
SUPER PETTEE SESSION

Philip Harvey

This year's ANZTLA conference included a pre-Conference session for users of the Union Theological Seminary Classification, commonly known as the Pettee Classification, after its originator, Julia Pettee (1872-1967). The session was the answer to a long-expressed need for more time to be spent at conferences on Pettee.

Richmond Correspondence

The session was enlivened by exciting news from the 'home of Pettee'. In June, Ruth Millard of Ridley College Library and Philip Harvey of the Joint Theological Library received correspondence from Dr John Trotti and Ms Dottie Thomason of the William Morton Smith Library, Union Theological Seminary, Richmond, Virginia, USA. Plans are underway to scan the Richmond copy of the Classification book and then manually edit its additions and revisions.

The ANZTLA Special Users' Group was advised that, once on disc, it would be relatively easy to add our own Australian revisions, a proposal that requires further elucidation and consideration. It can be taken that the ultimate product will be, in essence, the long-awaited new edition.

Elsewhere in the email correspondence, there was even suggestion that someone in Australia may want to take on the project. Such an expression indicates the changing nature of the relationship between American and Australian Pettee users. Dr Trotti retires in December 2002 as Director of the Library, an historic moment in the history of Pettee. Ms Thomason, Cataloging Librarian at Richmond, will continue the Pettee work there after Dr Trotti's retirement.

Australian classifiers have started exploring the Call Number index of Richmond's catalogue. Enquiries about new Richmond numbers were rewarded. On the eve of the conference, Ruth Millard received an email attachment with an ex-

tensive list, copied directly from Richmond's own working copies. Many of these numbers will be invaluable, whether as fixed subjects or guides to the practice and thinking of Richmond cataloguers.

All of this is regarded as a major breakthrough in our working relationship with Richmond, a relationship we hope will be mutually beneficial into the future. Both Ruth Millard and Philip Harvey are maintaining the correspondence with their Richmond counterparts.

Session Results

The special pre-conference session as a thorough-going success. Classifiers finally had a chance to discuss new subject areas, call number conflicts, knotty problem areas, areas of equal choice, and other daily conundrums. In the process we learnt from one another about local practices and broadened immeasurably our general knowledge of how the system operates.

Lists of pre-existing numbers were circulated. Lists of main concerns were addressed systematically. Classifiers worked together to arrive at common consensus, always with the understanding that we cannot agree every time on numbers that have been invented "at home" in the absence of a final authority.

As well as carrying away a vast array of new numbers, classifiers took tasks home with them for the group to consider and use later, including number merges and usage updates. There was a spirit of friendly co-operation, borne of creative endeavour toward a common end.

On the Wednesday evening, dinner was followed by a slightly irreverent speech about classification systems in general. Certain important reminders were made, nevertheless, about the value of our work.

Julia Pettee's words, from her speech to the American Theological Library Assoc.

in 1955, sounded as fresh as ever: "In my opinion, a special library is better served by a special classification than by a general classification system." The reason she gave then is eternally valid: "A specialist views the field of knowledge from his own particular angle, and selects from this field of knowledge the portions that are useful to him and develops those portions." She reiterated the truth that "there is nothing static about a classification scheme," proof of which was everywhere evident in our discussions throughout a productive and lively workshop.

Pettee Users Group hard at work!



Elections / Appointments

From ANZTLA A.G.M. 2002

President	Judith Bright
Vice-President	Philip Harvey
Secretary	Stephen Connelly
Treasurer	Lynn Pryor
Executive Member (from W.A. Chapter)	Steve Hall
Newsletter Editor	Val Canty
Assistant Editor	Jocelyn Morris
Statistician	Ruth Millard
Website co-ordinator	Tony McCumstie
ANZTLA-Forum Moderator	Jocelyn Morris