

Adelaidean

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NEWS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF ADELAIDE

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Kurna language subject 'begins at home'

The revival of the language of the Aboriginal people of the Adelaide plains is being recognised with the establishment of a subject in Kurna language at the University of Adelaide.

Professor of Linguistics Peter Mühlhäusler said he hoped Adelaide Linguistics could offer other courses relevant to South Australian Aboriginal languages and establish itself as a centre for training and retraining of teachers of Australia's indigenous languages.

As far as is known, a woman called Ivaritji was the last fluent speaker of Kurna. She died in 1929 and the language probably ceased being used fluently on a daily basis some time last century.

However, enough of the original language is known to enable it to be taught to children at the Kurna Plains School, and to adults at Inbarendi College and Tauondi (the

Aboriginal Community College, Port Adelaide).

Now, students at the University of Adelaide will be able to learn some of the language, study its structure, understand the context in which the language existed at the time of colonisation, and appreciate the circumstances under which the language is being revived.

The second semester subject will feature guest lectures by Kurna people and excursions to important Kurna sites and neighbouring regions.

Interest in rekindling the language had its genesis in the resurgence in Aboriginal identity and political activism in the late 1960s and early 1970s, and work with the Kurna language began in 1989/90.

Linguist and University of Adelaide PhD student Rob Amery said Kurna could be taught, despite an absence of speakers or sound recordings.

He said German missionaries Teichelmann and Schürmann produced a vocabulary and a sketch grammar last century.

The only available texts are translations of two speeches given by Governor Gawler in 1838 and 1840,



INSIDE

The University of Adelaide will confer just under 2800 degrees at its annual Commemoration Ceremonies this month, with almost 2100 graduands receiving their degrees in person. In this issue, we feature some of those new graduates — see stories on pages 4, 5, 7 and 8.

Not another literary hoax! This time, it seems, at least one former South Australian has fooled not only literary judges but High School curriculum advisers and Aboriginal readers as well. Writing under the name Wanda Koolmatrie, Leon Carmen (or whoever he represents: there may be more to this story than meets the eye [*The Australian* 29/3/97]) managed to win the Nita May Dobbie National Award for a first novel written by a woman. In South Australia his book, *My Own Sweet Time*, has been studied by students in Aboriginal Studies courses. Who cares? Does it matter?

Carmen's attitude is one that some literary critics will identify with. "People are people. Books are books." In other words, when we are dealing with fiction, anything goes. This argument has also been used in Helen Darville's defence. Postmodern critics have liberated books from their authors and when they look for meanings in texts they are scarcely interested in what an author might have intended.

Tensions exist in postmodern approaches to texts. On the one hand, hierarchies of all kinds are challenged and dismantled. The notion of a master narrative or "most important story" is replaced by an acceptance of differing versions of the past, versions of truth, all valid. Postmodernism, then, opens up spaces for minority voices to speak and be heard. Wanda Koolmatrie is allowed to speak. On the other hand, though, when Wanda Koolmatrie's authority to speak as an Aboriginal woman is challenged — that is to say, when the author of a supposedly Aboriginal narrative is discovered to be neither Aboriginal nor a woman — we can invoke postmodernism as we shrug our shoulders and say, what does it matter? Fictions are lies anyway; the boundaries between fiction and autobiography are blurred.

Such tensions cannot be resolved in purely theoretical (Western theoretical) terms. In a case like the Koolmatrie hoax, cultural boundaries have been crossed. The effects are real and far-reaching.

In assuming an Aboriginal identity as a writer, in targeting a small, government-assisted press, whose function is to put Aboriginal writing on the shelves of bookshops, Leon Carmen has betrayed the trust of his publishers, of tax-payers who support his publishers through government funding, and of readers who look to ois teo oc 0.11ey(A-4 TD onll&betona51 0.01 faÚlite/3)]TJ T* 0.ve b-

Push to make most of diverse environmental programs

A working party on postgraduate environmental education has proposed a range of strategies to ensure this core activity of the University of Adelaide is coordinated and marketed in a comprehensive and integrated way. Chief among the report's 24 recommendations is the creation of a new post of Academic Director of Environment Programs and Teaching (ADEPT) and an Environment Board.

The report, "Coordinating Diversity", is the work of a Postgraduate Environment Program Working Party established by the Dean of Graduate Studies, Dr David Liljegren, and supported by Quality Funding. It will go to Academic Board for discussion soon.

Dr Liljegren said the impetus for the working party was the realisation that the enormous range of environmental research and teaching at the University of Adelaide was not being coordinated and promoted in a way that could maximise its value and effectiveness.

"You need only examine our *Directory of Environmental Research and Postgraduate Education* to appreciate the breadth of expertise available here," Dr Liljegren said. "Ironically, the strength of the environmental program — its diversity and multi-disciplinary nature — is also its weakness. Everyone is part of it, but no-one owns it.

"Because it covers all Divisions of the University, it's difficult for peo-

The News IN BRIEF

NEW UNIVERSITY DON

Former South Australian Premier Mr Don Dunstan has been awarded the title of Adjunct Professor in the University of Adelaide's Centre for Labour Studies.

Mr Dunstan will undertake research in two areas. One project is a comparative study of the effect of 'economic rationalist' policies on living standards and social justice in Australia and overseas, with a particular focus on labour market factors and the deregulation and privatisation of the public sector.

The other is a study of the impact of international intervention on the social fabric of Fiji, with particular attention to Australian foreign policy and the 'economic rationalist' policies of the IMF and the World Bank.

Mr Dunstan practised law in Adelaide and Fiji until he entered the House of Assembly in 1953. During his political life he held the positions of Attorney-General, Premier and Treasurer, as well as several other ministerial portfolios.

LEGAL EDUCATION SEMINAR

Professor Wayne Westling, Elmer Sahlstrom Senior Fellow in Trial Law at the University of Oregon Law School, will present the next seminar in the Continuing Legal Education series run by the University of Adelaide Law School.

Professor Westling's seminar (in the Ligertwood Building on Thursday 15 May from 5.30pm to 7.30pm) is entitled "Suing for Serious Criminal Injury" and addresses the choice of a victim between being involved with a criminal prosecution and commencing a civil action for damages for some act that would constitute a crime, such as a civil assault action for a sex crime.

The seminar will be of particular interest to those who advise victims of crime, as well as litigators. Registration and cost details available from Linda Lambie, Law School, tel 8303 5582, fax 8303 4344.

PREDICTIVE MICROBIOLOGY FOUNDER IN ADELAIDE

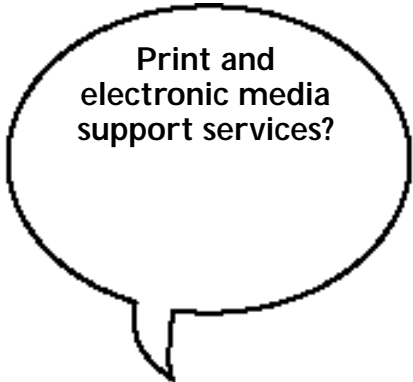
One of the founders of the field of predictive microbiology will deliver a lecture in the Department of Chemical Engineering on Wednesday 30 April at 4.00pm. He is Dr TA Roberts, formerly head of Microbiology at the Institute of Food Research in Reading, UK.

Predictive Microbiology is a relatively new scientific field which arose out of a research program funded by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food in the UK from 1989 to 1994.

This program aimed to model the growth, survival and death responses of the common bacterial pathogens in food against the main controlling factors (temperature, pH, water availability).

As food systems become more complex there is increasing need for collaboration across disciplines. The University is involved in this area of research through the multi-disciplinary Food Technology Research Group based in the Department of Chemical Engineering.

Dr Roberts will talk about the origins, problems and prospects of predictive microbiology for biochemical engineers. For further information about the lecture, contact Dr Ken Davey, tel 8303 5457.



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This month's commemoration ceremonies are cause for celebration not just among students and their families, but also for the University of Adelaide's Department of Clinical Nursing.

Almost 100 nursing students — representing the department's first intake of students last year — will receive their awards in Bonython Hall on Wednesday, 23 April.

They include 75 Graduate Diploma students, 11 Masters students and four PhD students.

And for one of the department's clinical lecturers, Ms Tina Jones, there's an extra reason to celebrate — because she is also one of the graduates.

Ms Jones, a clinical lecturer who specialises in cardiac nursing, will share the stage with some of her own students, having completed the department's Master of Nursing Science.

Although she qualified as a nurse more than 10 years ago, Ms Jones upgraded her qualification to the ter-

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Going to a conference this year?

If you will be attending a national or international conference this year, then consider volunteering to host it in Adelaide.

The Adelaide Convention and Tourism Authority (ACTA) is working with the University of Adelaide to bring more conferences to Adelaide. We are here to help you and provide complimentary support from the earliest bidding process to the final realisation of the conference.

We provide an impartial 'one stop shop' and can help you with all of your conference needs.

So if you will be attending a conference in 1997, why not take a package of information on Adelaide, including a complimentary promotional video.

For details of support provided, and to obtain your Adelaide package, contact Ms Anne-Marie Quinn on 8212 4794 or the Vice-Chancellor's Office on ext 33011. Email: aquinn@registry.adelaide.edu.au



Adelaide scientists weave a (World Wide) Web

Students and teachers in South Australia and across the world will benefit from a new environmental science project at the University of Adelaide.

A team of scientists from the University of Adelaide has just won a grant for more than \$40,000 from the Federal Department of Industry, Science and Tourism to develop a World Wide Web site linking environmental research on the Murray River to the school curriculum.

The WWW site, called The Murray-Darling River System – a Web of Life, will present a broad ecological view of issues vital to the environmental health and social and environmental value of the Murray-Darling Basin, publicising environmental research developments and revealing their social and economic significance.

This project focuses on the vital economic and social role that the Murray-Darling River System plays in South Australia and highlights our dependency on upstream environmental and water management.

The initiative will build on past and existing projects to produce a resource

useful to teachers and students and accessible to the wider community, raising the public awareness of environmental science research and its social relevance.

“This is an exciting project bringing together the research expertise of the University of Adelaide with the teaching skills of South Australian science teachers to develop curriculum material covering the Murray River — a vital resource for all South Australians,” said Mr Ian Roberts, Director of the University of Adelaide’s Science Communication Centre and leader of the project.

The Science Communication Centre will collaborate with zoologist Dr Keith Walker and geologist Dr Vic Gostin and the SA Science Teachers Association to develop and deliver engaging WWW-based material — closely matching curriculum objectives of the target school audiences and bridging the gap between front-line research and secondary education.

The project is supported by the Department of the Environment and Natural Resources, Water Watch and the Ngapartji Cooperative Multimedia Centre.

—Ian Roberts

The Australian Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology has recently recognised the research efforts of two postgraduate students from the University of Adelaide’s Department of Horticulture, Viticulture and Oenology.

Mr Dean Naylor, who is in the final year of his postgraduate studies on stress proteins in Professor Peter Høj’s laboratory,

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GUEST COMMENTARY continued from page 2

A similar discrepancy exists in the ways in which contemporary Aboriginal writing is received: there is considerable interest in the “phenomenon” alongside a desire to “contain” what it represents: to prevent it from “spreading” beyond the safe parameters of “authenticity”.

Groups of all kinds (family, national, racial) understandably seek to maintain their distinctive identities. However, we all exist in the same world, although we may perceive it differently, and it is in the areas of overlap (of knowledge, of place, of experience) that we can begin to approach and understand each other.

But there is little to explore in the Carmen hoax in terms of the problematic tensions and contradictions that might interest a contemporary literary critic. *Her Own Sweet Time* appears to be nothing but a calculated attempt to exploit current receptiveness to Aboriginal writing. Carmen’s motive (and that of anyone who may have helped him) seems to have been primarily personal gain — to see the book published. Carmen has no apparent interest in what Aboriginality might mean in terms of an evolving Australian identity. His young narrator confesses that fortune has snatched her from the “sordid”

scene of Aboriginal existence to set her on her feet in suburban Adelaide, from whence she ventures forth to experience life.

The fact that Leon Carmen claims that “black people that [he’s] known aren’t likely to get excited about something as abstract” (*Advertiser* 13/3/97) as a literary hoax indicates how little he understands the culture he has transgressed. It may be true that many Aboriginal people “don’t want to talk about blackness and whiteness all the time”. But silence can mask denial or hurt. Silence can be one of the mechanisms of survival.

An Aboriginal student in the Arts Foundation course at the University of Adelaide, trying to explain to me how she was affected by this particular case of stolen identity, how she felt as if something had been taken from her, concluded that the hurt was beyond words. I have to agree with her.

When Leon Carmen assumed an Aboriginal identity merely to facilitate the publication of a book he stepped outside the arena of contemporary literary debate and backwards into a colonial past. Does it matter? Of course it does.

'Number-cruncher' and science fiction buff is Alumni Medallist

Mathematics and Computer Science student Mr Duncan Richer is this year's recipient of one of the University of Adelaide's most prestigious awards — the Alumni University Medal.

Alumni IN BRIEF

ANRS Graduation and Prizegiving Dinner

Graduands, students, members of staff, and other alumni are all invited to the Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences Graduation and Prize-giving Dinner, to be held on Thursday 1 May in the Phar Lap Room at the Morphettville Function Centre (Morphettville Race Course).

6:30pm for 7:00pm; \$40 per person. DJ and dancing after dinner. Tickets are available from the Faculty Office at Roseworthy (phone 8303 7818) or the Inquiries Office at Waite (phone 8303 7308).

Graduation dinner for Economics and Commerce

Economics and Commerce alumni who would like to attend the Economics and Commerce Graduation Dinner to be held on Monday 28 April are invited to contact Helen Pountney at the School of Economics, tel 8303 4497.

The Dinner will be at the Terrace Ballroom, Stamford Plaza Hotel, North Terrace from 7:00pm. \$31 per person. RSVP Friday 18 April.

There will be a brief prize-giving ceremony toward the end of the dinner, and the evening will conclude with dancing.

Further news about the establishment of an Economics and Commerce Chapter of the Alumni Association will be available soon.

Virginia Tech honours alumnus

Engineering graduate Professor Chris Fuller (BE 73 PhD 78) has received one of the most prestigious awards presented to staff at Virginia Tech in the US — the Alumni Research Award. Full details later.

Law Graduation Celebration

The John Bray Law Chapter is hosting a Reception for new Law Graduates to be held in The University of Adelaide Club at 4:30pm following the commemoration ceremony on Wednesday 30 April.

Members of the Chapter, staff of the Law School, and members of the legal profession and judiciary are invited to join in celebrating the new graduates' admission to their degrees.

Further information is available from the Alumni Office: 8303 4275.

Visit to Waite Campus Science Museum

The Alumni Association is offering a guided tour of the Science Museum at Waite Campus on Sunday 4 May at 11:00am.

See the Mawson Collection and an exhibition of photography by Frank Hurley, who accompanied Mawson to the Antarctic.

A section of the museum reconstructs the old Waite Laboratories. Other exhibitions on display include the Florey Collection, which was set up to commemorate Adelaide's Nobel Laureate Lord Florey.

Bring a picnic basket if the weather is nice and enjoy lunch in the gardens of Urrbrae House.

Call 8303 4275 to make a booking. Bring your family and friends.

Louise Nowland took up the clarinet by accident but will graduate on Wednesday 30 April with a first class Honours degree in music and as the winner of a University Medal and the Doris West Postgraduate Scholarship for Women, which has enabled her to proceed to a Masters coursework degree in Music performance.

Ms Nowland is the fourth woman graduate to