

Cartoonists at the State Library

LETTERS

Dear Editor,

In reply to M M Redrup's letter concerning the 1989 AGM and the motion for *free* Section membership (*inCite* 11(1) February 1990), some matters need to be addressed.

The vote taken at the AGM was not disregarded by General Council. I spoke against the motion at the AGM and also at General Council, because of its implications. As Sue Kosse pointed out in reply to the letter, the 1986 Corporate Plan and Review endorsed the unbundling of membership fees, and while its recommendations should not necessarily stand for all time, there should be good reasons put forward to change this practice. Such reasons have not been produced so far.

In order to fund its activities, ALIA raises revenue from a number of sources — membership fees, commercial activities, profits from conferences and so on. It was made clear at the AGM and at General Council that if revenue was lost from one source (Special Interest Group or Section membership fees) it would have to be made up from another, or services would have to be cut. I expect that whoever (quite reasonably) reported the voting patterns at General Council would also have summarised this argument for the benefit of those who initially proposed the motion.

I am also bemused at the references to those in the 'high lofty towers of the Association'. Who are these people? Clearly they are not the representatives from New South Wales, Queensland, Victoria and Western Australia, who (we are told) supported the proposal. As for the rest, I can assure M M Redrup that, based on my experience as ACT General Councillor and General Treasurer, all members of General Council take their responsibilities very seriously, are ever conscious of the members whom they represent, and consult as widely as possible in the course of their duties.

As for M M Redrup's final point, it is the responsibility of all members (not just those in the high lofty towers) to encourage further membership in their Sections, Special Interest Groups and the Association itself, whether membership fees are bundled or not. It is only a waste of time if we don't do it right.

Kerry Webb

Five hundred and sixty-six children from all over Sydney and country areas of New South Wales swarmed to the State Library of NSW to learn how to draw comics, caricatures, and cartoons and to meet the creators of their comic-strip heroes in the January school holidays.

The Artists on Show workshops, were led by members of the Black and White Artist Club, James Kemsley, Jim Russell, Bill Leak, Roger Fletcher, Cathy Wilcox, and Tony Rafty. They were launched by Dominique Collins on behalf of the Minister for the Arts and attracted many children who had never been to the library before and certainly had not thought of it as somewhere to spend the holidays.

Sponsors of the Library's Education Service, McDonald's Family Restaurants, distributed fliers throughout their metropolitan food outlets publicising the event. The idea of drawing cartoons seemed to spark the imagination of the media, resulting in \$26 260 of free press and radio publicity. Caricatures from one of the workshops were featured in Steve Vizard's Tonight Show on ATN 7 and ABC radio did several interviews with the artists.

Places in the session were fully booked as soon as publicity was released and subsequently demand was so great that five more workshops had to be introduced at short notice.

Children drew on a wide variety of comic situations in their drawings including slapstick with an emphasis on minor disasters and satire based on politicians, parents and teachers. In Leak's sessions, they took to caricaturing Bob Hawke and Nick Greiner with enthusiasm, learnt to construct a joke in three frames with Jim Russell, and to capture the essentials of personality in a fast sketch like Tony Rafty.

The popularity of cartooning among children is related to its place in playground rituals and more broadly to the national culture of leisure. Jokes, wordplay and the *send-up* are favourite currencies. Humour is highly valued especially when used in the back row of the classroom and to be a successful cartoonist it helps, to quote Bill Leak, to be a *smart-arse*!

Children have little opportunity to expand on this form of humour formally in art classes and never with professionals working in journalism so the concept of Artists on Show was highly innovative.

Rosemary Moon
Education Officer



Children attending the State Library of NSW workshop 'Artists on Show' display caricatures of Bob Hawke as a bird (left), Nick Greiner as Kermit the Frog and Bob Hawke as himself.