

A TRIBUTE AND REMINISCENCES

When I learned recently that Jano Foulkes-Taylor had passed away I was reminded of her visit to Derby for a Home Tutors' seminar in 1979.

Why?

Jano attended representing the, relatively new, Isolated Children's Parent's Association, telling us what the organisation did and made us aware of some interesting developments on the horizon.

There were two profound things I remember.

The first... how when interviewing girls for prospective governess positions, she considered painted fingernails as a complete waste of time and thought this might be an indication of tardiness. This being my first visit to town for many months, and myself being a 26-year-old governess, I quickly hid my neatly painted fingernails!

More importantly to us 'people of the bush', was the mention of this wonderful new invention called a facsimile machine. We were utterly gobsmacked as she described in detail, how one could insert a piece of paper in a machine here and it would spit it out on someone else's machine, on the other side of the country or, even, the world.

At that time, out on the Kimberley stations, we were totally reliant on the RFDS radio skeds for our communication with the outside world. We didn't see the phone until 1987 so what

Jano was describing was beyond our comprehension. We were incredulous.

Had she mentioned then, that at some future date we would all have our own individual phones, we would probably have written her off as being totally bonkers. Today our grandchildren don't even know what a facsimile machine is, it now having being superseded by the delights of scanners, mobile phones and all the other joyous pieces of technology there are around, to trip us up and, supposedly, make our lives better.

How was she privy to this information many would ask? Jano was the then ICPA representative on the Federal Communications Council. It is thanks to people like her that those of us who live in remote Australia have the communications we do. Yes, there is still plenty of room for improvement but, without people of her ilk bombarding Federal Parliamentarians with the reality of the bush, we would probably still be using radio.

Those were the early days of ICPA when people in Canberra thought of the bush in a romantic light, very few having actually been there. So far removed were they that when approached for an allowance to help isolated mothers teach their children on correspondence, a certain member asked why anyone would need an annual allowance of \$500 for stamps! While there have been changes in assistance, many issues have changed little. Sometimes even usbands and children did not realise the important work done by ICPA.

As a young governess I looked in awe at a lady who had all this knowledge and yet, was so approachable. Many years later it was my turn to take up the baton and try to do my bit for those living in remote Australia.

I shall always think of Jano Foulkes Taylor as I look at my fax! It is a reminder of painted finger nails and the start of a pathway to the frustration of technology.

Marcia Finger
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Vice President

Jano at an ICPA conference with Michelle Marshall and Carolyn Halleen all of WA

