

Slote's book, basically a reworking of his frequently cited dissertation, shows that the fiction collections of several New Jersey public libraries conform in general to the "law of scattering" observed in other subject areas and other kinds of libraries. In brief, since recently used books are most likely to be reused books, they should constitute any library's "core" collection. Unused books should be stored or discarded. Since Slote intends his book to be a textbook, he also gives a brief history of weeding, a review of weeding literature, a rebuttal of other weeding criteria, and a clear description of "scientific" weeding routines.

On the practical side, Slote's weeding method is sensible and workable. As a textbook, however, the book is weakened by its narrowness of vision. For example, students need to consider at length the implications of the very real conflict that exists in academia between those who see the library as a repository and those who see it as a use-oriented knowledge dispenser. Students should also think about the peculiar coincidence that the no-growth model of the library has emerged simultaneously with the emergence of the no-growth model of the economy at large. That is, are we innovating or are we merely being swept along? On the mathematical side, surely graduate students should at least be shown "mathematical proofs," no matter if, as Slote says (p.64), they are "difficult to follow."

Such general questions aside, the book is badly organized, repetitive, and unnecessarily combative in tone. Rigorous editing could have reduced it to a longish how-to-do-it article for one of the general library periodicals. As it stands, it is a disappointing handling of an important idea, especially when compared with so solid a book as Buckland's *Book Availability and the Library User* (Pergamon, 1975) which develops this subject (as well as others) with such greater incisiveness.—Peter Dollard, *Monteith Library, Alma College, Alma, Michigan.*

Buckland, Michael K., *Book Availability and the Library User*. New York: Pergamon, 1975. 196p. \$7.50 pa. (LC 74-8682) (ISBN 0-08-017709-3) (ISBN 0-08-018160-0 pa.).

Although the publisher's price of \$7.50 for the paperback edition may appear a bit steep for a 196-page monograph, this book should become a classic. The investment in a personal copy should not be begrudged; it is a small price to pay for professional survival. The point may be argued, but I believe that Buckland's greatest contribution is his ability to develop a perspective on libraries and their problems which is thoroughly modern.

For example, Buckland recognizes and accepts a fact which much of the profession tries to ignore: that libraries are finite in nature, that there must and should be limits to their growth. Recognition of our limits must increase our awareness of the need to structure the library within those limits so that the best possible service can be provided to library users.

Service to users is, after all, the means by which most libraries today justify their existence and their annual budget requests. Yet as Buckland points out, there remains a great disparity in the attention paid by the profession to intellectual access and physical access or availability. The priorities assigned by users, and by funding agencies as well, have been clear for quite some time. What has been written on a subject, or even what the library owns on a subject, is generally a matter of less interest than what the library has available on the subject to meet a need at a specific time.

For those librarians ready to accept the concept of the limited library with service to users as its objective, Buckland suggests a number of methods for improving service and measuring it which have been developed through his own research and that of others. Even a partial list of these tools is impressive. One may determine what the optimum size of the library should be, what titles it should contain, and how long those titles should be retained. It is possible to directly measure user frustration with the library and to quantitatively measure the library's performance by its ability to make materials available when needed and to satisfy its users on a continuing basis.

The key to availability lies in understanding the relationship between user demand, loan period, and duplication policy. Clearly the level of demand will vary from title to

title throughout the collection. Therefore, if titles with high demand are to be available, the library must either provide additional copies or insure that the single copy is not kept out by one borrower for an extended time, thus denying access to other borrowers. Buckland proposes a variable loan policy with short loans for popular titles and longer loans for less used materials. Librarians who still have doubts about their ability to secure quicker book returns by simply reducing the official loan period may opt for more duplicates. The important point is recognition of the interrelations among these factors and their impact upon library service.

The experience at Lancaster demonstrates that when the library begins to supply what is wanted when it is wanted (greater immediate availability), not only will user frustration decline and user satisfaction increase, but total use of the library will be stimulated as well. Per capita circulation at Lancaster increased by more than 100 percent in the first year and appears to be enjoying more modest but continued growth through the present.

The format of the book suggests the hope that it be adopted as a required text in library schools—a hope that practicing librarians with a service orientation will probably share. Some may object to the highly structured textbook approach, complete with outlines and summaries for each chapter, but most will approve of the placement of much of the theoretical background and mathematics in separate appendixes. The bibliography also appended is excellent. Unless professional education is even more irrelevant than we think, Buckland's book will probably see widespread use. So be prepared for young librarians who not only take the rhetoric of service seriously, but have the desire and the knowledge to begin transforming rhetoric into reality.—*Robert L. Burr, Director of Circulation, Earl Gregg Swem Library, College of William & Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia.*

Josey, E. J., ed. *New Dimensions for Academic Library Service*. Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow, 1975. 349p. \$12.50. (LC 74-30062) (ISBN 0-8108-0786-6)

In his introduction E. J. Josey explains how recent trends have changed the aca-

demical library; so he sought competent persons to write these twenty-five original essays entitled *New Dimensions for Academic Library Service*. Because academic librarians strive to play a more influential role on curriculum committees or academic senates, this series of essays focuses on the initiative of librarians, information scientists, and educators. Four main ideas are featured in the book: (1) the library as a vital component of higher education; (2) new approaches in solving academic library problems; (3) unscrambling academic library issues; and (4) patterns of library information systems, networks, and consortia providing information and library services to academic library users.

The reader learns that many active librarians are interested in where academic education is heading and on whom it is centered. Several librarians have exerted themselves to solve the problems that face academe. A theme that threads itself throughout the essays is change. Change has occurred because of the need to give better service and to address that service to the cynosure of education, the student or user, not the classroom or the teacher.

Part One states that despite the financial bind higher education finds itself in today, academic library programs are examining themselves and changing to more qualitative service, to a concept that will break down barriers between student/teacher, librarian/faculty, and other arbitrary compartmentalizations. The use of newer media especially in community colleges augurs well for the future, as well as the trend toward separate undergraduate libraries in large universities.

The problems tackled in Part Two indicate activities should be oriented toward the library users, what they need, for instance, using computer applications when available, especially looking to the future; also, intimate collecting and sharing arrangements, if only at the regional level. In facing up to the change in today's education, librarians must discover users' needs, even though their involvement in student and faculty activities may result. Besides such involvement at the local level, interest must exist in national concerns such as subject headings for the people, or financial problems affecting black college libraries.