

LAA Membership fees 1984

After being awarded a professional qualification this year, I was accepted as an Associate of the Library Association of Australia. Not employed as a librarian, but being extremely interested in the profession, I was willing to pay the required reduced fee to keep in touch, although it was unlikely that I would ever use my librarianship credential.

I now find that my fee for 1984 would be \$232.

Last year the subscriptions to all my other professional associations and interest areas amounted to less than this figure as follows:

Institute of Recreation	\$30
Australian College of Education	\$55
Australian Council for Health, Physical Education and Recreation	\$25
WA Institute of Educational Administration	\$12
Royal Australian Institute of Parks and Recreation	\$70
National Trust	\$14
Royal Historical Society	\$15
Australian Women in Education Coalition	\$9
	<hr/>
	\$230

There is a point where interest must be weighed against common sense or simple economics, and, therefore, I must regretfully announce my early retirement from the association after only one year of membership.

I sincerely hope that the executive of LAA will carefully reconsider the implications of its revised fee structure.

Jennifer Browne

and again . . .

It was indeed heartening to be informed via the *1982 Annual Report of the Library Association of Australia* of the reversal of the trend to declining membership. To be reassured that 'particularly in more difficult economic times' the Association had achieved 'a quantitative seal of approval as well as a qualitative one' heralds the success by the Association in the area of retention of members which, over the year, has been acknowledged as a major problem.

This welcome trend may now be threatened by the new fee schedule introduced for 1984.

Since the introduction of the Royal Charter in 1963 the Library Association has existed to:

- promote, establish and improve libraries and library services.
- improve the standard of librarianship and the status of the library profession.
- promote the Association for the foregoing objects of persons engaged or interested in libraries or library services.

Membership has been accepted not only from people engaged in libraries and library services but from those who are interested in libraries and library services. No doubt many of those persons, the 'members' of the

Association play a very important role in the development of the Association and the successful pursuit by the Association of its aims and objectives.

In line with that philosophy fee schedules have normally included a category to encourage the membership of persons not actively gaining their remuneration from libraries who wish to support the aims and objectives of the Association. In fact the potential of this membership category has never been fully exploited for the benefit of the Association.

It may well be that the previous General Council has taken a conscious decision to discourage 'ordinary' membership and thus, by default, introduce a 'Librarians Association'. If that is the case then a change by the democratic process to the Royal Charter and the Association's aims and objectives together with notification to those members that they are no longer eligible for membership would be the forthright way of achieving such an Association.

I am concerned that this decision was not taken consciously. These members, many of whom have no 'vested' interest in libraries, give the Association a balance which will be wasted away should they choose to resign due to the deletion of their category of membership and subsequent large fee increases.

In the current economic climate where consensus and restraint are offered as the best chance for overall recovery these members are being asked to accept fee increases ranging from 47% to 800% in one year. In my own case I find an increase from \$34 to \$197 (579%) – difficult to justify, notwithstanding my continuing interest in the Association.

I have therefore written to the President requesting this matter be brought to the attention of the first General Council meeting to be held in 1984 for reassessment. I believe all of those members would be more than happy to accept an equitable fee increase to balance ever increasing costs. I do not believe the majority would be prepared to accept, in one year, increases of the nature imposed.

Brian Henderson

College and library closing

The W.S. & L.B. Robinson College of the University of New South Wales (Broken Hill Division) will close at the end of 1984. The process of dismantling the library has already begun and is expected to be completed by the middle of this year. After the 15th July there will be no library staff (and all communications with the library will cease). It is regretted that no more requests for Inter-Library Loans will be entertained. Our thanks are due to the many other libraries throughout Australia which in the past have processed so many Inter-Library Loan requests for us.

P.G. Longrigg
Librarian

Online Information Retrieval in Australian Academic Libraries

By C.S. Wilson, 1983. 343 pp.
ISBN 0 85823 216 9 \$20.00

Order From:
The Administrative Assistant
School of Librarianship
University of New South Wales
Box 1 Kensington, 2033 NSW

The asbestos question

I refer to your story entitled *The asbestos dispute* (*InCite* v.4 no.20).

As is noted in the article, a decision to remove the asbestos from the National Library has now been made by the responsible authority and the ten-week interruption to the work of the Library is, thankfully, at an end, though the results of that interruption will be felt throughout the Library and indeed throughout the Australian library world for some time to come.

Nothing could be further from my mind than to re-arouse animosities, none of which were of the Library's seeking, but it is reasonable enough to draw attention to the full wording of the report of the independent arbitrators. I quote from page 9 of the report: 'The health risk to staff in the Library does not appear to be significant. Despite the low health risk currently existing in the Library we consider the degree of damage to the asbestos to be sufficient as to warrant removal'.

This appears to justify completely the position maintained consistently by the Library throughout this unhappy episode, i.e. that while the asbestos in the Library might well constitute a potential risk, which the Library was not able to assess and which therefore should be addressed by a competent authority, there was no evidence of any substantial present risk to staff or users.

It was a matter of considerable concern to the Library that much distress was caused to many members of staff during the industrial action by repeated assertions that they were at present in danger.

Harrison Bryan
Director-General, NLA

Real library news

I would like to say how refreshing it has been to have a publication such as *InCite* report real news. The article in Vol 4 no 20 on asbestos and the articles on the referendum in North Sydney have provided information in a real and relevant manner and have made me realise how good *InCite* is.

I have talked to a number of librarians in particular about the last article on asbestos and have found that they thought it was a terrific article – to the point and informative. We support the reporting of real library news in *InCite* and are grateful for your work in ensuring this happens. The asbestos article was factual and anyone who criticises it should be aware that the LAA's policy is not the control of information but its dissemination. There was no bias in this report . . . it gave members the news we have come to expect through *InCite*.

Keep up the good work, I really enjoy reading *InCite*!

Roxanne Missingham

MORE LETTERS ON PAGE 8

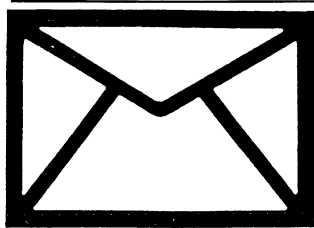
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SECOND POST

A protest

We the undersigned, representing members of the named Associations wish to register our concern regarding the contents of the book *Desert, Bamboo and Barbed Wire* by Francis Murphy (Oliff Publishing Co., Sydney, 1983). Had it been presented as a piece of fiction it would have been in bad taste, but to publish such an extended prevarication as history is unpardonable.

A reader is entitled to expect that an author and editor will have done research in order to avoid patent discrepancies between what is written and known, or verifiable facts. In this work contradictions abound. We find it tedious, distasteful and to many hurtful, especially to those who served in the areas mentioned and those who were prisoners of the Japanese, and believe that it does not merit any more consideration than to be dismissed as a tissue of lies.

On behalf of those nurses who gave dedicated service during World War II we take exception to the book being dedicated to them and would be most concerned if the book were to be distributed to Public Libraries, School Libraries and Reference Libraries where it could be taken as a factual part of the history of the Royal Australian Army Nursing Corps.

In signing this letter we express our determination not to be involved now or in the future in any scheme or proposal for The Montrose Memorial Home Trust Fund home for disabled veterans or indeed any other project suggested by the author.

Brigadier P.M. McCarthy RRC, President
Royal Australian Army Nursing Corps
Association

Mrs. Ethel M. Lane MBE, President
Royal Australian Army Nursing Corps
Association (NSW and ACT Branch)

Mrs. Ethel M. Lane MBE, President
Returned Navy, Army and Air Force Sisters
Sub Branch R.S.L. NSW Inc.

Mr. W.R. Davison, President
NSW Ex POW Association

Keep the advertisements

The practice of removing advertisements from periodicals before binding them seems to be common in libraries. No doubt it is done for economic reasons, but it results in the bound volume being an 'expurgated' edition. Persons who have seen copies of the periodical in its original state and are interested in the advertisements are disappointed; while others, and 'future generations' are deprived to some extent.

I was disappointed to find a set of *L'illustration* in one library had been bound in this way. What I missed were 1920s and 1930s advertisements for French motor cars: interesting to the car enthusiast, and often very good examples of art deco style. Advertisements in old issues of *National Geographic* and *Life* – two other examples that come to mind – are often just as interesting as the text of the magazines.

For every periodical title held or received in Australian libraries, I suggest that at least one holding library should bind complete with advertisements.

Keith Gaymer

The LAA and lobbying

It has been upsetting to see several recent references to lobbying in *InCite*, as if it were a desirable activity for the LAA. It used to crop up, of course, as an off-putting element in arguments for the removal of the Association's headquarters to Canberra, but certain goings-on in that city during 1983 have surely made us all aware of the distasteful type of person who goes in for lobbying. And letters in the paper, in Sydney at any rate, have shown that thinking people recognise the immorality of trying to bring influence to bear in a democracy. It isn't so many steps from lobbying to offering bribes.

Goodness knows, the Association takes up many causes in which I personally do not believe, but I accept those responsible as decent people whose priorities happen to differ from mine. In their enthusiasm they're working for the fancy frills before we've succeeded in providing the essentials of library service; nevertheless, their hearts are in the right place. But the pursuit of lobbying as a worthwhile goal is a very different matter.

As librarians we try to present reading matter (= information, if you like) to those needing it, in a way that won't reflect vested interests or influence our public in any particular direction. We pride ourselves on unbiased book selection and so forth. How can we betray all this by seeking improperly to influence parliamentarians and their hangers-on?

The only justifications for lobbying that its cynical proponents seem able to find are the crass claim that the end justifies the means (rather than being contaminated by them) and that others (the revered ALA and other Australian pressure groups) do it. It hardly needs to be pointed out that LAA members should think again about letting themselves be represented by persons willing to betray the professional ethics that working librarians live by, and possessing such a shaky grasp of logic that they believe two or more wrongs make a right.

If these philosophical considerations haven't undermined the would-be lobbyists' sense of rectitude in a worthy cause, they should at least take note of the prudential argument: their lobbying will be counter-productive if they aren't carrying the rest of LAA members with them in their devious machinations. The sooner they return to their last (helping the users of their libraries) the better.

Janet D. Hine

Not for owning or loving, reading only

I am astounded and disappointed that *InCite* should have seen fit to afford wider dissemination to the speech which many Victorian readers had already heard when Phillip Adams delivered it to the National Book Council. (*InCite* volume 4 no. 21.)

Mr Adams' cheerful admission that he buys books without reading them, rumples their covers and leaves them lying around so that they look 'used and loved' was distressing enough to those of us who sat through when he made it. We didn't need to read it as well.

It should not be necessary to point out to a readership of librarians that books are for reading. If they are not read, they are worthless. Mr Adams would have paid a more impressive tribute to the ideals of the Library Association of Australia (and incidentally the National Book Council) had he been able to assert that without owning a single book, he read several of them a week.

Juliet Flesch

Not endorsed by WAIT

The *Journal Arts and Education* recently undertook a promotional distribution of complimentary issues which included a separate sheet containing a number of favourable comments attributed to various Australian libraries. Among these is the following:

'September issue – great. These are exactly the types of articles I wish to read' WAIT Library, Bentley, WA.

In fact, the above comment was written in a 'comment corner' on a free reader service request slip included in an issue of the journal some considerable time ago by a member of the WAIT Library staff acting on her own initiative. While I have neither the desire nor the intention to inhibit the expression of their professional opinions by any of my staff, I believe that the presentation of this comment by *Arts and Education* is misleading. Moreover, in that the individual librarian concerned has now advised me that she considers that this journal has deteriorated significantly in quality, I would like the profession at large to know that WAIT most certainly does not endorse it.

G G Allen
Principal Librarian

Libraries: After 1984

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