

Books wanted for Griffith University Law Library

Elizabeth Naumczyk, formerly Associate Law Librarian at Bond University Law Library, is now the foundation Divisional Librarian for Law at Griffith University Library. The newly established Division of Law will commence its law program in 1992, offering courses in a combined mode with other divisions. In the first instance joint degrees will be offered in the areas of Environmental Studies, Japanese Studies, Public Policy and International Affairs and Business.

The Law collection, to be housed in the main library, needs to be developed to meet the teaching and research requirements of the Division. The law librarian is keen to receive offers of donations of legal materials or lists of items for sale, including parliamentary publications, law reform commission publications, law reports, statutes, law reviews and law books. If you are able to be of assistance please contact Elizabeth, telephone (07) 875 7305, fax (07) 875 7845.

Elizabeth Naumczyk
Divisional Librarian (Law)

Letters

Break down the barriers

Dear Editor,

I'd like to bring to the attention of readers, especially readers in library management, an issue which they probably don't often have cause to consider, i.e. the issue of disabled librarians. I became paraplegic after an accident 5 years ago. At that time I had a wide experience of working in school and public libraries over 10 years.

For various reasons I was then in a part-time job in a public library. I have stayed in this job. Fortunately, this library building is completely wheelchair accessible. However, for 2 years now I've been attempting to get full-time work as I'm totally self-supporting and need the money. Due to budget cuts, the extra casual work I used to do elsewhere no longer exists. I don't have the conditions, security and privileges of a full-time worker.

In my quest for a job, I have come again and again up against the insoluble barrier of workplaces that are totally unsuitable for someone in a wheelchair. Several times I have got to the interview stage to discover that my office would be upstairs and there is no lift, that there is no disabled toilet, that I couldn't get behind the circulation desk and so on. Employers don't seem to give much thought to making changes either. Is it the same as the 'women can't work here because there are no women's toilets' argument? This is an unintended but potent form of discrimination.

'But surely all new buildings are suitable', people say to me. Not necessarily so. I've recently heard of a suburban Melbourne library built 2 years ago where the work area is upstairs and there is no lift.

Taken together with the various conscious and unconscious attitudes that people have towards employing disabled workers, it all adds up to a discouraging and frustrating scene. I'm certain that at least some employers have questions in their minds such as, 'Will she be a burden?' 'How will the public/other Council Officers cope with dealing with this person if I put her in a responsible position?' 'How would she effect my library's shiny, efficient, attractive corporate image?' Remember that this sort of thing can happen to anyone, even a librarian, in the few short minutes it takes to have an accident.

Employers need to be educated. Perhaps *inCite* and/or ALIA could play a valuable role in this process. Meanwhile, I have been forced to look outside public libraries and have just found a job in the TAFE area. Here, because of the variety of students catered to, attitudes have been re-examined and provision made for people with differing needs.

There are some excellent materials available on the myths and realities of employing disabled people. Perhaps they should be made more widely available to library management and perhaps people would spare a thought for this issue in planning future physical changes to the workplace.

Janice Jenkins

Warmer Bulletin

Dear Editor,

I want to thank you very much, not only for inserting into *inCite* my notice about *Warmer Bulletin*, but also for forwarding to me the various replies.

We have received a very good response, fifteen to date. All respondents will be sent a copy of the current issue of *Warmer Bulletin* from here, and their details passed to the Tunbridge Wells head office of World Action for Recycling Materials & Energy from Rubbish so that they can be added to the permanent mailing list.

Again, very many thanks.

James Orton

(Any more takers? Write directly to James at PO Box 69, St Leonards, NSW 2065. Ed.)

Long-term or moving on?

Dear Editor,

While Eric Whiting (*inCite* 16) has a valid point about closed shops, I must take exception to his comments about so called 'energetic, highly motivated individuals' who change jobs every 1-2 years. Yes, experience is vital, but it simply isn't accurate to lump all the positions in librarianship and related fields into a basket labelled 'long-term' and scowl at anybody with the temerity not be aiming to collect a gold watch for long service.

More and more contract positions of short duration are being offered, and those who take them frequently find themselves with unique opportunities to learn a great deal very quickly. Equally importantly, such positions often involve a high degree of autonomy — what better way to gain experience in handling the 'extraordinary situation' of which Eric writes. Working in a variety of environments and positions can enable a new staff member to bring a combination of experience and knowledge to an organisation which can be of enormous benefit.

And let's face it, there are permanent positions in which the potential for gaining knowledge and experience is exhausted fairly rapidly!

It is only fair that I declare my bias in making these comments — I'm one of the 2 year average contract types. And I well remember in my very first professional position being advised to stay a minimum of 5 years in a position. I didn't. If I had, I would have been miserable. I might have ended up doing my job badly. No matter how much extra 'experience' I had gained, it would not have been much help to my employer if that had been the case.

Horses for courses, Eric.

Lee Welch