

Recent Publications

BOOK REVIEWS

Libraries and the Learning Society: Papers in Response to A Nation at Risk. Chicago, Ill.: American Library Assn., 1984. 151p. \$9. LC 84-11163. ISBN 0-8389-3313-0.

The five papers included in the work under review here constitute the first step in the response to the failure of the commission responsible for *A Nation at Risk* to acknowledge adequately the role of libraries in the educational program of our country. In addition to this title, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education but issued by the ALA, the Department of Education has also published *Alliance for Excellence: Librarians Respond to A Nation at Risk* (64p.), which contains thirteen recommendations for action on the part of librarians, parents, educators, and citizens, by which "Libraries, newly organized, freshly chartered, can become centers of the learning society." This publication is now out of print at the Government Printing Office but has been reprinted and is being distributed through the good offices of World Book Inc. In addition, ALA has published *Realities: Educational Reform in a Learning Society*, a statement by ALA's Task Force on Excellence in Education (13p. single copy, free; 2-10, 50¢ each; 11-99 copies, 30¢ each). The latter publication is intended to be used as a basis for study and discussion by groups of citizens and others concerned. With these resources, 1985 is obviously the "Year of Dissemination" for libraries and the learning society.

Libraries and the Learning Society presents analyses by five leaders of the profession that were used as the basis of five seminars held at the invitation of the U.S. De-

partment of Education in as many localities around the country during the months of January through March 1984.

Readers of this journal may be most interested in Richard Dougherty's thoughtful analysis, "Stemming the Tide of Mediocrity: The Academic Library Response." He provides a survey of the seminal studies on use of academic libraries whose "lessons and recommendations have gone largely unheeded." Patricia Knapp, Louis Shores, and E. J. Josey are among those whose work he cites. Dougherty's major recommendation for improving the impact of academic libraries is one that has been urged for years, one might almost say for generations: "There should be a logical progression in the teaching of library strategies beginning with primary schools, and continuing steadily through college." Among problems that must be met by academic libraries, Dougherty cites the need for more effective programs for educationally disadvantaged students and recognition of the need to involve librarians more actively in the educational role of institutions of higher education, which he says is not "just a matter of status but also a matter of turf and roles." He notes especially the need for state agencies and tenure and promotion committees to be willing to alter academic reward systems. It is no criticism of this author's work to say that his paper has little in it new or original; rather it is a further evidence of organizational resistance to change in academic institutions.

Douglas L. Zweigig, in his paper "Public Libraries and Excellence: The Public Library Response to A Nation at Risk," emphasizes throughout the importance of

the public library's role in eradicating adult functional illiteracy, although he points out at the same time that "public libraries themselves have yet to play a major role in the achievement of adult literacy." Zweizig is concerned also with the continuing constriction in economic support for public libraries and notes the growing tendency in public libraries to eliminate young adult services. He elaborates on the increasing sameness of available information and, as a result, the obligation of the public library to enhance the diversity of information available to the general public. His emphasis on this increasing sameness is of particular interest but contrasts with the fact that the *amount* of information has tripled in the number of titles published annually in the past twenty years. His recommendations include several mentioned in other papers: diversification of content, longer hours, joint planning with community schools for the information requirements of students, and more active planning between teachers and librarians. Zweizig's discussion of the public library's role in planning points up, as Dougherty did, the need for cooperation and coordination of programs and services between school, academic, and public libraries.

Peggy Sullivan's paper, "Libraries and the Learning Society: Relationships and Linkages among Libraries," brings out a number of points already mentioned. In discussing the role of library instruction, she claims that "School and public libraries probably do their most effective job in this area at the elementary level." Access to computers, the function of libraries to serve as bridges to the English language for new residents in the U.S., and the formation of library networks to provide better service are among the special points she makes. She notes, however, that "school libraries are traditionally the last type of library to be included in any multi-type cooperative (although there are some indications, as in New Jersey and New York, that this condition is changing)." Sullivan makes special mention of the fact that two stereotypes still exist and continue to delay the incorporation of school libraries into networks: the no-

tions that all "school library collections are alike so they won't have much to offer, and school libraries are self-sufficient because of the limited demands made upon them." Sullivan, like other authors in this series, promotes the role of library education in providing leadership in developing the function of libraries in a learning society. In discussing the role of library schools in higher education, she points out that library schools are "lacking in the numbers and clout that would make their institutional integrity clearer and their existence more secure." She questions the wisdom of returning school library education programs for housing exclusively in schools of education.

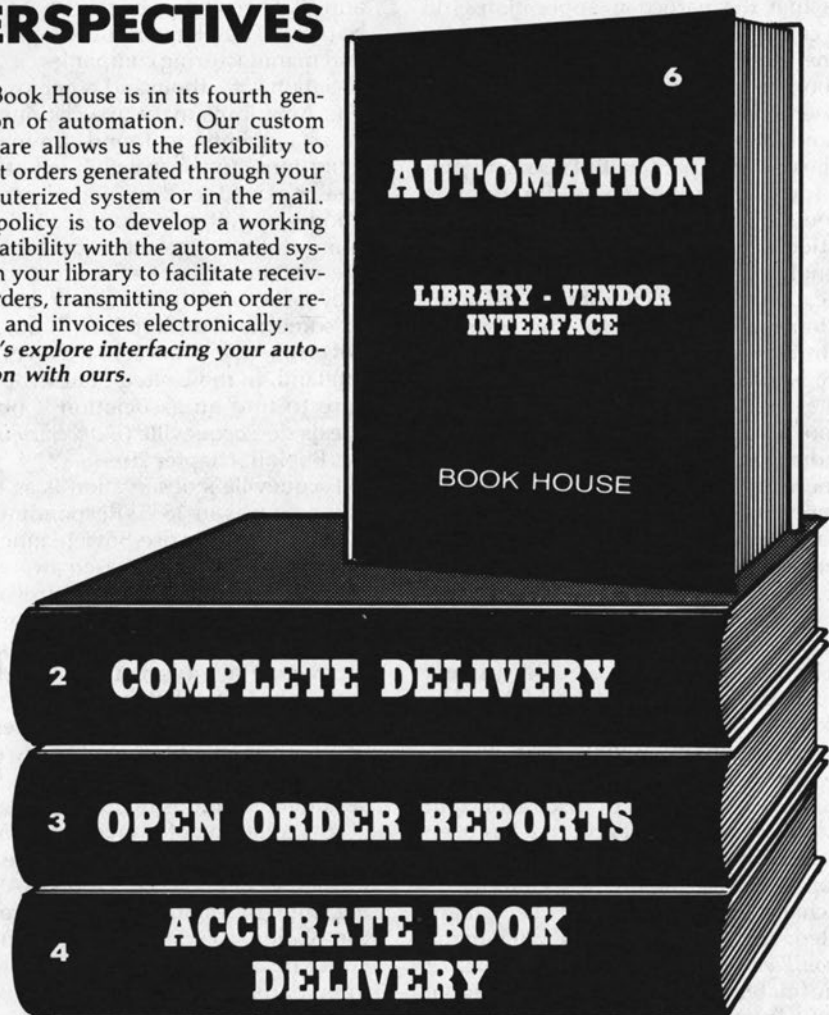
This is one of the many recommendations made by Jane Hannigan in her wordy and discursive paper, "Vision to Purpose to Power: A Quest for Excellence in the Education of Library and Information Science Professionals." In discussing a "Specialty Scenario: School Library Media Education," Hannigan states forthrightly, "I would move all educational responsibility for this profession to schools of education," basing her argument on the assumption that "school library media specialists are properly a part of schooling and their allegiance should be primarily in education." Other aspects of library education discussed by Hannigan include the need for curriculum planning, increased faculty productivity, and continuing education for faculty members, as well as deans!

The paper by James Liessner on "School Library Media Programs in an Information World" is based on a thorough exposition of the research that has been done in this field in recent years and emphasizes (like Dougherty and Zweizig) the need in both teaching and testing for library instruction programs to concentrate on higher levels of skills as well as on basic skills. His discussion of the role of information use and users in school media centers and its relation to the reference function in schools, leads to his assertion that "School library media programs need to be brought into the main stream of library information activity." He believes that all professional education should be moved to the gradu-

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ate level and that the "discipline of the library media specialist is the discipline of any library and information specialist except that the particular application is in this case in the school."

The question of library education for school media specialists seems to this reviewer to be the most important, and apparently the most controversial, discussed in these five papers, with Hannigan opting for putting the school librarians in schools of education and Sullivan, but particularly Liessner, coming down strongly for graduate level professional education as a part of the library and information specialist program. This reviewer is strongly in favor of Liessner's stand. Here is where the customers are, and, as in the past, this is where the leaders in the school library field have been and should be educated.

These five papers present a variety of assessments of librarianship today and an equal variety of recommendations for the achievement of excellence in the learning society. We owe a special debt not only to the authors of these papers but also to the staff of the Center for Libraries and Education Improvement in the U.S. Department of Education, as well as to the ALA and its Task Force on Excellence in Education. The three publications that have been produced provide a wealth of opinion and data for use as a basis of discussion. But they will be worth the effort that has been put into them *only* if the profession takes action to correct the problems and meets the challenges that have thus been highlighted. As Norman Stevens wrote in the *Wilson Library Bulletin* (Nov. 1984, p.221): "The material should be of substantial benefit in awakening our consciousness and in teaching us how to present our views to others in a forthright fashion."—*Mary V. Gaver, Past President, ALA, and Professor Emeritus, Rutgers the State University of New Jersey.*

Abstracting and Indexing Services in Perspective, Miles Conrad Memorial Lectures. Ed. by M. Lynne Neufeld, Martha Cornog, and Inez L. Sperr. Arlington, Va.: Information Resources Pr., 1983.

312p. \$27.50. LC 82-084484. ISBN 0-87815-043-9.

"Americans of all ages, all conditions, and all dispositions, constantly form associations. They have not only commercial and manufacturing companies . . . but associations of a thousand other kinds. . . . The Americans make associations to give entertainments, to found seminaries, to build inns, to construct churches, to diffuse books, to send missionaries to the antipodes. . . . If it be proposed to inculcate some truth, or to foster some feeling by the encouragement of a great example, they form a society. Wherever, at the head of some new undertaking, you see the government in France, or a man of rank in England, in the United States you will be sure to find an association," observed Alexis de Tocqueville (*Democracy in America*, Book II, chapter 29).

Tocqueville's observation is as true today as it was in 1835. Responding to the shock of the surprise Soviet launching of *Sputnik* and to the increased awareness of the value of bibliographic control over scientific and technical research, representatives of fourteen American indexing and abstracting services met to establish a federation in 1958. They intended to cooperate in order to resolve inadequacies in the coverage of scientific literature, to explore applications of mechanization, and to seek joint solutions to other problems.

This collection of essays commemorates the twenty-fifth anniversary of the founding of the National Federation of Abstracting and Information Services (formerly the National Federation of Science Abstracting and Indexing Services). The three parts of this volume are (1) papers detailing the history of the federation written by current and past officers, (2) brief personal statements by past presidents and executive directors of NFAIS on the silver anniversary of the organization, and (3) the fifteen Miles Conrad lectures. Miles Conrad (1911-64) was director of *Biological Abstracts* and a founder and first president of NFAIS. Since 1968, an expert in indexing, abstracting, or information service has been invited to address the annual meeting to honor Conrad. These lectures