

ADVANCES IN
LIBRARIANSHIP

VOLUME 9

1979

Advances in
LIBRARIANSHIP

Edited by

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Volume 9



ACADEMIC PRESS New York San Francisco London 1979

A Subsidiary of Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Publishers

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ACADEMIC PRESS, INC.

111 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York 10003

United Kingdom Edition published by
ACADEMIC PRESS, INC. (LONDON) LTD.
24/28 Oval Road, London NW1 7DX

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS CATALOG CARD NUMBER: 79-88675

ISBN 0-12-785009-0

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

79 80 81 82 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

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Preface

Events of the past several years have created serious and often divisive problems for librarians in America and abroad. Particularly distressing problems, especially in the United States, have related to the questions of intellectual freedom, the implementation of user charges for the delivery of library and information services, and the utilization of paraprofessional employees in libraries. Of concern to librarians everywhere has been the relentless pressure on library financial support generated by the twin forces of inflation and the instability of various national economies.

This volume of *Advances in Librarianship* addresses these problems and assesses recent attempts by library interests to cope with them. The tentative verb is utilized because it will be obvious to readers of this volume that librarians are only now fully engaged in their efforts to surmount these difficulties and, in many areas, the outcome remains uncertain.

The first three articles deal with broad and highly significant problems which have generated heated, and often acrimonious, debate among librarians. In the introductory contribution, David K. Berninghausen, long a leading advocate of the librarian's role as guardian of intellectual freedom, surveys the current status of the librarian's commitment to this idea in America. In doing so, he candidly and critically reviews the furor surrounding the appearance of the American Library Association's film on free speech, "The Speaker," and examines the most recent attempts from the Left to limit free access to library materials. Berninghausen's unequivocal rejection of any compromise of the principle of intellectual freedom will not suit many librarians, but his article surely clarifies the issues dividing

librarians and presents a forceful articulation of the “purist” position on this question.

If any issue has garnered as much recent attention as the intellectual freedom question, it would have to be the broad, and poorly understood, concept of user fees. Thomas Waldhart and Trudi Bellardo, in the second article, provide librarians with an unusually clear and value-free assessment of this emotion-laden issue. As they clearly point out, the implementation of user fees is a moot point since they have been in place for certain services in libraries for at least a century. The recent interest in the question revolves around an apparently ideological debate over the extent and nature of such charges. Waldhart and Bellardo adroitly analyze the pro and con arguments related to this issue and carefully analyze the empirical research, embarrassingly little as there is, on the actual impact of user fees on library use. While the heated debate over the advantages and disadvantages of user fees does not appear close to resolution, it should be easier to understand as a result of the appearance of the Waldhart and Bellardo study.

An issue of longer standing, but one which has taken on new significance recently, is the controversy surrounding paraprofessional employees in libraries. In what is clearly the most comprehensive study of this topic to date, Charles Evans traces the evolution of the paraprofessional in libraries and forcefully delineates the issues that librarians must face if they are to intelligently and objectively deal with this matter. As Evans makes clear, the concern with the employment of paraprofessionals in libraries always surfaces with a vengeance when the professional market is shrinking, and too often objections to paraprofessionals are based on the fears of professional librarians for their own employment future. Assuming that libraries will be faced with an unfavorable budgetary picture for some time, Evans’s thorough and systematic analysis of the role of paraprofessionals in libraries should prove of real use to librarians attempting to make informed decisions in this area.

Indeed, if there is an overall theme evident in this volume, it would be the librarians’ attempt to cope with shrinking budgets. Certainly, the advocates of user fees and the employment of paraprofessionals place economic arguments high on their lists as justifications for the widespread use of these steps to meet declining library spending power. But these debates are also clouded by emotional and

ideological issues. The second group of three articles deals directly with efforts at improving the operation of libraries, a particular concern among librarians during these uncertain financial times. And while these problems often emerge as confused and ill-defined by librarians, they nevertheless appear to be free of the emotionalism so common to the topics discussed in the first three articles of this volume.

The measurement of library effectiveness has become a perennial problem in libraries, and Rosemary and Paul Du Mont have written a careful and detailed analysis of developments in this area. While the Du Monts acknowledge the problems inherent in the meaningful evaluation of library services, they nevertheless insist that gains have been made, and they support their claim by critically assessing the values and shortcomings of various "schools" of evaluation. They then proceed to offer their own model of the way in which library evaluation might best be understood. Their review of developments to date and their model for evaluation should advance our understanding of this significant problem substantially.

The article by Abraham Bookstein and Karl Kocher on operations research also is directly concerned with the effective management and evaluation of library services. The authors point out that the increasing complexity of library organizations has generated an interest in various sophisticated management techniques and tools, especially operations research. But the interest in this new method has often been frustrated by its highly mathematical focus. This obstacle to the use of operations research is unfortunate, Bookstein and Kocher argue, since the method would seem to offer considerable potential for the improvement of library operations. In their article designed for a nonmathematical audience, the authors present a lucid and forceful explanation of operations research and its applications in libraries. Such a treatment has been long overdue, and it should lead to a fuller understanding and perhaps even a fuller utilization of this method in library management.

Support for research in librarianship is, of course, central to the development of new and effective approaches to library management. It is thus appropriate that an article on financial support for libraries should appear. George Whitbeck, Jean Major, and Herbert S. White survey the current status of research support and provide a thorough analysis of the extent and nature of this support. In the

process they document the paucity of research support and research in librarianship and offer some valuable insights into possible remedies for this shortcoming.

The final two articles in this volume of *Advances* treat specific examples of recent developments in two rapidly changing and substantially advanced areas of librarianship. The contribution on American medical libraries by Donald Hendricks documents the significant advances made in medical librarianship over the last decade and reinforces the view that medical libraries are clearly ahead of most other types of libraries in their utilization of new technology and the implementation of cooperative systems. While Hendricks highlights the impressive developments in medical librarianship, he unflinchingly identifies problem areas and failings as well.

Carmel Maguire, a leading authority on Australian librarianship, provides the final contribution for this volume. With the insight gained from systematic and continuing monitoring of the Australian scene, Maguire portrays the rapid development of library services in that country. Particularly valuable is her enlightening dissection of the complex federal and state involvement in Australian librarianship. Telling the story of Australia's unique program of library service—a complex mix of American, British, and indigenous ideas—posed a challenging task, but Maguire would appear to have succeeded remarkably well in tracing historical developments, analyzing current status, highlighting problems, and suggesting future trends.

Michael H. Harris

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I. INTRODUCTION

T. H. White's final book on the Arthurian legend is called *The Book of Merlyn* (1977). In one scene an assortment of animals who comprise a "Committee on Might in Man" is discussing man's fero-

cious nature, trying to define man, and seeking a solution to the problem of man's aggression. The question arises, What is the objection to the proposition that men should live like ants?

Merlyn stood up and took off his hat.

It is a matter of natural morality, Sir. The committee suggests that it is moral for a species to specialize in its own speciality. An elephant must attend to its trunk, a giraffe or cameleopard to its neck. It would be immoral for an elephant to fly, because it has no wings. The speciality of man, as much developed in him as the neck is in the cameleopard, is his neopallium. This is the part of the brain which, instead of being devoted to instinct, is concerned with memory, deduction, and the forms of thought, which result in recognition by the individual of his personality. Man's topknot makes him conscious of himself as a separate being, which does not often happen in animals and savages, so that any form of pronounced collectivism in politics is contrary to the specialization of man (pp. 115-116).

Merlyn was explaining why he opposed might in all its forms for human beings. He added that for the boa constrictor, who is practically one enormous muscle, **Might is Right**: for the ant, whose brain is not constituted like the human brain, it is literally true that the State is more important than the Individual, but for Man it is equally true to say that mental truth, not force, is right; and that the Individual is more important than the State.

And man has been effectively developing his speciality through the centuries and millennia. Free inquiry and expression are essential if man is to continue to develop his speciality. Sometimes the principle is called "intellectual freedom" or "academic freedom," but whatever name is used, the principle of free expression is the basis for the United Nations' Declaration of Universal Human Rights and for policies of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), Phi Beta Kappa, the Speech Communication Association, the American Library Association (ALA), and various other organizations devoted to preserving the right of the individual to examine all evidence pertinent to an issue, forming his own personal judgment as to the truth.

However, it is important to note that less than 20 percent of 4.4 billion human beings on our planet have experienced free access to all points of view on all substantive issues. Thus more than 80 percent have been denied the privilege of forming their own individual