

Further to 'Friends'

Indeed as librarians we all need friends and 'Friends' groups do a memorable job in helping out in certain libraries. However, it seems to me, we are short of a very particular type of friend. Let me cite four whom we have lost.

First, Thomas Fisher, the memorable book maker; next Reverend Irving Benson, a doughty preacher and champion of the free library movement; Sir John Ferguson, a bibliographer for all seasons; and Sir William Dixon a generous benefactor. Fisher was the only non-public figure. All realised the importance of literacy and, above all, access to learning. We badly need the friendship of distinguished people, such as these, outside our profession — people of conviction who can bring our most serious and urgent issues into the public arena.

G. F. R. Cowdery

Professional identity

Katie Blake writes (*InCite* no. 10, p. 7) with passion, authority, and I believe, a touch of indignation about the 'old order' (librarian) changing, yielding place to new (information manager). Words have an uncontrollable habit of altering their meanings.

At the heart of the dilemma is the rapid and irrevocable intrusion of technologies into our professional lives. Librarians did not invent computers and we are forced to master their potential. Katie demonstrates woolly thinking when she tries to distinguish between 'facts', the librarian's raw material, and 'information', the commodity of the 'information manager'. There is little to be gained in this line of argument: people who work with both facts and information in our world do it best when they add value to both by unique training and skills.

As an educator of librarians, information managers, information professionals, information specialists, call them what you will, it is difficult to explain to teenagers and very young students what it's all about. I have recently finished writing a book for teenagers describing, hopefully enticing them to, our line of work. What required the most cogitation was delimiting the boundaries of the profession. Having reached a reasonable comprehensive description, I was amazed when the publisher (a large one) suggested that I include compilers of the Telecom Yellow Pages as part of it!

Anyone who has ever tried to see logic in the Telecom filing system will be aware of its inadequacies. La Trobe University, for instance, established 21 years ago, does not appear in the Melbourne Yellow Pages under 'universities', if at all. The reaction of the publisher quoted is typical of the confusion in the public at large over what our role in society, business and politics involves. 'Librarian' was concise and nice, but carried overtones of a negative image.

At the moment I know of no new word to neatly explain our virtues and strengths, and our desire to maintain a professional identity.

Graeme Johanson

Friends of library

At Ryde-Hunters Hill, a 'Friends' group flourished during the period 1968-75, with 10 active members. The 'Ryde-Hunters Hill Library Association' constituted of Sheila Swain, Mick Lardelli, John Birch, June Peek, Ian Savins, Gavin Cashman, John and Carol Casey, Shirley Berg and Oelwyn Mackenzie. In this period, the library service doubled its staff and raised the number of qualified personnel from, if I recall correctly, three to twelve. In swift order, after the group's formation, came the new central library, a permanent twofold increase in resources votes, the opening of the central library every Saturday and Sunday afternoons, a new branch library at West Ryde, computerisation, a year-long cultural program and a major boost to the commencement of the Children's Film Circuit.

I am sure that the 'Friends' group was the major factor underlying all these advances. Public meetings were held, with Alan Horton, Peter Coleman, Barry Scott and other speakers to support and publicise each specific library requirement. Letters were sent to local papers and councils. There was never any interference with the library's functioning.

It is significant that three of the ten members were aldermen and three were active members of political parties. The group con-

sisted also of a leading figure in the NSW P & C Association, a school librarian and the president of the local history society. I believe that a public librarian can only favour the establishment of a Friends group. Looking back I can see how fortunate Ryde-Hunters Hill Library was at the time as the coming together of such talents is no doubt uncommon.

It is proverbial in local government that 'one letter from a ratepayer is worth a hundred reports from a senior officer'. How much more effective a Friends group acting on the library's behalf.

Julian Woods
Goulburn City Librarian

Cont'd page 9

Frontline continued from page 2

These are the areas surrounding Australia — what can we as an association do? Are we going to sit back and say that the government and IDP are doing what they can? Don't we as a professional association have the responsibility to do what we can to help fellow professionals in adjacent countries?

At present the Association has an International Relations Committee which has as a term of reference 'supporting the LAA's involvement in international activities, encouraging exchange and internship programs, and charged with development of a program of assistance to external library associations with particular emphasis on the Pacific Asian region'. We also have an LAA Policy Statement on the South-West Pacific. More significantly no funds have been set aside for overseas programs in the budget. The infrastructure is there but we do not have a program.

The Association needs to establish a small working committee to develop an appropriate policy on international relations for the LAA and to propose a suitable program. Such a program must be discussed and developed cooperatively with library associations in the region.

The LAA has relations with the American, Canadian, New Zealand, Hong Kong, Singapore and Papua New Guinea library associations but there are many more associations in other countries in the region. We need to reach out and develop links with them, to determine mutually how we can help. We must develop a well-planned and integrated program of international relations rather than the ad hoc intervention of the present.

All this is of course not a one-way street — this Association would benefit by contact with overseas associations. We can learn much by the way in which other associations conduct their business and use particular activities to successfully promote their associations.

Let's make sure that the impetus of the IFLA conference and its overseas associations does not dissipate. Let's use it to build on the success of IFLA to develop closer relations with overseas associations particularly those in our region and let us develop an association program which will be effective both for those countries and for us.

Averill Edwards
Vice-President

NOW AVAILABLE FROM THE LAA

KEEPING ARCHIVES

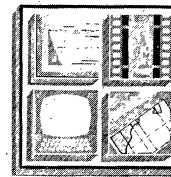
By Ann Pederson
(Published by the Australian Society
of Archivists Inc)

Chapters cover:

Introducing the Archival Profession; Getting Organised: the basics; Acquisition and Appraisal; Accessioning; Arrangement and Description; Finding Aids; Access and Reference Services; Conservation; Using Computers and Micrographics; Documentation Programmes for Archives; User Education and Public Relations

(ISBN 0 95955 659 1) 374pp incl. index

KEEPING ARCHIVES



Price: \$27.50
(plus \$3 postage)

Letters cont'd from page 6

Real life hypothetical

The Northern Territory Library Service has just initiated a new service of home loans of rare books on NT history. The collection was funded by the Australian Bicentennial Authority and is intended to serve the needs of those who cannot travel to Darwin to consult material held in the State Reference Library's Northern Australian Collection.

Contrary to expectation, the majority of requests are coming from remote Aboriginal communities rather than the users in urban public libraries. Consider nevertheless, how you would answer the following letter from a user of the Country Borrowers' Postal Library Service:

Thank you for the last selection of books, which I enjoyed very much.

One book has not been returned [title] which deals with a sacred site here on . . . Island has been appropriated by the man the book is dedicated to, that is Mr . . . MBE. The book which he had not seen since its inception, 30 years ago, is about him and his brother.

I showed it to him and now he refuses to give it up. He is very old. I told him it belonged to the NT Library. The sticker on the front cover says it was a bicentennial gift. He says it's the least the Government could do for him — to give a copy of a book written about him and his life's work.

I apologise for not returning the book, but it has made him so happy to have it. What can be done? For the next selection of books, I would like biographies — any biographies.

Preparing a reply to this letter was something of a brain-teaser as the book is, of course, out of print. What would you have done?

Jenny Armour
Public Library Services Section
NT Library Service

Library administrators

In his letter (*InCite* no. 12, 29 July) Dr Neil Radford strongly took a stand on librarians as administrators which may be tenable. It may also be untenable, regardless of the very important work of the Australian Information

Management Association (AIMA) since its inception.

The purpose of my 'Frontline' (*InCite* no. 9, 10 June) was for the profession to commence addressing it in a positive manner rather than in our customary reactive manner. It is an issue we have not handled well in the past, and it is an issue we will certainly need to address in the future. If we are to respond to this issue in the future, please, let us do so with the knowledge and confidence that we have considered it objectively and that we can justify our stance, whatever that stance may be.

Dr Radford makes no reference to the major content of my 'Frontline'; opinion carefully stated by two long experienced and distinguished past Presidents of the LAA. Opinion suggesting that it may be to the overall advantage of our profession and, more importantly, the development and influence of library and information services, to welcome an appropriate association with the profession of administration. In order to further the debate, it would be most valuable if Dr Radford could respond seriatim to the points raised by those two past Presidents.

Alan Bundy
LAA President

The rural view

While I appreciate the concern of the librarians of New England, NSW, for the needs of rural libraries, I should like to correct their limited perception indicated in the statement: 'However, with the exception of those educated at Riverina-Murray Institute of Higher Education, professional librarians are not being trained to serve rural communities.'

There are in fact two institutions so located as to have a specific interest in providing professional librarians to serve rural communities. Riverina-Murray Institute of Higher Education is one, Ballarat CAE is the other.

Graduates from the latter institution's librarianship courses take positions in NSW, NT, Tasmania, SA and Queensland libraries, well beyond capital cities. As for Victoria, a high percentage of recently graduated librarians in rural libraries would be graduates from the Ballarat CAE.

While I appreciate the need to have eye-catching headlines in *InCite*, it would be

preferable if they were slightly more accurate. The article in question could have been headed 'Australian Libraries Summit — The NSW Rural View'.

Thelma Rungkat
Head, Dept of Librarianship
Ballarat CAE

Page One

Does *InCite* reflect the main concerns of LAA members? I was very disturbed to see the way in which the profession's priorities were portrayed in volume 9, number 11 of *InCite*. The story 'CSIRO — End of an Era?' describing the major changes occurring with respect to CSIRO's library and information system and thus to the nation's largest bank of scientific and technical information as a result of a report from management consultants was relegated to page 7. The leading story 'Stopping the Rot' was an inappropriate choice.

There is no doubt that Helen Price and the LAA have produced a worthwhile and practical work and one should not discount the importance of conservation and preservation of the nation's collections. However, the sweeping changes prescribed for CSIRO and the dramatic effects these will undoubtedly have on the provision of scientific and technical information services to the library community and, in fact, to all Australians should be matter for far greater concern and emphasis in our profession's newsletter.

The imminent destruction of Australia's scientific information resources including the cessation of gift and exchange arrangements built up over the years; the foreshadowed cuts in support to Australis and CSIRO databases, interlibrary loan and reference services; and many other cost cutting measures referred to in the article 'CSIRO — End of an Era' are cause for all of us to pause and consider the role of CSIRO as a national resource and its collection as part of the national collection.

Is this matter a legitimate concern for our profession? I say it is and the LAA concern itself with establishing priorities and reflecting these priorities more effectively eg by the juxtaposition of these two articles in *InCite*.

May I also suggest fellow members to contact local members with regard to CSIRO's future.

Jerelynn E Brown
Bibliographic Services Manager

A REFERENCE WITH A DIFFERENCE

The Reference: **Australia's Top 1000 Companies.**

- Includes:**
- 14 Financial performance indicators
 - ASIC Industry classification
 - Company address, telephone
 - CEO's name and title

The Difference: **All the above is now available on a single diskette.**

- Simple to use and menu-driven
- Runs on any IBM-compatible
- Outputs to your Word Processor, prints labels
- Allows easy industry and company analysis

INCITE SUBSCRIBERS PRICE: \$395 (\$100 saving)



IBIS

Ring for a comprehensive brochure, on **008 038 136**
or write to IBIS Business Information, GPO Box 427G, Melbourne 3001.