

critics with the depth that one would find in a more narrowly focused or scholarly book. The annotated references to other works are plentiful and helpful in this light.

Information Liberation is an excellent example of a book that libraries should own, but probably will not. By taking an admittedly extreme position relating to the information society, the book functions as a tent post, without which a library will be less capacious of mind and less able to fulfill its purpose. Aside from that, Martin might be right, and we would be selling ourselves short to pursue a society where information is any less free than he envisions.



Poor People and Library Services edited by Karen M. Venturella. Jefferson NC: McFarland, 1998.

Reviewed by Linda Pierce

This work is a great start to filling the need for professional material on delivering library services to the poor, disadvantaged, minority and other marginalized groups in our society. In this age of increasing focus on professional writing on technology, and library applications of technology, it is essential to have books such as this that focus on the core values of library service, and most importantly on library service to those that have no political or economic voice in our society.

For the most part the book contains first person accounts or descriptions of library programs for the poor. The book is divided into sections including Poverty Programs for Children, Access to Technology for Low Income Groups, Neighborhood Coalition and International Organization, Programs in Shelters and Public Housing and Rural Poverty Programs. These chapters are preceded by a forward by Sandy Berman focusing mainly on the American Library Associations positions regarding library services to the poor and the need for a renewed commitment to that by the Association and the need for evolving and changing subject headings dealing with the poor.

The first article provides the context for the book and it does that admirably. The article is "History and Theory of Information Poverty" by John Buschman. Buschman does an excellent job of putting into an historical context the role of the library in working with the poor and more importantly the changing political and social climate that has made that much more difficult to accomplish. Buschman chronicles the early commitment of public libraries in the area of literacy, uplift and working with immigrant groups. He quite rightly also includes a review of the revisionist library literature that puts the traditional views of library service in a broader social context. He concludes, however, that no matter how much the library at the turn of the century might have considered itself a venue for the poor and downtrodden the shifting towards an era where economics are the new polity there is a new public policy that has radically changed how libraries view themselves and their patrons. The need for revenue generation and the vision of library as an economic entity have lead to a new reality of more fee based service, increased fines and oter ways to make the library pay for itself. This has consequently lead to an even great disparity in access to and use of library services between the affluent and the poor. Buschman's challenge to have the library serve all is a fitting opening to the rest of the book which documents various library services which meet that challenge

All of the library programs described in the book provide good information about the impetus, development, funding, relevance, and in many cases results of innovative programming to serve economically disadvantaged areas and for the most part groups that were not already library users. These programs all acknowledge the problems that exist in beginning service to a new area and groups of users, they also focus on problems specific to introducing library services to individuals and groups who may not have used libraries in the past or in some cases had negative experiences with libraries or other governmental agencies.

The article by Denis Creitnon and Carl Egner "Libraries in the Streets" was particular interesting in that the program described was not originated in a library or by librarians. The Street Library program was started by a group called the Fourth World Movement. Volunteers from this group take books and reading to children where they live and begin to develop reading skills and a love of books. The leaders also discovered

real barriers to these children to use library services; these barriers included fines, other fees and a distinct unease in the library setting. After recognizing these barriers the Street Library volunteers began working with the local public library to find ways to bring these children into the traditional library setting and worked to overcome the children's concerns. This was a wonderful story of a library working with an outside agency to benefit the children in a severely economically disadvantaged section of New York City.

The chapter by Kathleen de la Pena McCook and Kate Lippincott, "Library Services to Farm Workers in Central Florida" presented another type of project. This project came into being because of the commitment of the Director and faculty of the South Florida School of Library and Information Science. They perceived the need for increased library service to the migrant worker population in Central Florida and worked to analyze that population's needs and then engage library consortia, and other groups including the Florida Library Association in a plan to begin to meet those needs. This project was an amazing illustration of what exciting work librarians engaged in library education are capable of generating.

Other articles deal with the establishment of library centers in large public housing developments, technology in libraries that serve the poor and services to children. I found the book interesting and full of timely suggestions for working with the poor. Unfortunately all the projects reported on were aimed at public libraries and the work they were doing. This underscores the need for academic and special libraries to see what role they may be able to play in the provision of library service to the poor. I would recommend the book to all public libraries to inspire and challenge them to see how their institution measures up in service to this often under-served and silent part of their community.



NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

Jennifer Cram is widely published and a frequent speaker at national and international conferences on topics which include the image of librarians and libraries, performance measurement and library service delivery and management, including the application of indigenous management and communication principles to mainstream library management. She was National President of the Australian Library and Information Association in 1993, was awarded a Minister for Education Leadership Award, and the Queensland Special Librarian of the Year Award in 1996, and is currently Manager, Library Services for Education Queensland.

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Linda Pierce is a Reference Services Librarian at Gonzaga University in Spokane, Washington. She has been active in the American Library Association and Social Responsibilities Round Table for many years. Linda is the co-author of the book *Information Ethics for Librarians* published by McFarland.

Ann Sparanese is Head of Adult & Young Adult Services at the Englewood Public Library, where she has worked for the past 10 years. She has been involved with Cuba solidarity work for more than 25 years. Currently, she is chair of the John Sessions Memorial Committee of ALA, member of the Social Responsibilities Round Table-ALA Action Council, and of the AFL-CIO/ALA Joint Committee on Library Service to Labor Groups.