

Letters

'Bun fight'

'To see ourselves . . .'

FOR more than a decade it has been possible to get instant attention and publication by delivering lectures and writing articles which assert 'No longer is the typical librarian a middle-aged lady who finds you nice books to read . . .'

A bit of generalised sneering is followed by exposition of the 'true' core of modern librarianship, whether it be computerised information retrieval, audiovisual wizardry, microform catalogues or cassette loans to teenagers.

While one may excuse a degree of tactlessness from a fellow professional who is enthusiastic about his own small specialty, too much of this naive burbling becomes downright offensive. Especially if you happen to be a middle-aged lady who spends a lot of time finding books for people to read.

I invite Mr Borchardt (*Incite*, 23 Jan 1981) to conduct a membership survey to ascertain how many librarians are female, wear glasses and deal with books daily. Are they an anachronistic rarity? Or are they so numerous as to constitute a threat to 'real' librarians? Should they be disposed of? They shoot horses, don't they?

Why fret about the 'public image' of a librarian? Visual media impact must be immediate; its subject recognisable. A handsome kindly man with a stethoscope heads a medical article, a pilot adorns an Air Force recruiting poster.

That great public out there does not consist of librarians or university lecturers. Ordinary people relate to the familiar image – the local librarian they meet. There are many young and attractive ones around, but they still spend more time getting books than showing their legs. They are creating a public image. They are doing it by acting as librarians, not by acting in some TV soap opera about librarians of the future making the world safe for democracy by pressing the right button on a computer console.

Would honour be satisfied if the *Bulletin* sketch was amended so that the bespectacled lady is (a) wearing tights (b) surrounded by a computer memory bank (c) replacing a fuse? Or would we merely find a Dr Spock instead of Mr Borchardt deploring the way this female drudge drags down the public image of his noble profession?

H. W. Colley
Port Adelaide High School

'Bun fight'

Flesh out!

UNTIL recently I was employed as a research officer in the Department of Employment and Youth Affairs in Perth and I would like to reassure Mr Borchardt (*Incite*, 23 Jan 1981) that the professional content of librarians' work is well known to those researching this and other occupational categories.

The *Bulletin* article was based largely on the above Department's bi-annual publication *Employment prospects by industry and occupation*, so any embellishments can be attributed to the *Bulletin*.

I agree entirely with Mr Borchardt that we as individuals, together with the LAA, should make a concerted effort to educate and inform the community that librarians are capable of more than stamping, shelving or rearranging books. I suggest we start by educating the print and electronic media.

However, I would suggest that in future Mr Borchardt avoids sexist or patronising remarks concerning women, eg 'a bright (sic) young lass showing plenty of leg'. Would he contemplate 'a lad bearded and long haired' showing plenty of leg? I'd suggest Mr Borchardt has a bit of a cheek casting the first stone. Or to use another hackneyed expression, he should put his own house in order, first.

Roy Stall
Claremont Teachers College, WA

'Bun fight'

Destruct the image

As Dietrich Borchardt points out (*Incite* no 1, 23 Jan 1981) the image of a librarian as depicted by cartoonists in popular magazines is still widespread in the community and is explicable on narrowly social rather than on any sensible grounds.

I happen to look back on a career bedevilled by interminable negotiations to obtain due recognition for my senior librarians and their supporting staffs – colleagues all fully adjusted to the multifarious and exacting demands of contemporary society.

One can only urge, therefore, the effective destruction of an image which so pervasively misrepresents the character and capabilities of the modern profession to which we belong.

K. A. Lodewycks Box Hill South, Vic

'Bun fight'

Death to the spectre

COMMENTING on Mr Borchardt's letter (*Incite*, 23 Jan 1981) concerning the public image of librarians, may I ask whether he, or the LAA, has communicated with the *Bulletin* in order to 'straighten them out' on this point?

The public image problem must be recognised as central to many of the issues confronting librarians today. If we were only seen to be what we are, the path to a reasonable acknowledgement of the worthwhile, indeed valuable, services which we provide would surely prove easier, resulting in a likely improvement in funding, salaries and professional standing.

The *Bulletin* sketch is symptomatic of the public's ignorance of what libraries and librarians can and are doing for them. This is a situation exasperated by the media and ignored by the LAA (one of whose stated objectives is to improve the status of the library profession), and by the ALPC. If this area is not within the responsibilities of this council, why not? Or should we have an Australian Librarians Promotion Council?

I commend Mr Borchardt's call for greater LAA commitment in this area. However, it is also up to each one of us, as librarians, to see that this spectre in black with the glasses and a bun, is laid to rest at every opportunity.

P.J. Meredith
Penrith City Library, NSW

'Sources' quiz

'Do You Know Your Australian Sources?' by Carol Mills (*Incite* no1, 23 Jan 1981) is quite interesting.

I am wondering if Ms Mills did not find any source to give a complete list of past winners of the Australian Children's Book of the Year Award or she restricted the material only to so-called bibliography.

Bookmark '81 – Diary and Directory by the Australian Library Promotion Council, gives a complete list of them.

Taisoo Kim Watson
Brighton City Librarian

SENIOR LIBRARIAN (LAW) LIBRARY THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY

Applications are invited for the position of Law Librarian. The successful applicant will be responsible to the Head of the Library's Social Sciences and Humanities Division for the administration of the Law branch library. Reader Services and collection building will be among the main responsibilities. The Law Librarian will be expected to collaborate with the Law Faculty in providing instruction in the use of the library to undergraduates and others. Applicants should have a professional qualification in librarianship together with appropriate qualifications in law. Previous experience in a law library would be advantageous.

The Law Library at present has a stock of over 66,000 volumes, receives some 1500 current periodicals, and has an annual accession rate of about 3500 volumes a year. There is a support staff of seven.

A suitable applicant with the required professional library and law qualifications

and requisite experience would be appointed at the Senior Librarian Class 2 level with a salary range of: \$20,061–\$22,461 p.a. but the University reserves the right to offer appointment at the lower level (of Senior Librarian Class 1: \$17,340–\$19,433 p.a.) to a suitable applicant who does not have the desired law qualification or the degree of experience required.

Reasonable travel and removal expenses will be paid and assistance with accommodation will be provided to the successful applicant if appointed from outside Canberra. The appointee will be required to undergo a medical examination.

Written applications, quoting reference number 81051, should be forwarded to the Secretary, The Australian National University, PO Box 4, Canberra, ACT 2600, with whom applications close on 5 March 1981. Receipt of applications will not be acknowledged unless requested.