

church, or school when viewed from the perspective of organizing support. The second part of this collection also has a disturbingly diffuse quality. The essays deal with all kinds of libraries—from large academic to small-town public—and discuss a variety of topics, ranging from how to deal with problem personalities in a friends' group, to choosing print styles for library publications. In this case, comprehensiveness is a liability rather than an asset. The reader is left with a wealth of information on a variety of subjects and a longing for some more in-depth treatment of the overall problem of organizing support for libraries.

Fortunately, Paul Mosher's essay, "Friends Groups and Academic Libraries," satisfies this craving. In describing the Stanford Library Associates, Mosher paints a picture that should inspire the envy and admiration of any library director. An imaginative program, the work of a full-time library development officer, and the support of the library staff have combined to make for a remarkably successful friends group. Yet, as Mosher sagely notes, this friends group has never been seen as an end in itself, but as a source and resource "for a range of short- and long-term developmental activities, having as their goal the larger financial benefit of the library." Mosher's essay crystalizes the seminal thread in this book: carefully cultivated, a friends group can indeed be a valuable resource that can help libraries provide better service and better collections, even in the straitened environment of the eighties.—*Leslie Parker Hume, Research Libraries Group, Stanford, California.*

Getz, Malcolm. *Public Libraries: An Economic View*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Pr., 1980. 214p. \$12.50. LC 80-10651. ISBN 0-8018-2395-1.

From time to time experts from other disciplines have applied their paradigms to libraries. The impact of their efforts has usually been negligible on thinking and practice within the profession. This book, written by an economist and intended for scholars of local government as well as library and public administrators, may prove to be an exception.

Getz' outsider view of libraries as publicly financed institutions, and the resulting payoff of such support in terms of value to society and the efficiency of operations, is provocative and illuminating. Drawing upon data from thirty-one major libraries, the author has attempted to analyze "the strategic decisions that shape the provision of public library service in the United States" according to economic and public administration theories. The conclusions—based on macroeconomic data about the optimum mix of hours of operation, number of facilities, staff size, number of materials, and the impact of technological innovation in terms of cost reduction—are not definitive but certainly raise tough questions that public officials are likely to ask and library administrators should prepare to answer.

Getz views libraries with scholarly dispassion, but some of his statements are sure to raise hackles among librarian readers. He considers the public library as an industry and the "bundling" of labor, buildings, and materials a "production process" to be optimized into a cost-efficient mix of services. Forty-seven of the fifty-nine branches of the New York Public Library are characterized as having benefits less than their annual cost of operation. He discusses the widely accepted public administration concepts of equity and redistribution of benefits—both are positive if benefits are larger for low-income families. He concludes that public libraries do "not tend to redistribute well-being from higher to lower income groups" because low-income groups do not use libraries much.

He favors charging fees whenever the library incurs an additional use. Furthermore, it's appropriate to charge in excess of cost. In fact, the author thinks fees reflecting the value of the service are perfectly O.K. The problem is setting the basis for the fee.

Academic librarians should not ignore this disturbing book. Many of the ideas presented and issues raised are pertinent for all libraries.—*Ellen Altman, University of Arizona, Tucson.*

Studies in Creative Partnership: Federal Aid to Public Libraries during the New Deal. Edited by Daniel F. Ring.