

Recent Publications

BOOK REVIEWS

Pruett, Nancy Jones. *Scientific and Technical Libraries*. Orlando, Fla.: Academic, 1986. 2v., alk. paper. \$90 (ISBN 0-12-566041-3; 0-12-566042-1). LC 86-10829.

Pruett has undertaken the ambitious project of describing in these two volumes all aspects of scientific and technical research libraries other than medical libraries. On the whole, she is very successful; I would have liked something of this sort when I was in library school, and I anticipate referring to it for information, surveys of relevant literature, and reasoned summaries of the various aspects of librarianship in science and technology.

Obviously it is impossible to be totally comprehensive in a work of this scope. Pruett's aim, as stated in her preface, is to "lean toward 'everything you wanted to know' when the literature seemed thin . . . and lean toward more of an outline when there seemed to be adequate sources published." One of the impressive features of the work is its thoughtful review of the literature.

The first volume is on functions and management. It is organized around what Pruett defines as the five primary functions libraries provide their organizations: information retrieval; current awareness; collection development; collection control (including circulation, shelving, cataloging, indexing, and bibliographic control); and document delivery. Also discussed are secondary functions performed in support of the primary ones: management, space planning, automation, and equipment selection and maintenance. Of course this division is somewhat artificial,

and Pruett acknowledges the blurring of boundaries, particularly in light of integrated online systems. This volume also has a general introduction, a review of "scientific literature and its use," and descriptions of three geological libraries (university, corporate and federal), used as a device to make some points more concrete and to emphasize the variations in libraries due to differences in settings and organizational objectives. This is an interesting approach that should be especially instructive to students who are relatively unfamiliar with details of technical library operation. Two of the descriptions are written by Pruett's colleagues, as are two of the twelve chapters in this volume.

The second volume also comprises twelve chapters, including some very brief ones on special formats (conference literature, dissertations and theses, government documents, in-house and proprietary information, serials, maps, microforms, numeric data, patents, software, standards and specifications, technical reports, and translations). Of the seven subject-area chapters, only the one on geoscience is by Pruett, but there is little repetition or overlap.

Although I am favorably impressed with the work, there are occasions when the author's judgment does not coincide with mine. She suggests the utility of a list of "citations that could be expected to be asked for from a sci/tech library" as a self-administered test for comparisons of sci/tech collections and document availability. But apart from certain core materials, sci/tech libraries are so much shaped by lo-

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cal needs that I doubt the utility of such a list. She also gives more credence than I would to Library of Congress claims on the projected cost of DEZ deacidification. Still, in paging through my review copy, I find that among the critical marginalia I have entered, there are also about an equal number of passages marked *yes*, including "—many people hear scientists' complaints about publication delay times and proposed automated solutions: for example, unreviewed electronic journals which are available instantly. They do not understand that scientists view this as 'garbage in-garbage out' and that the review process and the formality of the publication process are essential."

At some points, progress has overtaken the author's judgments. I do not agree that "no one has yet solved the problem of individuals holding up [routed journal] issues, or the problem of tracking the issues when they are routed," since I have seen the routing system at Abbott Laboratories, where issues are sent back after each routing and a computer picks the next user so as to reward those who return issues fastest. There are occasional errors that may have been caused by the publication schedule: the National Translations Center at the John Crerar Library is given its old address, although earlier a 1985 article on Crerar's move to its present site. And there are a few minor annoyances such as citing the late Derek Price under "De Solla Price."

I noted two instances of repeated sentences (word-processor syndrome?). In an illustrative example on the Bradford distribution, we find the sentence "The core collection of books then consists of everything which has not [sic] circulated in the last 60 months," which is presumably just a typographical error but might confuse a student. Finally, I don't think the index is up to the quality of the work as a whole. Most of the entries seem to be taken from section headings, and information in paragraphs without separate headings may be difficult to find; for example, in volume 2, the chapter on physics has a brief but useful survey of literature on the browsing behavior of physicists and other researchers, but neither volume index has

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the heading "browsing." However, lapses in general are minor and could be corrected in a second printing of what is clearly going to be a standard work.—

Robert Michaelson, Seeley G. Mudd Library for Science & Engineering, Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois.

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

Acid Rain: 1986, A Handbook for States and Provinces. Comp. by Acid Rain Foundation. St. Paul, Minn.: Acid Rain, 1987. 600p. \$55 (ISBN 0-935577-07-6).

Air Pollutant's Effects On Forest Ecosystems. Comp. by Acid Rain Foundation. St. Paul, Minn.: Acid Rain, 1987. 440p. \$55 (ISBN 0-935577-01-7).

Auld, Lawrence W.S. *Electronic Spreadsheets for Libraries.* Phoenix: Oryx, 1987. 240p. \$37.50 (ISBN 0-89774-245-1) LC 85-43324.

Balachandran, Sarojini. *Decision Making: An Information Sourcebook.* Oryx Sourcebook Series in Business & Management. Phoenix: Oryx, 1987. 208p. \$43.50 (ISBN 0-89774-270-2) LC 87-7975.

Benhan, Frances, and Ronald R. Powell. *Success*

in Answering Reference Questions: Two Studies. Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow, 1987. 313p. \$29.50 (ISBN 0-8108-1940-6).

Berg, Steven L., Dana Finnegan, and Emily McNally. *NALGAP Annotated Bibliography: Alcoholism, Substance Abuse, and Lesbian/Gay Men.* Fort Wayne, Ind.: National Assn. of Lesbian & Gay Alcoholism Professionals. 260p. paper, \$25 (ISBN 0-9618753-1-3).

Bibliography of Latin American Bibliographies, 1980-1984: Social Sciences and Humanities. Ed. by Lionel V. Lorona. Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow, 1987. 239p. \$25 (ISBN 0-8108-1841-4).

Borst, Raymond R. *Henry David Thoreau: A Reference Guide.* Boston: Hall, 1987. 144p. \$35 (ISBN 0-8161-8822-X) LC 87-7420.

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