

parts of the book are informative, interesting, readable, and easy to follow. The rest of the book is more difficult to read. Parts of the text are dense and packed with detail and quotes. Also, the book is unavoidably repetitious: the authors tried to present as balanced and accurate a view as possible; to this end, the same information is presented repeatedly in different contexts and from different points of view.

As in British libraries, great changes have taken place in United States libraries in the past decade. Many of these changes have been caused by the same or similar technological and economic developments that caused the changes in Great Britain. Like our British colleagues, we have been forced to look at preservation in new ways and to change our approach to preservation management. We now think in terms of preventive conservation, and we endeavor to make the most effective use of new technologies to preserve not just single items, but entire collections, and to make them available for future use. This correlates with what the authors of this book mean when they state that "access, retention, and preservation cannot be separated from each other," (p.155) and that preservation management is now considered in terms of access and use of books and information.

The development and acceptance of new preservation management policies and practices appears to be farther along in the United States than in Great Britain. This is due in part to stronger advocacy in the United States. Several libraries have full-time preservation librarians with specialized preservation training whose sole responsibility is to ensure preservation of the collections in their charge and to advocate and initiate policies and practices that will serve this end. Many other libraries have staff who carry out this responsibility on a part-time basis in addition to their other job responsibilities. The library and preservation communities add support by being active and vocal in their promotion and debate of preservation issues. The authors of this book recognize the importance of advocacy in promoting preservation in British libraries. They explain that they offer their book "not simply

as a report on a piece of research, but as a contribution to a debate . . . about how . . . Britain can exploit its written and printed heritage while preserving it for those who will come after us" (p. x). The authors know that by making librarians aware and knowledgeable of preservation management policies and practices, they enable them to advocate and initiate policies and practices of their own that will contribute to preservation of collections in their institutions.—*Sherelyn Ogden, Preservation Consultant and Conservator, Library and Archival Materials, St. Paul, Minnesota*

#### WORK CITED

Ratchliffe, F. W., with D. Patterson. *Preservation policies and conservation in british libraries: Report of the Cambridge University Library Conservation Project* Library and Information Research Report, no. 25. London: The British Library, 1984.

*Serials Management: A Practical Guide.* Chiou-Sen Dora Chen. Chicago: American Library Assn., 1996. 186p. \$30 (ISBN 0-8389-0658-3).

The Roman poet and satirist Horace wrote: "Do you wish to instruct? Be brief, that the mind may catch thy precepts and the more easily retain them." While reading this book, I was constantly struck by how succinctly, clearly, and methodically the author presents the concepts and methods involved in serials management.

The book touches on all aspects of serials management except cataloging, with the major emphasis on acquisitions. Throughout the book, the author strives to keep the reader aware of the need to understand the general workings of other sections of the library that are supported by the acquisitions function, especially collection development and public services. The first two chapters together lay the foundation for a practical understanding of serials work. In chapter 1, titled "Definition and Character of Serials," Chen provides the reader with definitions and explanations of the various types of serials and their behavior. For example, the section on monographic series employs standard textbook definitions with

turns of phrase and concrete examples that clarify the concept. There is a clearly written section on electronic journals that makes a good attempt at establishing a definition but that also emphasizes their still-nebulous nature and development. Chen is less successful in the section in her description of "pseudosericals" because of a lack of examples, but this is the only flaw in an otherwise effective chapter.

Chapter 2 is titled "Organization of Serials Management." The methodical and unbiased presentation of the various organizational models (decentralized vs. centralized organization, organization by format vs. organization by function) is first-rate. Chen provides organization charts and a healthy discussion of the pros and cons of the models. She is careful to note that no two libraries are alike and that readers should thus consider the needs of their particular libraries in applying any one model or mixing and matching aspects of the different models. Even though this may seem obvious to many readers, the various organizational structures of technical services departments in general and serials departments in particular in different types of libraries is not broadly understood. Chen's effort to explain and present the structures and applications is among the best.

The next four chapters reflect the progression of materials through the selection process to receipt: Chapter 3 treats collection development, chapter 4 addresses serials vendors, chapter 5 explains acquisition methods such as direct ordering and blanket orders, and chapter 6 describes ordering, claiming, cancellations, and so forth. Along with a basic definition of collection development, chapter 3 presents an overview of current issues (ownership vs. access), a review of the information sources used in selection (trade bibliographies, reviews, and so forth), and budgeting. Chapter 4 provides basic information about the role of the vendor and under what circumstances a library might choose to employ one. There is information on how to choose and evaluate a vendor, a discussion of the pros and cons of using more than one vendor, and an important section on how to work with a

vendor that emphasizes the need for the serials librarian to develop a business sense and be a considerate and reasonable customer.

Chapter 5 is a nuts-and-bolts section on acquisition methods. Chen describes standard acquisition techniques for electronic serials (for example, a subscription), and notes complications not associated with serials in traditional formats, such as lease agreements. Chapter 6 "explains the essential steps involved in processing serials acquisitions and serves as the basic guide for developing a library's serials acquisition working procedures" (p. 75). In this chapter, Chen is careful to point out that the basic guidelines can be followed by every library but that local environment will influence how serial acquisitions work.

The next two chapters address the last two steps of serials processing: Chapter 7 on preservation and bindery and chapter 8 on records control. Chen includes a discussion of using electronic technologies such as CD-ROM to preserve serials information, but most of the chapter is devoted to the time-honored bindery method because binding, as she says, "is the only preservation choice for those serials that are unavailable in microform or on electronic files" (p. 100). She describes what makes a good binder (prompt pickup and delivery) and what the standard techniques are (sewing and gluing). The chapter is very thorough in describing the steps in preparing a bindery shipment, but there is no mention of the need to understand cataloging conventions to avoid binding changes of title together, and to ensure that supplements and special issues are bound correctly. Chen says in her introduction that cataloging will not be touched upon, but the failure to mention how cataloging and binding affect each other is an important omission in an otherwise useful chapter. Chapter 8 describes the most important and difficult aspect of serials work: records control. Chen states that "records control is the foundation for library functions" (p. 107). Again, her primary topic is acquisitions, and so she describes in detail the four types of records that are essential: order,

receipt, claim, and payment. Included in this chapter are good descriptions of records for alternative acquisition methods such as gifts and exchanges. Also included are the varieties of specialized files that a library might need, such as routing files, desiderata files, and tickler files. In this chapter, Chen emphasizes the need to establish a working relationship with catalogers. She also includes a statement with a summary of holdings records and the different levels of holdings reporting (summary vs. detailed).

Chapter nine describes the relationship between serials and public services. Chen emphasizes that "even if their work consists only of technical services, serials departments are heavily involved with services to the public" (p. 122). This is because of the changeable nature of serials and the complexity of the record-keeping. Chen goes on to describe the various reference services: using indexing and abstracting tools, interlibrary loan, article delivery services, and circulation policies. There also are sections on collection arrangement (should serials be in a separate location or interfiled with monographs?) and the question of whether to classify serials.

Chapter 10 is devoted to serials automation. Chen does not attempt to assess automated systems but instead tells the reader about their advantages. For example, she states that automation benefits collection development because the automated fiscal reports the system generates allow for collection analysis which in turn improves budget control. Another advantage is the combination of various paper files into one database (e.g., ordering, receipt, renewal, and bindery information could be in one record instead of four). Automated systems "not only maintain the order of files but also automatically review files to sort out actions that need to be taken" (p. 139). Chen also describes types of serial systems (stand-alone serials con-

trol only systems and integrated systems), system selection, records conversion, and implementation.

The final chapter is devoted to current topics and future challenges. Current topics include electronic publishing, serials pricing, copyright (again, electronic publishing emerges as a factor), and standards such as electronic data interchange (EDI). Chen addresses the challenge of keeping pace with change and how the role of the serials librarian has evolved, especially since the development of electronic publishing. She continues with a useful section on professional organizations, conferences, and the serials literature.

The book is structured in a solidly traditional manner. The introduction states the purpose and organization of the book. The chapters address serials management in a logical progression. Each chapter begins with definitions and a summary of the chapter's purpose and arrangement, allowing the reader to go directly to the topic of interest. The book concludes with an extensive bibliography and an appendix on serials management. The index is complete and accurate.

In the preface Chen defines her intended audience as "serials librarians, nonprofessional serials supervisors, and library school students who are interested in serials management" (p. xi). She goes on to state that "serials publishers, agents, and users can also use this book to gain an understanding of the library serials operation and promote cooperation among serials community members for mutual benefit." She succeeds in constructing a book that serves as a primer for the novice, a planning and learning tool for the more experienced serialist, and a reference tool for anyone wishing to understand the organization and function of the library serials department.—*Beverley Geer, Mad-dux Library, Trinity University, San Antonio, Texas*