

Who What Where & When?

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Disasters, anybody?

We are currently collecting material for a book on disaster response within Australia and New Zealand.

We are interested in disasters, both large and small, which may have occurred within libraries, archives, the records of commercial firms or personal libraries. By 'disasters', we mean fire or soot damage, water damage or structural collapse and, in scope, anything from a couple of shelves of damaged material through to the destruction of a building.

While a certain number of disasters are known to us through the public and professional media, we are conscious that there must be a large number which have not come to our attention. If you have been in such a situation, or if you can refer us to someone who has, we would like to hear from you as your experiences can provide valuable information for our project. If you can help then we can simplify your response as we have a short (2 page) questionnaire that we would like you to complete.

Our aim is to produce a practical disaster management handbook which will take its examples from events in Australia and New Zealand and provide a ready source of information on a wide range of topics including pre-planning (with a view to minimising loss), salvage advice, staff management and post-disaster recovery.

Judy Doig can be contacted by telephone on (03) 660 2390, facsimile (03) 663 3047, or by Email judyd@library.lib.rmit.edu.au or by mail c/- RMIT Libraries, PO Box 2476V, Melbourne Vic 3001.

Eric Archer (Conservator)
Judith Doig (RMIT Libraries)

A response to D H Borchardt

Oh! The shame of it all. Chauvinism is alive and well for some librarians, on the evidence DH Borchardt's comments on 'Professional qualifications' in *inCite* 5.

Long has the work of Library Technicians been perceived in the same light as that of the housewife; they take out the garbage, look after the shopping, do (amazing) things on a restricted budget, raise the children in their early years, they have even been known to put less on their plate so that the ma(s)ter will have more. And like house-

wives, the work of Library Technicians has gone for the most part unrecognised and undervalued.

I applaud the Association and its enlightened members, in this the Year of the Family, for daring to address this poor perception. The broadening of the Fellowship to enable recognition of outstanding contributions by Library Technicians to their (occupational) family is a bold step, one that will bring us all closer, despite those who would wish to tear us apart.

Peter Murdoch

[A letter echoing Peter's sentiments was also received from Michael Wayne Soo in NSW]

Those professional standards...

[In reply to Brad Hilton's letter in *inCite* 6, p 36.]

Employers today demand ever higher educational credentials from their workers. They use these formal qualifications to make their task of screening and selecting job applicants easier, supposing that better educated workers are more productive than those who are less educated.

We know that there is little or no relationship between educational achievement and job performance or productivity. The skills required to get High Distinctions in courses on Library Science are not the same skills needed to deal with a confused individual the size of a pick-up truck throwing punches near the Library's Information Desk. Most people pick up the necessary skills on the job, not in the classroom, and the characteristics that make for a successful career (initiative, leadership, drive, negotiating ability, willingness to take risks and persuasiveness) are not taught at schools.

However, having said that, I firmly believe that a profession without standards is of no value, because it has no authoritative principles or rules for guidance, by comparison with which its excellence or value may be determined. Librarianship is no exception: standards have been set by each profession. They have to be met. That is the *reality*.

The professions will continue to impose their standards because they want to limit entrance into the profession, thereby increasing their prestige, autonomy, and earning power. A higher credential means higher earnings, because of the value job markets place on it!

Nijole Salkunas ■