

## Book Review

**Advances in Serials Management, Volume 7**, edited by Cindy Hepfer, Teresa Malinowski, and Julia Gammon. New York: JAI Press, 2000. 193 p. \$80.00 ISBN 0-7623-0372-7.

Volume 7 is the second in the series to be brought out by the editing team of Hepfer, Malinowski and Gammon. While the editors say in the Preface that they bore in mind the intent of the original editors, this reviewer feels that the volume takes a step away from the type of research and articles found in previous volumes.

On the surface, this volume follows the same general formula set up in previous volumes. Eight chapters are devoted to a variety of serials-related topics and projects. Chapter 1 details the results of a 1997 Association of Research Libraries (ARL) survey on the use of serials vendors in academic libraries. The authors explain the survey methodology, present the results, and compare this survey with its 1986 predecessor. Chapter 5 is in a similar vein, in that it reports on the *Aqueduct Benchmark Title Survey* of 1992 through 1994. The chapter includes background information on the Aqueduct Retreat and a review of earlier title surveys, in addition to an explanation of the *Aqueduct* survey and detailed survey results. The chapter is extremely well written, easy to read, and (like Chapter 1) relates the results of important research in the field.

Another chapter presents an excellent overview of preservation issues and concerns of particular importance for serials, and gives practical advice that readers can put to use in their own institutions. It is a useful chapter for preservation novices and very enjoyable to read. A fourth chapter deals with motivating employees, placing particular stress on the importance of "introducing fun into the workplace (p. 178)." The chapter includes a literature review and the basics of motivational theory, in addition to providing a list of suggestions for how to introduce fun at work. While this reader felt that many of the specific motivational examples would send her staff running for cover, the over-arching idea that having fun can help staff to cope better and be more motivated is, indeed, sound. The ideas that are presented should help get the creative juices flowing and aid supervisors in the quest to motivate their own staff.

In this reviewer's opinion, the other four chapters of this volume step away from the goals and mission of this, or any, professional series. These are what I am calling the "vendor chapters." There are similar chapters in almost all of the previous volumes; however, there have never been so many in the same volume, and this is what tips the scales and causes Volume 7 to go further afield.

In the Preface, the editors state that they actively solicited material from vendors. This, of course, is not a bad thing. Vendors are as much a part of the library field as are librarians, and we can all benefit by their contribution to the literature. The problem with the vendor chapters in this volume is that they read like company annual reports or public relations spiels. The intent is obvious: to advertise the company and its product, and to gain customers.

Admittedly, not all of the vendor-written chapters are equally entrenched in this category. In the chapter on a document delivery company, the author not only gives a complete history of the company she represents, she also gives an excellent overview of the field of commercial document delivery. Similarly, in "Coffee at a virtual Carolina Inn," the interviewee answers

questions from a broad base of knowledge, and provides much useful information in addition to advertising his company. Both of these chapters are enjoyable, both include important information for librarians, and both present perfect companies with which every librarian should want to do business.

Another chapter deals with a specific product from a particular company, as written by a previous representative of that company. While there is a brief overview of similar products and services available from other vendors, the main focus is on this company's wonderful product. In reading this chapter, the unwary reader might think that the company has developed an absolutely perfect system. There is nothing in the chapter about any problems or concerns with the current product. There is no discussion of customer complaints. Everything is perfection.

The remaining chapter presents an entertaining look at the history, current state, and future plans of another company. The chapter reads like an extended annual report or an anniversary celebration publication. The reader is obviously meant to believe that this company is absolutely perfect in every way.

There is nothing wrong with soliciting articles from vendor representatives; however, this reader feels that greater care should be taken in accepting for publication articles that read like advertisements or sound like a session from a vendor booth at the American Library Association (ALA) conference. There is a place for such publications, and that place is not in a professional series. If the articles were to be included in a publication such as *Advances in Serials Management*, there should have been fewer in any particular volume (continuing past practice), or they should have been offset by another chapter, written by a non-partisan library professional, which discusses the claims of each article in a more realistic light. Without this, the reader is left to wonder about the free advertising being given to these companies.

*Advances in Serials Management, volume 7* seems to this reviewer to have a split-personality problem. Half of the volume can be highly recommended for serials acquisitions librarians. The other half is enjoyable but not really the type of material one expects to find in a professional publication. The volume should be purchased by those libraries acquiring the entire series; however, this reader hopes that future volumes in the series will be more in line with earlier volumes.—**Mary Greci, Serials Catalog Librarian, Knight Library, 1299 University of Oregon, Eugene, OR 97403-1299 <mgreci@darkwing.uoregon.edu>**