

No professional qualifications needed?

I write somewhat belatedly in response to the letter of 26 July 1993 under the title of 'No professional qualifications needed?' The letter set out the concerns of 32 of our professional colleagues in an unnamed university library that a senior management position, Manager, Serials Section, was filled by an individual without librarianship qualifications. They summarised their position as 'concerned because we see this as a deskilling issue.' I share their concerns.

That such a situation would arise in other professions such as teachers, lawyers, doctors, social workers, ministers or accountants is unthinkable, not necessarily because it is not possible for 'laymen' to apply for such positions but because the other members of the profession would rise in a body and protest. So I re-read the subsequent issues of *inCite* to see what my colleagues in the library world and our representatives on ALIA were saying on this vital issue.

The simple answer is that in six months there appears to be nothing said on this subject. No comment from the President, Industrial Information Officer, Training and Development Officer or Executive Director of ALIA, nor any letters from my colleagues. I was, and remain, shocked at the apparent indifference of the library profession to an issue that bites deeply into the heart of our claims to be a profession at all.

And, I am particularly shocked that my professional association, ALIA, has apparently taken no action in this matter. Upon reflection, however, the hands of ALIA may well be tied by their own decision to appoint a non-librarian as Executive Director.

Perhaps 1994 is the year we should take a stand and protest at such disregard for our hard-won professional expertise and qualifications. Although if our own professional body does not

value them why should the rest of the community?

Gail Robertson
Director

Library & Information Services
Federal Court of Australia

The Industrial Information Officer has made this response to Gail's letter:

Gail Robertson's anger at the appointment of non-librarians to manage libraries is admirable. It finds formal support in ALIA's *Policy Statement on Senior Library Appointments*. But her outrage is misdirected when she targets her colleagues and her professional association.

The fact is ALIA members are continually bringing cases like this one to the attention of the National Office; and ALIA makes frequent submissions on their behalf to employers, often with success. Much of my own time is spent doing this. Indeed, it is precisely because in a *Picket Line* column last year I specifically addressed this problem and sought calls from members, that many examples of the problem have been pursued. This includes the university case described by the 32 librarians who are now supported by Gail Robertson. It is not always possible or appropriate to make these discussions public.

ALIA National Office and Gail Robertson share the same concerns about threats to the profession and it is reassuring to see members expressing them strongly. Strong views and some healthy outrage are necessary in difficult times and constructive criticism is always welcome. I would like to think, however, that a telephone call followed by a vigorous discussion is the best way to ensure an effective exchange of information to ensure that both members and the National Office staff get their facts right.

I'll call you, Gail!

Phil Teece

Libraries are funny?

Since the publication of the very popular *LIBLAF ONE*—the world's first compilation of library cartoons—I have continued to receive cartoons and humorous items about libraries literally from around the world. So many in fact that *LIBLAF TWO* will be published in September 1994.

I am grateful to the many *inCite* readers who responded to

my 1992 request for cartoons—I would be similarly grateful for any other cartoons and humorous items for inclusion in *LIBLAF TWO*.

Alan Bundy ■

ALIA's member services

They have a new and more defined focus, says Carolyn Cherrett

The team that makes up member services consists of five people: Membership Services Manager Carolyn Cherrett, Membership Officer Elizabeth Pinner, Membership Clerk Sharon Brodrick (there's another clerk on the way) and part time Publications Clerk Fiona Schell. The task of all these people is to serve you, our members.

The membership team is responsible for membership renewals, maintenance of all membership records, new members' applications, issuing membership certificates, providing stationery and mailing labels to Divisions, answering subscription claims, selling ALIA publications and responding to telephone and written enquiries from members.

Over the next few months the membership team will be looking at ways of improving our service to you. Our main goals will continue to be quality client service and adding value to your membership of the Association. We will be striving to ensure that everything we do has a clear emphasis on our clients—the members of ALIA.

Feedback and suggestions from members on member services will be welcome and should be addressed to me, Carolyn, at the ALIA National Office.

Help!—Children's and Youth Services Librarians

Darwin Public Library and Information Service are seeking ideas for holiday programs offered in Public Libraries. Being somewhat isolated from our southern counterparts we don't often get the chance to exchange ideas and experiences, so here is our plea—if you have run a successful holiday program for children or youth at your library we would love to hear about it. Please write to: Jacinta Stanford, Darwin Public Library and Information Service, Casuarina Public Library GPO Box 84 Darwin NT 0801.