FROM THE COMMITTEE

Our mid-year event will be a tour of the newly renovated Mechanics Institute in Sturt Street at 11 am on Friday 30th May. The building has now been returned to a vision of its former glory and is ready again to play an important part of the fabric of Ballarat’s cultural and historical being.

Frank Martin will act as Treasurer for the rest of the year as Walter Robson is still unwell.

Acting on business arising from the AGM, Roy Schrieke and Robert Hook are to liaise with Clare Gervasoni re an Interpretive Panel and the Display Cabinet.

Lunch will be at Prospects Restaurant at the SMB Campus at 12.30 on Friday 30th May for an approximate cost of $15 for a two course meal plus drinks.

Would you please notify Ian McKee anneianmckee@ozemail.com.au Ph: 5332 7604 or P.O. Box 359 W Ballarat West by Tuesday 27th May.

FROM THE 2007 AGM

Twenty two members attended the AGM following the Vice Chancellor David Battersby’s luncheon at Mt Helen on Monday 17th December. The President invited Ms Leanne Pitman, University Librarian and Ms Clare Gervasoni to address the meeting. Ms Pitman told of various recent developments in the library, and how it had grown over the years she had been there, now having 30.5 equivalent full time staff, the actual number employed being 45 people. She also said that over half the new acquisitions are in electronic form, rather than monographs although these remain an important part of the collection. The library also removes books that are out of date, placing these in archives. She is also trying to get the State library material held in Ballarat to be available for Ballarat users.

She thanked the various people who had helped with the historical collections, and said that any one who volunteers for such work would be able to join the library as free users.

Her major announcement at this point was that Zig Plavina’s work on the biographical records of former staff of the university and its predecessor institutions was to be recognised by calling it the Zig Plavina Biographical Collection. Zig Plavina said how honoured he felt to be so remembered, and told a little of his work, emphasising that it had been great fun.

Ms Gervasoni talked about new historical records, including various donations from past staff and other people. She emphasised that any material collected was valuable as it gave insight into the Institution’s past from a human point of view as well as that given by the more formal records.

The President thanked Ms Pitman and Ms Gervasoni for their time and presentations.

The Executive and Committee, listed in the panel, were duly nominated and elected.

General Business and the President’s report are recorded on other newsletter pages.
HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE 2007 PRESIDENT’S REPORT

Alan Ballard

The President thanked the Executive for their help, and in particular Roy Schrieke for his work with Library liaison and the UB collection, also the Ballarat Treasures nomination. Roy has also retired from exam invigilation after 10 years of service. Roy has been particularly conscientious in the way he approached this task and has made many suggestions for streamlining the procedures. He also played a key role in the training of supervisors from outside UB.

Thanks to Graham Hawley for his efforts as Newsletter editor. This is a vital communication link with our members. Also to Clare Gervasoni for her assistance in providing information for our newsletter, for what is currently happening at UB and what has happened in the past when our members were working there.

The newsletter is now available on the UB website alumni page which has a section on the latest news from UBESA and a link to download a pdf version of our newsletter. Thanks to Vivienne Wittwer for providing this information, and to Colin Kline for his contact with the UB and Vivienne, re the implementation of a new data base.

A special mention should be made of Zig Plavina for his work on the UB Collection. Zig has been a tireless volunteer since he retired from full time work. Our best wishes to Zig for a recovery to health, as he fights the big C.

2007 AGM notes

Display cabinets and Interpretive boards. Roy Schrieke says the University needs to present a proposal to us. Robert Hook and Roy Schrieke are to follow this up.

Frank Martin asked whether the label on the biographical collection box was the final label, and also was the box a suitable container for the documents. Ken Clements said that the box was well built and would be available for research purposes. It was moved Roy Schrieke seconded Frank Martin that the association provide a brass plaque, value up to $100, in consultation with the library to replace the current paper one. Carried. Colin Kline is to put all the biographical data into digital form so that multiple copies can be kept.

Colin Kline reported that he was consulted about a possible new data base program for the University, that Oracle has been chosen and that UBESA will have place in this from probably mid 2008. We will also have a link from the University web site.

Frank Martin suggested that UBESA visit the synchrotron at Monash University for its mid year function, generally accepted with the further proviso of a lunch at a suitable place near Monash.

Tom Norwood commented on the lack of new members, and asked if retiring staff were told of us. He also suggested posters in the various staff rooms of the University. Agreed a good idea.

Frank Hurley suggested that the University could use retired staff in its regional engagement role, and suggested we offer such support to the Vice Chancellor.

Roy Schrieke thanked Alan Ballard for his services to UBESA during the past year and also over many years previously. Carried with acclamation.

Roy Taylor

The ABC Retirement Club’s Christmas dinner in Melbourne in December, which also marked the 75th anniversary of the broadcaster, gave Harry Lehrer and Roy Taylor the chance to catch up after parting company at the Ripponlea studios in 1962.

In recent years, both Harry and Roy have become Probians, so their dinner conversation moved from the early days of television and their work with the film department to Probus matters. Harry is a foundation member of Beaumaris Heights, has served two terms as president and is a life member. Roy is a member of the Probus Club of Ballarat Goldfields and past committee member.

They met at what was then ABV2 in February 1958, where they worked in the film department, prior to the advent of video. Harry was a cine cameraman and Roy was the assistant to the film manager. Roy recalls working with a crew covering runner Herb Elliott’s training camp on the dunes at Portsea with the famous late Percy Cerutty, who was a hard taskmaster.

Roy resigned from the ABC in January 1962 to take on a role with the regional television station BTV6 in Ballarat while Harry remained with the national broadcaster for a little while longer before moving into the private sector.

For a couple of hours at the reunion dinner at the Kelvin Club, both Probus and the ABC fuelled many stories and friendships were re-kindled.
PROFILE: PETER BLIZZARD

Since retiring from the Art School at UB, Peter has been working full time on his sculpture and painting. The highlight of this period was an invitation to hold a one man exhibition of his work “Sacred Land 2006” at the Hakone Open Air Museum, Japan, with 40 sculptural pieces and 15 paintings. He is represented in many Japanese collections.

I met up with Peter during the inaugural Lorne outdoor sculpture exhibition at the end of October 2007 where in marked contrast to his experience in Japan, he was repairing some vandal damage to the mounting on one of his exhibits that had been pushed over during the previous night. Peter’s two exhibits did manage to survive the 10 days outdoor display.

The sculptor lives deep in the Wombat Forest at Greendale in his stone house / studio that he has built himself over a period of years. There he leads a slow life close to nature, sharing the forest with wallabies and other wildlife.

Peter tries to show how Australian History and Landscapes fit into contemporary society in his artistic work. He says “The connections between time, place, the environment, nature and mankind. The sacredness of nature. The effect that man has had on his environment. How man should venerate the earth and walk lightly on it. The spirit of the earth in relation to culture and race. The inner spirituality of all people. These are the ideas and issues I think about when I am making sculpture.”

His exhibition in Japan during 2006 was part of the 30th anniversary of the “Nara Treaty” the treaty of friendship and cooperation between Australia and Japan which was signed back in 1976.

In Ballarat, Peter is best known for his work in the design of the Australian Ex Prisoners of War Memorial.
A group Ballarat School of Mines graduates working in WA held a reunion at Kalgoorlie around the same time this photo was taken. The stately Alfred Mica Smith, seated in the second row was high on their minds as the photographer provided 'a graceful memento to their old chief Prof. Alfred Mica Smith.' With the photo was a cheque to defray Prof. Smiths expenses on a Christmas trip to the west; but considering the extreme heat ... his old students [hoped] he would avail himself of a more pleasant trip in milder regions.

One graduate, William Corbould, recalled his first visit to SMB: 'From the Registrar's Office I was led to be introduced to the Professor of Chemistry, one Mica Smith. The initial encounter gave me little encouragement - his large laboratory was filled with hundreds of bottles bearing strange labels with queer symbols on them. My heart sank. At the first opportunity I grabbed my hat and made for the door, but the good professor called me back. I pointed out that I was never any good at school ... so it was no use pretending to be clever enough to understand all those weird symbols!

The Professor told me not to worry about that and took me to one of the benches where he found a blowpipe and a charcoal block. Mixing together two powders from bottles on the shelf he transferred a sample to the charcoal and directed the bunsen flame onto it. Soon it began to melt and a white bead appeared in front of my eyes. He then took a test tube and added a little colourless liquid from each of two bottles. A beautiful dark blue colour appeared. My interest was won.'

Corbould had a very successful career and bequested £6000 to SMB 'for the purpose of founding a scholarship to commemorate the memory of the late Alfred Mica Smith'.

Highlights of careers of other staff members depicted can be found on the UB honour Roll (www.ballarat.edu.au/curator)

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**SCHOOL OF MINES STAFF 1900**

story by Clare Gervasoni