



**Happy technicians**

In response to letters published in *InCite* 4 July on the issue of whether Technicians are to be included as 'Professional' members of the Association, we believe most SA Technicians are happy to be Technician Members because that is what they are.

Technicians discussed the point in question in detail and unanimously agreed that a Technician Membership was the most desirable category to be in for all aspects of the Association, including payment of fees.

Technicians feel very strongly about their position and roles in the workforce and within the Association. We are first and foremost Library Technicians not Librarians. Here in South Australia (we have only had Technicians since 1980) many of us are still struggling to 'educate' our employers on the value of Library Technicians.

We appreciate the concern of the other writers to *InCite* re Ian McCallum's statement, although the initial reaction was 'wonderful' 'at least the recognition we have waited for', the reality is, that we are and always will be TECHNICIAN MEMBERS not LIBRARIAN MEMBERS.

With all the changes imminent we need to have a united front. A division between Professional and Technician will not help the Association forge a new and exciting image for the future.

*Marilyn Dawson*  
President

SALT (South Australian Library Technicians)

**A breath of fresh air**

It may surprise some members of the LAA to learn that not all library technicians are 'would be if could be' non-librarians. Most technicians are not seeking to replace librarians or using the various available technician courses as stepping stones to 'higher' things.

Rather they are seeking recognition *in their own right* as worthwhile participating members of the Association and not as the second class members they appear to be at the moment.

The high rate of cancelled technician memberships is indicative of the disillusionment of technicians who feel they are offered little incentive to remain within the Association. However if the breath of fresh air which was evidenced by the statement of the president of the LAA (P2 *InCite* 6 June) is indicative of the winds of change presently blowing through the hallowed halls of the Association, technicians should wholeheartedly support any moves made by the LAA to become truly representative of all the members whether professional or otherwise. I'm sure technician groups will be watching the Association with renewed interest in the months to come.

*Library Technician*  
(name and address supplied)

**That professional question**

I have found some of the discussion in the letters in *InCite* of 4 July, 1986 to be rather demeaning of library technicians.

I find Lindsay Harris' analogy of the chef at McDonalds rather interesting from the point of view that the Chairman/Managing Director of Harrods' Store in London was a salesman in that store thirty years ago. It is obvious that he must have been Managing Director material and with the right training attained that status. Indeed, there are some librarians in charge of institutions today who worked their way up and thirty years ago were only shelving books!

There are, no doubt, library technicians in the workforce who would be *capable* of being President of this Association one day and would be *capable* of getting the degree which would qualify them to be Professional Members. I have worked with librarians who hold that 'piece of paper' whom I have considered to be very unprofessional! On the other hand I have had Members of Parliament congratulate me for carrying out my work in a very 'professional' manner. I have delivered the information they have wanted, in the manner they wanted it and within their deadline. I do not have a tag around my neck saying 'library technician' making them believe I could not possibly be 'professional'. I am sure there are many library technicians out there with the same professional approach to their tasks!

Having got that off my chest I must now say thank you to Warren Horton and to Dr Neil Radford for acknowledging my last point in their letters.

Maybe the Professional Member category is misnamed and those people 'possessing qualifications' should be called Degree Member or Associate Member. Professional seems to be the contentious word and smacks of educational snobbery as indeed did the whole of Lindsay Harris' argument. I feel that the only answer is to retain the category Technician Member. Technicians could not satisfactorily be slotted into any of the four categories nominated on p54 of the report.

Having earned our place in the library world as a para-professional group of workers I for one do not want to lose my identity and be lumped in with Personal Members and other than Professional Members.

I feel sure our Association has a great deal to gain by being open to people with various levels of tertiary qualifications. Surely this makes for a cross fertilisation of ideas which must enrich all concerned and make it possible for us to stand by our Statement on Professional Ethics which in part states 'Both librarians and library technicians are dependent upon one another. . .'

*Marlene Knowles*  
Library Technician  
NSW Parliamentary Library

**Professional people**

The executive members of the NSW library technicians' sectional group support the National President's belief that 'professional' is a general term and we maintain it applied to librarians and technicians alike. 'Professional' has become an emotive, misused word and we consider it ill-used.

Certainly librarians have had an uphill battle to be recognised as professionals by the community at large. People with no qualifications at all get away with calling themselves librarians, and librarians must find ways to put a stop to this practice. If the term 'qualified', 'full', 'associate' had been used in the first place rather than 'professional' as a category of membership would we then have been subjected to the indignant pages of letters in *InCite*?

Referring to *InCite* vol.7:12,9 Future direction of the Library Association of Australia we agree with the categories as set out in Recommendations 38-43. This gives recognition to library technicians and recognition of qualifications is the next desirable step.

*J. Walke*  
Hon. Secretary, on behalf of  
Executive of NSW Library Technician  
Sectional Group

**Darwin Conference**

As third year library studies students at WAIT we would like to comment on the presentation, or lack of presentation, of papers at the LAA Biennial Conference held in Darwin (Jul, 1986).

The presentation of a large percentage of papers was disappointing. Although the topics were interesting, even stimulating, they were overshadowed by the use of poor communication techniques. Reading papers verbatim speaking in a monotone and inadequate visual aids resulted in many lacklustre performances.

If librarianship is about communicating with users and fellow colleagues perhaps future presenters should be encouraged to develop and utilise essential communication skills. There is possibly a role for the LAA Continuing Education Programme in developing these skills.

Many aspects of the conference were enlightening and informative, providing future incentives. In all, Darwin was a great learning experience and we are looking forward to attending future conferences.

*Helen Nicol*  
*Mary Anne Temple*  
*Leo Terpstra*  
*Brigitta Costello*

**Visible proof, for how long?**

Twelve years ago as a very mature student burnt the midnight oil over one year to pass the Library Association's exams.

As a reward for all my hard work I was given a little piece of paper which I treasured as public evidence of my well-earned status of Librarian.

Last year I retired both from work and as a member of the Library Association of Australia.

Recently the postman delivered a letter dated 28 May 1986 signed by Jenny Adams which sternly informs me: 'If you are not planning to renew (LAA membership) . . . we must ask you to return your Certificate of Associateship as you are no longer entitled to use the term ALAA.' How cruel to take away my one visible proof of achievement!

And just how legal???

*Del McGuinness*



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## Sanctions or censorship?

This letter is written as a result of reading the opinions of Jeff Leeuwenburg (18 July). The mentioned opinions concerning the South African official policies and the government enforcing them regard themselves to one side of the argument, the side that we never stop arguing about.

It is about time that we, the world, stopped writing a moral rulebook in which the countries that agree think that they have the right to make unaligned countries follow their laws.

Economic and other sanctions are a form of dictatorship which will not do any good in most situations, and it is indeed something at the Western 'democracy' vehemently opposes in its basic structural policies.

For viewers of the Carleton-Walsh report there was an insight into the question of sanctions. The primary namesake of the show read through a list of all sanctions performed by the British since the first World War. In these he could only find one that had had the desired effect, proving that they are useless.

I was under the impression that I was entering into a profession that could abstain from involving itself in such deplorable actions, but I can see that the seeds are there waiting to be sown.

I suggest that librarians continue in their present vein, as a profession with very few cases, and not dictated to by the politics of the day. One of the most important values of the library is to protect against bias. To stop trade with South Africa simply because of its policies would facilitate a form of this bias.

It is not our business to decide if nations, organisations, or even individuals are right or wrong in what they do, but it is our business to remain *Impartial* and present *Both Sides* of the argument, no matter what our personal views are.

Remember, libraries as I understand them, should be free from all influences. We stock books about and by Buddhists, Hare Krishnas, and countless other religions and sects. I am simply not believing in a subject or its doings not reason enough to impose censorship on it.

The South African Government has done nothing to libraries specifically and as such there are no grounds for stopping loans trade with them.

T.C. Lawton  
(WAIT library student)

## Official Action?

Jeff Leeuwenburg's letter in *InCite* for 18 July raises a number of professional issues which require further thought and comment.

I am in entire sympathy with the basic contention that librarians should consider withdrawing their services from South Africa when such services are likely to assist a repugnant and repressive regime.

The first two courses of action suggested, however, seem unacceptable to me. In my opinion quietly mislaying a request is more likely to cause the requestor to regard the library to which it is made as inefficient than to use it to realise that the request is being denied on political or moral grounds.

Similarly, *personal* representations by inter-rare officers are likely to carry little or no weight.

What is needed is *official* information, from the library to which the request is made, that the request for material will not be granted. It is only by *official* action that we can hope to institute change. The *personal* responsibility which we all have is to work, as Leeuwenburg suggests, for institutional policies.

Juliet Flesch

## Position wanted

I am desirous of emigrating to Australia and therefore wish to seek employment in any academic, public or special library. I have more than 20 years of library experience and considerable expertise on the URICA computerised library system. My present position is that of a Data Base Management in a university library.

My library qualifications are MLS from the University of Pittsburgh, MS in ED from Indiana University, Bloomington, and MA from the University of Durban-Westville.

Manikam Moodley  
140 Battersea Avenue  
Reservoir Hills  
Durban 4091  
South Africa

## No laughing matter

I wish to protest about your comments on the advertisement, appearing in *The Sun-Herald*, 29 June, 1986, 'casting librarians in a quiet and timid role . . .'. I find your remarks on this very distasteful advertisement to be almost as offensive as the ad itself.

Not only does the advertisement use a librarian stereotype, it also uses a sexist and exploitative view of an 'attractive' woman to promote a product which bears no relation to either of these misconceived images.

Your flippant reply only serves to reinforce the use of these two incorrect and offensive stereotypes, damning to both the library profession and women in general.

Surely this is not a responsible reply from a 'professional' association?

Pamela M Jenkins



## AN EVENING WITH JAMES THOMPSON

Monday, 8 September 1986

James Thompson, Librarian of the University of Reading, is the author of *Library Power* and *The End of Libraries*. Hear his views on the future of libraries in the age of high technology, and a rapidly sinking Australian dollar.

**Venue:** Board Room, YWCA, Wentworth Avenue Darlinghurst  
6 for 6.30 pm.

**Cost:** \$15, \$10 for LAA members. Refreshments will be served.

**Contact:** Sue Phillips, LAA  
Tel. (02) 692 9233  
(008) 221 1481

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## THE LAA VIDEO

Students of the School of Library and Information Management at the SA Institute of Technology recently were shown the LAA video and their reactions have been supplied.

Asked if they considered that they gained an overall picture of the LAA, 16 thought 'yes' and 6 'no'. Sixteen students thought the video was about the right length, 2 thought it was too short and 4 found it too long. Twelve students found no area in which they required further information but 10 thought otherwise. Five of the viewers were unimpressed by the range of LAA activities but 14 were impressed. Only 5 would have preferred a personal talk, while 15 favoured the video. Twelve expressed the view that the video had encouraged them to join the LAA, but 10 did not feel the urge.

Enlarging on the question about wanting more specific information about the LAA, some felt that there was insufficient explanation of what benefit LAA membership could give to student members.

Another comment was that although the video kept reinforcing that LAA membership was a must, it didn't give clear enough reasons why. A number of people found that the video still left them unclear about how the LAA benefits the individual and about what the LAA actually does. More information about the sections and special interest groups was also asked for.

It was also suggested that a combination of the video and a personal talk would have been useful, in particular to cover the points raised by the students.

Other comments included that the video should explain how the LAA helps people to get jobs, should have more emphasis on activities for students, a feeling of uneasiness at belonging to an association with a basically 'professional' membership.

Enquiries about the LAA video should be addressed to Angela Brommann at Head Office (02) 692 9233 Toll free (008) 22 1481.

## BiblioFile at UQLibrary

The University of Queensland Library is using BiblioFile to assist in its retrospective conversion project. BiblioFile marketed in Australia by ALDIS (Australian Laser Disk Information Services Pty. Ltd.), provides access to over three million Library of Congress MARC records on four compact laser discs.

BiblioFile is mounted on a CD-ROM disc drive with software on an IBM PC clone. Selected records are saved to a floppy disc file, and then converted to a standard AUSMARC format by software provided by ALDIS. The AUSMARC file is then down-line loaded from the PC to the Library's DEC PDP 11 based system for proof-listing, editing and indexing.

The benefits of using BiblioFile are seen as the ability to schedule retrospective cataloguing depending on the availability of staff, its ease of use, the high success rate and relatively inexpensive price per record.

BiblioFile, with its monthly English language updates, will also be used to select AUSMARC records for new titles.

The library estimates it could select, convert to AUSMARC and up-load over 700 records per day. Staff acceptance of BiblioFile has been high with the knowledge that they are at the leading edge of information technology in using the compact laser discs.

Sue McKnight  
Deputy Technical Services Librarian  
U of Q Library