

# Racial vilification

'How like a fawning publican he looks!  
I hate him, for he is a Christian, ...'  
Merchant of Venice, I.i.42

'You call me misbeliever, cut-throat dog,  
And spit upon my Jewish gaberdine.'  
Ibid., 112.

New South Wales leads Australia in with a law to combat racial vilification, although Western Australia is currently legislating to oppose written vilification and Victoria has begun consideration of similar action.

This word *vilification* may be new to some of us. The NSW Anti-Discrimination Board defines it as:

- a racist act or action, that
- happens publicly as opposed to privately, and that
- could encourage others to hate, have serious contempt for, or severely ridicule a person, or a group of people, because of their race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national background.

Shylock's soliloquising comment on Antonio is therefore not vilification, but his complaint about the bad treatment he had received would certainly be justified.

Examples of racial vilification, and hence against the law in NSW, *might* be:

- writing racist graffiti
- making racist speeches or statements in public
- abusing someone in a racist way in public
- making racist statements or remarks in a newspaper or journal, or on the radio or television
- wearing racist symbols (such as badges) or clothing with racist slogans



- in public
- making racist gestures in public (for example, 'Heil Hitler' salutes)
- distributing material that you know expresses or promotes racial hatred
- putting up racist posters in public
- publishing racist material.

But note that *might* — to fall within the meaning of the act, these examples would have to:

- happen publicly
- encourage hatred, serious contempt or severe ridicule
- come outside free speech, fair comment or the reporting of acts of vilification.

In NSW, people feeling themselves subject to racial vilification can call the Anti-Discrimination Board to discuss the incident and find out what to do next. Formal complaints can go up to the Equal Opportunity Tribunal which can order apologies and retractions or award damages up to \$40 000. If Shylock confronted the Merchant of *Sydney* instead of *Venice*, he might get his pound of flesh after all.

## Serials

The Australian Serials Special Interest Group (ASSIG) of ALIA is conducting a seminar in conjunction with its AGM at the 1990 ALIA Conference in Perth. It will be held on Monday, 1 October from 2 pm to 6 pm.

ASSIG has arranged three speakers. Dr Toby Burrows (Divisional Librarian, Technical Services, University of Western Australia) will address the topic 'Journals about Journals and Serials about Serials'. Elisabeth Brown (Senior Librarian, Newling Learning Resource Centre, University of New England) will speak on 'Recent Developments in Overseas Serials Control', and Dr Shane O'Neill (Managing Director, Bowker-Saur London and publisher of the British Library Association Journals) will talk about 'Publishing for the Profession'.

The speakers will be followed by the ASSIG Annual General Meeting and drinks supplied by the Group.

## Staff development seminar

This seminar, organised by SACAE Library on 19 and 20 July, attracted 50 participants from all over Australia.

Dr Barry Elsey, the facilitator, from the Centre of Human Resource Studies at SACAE Underdale, introduced a theoretical model of staff development which was illustrated by case studies from speakers from around Australia. Topics covered included policy and planning, needs identification and evaluation of staff development.

Evaluation sheets later completed by the participants have shown strong support for further national or state conferences. The seminar achieved its aims, which were to establish a national identity for library staff involved in staff development and to begin to organise a national network.

It was proposed that each State should establish a Special Interest Group for staff development and draw up a policy statement, which will contribute to a national statement for ALIA. A national directory of library staff development personnel and a national directory of staff development packages for induction, training etc. will also be prepared.

Letters requesting information and input have been sent to major libraries. Anyone not receiving the request who would like to contribute or who would like more information, should contact Jane Hiscock (SACAE), telephone (08) 354 6357, fax (08) 354 6699, or Peter Haddad (NLA), Isabella Trahn (UNSW), Joanne Rutherford (U of Q), Pam Longley (La Trobe Uni), or Patricia Cawley (Murdoch Uni).

## Joan Martin's Letter of Recognition

More than 50 friends and colleagues from Melbourne libraries gathered in the lounge of the Kooyong Lawn Tennis Club on 1 August to honour Joan Martin and her work for health related libraries over the past 25 years.

The function provided the perfect opportunity for the presentation of Joan's recently awarded Letter of Recognition.

Bruce Davidson, General Treasurer of ALIA, and General Councillor for Victoria, presented the award, giving a background of its place in the ALIA award structure, followed by a reading of the citation.

Ann McGalliard (Family Medicine Program), a long-time friend and colleague of Joan then gave a more personal resumé of Joan's career, and presented a gift on behalf of the Health Libraries Section (Victorian Group).

A most enjoyable evening made a fitting tribute to a warm-hearted friend and colleague.



Bruce Davidson presenting Joan Martin with the Letter of Recognition