversation with JSNWL Canberra guests. For anyone unfamiliar with Judy's work you can see her cartoons online at [www.horacek.com.au](http://www.horacek.com.au)

Many thanks also to JSNWL Canberra volunteers Patti Kendall and Margaret Pender for their support on the day with catering.

*Norelle Woolley  
Canberra Talks Co-convenor*

#### Updated Contact Details

At the last JSNWL Canberra talk we bade farewell to Kristin Blume who has left for an exciting journey to Peru, where she is doing volunteer work. Amy Rhind, who has supported us for a number of months now, has joined me as co-convenor of the Canberra talks. We are delighted that Amy has taken on this role. The best way to contact us is still via email on [jsnwlcanberra@yahoo.com.au](mailto:jsnwlcanberra@yahoo.com.au)

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## OPEN DAY AND THE OFFICIAL LAUNCH OF THE LIBRARY

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Saturday 18 March, 2006 was Open Day at the Library, the official launch of the Library taking place at 10.30 am.

A good crowd assembled for the official launch of the new venue for Jessie Street National Women's Library. Elizabeth Evatt, who is a patron of the Library, attended. Other guests included Helen Reddy, who will be this year's speaker at the Library's Annual Fundraising Luncheon at Parliament House. The Chair of the Board, Jozefa Sobski welcomed all present and introduced Cr Robyn Kemmis who told the audience that she had connections in her youth with Jessie's family, so had a particular interest in the Library and its objectives which are based on Jessie Street's philosophy and interests. She showed us a large manual she had been given when starting work, with guidelines for being a model women in the workplace. Sections she read out were very amusing when considered in today's environment.

After Cr Kemmis had declared the Library officially open, Deputy Lord Mayor Verity Firth gave a short talk, beginning by saying she is thankful she is a product of a later generation than Jessie. She felt it was very suitable for the City of Sydney to be able to offer the Library this particular location, as the adjoining suburb of Glebe had a higher than average proportion of women residents. She finished by quoting from a song, introduced to her by her mother, on the opportunities for a modern woman.

Christine Lees then welcomed and thanked the Armour family who had donated a special bookcase in memory of their relatives, Ellen and Edith Armour and Doris Ammit. She said it was appropriate that it would house works by and about Virginia Woolf who was admired by these women. The bookcase will also house the Library's small but significant Jessie Street Association collection, signed books given to Jessie by their authors.

An interesting cross-section of people came through the doors for the Open Day. Board members, volunteers and their families, Library members, contacts made through members and local people were able to meet and mingle. Some people became new members and others took away publicity material so they could find out more about the history of the Library and possibly attend the Lunch-hour Talks. The layout and location was greatly admired and all who came expressed a hope the Library would flourish in its new surroundings.

*Christine Lees, Board Member*

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## SPECIAL GIFTS

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The Board through the Sponsorship Committee has initiated a new project. This has come about in response to the need for a large amount of extra funding to meet the costs of the move to our new premises. A letter of request for members to make a higher-than-usual donation as a tax deductible Special Gift to the Library has been drawn up and will be sent out in several waves. The first letters have already brought a good response and we are very grateful to all those who have been so generous.

As a special thank-you to those who have made donations of \$500 or over, the Board has decided to put a plaque on a bay of the new compactus acknowledging the donor. We have already named six bays and are hoping to have names on many more when further letters are sent.

### DONORS

**Evelyn Abbey  
Kirsty Altenburg  
Elizabeth Evatt &  
Richard Southan Memorial  
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Maureen Kingshott &  
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Kathy McClellan  
Alice Oppen  
Helen O'Sullivan  
Ros Pesman  
Lee Rhiannon  
Annelise Thomas  
Helen Tuckey**

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## OVERSEAS NEWS

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### SNOW, SUFFRAGE AND STRAWBERRY SHORTCAKE

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*In March, two of our members, Lenore Coltheart from Canberra and Chase Livingston from San Francisco, made a pilgrimage to upper New York State. Here is Lenore's account of where they went and why they went.*

A visit to Seneca Falls in upstate New York in December 1994 first introduced me to the intriguing history of the top third of New York State. From below the 'finger lakes', up to Lake Ontario in the north, from Syracuse in the east to Rochester in the west, this was a country through which slaves were smuggled from the south to freedom across the Canadian border. The story of this 'underground railroad' is written across the landscapes of upstate New York, an area also noted for its history of nonconformist churches.

But I had just wanted to stand on the site of the historic women's rights convention held in Seneca Falls in 1848, when Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott had presented a Declaration of Sentiments asserting that 'all men and women had been created equal', the resolutions including 'the overthrowing of the monopoly of the pulpit, and for the securing to woman equal participation with men in the various trades, professions and commerce'. That meeting had changed the world – though it was another 72 years before equal voting rights were won in the USA, the first step to equal citizenship.

So in March this year I jumped at the chance to return to Seneca Falls as part of an exploratory tour of sites related to the struggle for women's rights. Guided by Chase Livingston, an expert in US suffrage memorabilia, we explored upstate New York from snowy east to wintry west, carving an extraordinary trail of women's history. There are sites of special relevance to Native American women, and others most significant to African American women, all linked in the powerful story of the political pioneers. It would take much, much longer than we had to explore every site in this historically rich area, so our focus was on three of the pioneers of women's rights, Matilda Joslyn Gage, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B Anthony.

Matilda Joslyn Gage's house in Fayetteville, near Syracuse, is being formed into a heritage & education centre by the Gage Foundation, under the expert guidance of Sally Roesch Wagner. The furnishings recall the house as it was when Matilda Gage and her

family lived there. It is a place that resonates the high points and low points of the long struggle for the vote. Perhaps one of the most poignant of its records is in the bedroom where Susan B Anthony stayed, when working on the multi-volume History of Women's Suffrage. Etched into a window pane is her tiny signature – what was she thinking as she painstakingly inscribed this so neatly? We spent most of the day with Sally, walking around that one little town, full of places that powerfully convey the 19th century connections of anti-slavery and women's rights, from grave sites to a wintry park where statues of Matilda Gage and Frederick Douglass sat working across a table set for afternoon tea. Back at the Gage house Sally served us the same afternoon tea, a very real and very sumptuous strawberry angel cake, a favourite from those days.

The next morning we were in Seneca Falls, snow falling gently as we stood in the bare remnant of the Wesleyan Methodist Church where three hundred people had taken part in the first women's rights convention on 19-20 July 1848. It was fun photographing the printing press of the suffrage newspaper, The Lily, displayed in a nearby shop window, trying to avoid capturing our own reflections too, like ghosts of women tending the machine. We left a yellow rose on the doorstep of Elizabeth Cady Stanton's house, now an historic site, and picked up some fallen chestnuts from the tree in her front garden. With snow still falling, we took turns standing in the encircling arms of a bronze statue of the suffrage pioneers meeting in the street. At last we retreated into the warmth of the Zulu, the best coffee shop north of New York city to imagine the story of women shaping democracy ringing out from Seneca Falls all around the world.

Among the significant sites we did not have time to visit was the Auburn home of Harriet Tubman, revered as the heroic 'conductor' of the underground railroad, and the house of Hester Jeffrey, another African-American fighter for women's rights. But we had to head west, our destination Rochester, where we had an engagement that could not wait. One hundred years before, 2000 people had crowded into Rochester's Presbyterian Church for the funeral of Susan B Anthony. We had invitations to a re-enactment of the event, to be held at the same site, now incorporated as the auditorium of Rochester's School of Music. This was a moving and

extraordinary event as more than a thousand people filed into the hall, in the centre a flower-covered coffin flanked by two white-gowned girls, silent as the original sentinels. The setting and the service followed the original closely, including the music, the hymns and the addresses by Hester Jeffrey and Carrie Chapman Catt. The solemn and uplifting event ended with the buzz and warmth of a reception in the Rochester Town Hall.

From there we went to the vast Rochester cemetery – someone joked that the population there was greater than the city itself. Chase knew exactly where the historic plots were and we spent some time at Susan B Anthony's grave, adding our roses to the flags and tributes earlier visitors had left. We also went to the church where the magnificent stained glass window Hester Jeffrey had commissioned in honour of Susan B Anthony is installed, complete with the famous motto 'Failure is impossible'.

The Susan B Anthony House in Rochester is another living museum of women's history run by a private foundation, well maintained and an important tourist site. It also is a centre for education in women's history, with a round-the-year program of events. But I had mixed feelings as I walked down Madison Street and up the stairs to the front door of No.17. In 1902, Vida Goldstein made the same pilgrimage to visit 82-year-old Susan B Anthony in her house, a centre of the suffrage struggle for the forty years she lived there. I was following in her footsteps – but I had no idea where Vida Goldstein nor other Australian pioneers of political reform lived and worked.

I am looking forward to exploring the historic sites of upstate New York some more. But first I plan some exploring closer to home – maybe a walking tour of Sydney that will take me by unknown sites like Rose Scott's house, and Maybanke Anderson's, and Mary Windeyer's, to honour the places they worked for us. I wonder what they served for afternoon tea?



*Chase at the monument to the 1848 Women's Convention, Seneca Falls*



## OUR LIBRARY CO-ORDINATORS

*We extend a warm welcome to Deborah Barratt and Barbara Marshall our two new Library Coordinators. They are taking up the challenge of coordinating the work of the volunteers and helping with various aspects of the functioning of the Library.*

### Deborah Barratt



I arrived in Australia in February 1988, a few days after the bicentennial celebrations, when Sydney still had a celebratory feel about it. My New Zealand partner, now my husband, and I took to life here very quickly and I can still remember the pleasure of walking to work through the Domain under a cloudless blue sky; so different from the frantic and uncomfortable early morning journey on the London underground.

Originally we had had no intention of moving to Australia permanently, but once we had children, a home and jobs that we both thoroughly enjoyed, we realised we were here to stay. In these early years I worked as a Prints and Drawings Conservator, initially in the Conservation Department of the Art Gallery of New South Wales and then for an independent conservation organisation.

However, with small children to look after, I made the not uncommon mistake of letting my skills slide and found when I wanted to re-enter the workforce that I was no longer readily employable as a conservator. I spent the next few years completing an Arts Degree at the University of Sydney, which was a wonderful opportunity to go in whatever direction my interests took me.

One of the things I most enjoyed were the hours spent in the Fisher Library ferreting out as much information as I could about whatever subject I happened to be studying. This experience left me with the conviction that libraries were the place for me, so when Jessie Street National Women's Library advertised for a volunteer Library Coordinator I leapt at the opportunity. I have not been disappointed; it is good to be in an environment where the day-to-day tasks of library administration are enhanced by absorbing conversations about contemporary artists or the relative merits of George Eliot and Charlotte Bronte or Kylie Tennant and Ruth Park.

### Barbara Marshall



I was born in a small village in Lancashire and was the first girl from my primary school to graduate from University. I was educated for my high school years at a convent school. I will always be grateful for the nurturing of an enquiring mind and the love of history and literature encouraged first by my parents, and then by my teachers. I feel extremely fortunate to be a baby boomer born in post-war England. At that time high on the government's priorities were top quality health services and the best possible education for all.

I studied History and English at Leeds University and graduated with Joint Honours. I then went to Manchester University to study for a Dip Ed. I spent the early part of my teaching career at a grammar school, and then moved to be second in department in a large comprehensive school in Hull in East Yorkshire. It was there that I met my husband. He was working for a multinational pharmaceutical company, and just as we got engaged he was invited to work in Sydney for two to four years. We were married one day and left the next day for Australia. We are still here 32 years later.

My life in Australia has been very varied. I have taught English, in both the public and private system. We have brought up three children. I have helped my husband start and maintain a business. I have gained a qualification in tour guiding and last year completed an MA in Literature at Sydney University. My favourite course, and best marks, were in Australian Women's Literature.

At present I enjoy my garden, reading, being an active member of a local Shakespeare group and a poetry group. I look forward to a rewarding and mutually beneficial association with the Library. A bonus of travelling into the city from Dural is that it gives me lots of time to listen to books I have downloaded onto my i-pod!

## DONATIONS OF MATERIAL

We thank the following people and publishing companies for generously donating material to the Library.

Jan Biber  
Jenelle Brangwin  
Merry Cooper  
Joan Dwyer  
Shirley Jones  
Beverley Kingston  
Melody Mandeno  
Robyn Mathison  
Bridget McKern  
Connie Peters  
Jane Pollard  
Helen Reddy  
Jill Roe  
Jozefa Sobski  
Jan Wilson  
Elinor Wrobel

ABC Sound & Reference Library  
Association of Civilian Widows  
(Liverpool Branch)  
Clouston & Hall  
IATSIS  
The Federation Press  
The Text Publishing Company  
Unicorn Press  
University of NSW Press  
Wakefield Press

We are very grateful to **Mr Baillieu Myer** for donating to the Library an enlarged reproduction of a little-known photograph of Jessie in her younger days.

We also thank **Mrs Belinda Mackay** for paying for the framing of this photograph of her mother. It is now on the wall at the entrance to the Library and is a fitting complement to the oil portrait of Jessie, which we also have hanging in the Library.

*continued from page 5*

it's relevant to the migrant experience. (Yota here read two poems, 'Departure' and 'The Machine', which reflect the migrant experience and finished her talk by reading 'The Weaver', 'To Autumn' and 'Travelling'.)

*Abbreviated by Shirley Jones from notes supplied by Yota Krilli*

Yota read the following poems. Poems appearing in her book *Triptych*, have page numbers attached.  
*At Sydney's Fish Market, Brushstrokes* (p 76), *Rosie* (p 24), *Coxs River* (p 30), *Raelene* (p 68), *Wolves, Fear, Summer* (p 90), *The Cheese Maker* (p 102), *Pedalling* (148), *The Epilogue* (p 118), *Memory, Hitler's Playground, Lament, In This City* (p 64), *Departure* (p 124), *The Machine* (p 130), *The Cabal, The Weaver* (p 104), *To Autumn* (p 54) and *Travelling* (p 18). Ed

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## NEWS OF MEMBERS

Congratulations to **Kate Grenville** who has won the prestigious Commonwealth Writers' Prize for her book *The Secret River*. She has been practising her curtsy to the Queen, who will present her with the prize in London in May. *The Secret River* has also been short-listed for the Miles Franklin Award.

In 2001, Kate's book *The Idea of Perfection* won the highly sought-after UK Orange Prize awarded for the best novel in English written by a woman.

Congratulations to **Alexis Yeadon** who has been promoted to Chief Librarian of the US Information Resource Center, part of the Office of Public Affairs at the Embassy of the United States of America in Canberra. Before her promotion she was employed as reference librarian.

An American who married an Australian and emigrated to Canberra in 1985, Alexis celebrates 30 years of librarianship this coming September. She has worked in a high school library in Pennsylvania, in public libraries both here and the USA, and with the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission. Alexis has been a dual citizen since 1994.

We send our congratulations to **Terry Underwood**, a member from Katherine in the Northern Territory. Her autobiography, *In the Middle of Nowhere*, was first published by Bantam Books in 1999. This year sees it in its 16th reprint. Terry's life in the outback has obviously been of great interest to a great number of people over a great number of years!

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### GRANT APPLICATION

#### City of Sydney Local Community Grant

We have applied to the City of Sydney for a \$5000 Local Community Grant to produce a 30-minute documentary detailing the experiences of Vietnamese women and their daughters who settled in Sydney during and after the Vietnamese War. Dr Pam Scott, a new volunteer, who has worked in Vietnam for twelve years, will manage the project. The \$5000 sought would enable us to purchase the equipment necessary to produce and view the documentary. We will be using the equipment thereafter to produce DVDs on other women's groups in the community and to enable researchers to access our DVDs, as well as our collection of audio- and videotapes..

**Michele Sacco** recently stood for a bi-election for Ashfield Council in Sydney on 29 April. She says:

'I chose to stand for Council, based on a commitment to The Greens and to the area. The State Government has decreed that the Inner West should have its population increased by 32% and I am opposed to that as the infrastructure is not capable of supporting such an increase. I have always been interested in politics so thought that I would give it a go. I am a fairly shy person, so found the initial doorknocking very daunting, but then enjoyed talking and mostly listening to the community. We got 22% of primary votes, so were pretty happy with that.'

Michele says that she sees standing for local government as a right for women, not a privilege, and feels indebted to those suffragettes who fought for such rights.

We are very pleased to hear that **Marjan Ashna** is now the happy mother of son, Aryan, born on 17 February 2006. She is on maternity leave, but is hoping to find a child-care place for Aryan when he is six months old so that she can return to work. Marjan joined us at the Library as a volunteer soon after she had arrived in Australia from Iran. She left us when she took a full-time job at Wenona School, but has periodically been able to help with newsletter mailouts.

For news of members **Lenore Coltheart** and **Chase Livingston**, see story on page 8.



### NEW MEMBERS

A warm welcome to our new members

Kay Batstone  
Ann Berriman  
Clare Daly  
Joan de Botton  
Roseann Dengate  
Julie Graeme  
Helen Hill  
Melody Mandeno  
Geraldine O'Brien  
Pauline O'Connor  
Shirley Patten  
Connie Peters  
Helen Reddy  
Pam Scott  
Helen Wood

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## MONETARY DONATIONS

We thank all those who have so generously made donations to the Library. Such donations help us meet the day-to-day running expenses of the Library. We appreciate your support.

Jennifer Alison  
Baiba Berzins  
Margaret Bettison  
Joan Bielski  
Ruth Callaghan  
Anne Conway  
Josephine Conway  
Marie de Lepervanche  
Anne Deveson  
Elizabeth Douglas  
Anne Edgeworth  
Della Elliott  
Judith Harrington  
Nola Harris  
Mary Henderson  
Sybil Jack  
Sandy Killick  
Beverley Kingston  
Josephine Krelle  
Helen Lawrence  
Mary Maltby  
Jeanette McAlpine  
Elizabeth McDonald  
Jean McGrady  
Sue Milliken  
Verna Morgan  
Geraldine O'Brien  
Diane Openshaw  
Fiona Ratcliffe  
Helen Reddy  
Margot Simington  
Sue Steggall  
Denise Thomas  
Rosalind Wallis  
Gill Watson  
Lola Woodward  
Alexis Yeadon

City of Sydney Resident's Network



NEW CENTRE OPENS IN GREECE

The Research Centre for Gender Equality (KETHI), founded originally in 1994, now functions centrally in Athens and regionally in Thessaloniki, Patras, Heraklion and Volos. It is supervised and funded by the General Secretariat for Equality of the Ministry of the Interior, Public Administration and Decentralisation.

The Centre aims at contributing decisively to the elimination of discrimination against women. It carries out research and studies and implements national and European action projects on gender equality issues. Through their studies they have a comprehensive list of publications. Among their activities they 'sensitise, educate and train agencies, groups, organisations and individuals regarding gender equality issues in their own country and co-operate with European and international organisations to promote mutual exchange of information'. You can get more information about the Centre from their website: <http://www.kethi.gr>

JSNWL will be liaising with them and exchanging newsletters.



The Library's signage is very prominent. This remark was overheard in a No 501 bus as it was nearing the Library. "I thought we were in Harris Street, but it says up there 'Jessie Street'."

I wish to:  join the Library  renew my membership  make a donation

Date ..... / ..... / ..... Title Ms / Miss / Mrs / Dr / Other

Name .....

Address .....

Tel (h) ..... (w) ..... Fax .....

Email (please print) .....

- Member \$45  Concession \$20
- Supporting member \$100  Life member \$500
- Organisation \$100  Student \$10 (conditions apply)

I wish to make a donation of \$ ..... (donations over \$2 are tax deductible)

I enclose a cheque/cash./money order for \$.....

OR Please charge \$ ..... to my  Mastercard  Visa

Name of cardholder .....

Card No ..... Expiry date .... / ....

Signature .....

I was introduced to the Library by .....

AutoDebit Authorisation

- I authorise JSNWL to charge this, and all future membership renewals as they fall due, to the credit card number given above on this form
- I authorise JSNWL to charge \$ ..... annually to the above credit card as a donation to the Library

Signature

Become a Volunteer

- I would like to help the Library by becoming a volunteer (You will be contacted so that an interview can be arranged)

Please forward the completed form to:

Jessie Street National Women's Library GPO Box 2656 Sydney NSW 2001

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*To keep women's words, women's works, alive and powerful -- Ursula Le Guin*