

## BOOK REVIEWS

### An excellent inspiration for action

*Library Service to the Deaf and Hearing Impaired*, by Phyllis I. Dalton. Phoenix, Arizona: Oryx Press 1985. 371pp. US\$39.50. ISBN 0 89774 135 8. Supplied by Bennetts Library Services.

This book has been published at a time when the consciousness of librarians has started to be raised regarding the library and information needs of deaf and hearing impaired people. The author, Phyllis Dalton, sees a natural progression in the development of library services to people with disabilities, which has traditionally been associated with services to the blind, to now encompassing services to the

'silent minority'. This is a thorough and informative work seeking to provide the basis for all types of libraries to institute and develop library services to the deaf and hearing impaired.

As Alice Hagemeyer, Librarian for the Deaf Community with the District of Columbia Library, points out in her foreword this work has application for other professionals who may have little knowledge of the underlying reasons which have held back the silent minority for 200 years. Although it is clear that many effective programs have been developed in the United States in recent years Hagemeyer describes *Library Services to the Deaf and Hearing Impaired* as a beginning of a move in the right direction. For Australian libraries a beginning and move in the direction of providing and expanding library services for the deaf and hearing impaired is now well overdue. For those on the threshold this book provides an excellent inspiration to action.

Each of the five parts of the work (overview and historical context; library programs; resources; evaluation; and potential for library service to the deaf) can be accessed for a mine of 'why' and 'how to' information. Particularly useful are the appendices with information about international symbols and specific library programs. Although, naturally, set in the American context much can be extrapolated for Australian libraries.

Valerie Moon

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### Useful — but curious ...

*Experiences of Library Network Administrators: Papers Based on the Symposium 'From Our Past: Towards 2000'* edited by Wilson Luquire. New York: Haworth Press 1985. 130pp. ISBN 0-86656-388-1.

As a network administrator, I looked forward to reading about my colleagues and their 'pasts'. Unfortunately I was to be disappointed, I should have known that they would not give much of that sort away!

In this publication, four ex-network administrators present papers on the origin, history and progress of their former organisations. These were AMIGOS Bibliographic Council Inc. serving 145 libraries, California Authority for Systems and Services (CLASS) with its 539 libraries, MINITEX in Minnesota and OCLC. These are useful histories and in some cases raise important issues. For example, the former Associate Director of CLASS expressed concern that library networks are in danger of developing as competitive business enterprises. This may not further the cause of co-operation. In addition, it may result in library networks being managed by non-librarians. He did not cite examples, but the questions of competition and of the qualities required of network directors are further canvassed in the panel discussion.

Some general themes emerge. The speakers agree that networks established without clear and well understood objectives, do not succeed. However reading between the lines those that had enough money seemed to be able to stay afloat even if they had unclear objectives. They could afford to spend many years sorting out what they should be doing.

The paper by Alice Wilcox is interesting in that she places her network, MINITEX in its wider social and historical context. However with little time for real analysis, comment such as 'libraries of nearly equal size and in close proximity obtain the greatest benefit from co-operative processing' are offered without any supporting argument.

The fifth and final paper in the publication is not about networks but is a description of the US National Commission on Libraries and Information Sciences, its history and achievements. The author is Alphonse Trezza, an ex-Executive Director of the Commission. He expresses concern that in recent years the Commission has lost its way and is moving away from libraries and towards the private sector. With Australia looking at establishing a Library and Information Policy, there could be warnings in this for us.

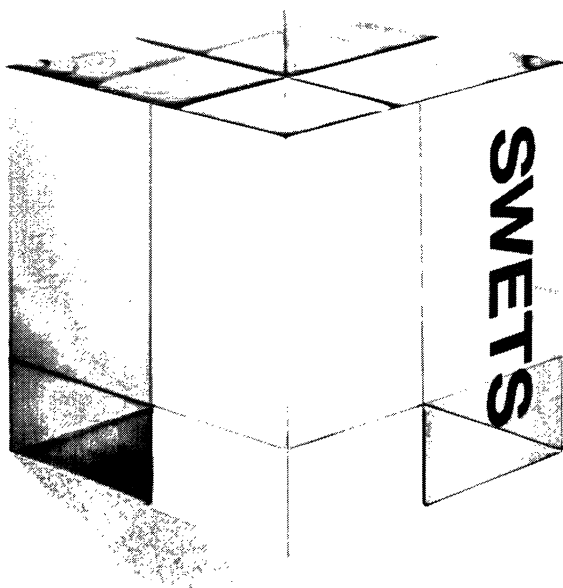
As a source of information about the Commission and the four networks, this is a useful book. However, as a publication it is curious in several ways. First of all, the papers have already been published as *Resource Sharing and Information Networks*. Vol. 2, Nos. 1/2. Secondly, there is a considerable amount of padding, in that its 130 pages contain 43 rather repetitive individual and group photographs of the speakers!

Rona Wade

Executive Director CLANN

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**state-of-the-art  
summary**

*The Information professional: proceedings of a conference organised by the Education for Librarianship Section of the Library Association of Australia, held 26-3 November 1984 at Melbourne College of Advanced Education, Melbourne, Australia* / edited by James Henri and Roy Sanders. Wagga Wagga: Centre for Library Studies, Verina-Murray Institute of Higher Education, 1985. \$20 LAA members; \$23 non-members. 225 pp ISBN 0 909561 99 0.

This conference attempted to draw together speakers from all areas of the information profession. The opening papers discuss trends and developments, followed by others on education for information professionals, and on new applications of information handling skills. Warren Horton's opening address effectively steals the thunder of several following speakers, and Peter Judge concludes with a summary of the recommendations of the LAA Futures Committee. There is an extensive contents list but no index.

On the whole I find the papers disappointing. Typically, the librarians actively defend their role in information management, while the non-librarians seem not to recognise that there is any debate at all, at least not as far as their role is concerned. Many of the papers, particularly in the section on new applications, are mere recitations of what a particular institution is doing, with no analysis of why they chose to do it that way.

All is not lost, however. For those in government, Oxley presents a report on the Victorian Public Service's work on defining information professionals and integrating them into a government structure. Schauder gives some facts on which we can base our own analyses. Webb adopts a refreshingly broad perspective in looking at the education needs of the computing world, and several educators discuss the politics of course nomenclature, showing that Sir Humphrey Appleby is present in academia as well as government. Hill shows how to do more than traditional librarianship in a corporate environment.

I get the distinct impression that the debate was decidedly one sided: those who are ill at ease in the broadening world that used to be ruled by librarianship stoutly defend their role; the non-librarians and some of the special librarians simply get on with the job, justifying their existence by performance alone. Maybe there was more debate but there are no reports or summaries of discussion to enliven the reading. Still, if the educators came away from the conference with the same conclusions as I did on reading the papers, and if this leads into course design, some value will have been served.

One final comment: the book is typescript, using a word processor. The editors have chosen to right justify the lines, but the program does this by inserting multiple blanks between words, rather than by micro-justifying the spaces between all the characters in a line. The result is difficult to read because the eyes have to adjust too frequently. Many studies have shown that unless micro-justification is available, it is much more effective to have consistent spacing even at the cost of a ragged right edge, a policy I follow in my own publications and reports. The power of a word processor has to be treated with some caution!

The Centre for Library Studies is to be commended on producing the papers in a short time and at an affordable price. The book should be purchased by those specialising in

librarianship, information management or whatever, and by those requiring a summary of the state of the game in Australia in 1984. Otherwise, I am afraid, it is a dry read.

Glenn Sanders

Sanders Information Management Services

**Valuable primary  
resource material**

*A guide to the history of Queensland: a bibliographic survey of selected resources in Queensland history.* Compiled by Johnston, W. Ross and Zerner, Margaret, Brisbane: Library Board of Queensland, 1985. 241 pp. ISBN 0 7242 1491 7.

This publication succeeds *A bibliography of Queensland history* published in 1981 by the Library Board of Queensland. It has succeeded in remedying some of the deficiencies of its predecessor. An earnest attempt has been made to address specific issues including the extent of the published works relating to Queensland history as well as the increasing holdings of unpublished material at the John Oxley Library and at the Fryer Library, University of Queensland. The guide will certainly supplement the catalogues of these two collections and make the valuable material contained therein increasingly accessible to the general reader, for whom this guide is primarily intended. The guide is not aimed at the bibliographer or the researcher. March 1984 is taken as the cut off point for the inclusion of relevant material. Comprehensive author/title and general subject indexes are provided. Improved subject access is a positive result.

The guide is an excellent one which will be widely used in accessing information resources on Queensland history, in line with the increasing interest being experienced in local and state history of all kinds. It is a pity that individual state primary school histories have not been included but reasons of space most probably prevailed. The same is true in the section on religion where histories of individual congregations are generally not listed. Such source material is difficult to obtain and their inclusion would have been useful, but the emphasis of the publication has remained on secondary sources rather than primary.

General Australian sources have not always been included. One of the major premises for this editorial decision is that such histories have not handled the history of Queensland well. This comment made in the introduction particularly mentions Manning Clark's multi-volume history. However it should be noted that this statement is equally true of his handling of the history of South Australia and Western Australia.

The question of inclusion/non-inclusion could have become a vexed one. Geoffrey Blainey's *The tyranny of distance* is included, whilst his *A land half won* is not. Ross Fitzgerald's *From the dreaming to 1915* naturally is as are Denis Murphy's many collections of essays which are a vital information source on the subject of Queensland labour politics. It is probably true to infer that the history of Queensland has not yet been fully integrated into the history of Australia. In allowing this situation to arise all Australian historians are to blame, not just those located in Queensland.

These small points should not detract from the usefulness of this work. The opening up of valuable primary resource material to the student of history will be a natural result of its preparation and publication, as will comprehensive access to academic works in a broad range of subject areas related to Queensland and its history.

Chris Henderson

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