

Wanted: a career in a library

You have probably glanced through the pages of *inCite* and seen the 'position wanted' ads. I ran mine in the January/February, March and April editions earlier this year.

In May 2006, I started my first paid library position at the Hornsby Shire Library and Information Service – up until that point I had volunteered in various types of libraries. I have been asked on a number of occasions 'Was the ad worth it?' The quick answer is yes – and no. I didn't get a library manager e-mailing me to say "I have a job, when can you start?" However, it was good proof of my use of initiative and my keenness to obtain employment in the library field. Would I run the ad again, if I were looking for work in the library field again? Yes, but I would show each potential employer the magazine and the ad.

If there is one thing I gained from my experience, it was that if you lack work experience – which to my mind seems to count for far too much in library assistant positions – you need to gain 'points' in other areas. For example, I realised that a current first aid certificate would be a big plus, and I obtained a National Criminal History Check (here in NSW, you cannot apply for a Working with Children Check, unless you are an employee, but this is a start), plus my ALIA membership. The other thing that hit me early on was that sometimes a skill could bridge across employment areas. I had been working as a stores person, and this gave me organisational skills, as well as skills in working with a numbered classification. While on the surface a job may not look as if it has any relevant skill that could be used in a library, think outside the square for skills that you may not have con-

sidered mentioning.

The word 'experience' comes up many times in ads for library positions, and I cannot stress too highly just how valuable this seems to be. If you have a desire to work in a law library – go and see if you cannot volunteer in one, and gain as much knowledge as you can, and *document it!!* Write down everything you do each day in an exercise book, making as many notes about how it was done, and why. *Never* be afraid to ask questions; knowing why it was done that way leads to more knowledge.

Lastly, I wish to thank the team at ALIA, in particular Sharon Cunningham for all her help in this venture of mine. To all potential library staff: Best of luck in your career, and if you want to ask more questions, my e-mail is alieads@optusnet.com.au.

Alison Edwards

The opening sentences of imaginary novels – bad ones

The 2006 results of the Bulwer-Lytton Fiction Contest were announced a little while ago. Australians are successfully contributing to the world's worst opening sentences: Geoff Blackwell of Bundaberg is 2006 runner-up in the Western category; Cathy Bannister (Canberra), Andy Otes (Sydney) and Beth Worrall all scored in the miscellaneous Dishonourable Mentions. Read all of them and more at <http://www.bulwer-lytton.com/>.

The overall Grand Prize winner is this stunning *noir* intro.

Detective Bart Lasiter was in his office studying the light from his one small window falling on his super burrito when the door swung open to reveal a woman whose body said you've had your last burrito for a while, whose face said angels did exist, and whose eyes said she could make you dig your own grave and lick the shovel clean. (Jim Guigli, Carmichael, CA)

The only appearance of a librarian – a somewhat clichéd cameo in the Science Fiction category – won a Dishonourable Mention.

Scarcely three months after he had promised Purity that he would stand by her no matter what, and a bare two hours after he had witnessed the unorthodox birth of her pointy-eared alien child, George somewhat dazedly approached the information desk at the public library and sent the matronly attendant into paroxysms of mirth by asking for a baby care book by Mr Spock. (Lionel Monash Hurst)

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