

Pocket Time



Tom McKeon
Industrial
Information
Officer

All dressed up ... and where to go?

Ian Delaney of WA has raised the problem faced by newly qualified librarians who find that their first job may be difficult to get without experience, and the experience impossible to get without a job. He also points to the depression in the general economy and the restriction in government spending which affects staff recruitment. He concludes by asking: 'We read about what ALIA does for its working members, but what can ALIA do for them before their first job? This librarian is for now a well-educated lawn-mower man.'

Tom McKeon comments as follows:

I would like to respond to Ian Delaney's letter in two parts. Firstly, I would like to look at the aggregate number of jobs. Secondly, it may be useful to discuss the advertising of job vacancies and ethics of employment practices. Other letters have been received which raise related issues.

The number of jobs — the bad news

There is little ALIA can do in the face of greater forces. Paul Keating is now able to say it. In recessions firms try and reduce labour costs: staffing may be cut and any vacancies may be left unfilled.

ALJ has a new Editor

inCite pays tribute to John Levett, the departing Editor, who single-handed has been the captain, navigator, crew and powerhouse of *ALJ* for the past 10 years. John set his sights in his first *ALJ* editorial (Vol 30 No 3, August 1981), and his achievements are now part of the record.

The new Editor is Dr Michael Talbot of the State Library of South Australia. Michael writes:

Having just received John Levett's files, I'm both pleased at the realisation of a longstanding ambition, and awed at

The majority of library positions are funded by one of the three levels of government. Here the picture is no rosier: the public sector was cut throughout the 80s.

A third factor which has reduced job opportunities is the amalgamation process in tertiary institutions. Many institutions froze staffing arrangements until they knew who their marriage partners would be. This process is nearing completion in most States, though anything could still happen in Victoria and the ACT.

Number of jobs — ALIA's impact

I will now look at what ALIA can do to influence the number of jobs. Lobbying and promotion are two activities carried out at both national and State level. Community appreciation of the role of libraries and the benefits of access to information is essential for the maintenance of library and information services and hence the maintenance of jobs for members.

Examples of such activities in recent times include lobbying against the suggestions in the NSW Oakes Report for charges in public libraries. Such a move would reduce consumer demand and hence enable lower staffing levels. A lobbying campaign was also mounted at the recommendation of the CRESAP review in Tasmania. At the time of writing the South Australian Branch is campaigning to maintain the State Library Lending Service.

If the above examples have been reactive, then a positive approach has been shown by ALIA and its many Divisions participating in the parliamentary enquiry into Australia as an Information Society.

The Board of Education now has an Employment Committee. This committee will provide policy advice on employment issues and conduct research into employment trends. A survey of the 1990 employment history of 1989 librarian graduates is now being analysed. A report will be placed in *inCite*. Another survey is being done on the nature and make-up of job advertisements for information industry jobs. This research should overcome a past reliance on anecdotal evidence.

the responsibility of the undertaking.

The change of editors is abrupt, with no overlapping period to observe the journal in action. For that reason, and because of the *ALJ*'s current high standard, my initial policy will be 'steady as it goes', with gradual changes.

The *ALJ* must retain its scholarly aspects but I have seen too many dry and soulless productions to repress the urge to keep it lively and expressive of the editor's personality. How that works out in practice remains to be seen.

Michael Talbot ■

Ethics in employment

The Board of Education has received correspondence from members suggesting less than satisfactory selection and appointment processes are occurring in the profession. There is a need for all employment opportunities to be fairly advertised and available to those looking for work. Librarians have an important responsibility in acting ethically when recruiting staff.

The Employment Committee is formulating a set of ethical employment principles that may be the basis of an ALIA policy statement. One such principle may be that all vacancies should be advertised within and outside the employing organisation. Also only people with appropriate qualifications should be appointed.

The Training and Development Committee is considering the viability of providing a professional development activity on the ethics of employment.

The new graduate

As Ian Delaney pointed out, getting initial professional work experience is the key. Employment agencies have reported an increase in temporary placements over permanent positions during the last year. It is worthwhile taking any professional work experience available, even if it is for short periods.

One of the benefits of ALIA membership is the professional network. Joining a Section or Special Interest Group is one way of getting known and being included in the word of mouth notification of job vacancies. The reliance on the 'bush telegraph' does have a relationship with the employment ethics discussed above. The important thing is to keep looking, for although graduates all arrive on the job market at once, vacancies will occur throughout the year.

Three State Branches sponsor employment services

ALIA sponsors employment services in three States. In New South Wales for LIAZE call Sue Innes on (02) 250 0376 (work). In Queensland call EQUAL on (07) 357 5877. LEG in South Australia may be contacted on (08) 223 1240. ■

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William George Buick 1923-1990

George Buick died on 8 December 1990.

Born on 29 June 1923, he joined the staff of the State Library of South Australia as an attendant, passed his matriculation examinations and was transferred to a position of Library Assistant in the Country Lending Service. He enrolled at the University of Adelaide as a part-time student in Science, transferred to Arts towards the end of the degree, and graduated BA in 1955. In 1956 the award of a Carnegie Fellowship and a Fellowship from the University of Chicago enabled him to gain his MA from the Graduate Library School of that University. He returned to Adelaide and advanced quickly to become Deputy State Librarian until, in 1964, he was appointed Associate Librarian, Institute of Advanced Studies at the Australian National University.

The high-point of his career was his appointment as Foundation Librarian at the University of Papua New Guinea in 1966. Here his wide-ranging vision of a library which was not only for the academic community and would contain a national collection against the time when a National Library for the country could become a reality ensured that he would build much more than an academic library.

The professional examinations began in 1944. By the end of 1945 George had become one of the first matriculants to qualify as a professional. His commitment to the

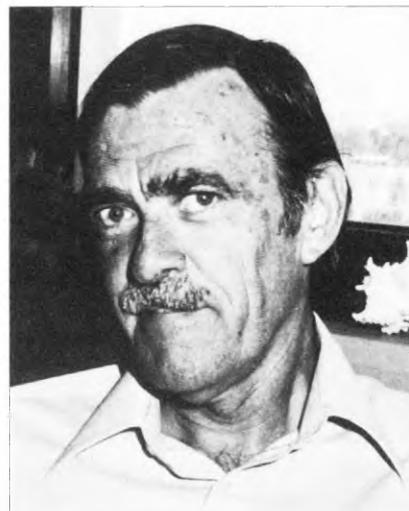
LAA was expressed in his service in executive positions in three Branches, in talks at meetings and in contributions to its journals. His book *Population and Government Studies for the Provision of Public Libraries in South Australia* was published by the Libraries Board in 1965. In 1971 he was awarded the Fellowship of the LAA 'as an experienced and inspiring librarian, scientist and dedicated educationalist'.

He set about building another new academic library and university when he became Foundation Librarian of Murdoch University in 1972.

After retirement in 1984 he concentrated on his first and abiding interest in malacology, the study of molluscs and their shells, working as a voluntary worker at the West Australian Museum. He built up his own great collection of molluscs and compiled a citation index of world mollusca. Just before he died he had the joy of having two species of mollusca named after him. So much for the record. What of the man?

George had a happy and optimistic personality which helped him cope with dreadful crises in health with fortitude and determination. He was also fortunate in his family life with his wife, Barbara, his son, Roger and his daughter, Janet. These people were his best friends.

His enthusiasm for his profession knew no bounds and ranged from clay tablets to



computer databases. He saw all libraries, all media, museums, galleries and collections as essentially contributing to one end — the increase in human knowledge, understanding and happiness.

He visited the world's libraries and museums and was at home in them as he was excited and happy on so many of the world's sea-shores. A naturalist, a librarian, a gardener, above all an asker of questions and lover of life in all its variety, George Buick recognised no boundaries between the past and the present, between nature and man, or between the arts and the sciences. Think about this man and remember him.

Jean P Whyte ■

School of Librarianship University of NSW

The School of Librarianship, as part of its Continuing Education programme is offering a number of short courses during 1991.

Introduction to Book Indexing

February (18 hours)

August (18 hours)

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April (18 hours)

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Library Automation using OASIS

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June (15 hours)

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Database Design

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For further information contact:

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