

Library network

A Christian Librarians Network is being established in Australia and New Zealand, and will soon publish its first newsletter. This network will serve interested librarians working in or associated with all major types of library and information services.

It complements more specialised groups such as the Australian Church Libraries Association (which recently held its first conference in Adelaide) and the Australian and New Zealand Theological Library Association, established almost 10 years ago. Interested Librarians are invited to obtain a copy of a questionnaire on the network and its newsletter from CLN, C/- Information Services Manager, World Vision Information Centre, GPO Box 399C, Melbourne 3001.

Bill Walker, Vic

The things we do...

I must, regretfully, resign my membership of ALIA as my plans for future residency are still uncertain. I hope within the next three years to be back in Australia, bringing with me the expertise I have acquired in the US. Although there are many ways in which Australian librarianship leads the world, on the basis of my experience in this country, Australian librarians can hold their head high. Colleagues here are frequently astonished at the things we do in Australia and the combination of innovative and common-sense ways we approach problems in librarianship.

Anne Robinson, Texas

Lessons of history

John H Berry, in his *Library Journal* editorial 1 November 1990, commended the professional solidarity of Australian libraries as they stood firm against user fees for public library service. He continued ... 'Truly frightening, however, was the evidence of a willingness, even a desire in some Australian quarters, to serve up that mistaken echo that one can distinguish between "basic" library service and all the good stuff like online searches and specialised information services... this attempt to dilute professional principles was justified on the basis of *reality* and *practical politics*'.

Truly frightening it is when the ALIA President-elect displays such an ignorance of history, and lack of concern for our fundamental professional principles, to write as she

did in her letter (*inCite* No 9, 16 September), that '...history is plentiful in people who get nowhere by standing, dogmatically, on principles'. The lessons of history are far more often the reverse; lessons of what happens when appeasing 'taking the easy way out' pragmatism supplants belief and principle.

Alan Bundy, SA

Free library services

Alan Samagalski (*inCite* No 11, 11 November 1994) has 'misread' and 'misinterpreted' my letter which appeared in *inCite* No 9! That ALIA '...now has a statement that can be used without hypocrisy' does not state that objectors to the new statement are hypocrites (though that may be the case?). The simple fact is that there is no library which provides all services free. The reality is that there are costs and that some of these are being passed onto library users for example, photocopy fees.

It would appear that both Lynn Allen and Alan missed my letter which appeared in *inCite* No 10, which gave a quite clear guide to what constituted a 'core' and 'value-added' service. I suggest a re-read of the issue may give them some food for thought? That the current statement is non-'prescriptive' allows flexibility to accommodate different

circumstances.

As for ALIA being irrelevant, then Mr Samagalski you have certainly been hiding your head in the sand for far too long and not, I would suggest, keeping abreast with the changing world. The public purse is not a bottomless money pit!

And as for a reason for renewing your ALIA membership, I would suggest you look at a whole range of areas ALIA has worked in... competency standards; professional development; lobbying, to name some... that have been of great benefit to the profession. A read of *inCite* issues will provide you with ample reason to remain a member.

I close with a quote from D Swanson's 'Evolution libraries and national information policy' from *Library quarterly*, 50:1, 1980;

'The polarisation of arguments and feelings on the fee versus free issues has tended to fog the obvious advantages of a dual system. A basic level of free service supplemented by extra services has not been widely noted... It is... the fee-based services that are likely to lead the way towards improvements from which all services ultimately benefit. Fee-based services might also give librarians better visibility over what services are really wanted or needed.'

Trevor Wakely, Vic ■

Urban legends

From the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) file at alt.folklore.urban, an Internet newsgroup with about 150 000 readers per month. The FAQ maintainer, Terry Chan, determines whether the legends are true, false, or unanswerable — pit your wits and resources against his and see if you can match his results!

- a) Mime had heart attack during act. People thought it part of his act. He died.
- b) Bubbles in bubble-wrap contain a cheap but toxic gas.
- c) You can send a coconut through the mail with out any further wrapping.
- d) If the entire population of China jumped up and down at the same time, (1) the earth's orbit would be disturbed, or (2) USA would be swamped by a tidal wave.
- e) Welding while wearing contacts can cause them to stick to your eyeballs.
- f) Jamie Lee Curtis is a hermaphrodite.
- g) A penny falling from the top of the Empire State Building will embed itself in the pavement below.
- h) *Sesame Street's* Bert and Ernie are gay.
- i) Koalas are always drunk from the alcohol in eucalyptus leaves.
- j) Koalas, being filled with eucalyptus oil, explode in bushfires.
- k) A town in Oregon banned all sex.
- l) Green M&Ms are an aphrodisiac.
- m) White House pizza orders increases indicate big operation underway.
- n) Oregon Highway Division blew up eight-ton dead whale; showered town with blubber.
- o) Albert Einstein did poorly in school.

[Answers can be found on page 26]