

Law Society Staffer Hits the High Seas

Receptionist at the Law Society's Secretariat, Fiona Halliday, recently achieved a long-term ambition to run away to sea.

Fiona was chosen to be a member of the *Young Endeavour* crew on a recent voyage and spent two weeks literally learning the ropes and getting her sea legs as this youth training vessel charted its course around the northern coast of Australia, calling into Magnetic Island, Orpheus Island and eventually claiming the little-known Rattlesnake Island for the youth of Australia.

The opportunity to sail aboard the *Young Endeavour* is available only to a select group and provides the participants with an chance to learn the rudiments of sailing a 33-metre, 2 mast, square-sailed brigantine in the most hands-on possible of manners.

The youth crew, as they are known, are taught to navigate, climb the rigging, set and furl the sails, act as galley slaves and dish pigs, swab the decks, polish the brass and in fact, do anything that is necessary to keep the crew and vessel shipshape.

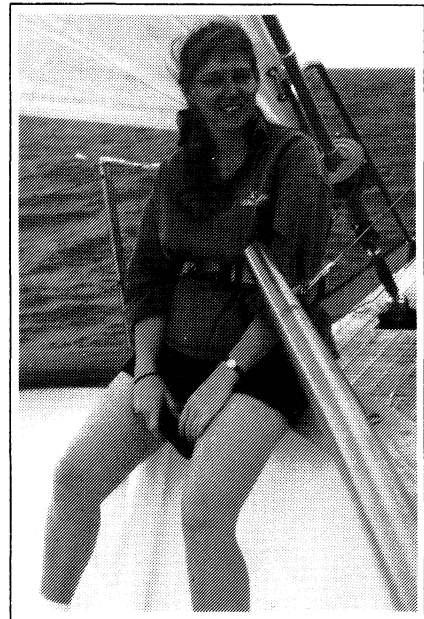
Accommodation was a bunk in a six or twelve berth cabin and each member of the youth crew was allotted a 27inch x 16 inch x 9 inch locker in which to stow their worldly belongings.

Watch was kept throughout the night in two hour blocks and Fiona admitted that the lack of sleep caused by this necessity was the only drawback to the trip.

This leg of the *Young Endeavour's* permanent voyage was staffed by 24 youth crew, 9 regular crew and 3 supers (naval personnel observing or trying out for positions on the regular crew of the vessel).

Fiona's abilities and enthusiasm for the life at sea earned her the Order of Australia Association medal, presented to one of the youth crew during the voyage and she is now a formidable mine of information about things nautical, including a somewhat colourful explanation of why toilets are called "heads" on board ship.

Whilst Fiona has now returned to the more mundane routine of dealing with mail, telephones and practitioners,



Fiona – all at sea

Secretariat staff have noticed an odd look crossing her face whenever her eyes turn seaward and it can only be a matter of time before she decides to give her sea legs another airing.

Towards Barber-Surgeons of the Law

continued from page 9

and unofficial lines of communication replacing formal applications and official documentation where possible.

Practitioners will be able to identify the key concepts and techniques of value to them. The law has been very slow to take up many of these management styles. None of the above models are of necessity inconsistent with the ethical and professional practice of the law.

Lawyers will continue to be undervalued as long as they allow others to interfere with their profession and its quality management practices. The current assault on the legal monopoly will succeed as long as lawyers do not answer the challenges and evolve. Harsh though it may be, the practice of the law will continue to change, and improved professional management practice will

emerge not as a placebo but as a panacea. An economic conflict has already begun that will inevitably lead to the extinction of some branches of the practice of the law as it is currently known. This conflict is not chivalrous, neither is it one in which quarter will be given or asked for by the adversary. Lawyers must now respond or suffer severe financial damage and further abrogation of their professional entitlements.

"Without change, something sleeps inside, and seldom awakens.

....The Sleeper must awaken!"

Frank Herbert, *Dune*

It will always be possible to resist change using reactionary arguments, and many people see change for its own sake as a bad thing. Change is often seen as a means whereby illegitimate authority

or threats to job security are brought into a workplace³. Sometimes, such fears are justified. However, one more point about change must be made – it is inevitable.

FOOTNOTES

1. *adhocracy* is a term coined by Alvin Toffler to describe organisations in which job descriptions and titles change frequently and rashly.
2. *op. cit.*
3. Pettigrew, *The influence process between specialists and executives*, *Personnel Review*, 1974

The views expressed in this article are those of the author and are not necessarily endorsed by the Law Society of the Northern Territory.