

There is an undercurrent of discontent out there in libraryland and it is bigger than you and me. But is it the discontent of a vanishing species: the dinosaurs of librarianship? Or the troubled words of respected professionals mourning the passing of a once proud and valued profession, hoping that their words will be heeded and that the profession will surge forth and regain its place of pride?

We've read and digested the wisdom of Michael Gorman and his views on the core knowledge of the profession.

But have you picked up Bob Usherwood's latest book *Equity and excellence in the public library: why ignorance is not our heritage* where the "evidence of wasted opportunities and limited horizons" disappoints Usherwood? His bemoans the "explosion in populism, with 10 copies of the latest blockbuster novel made at the expense of one useful but expensive reference book'" combined with the notion of "dumbing down" the public library's service. If public libraries are not always supported with professional librarians who, in Usherwood's words, have respect for professional values and "the confidence to defend them", what chance do we have of providing a well rounded and grounded professional public library service?

Then there is *Blatant Berry: the vanishing librarians* (*Library Journal* 15 February 2008): "It looks like the 'transformation' we seek for libraries and librarianship may turn out to be

more of a 'deskilling' of library jobs than an enhancement of the profession". John Berry too, writes of a dumbing down of librarians to the duties of 'retail clerks'.

More recently Bill Crowley's article in the April 1 issue of *Library Journal* includes the statement:

When a "solution" becomes a problem... [with the closure of US library schools several decades ago and the result] : To provide the intellectual justification for this transformation, the faculty joined with information-inclined practitioners to insure that ALA supported a definition of library and information studies that almost totally overlooks 'library' while justifying a program's concentration on 'information.'

Are these concerns indications of a brave new world for librarianship? At what cost, I ask.

Kerry Smith, FALIA
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Note to Members

We welcome letters on any issue of relevance to the library and information sector. It is important to note that the opinions expressed in Letters to the Editor are those of the authors and not necessarily the official policy of the Australian Library and Information Association.

Deadline for letters is the 10th of the month and they should be no longer than 250 words.

Please include your name and postal address as anonymous correspondence will not be reproduced.



Libraries

are for everyone!

Library and Information Week
19 - 25 May 2008

Library and Information Week

Libraries are for everyone!

<http://www.alia.org.au/advocacy/liw/2008>

Libraries are for everyone! It's a vital part of our commitment to promoting the free flow of information and ensuring that everyone has access to information. We are also committed to sharing our expertise to help our clients achieve their goals. We do this on behalf of every Australian.

Library and Information Week (LIW) is a good time to stop and think about the role and value of libraries in our communities, and to communicate and promote our achievements.

We have many types of libraries in Australia, all playing a valuable role in making sure Australians have access to the information they need. Access to ideas and information is fundamental to a thriving culture, economy and democracy.

This week is also a good time to recognise the contribution of skilled library professionals in all library sectors who enable, facilitate, and guide users in accessing information.

How can you use Library and Information Week to promote your library? Create your own eye-catching LIW promotional material; use our downloadable images. Read about great ideas for activities or promotions on our website, and what libraries have done in previous years. Use media resources on our website to supplement your own local media program.

ALIA will be distributing national media releases for Library and Information Week in conjunction with our sponsors, Softlink and ACMA (Australian Communications and Media Authority).

Celebrate during Library and Information Week!



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