Admin seminar goes 'bush'

by Tammie Reid
photos by Karen Parke

AT the end of last year's Admin seminar, Pemberton's Clerical Officer Anne Lillie, representing a small team of organisers from the Southern Forest Region, put in a strong bid to host the next seminar – down south in the tall forests of Pemberton.

Corporate Services Director John Byrne had his doubts. It had never been held out of Perth, it was a long way to go and he forecast attendance would be poor.

Anne and her team still took on the job and ran what has unanimously been seen as a tremendous success and the template for the next seminar in 2000. And John was the first to express congratulations.

The idea was to integrate field visits with CALM operational staff, experience first-hand some of the ecology and forest management work of the Department as professional development while still scheduling administration strategy, updates and issues during a more traditional seminar program.

The attention to detail that is a strength in admin people was obvious. The excellent rapport with the Regional and District staff meant the field components were tailored for the group. Spotlighting by bus was a bit of a challenge. The animals co-operated and many a woylie and ringtailed possum were caught in the bright beams reaching out like high security prison from the bus windows.

More than 140 people attended the three-day-event. Four Directors and the Executive Director presented to the group while all three Southern Forest District Managers plus a Business Unit manager shared the seminar chairing role. Several Branch managers also attended and took part over the three days. Outside guest speakers were included in the program and two workshops were held during the plenary sessions.

Many comments were made that the distance was a plus for the conference. When the seminar is held in Perth, metro-based staff tend to pick the eyes out of the program and attend only the sessions that are relevant to them. In this way, the seminar becomes more like an information session rather than a time to connect with other professionals in the admin area. Over the three days in Pemberton, there was a fostering of discussion, ideas and networking that comes as people put faces to the telephone contacts with whom they've been dealing for many years, yet never seen.

The formal dinner set the team spirit tone for much of the following days together. The dinner show was called 'The not so CALM Admin Footy Show' hosted by Tammie Reid and Rod Annear complete with player panel—Mark Nielsen, Natalie Burton and Jan Rayner—and complete with 'Sam's mail bag' and team match ups for the play-offs. These were the Corner Cutter Regionals versus the Admin Stingies Line up.

There were in depth interviews with the captain/coach of CALM, Syd Shea, with frank discussion of salary capping and forecasts about new clubs entering the competition.

A highlight of the night was the remarkable fast footwork demonstration by Southern Forest Regional Admin staff, Tanyia Read and Rob Hopkins, with two other dancers from Manjimup. They treated the dinner guests to Irish tap dancing that inspired the evening to break out into dance and celebration.

Where to next? People are a little nervous in feeling they have to match the success of Pemberton. But Anne and her committee—Graham Norrish, Janine East, Karen Parke, Judy Flannigan, Cheryl Cassidy and John Gillard—have a number of pointers that they see are the secret ingredients for success, wherever the seminar is to be held.

First, have a small group willing to work together to get the details seen to. It's the finishing touches that help people appreciate the whole.

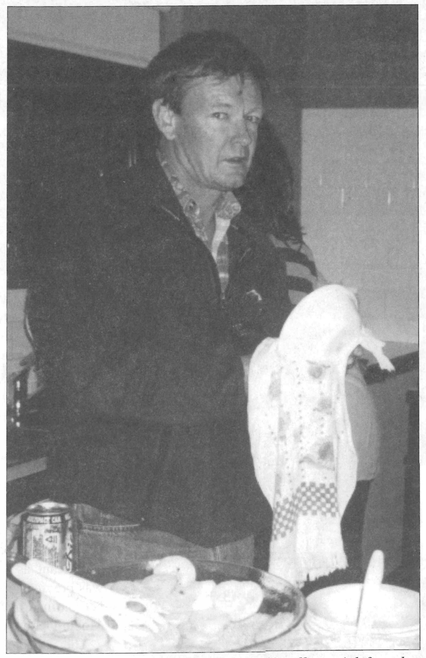
Second, it's vital to have the support and endorsement from the District and Regional manager so this work is seen as part of your works program and the support is there when the pressure comes on closer to the actual event. "John Gillard's (Pemberton District manager) support and involvement was greatly appreciated by the organising commitee," said Anne Lilley.

Third, seek and follow past participants' feedback to get the program content on track. You don't have to do this bit on your own, there are always ideas and suggestions to guide you at this stage.

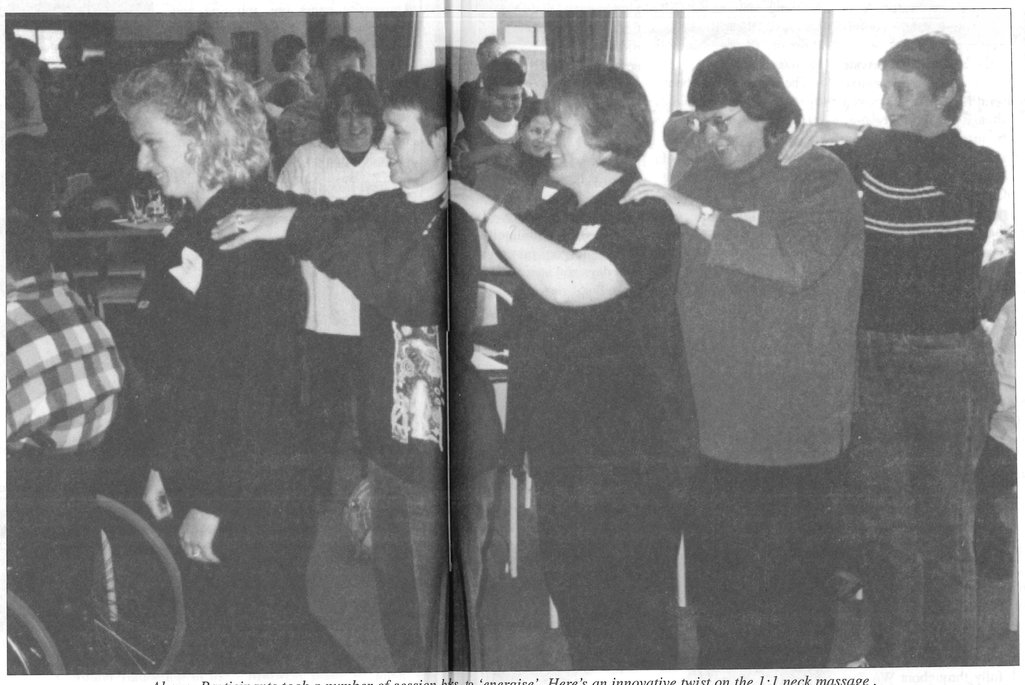
And fourth, JUST DO IT – in true admin style.

Group activities were a key part of the conference. Here, Judi Pitcher (Calm Timber Technology) left, Steve Whitesmith and Barb Kennington (Wheatbelt), Helen Ferguson (Corporate Services, Como) and Deb Italiano (Harvey) make a 'bridge over troubled waters' modelled on the Valley of the Giant's Tree Top Walk. Noel Davey (Mid West) is somewhat obscured.

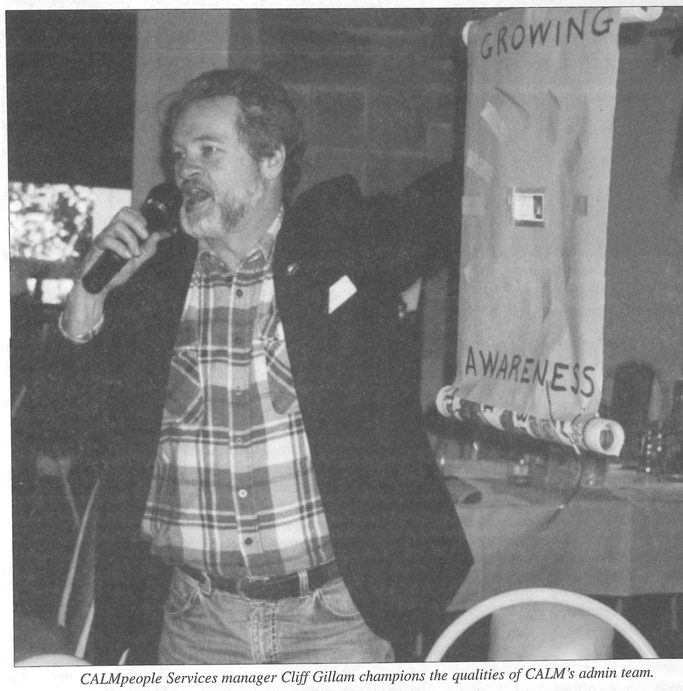
The Not So CALM Admin Footy Show was the evening's entertainment at the conference dinner. Here is the closing song – Where has all the money gone? From left are Mark Nielsen, Jan Rayner, Don Herbertson, Natalie Burton, Rod Annear, Tammie Reid and Rob Hopkins.



Left: Admin officers Natalie Burton (Dwellingup) left and Leonie Henderson (Yanchep National Park) show the latest 'fashions in the field'—steel toe-cap boots!
Above: Peter Ryan (Management Audit, Como) cut up the onions for the 130 people who attended the evening barbecue at the Perup Ecology Centre.

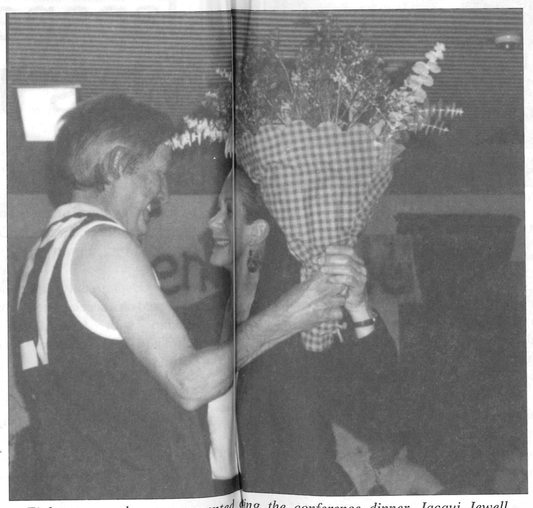


Above: Participants took a number of session breaks to 'energise'. Here's an innovative twist on the 1:1 neck massage .



CALMpeople Services manager Cliff Gillam champions the qualities of CALM's admin team.

Manjimup admin officer Graham Norrish finds a comfortable seat on the log landing as Pemberton forest officer Jaron Creasy explains the operational planning involved at this site near Big Brook.



Eighteen awards were presented during the conference dinner. Jacqui Jewell, Marine and Coastal Districts, Fremantle, was nominated for internal customer services. Congratulating her is Rob Hopkins.

Finance section members Scott Purdie, left, Stephan Dumitro, Jaye Huang, Larry Nichol and Ken Lewis take a break.

LIFE IN THE KARRI FORE

(4)

Coshan / Lomo Financial Seminar

Clive at the

SET 1

42/44

Tourist Centre, on the field trip, first day of the conference. Group visited, forest sites, saw mill and Tourist Centre, Kami Interpretive Display

EXIT
MOUNT FRANKL

Judy Flanigan (Walpole)
with a set of scales
her group designed
to help get the
balance right for
CAUM in the
next 12 months

SET 4
18/28

15

Emily Humble
of CALM
Timber
Technology

holds up her groups
"team spirit" trophy
at the close of
the conference

Set 4
20/28

adidas

Pat Saunders
Business Mgr at South
Coast Sheepfarmers, Albany.
with her group's
trophy for "Team Spirit"

SET 4
15/28

IMAGE

8/44

Set 1

Some of the
organising committee
Out bush, on tour

Janine East MP
Judy Flanigan Walpole
Peta Clarke Walpole

'98 10

'93 10 14

'93 10 14

Linda Gilbert organised the short break energisers throughout the conference. Here is one successful exercise, the mutual neck & shoulder loosener.

John Gault — Swan Region assists Dave Bottril Bunbury Region

CW

5 3
34/36

Pembi
Forest Workman Doing a great job

Draffy Hunter, organising over 120 afternoon teas at Big Brook - and keep out of that, sit down & drink up.

Set 1
21/44

10

10/14

Set 1

Conference organizer
Anne Lilley deep
in thought about
those last details.

Unanimous agreement
that the finishing touches
really made the conference
a great success.