

EDITORIAL

by Noreen B. Blake

The prison library is a crucial component in the rehabilitation of incarcerated persons. Library resources give information, points of view, attitudes, philosophy, escapism, and sheer enjoyment. Books and all they represent constitute a vital means by which prisoners may come to terms with their situation and make new beginnings.

This issue centers on three aspects of the prison library. Vibeke Lehmann is a veteran in the administration and planning of library systems for state institutions in Wisconsin and the author of several papers and articles on prisoners' rights and the role of the prison library. Here she presents for us a comprehensive background on the development and management of prison libraries, based on national and international guidelines, and an examination of the roles a modern prison library plays in assisting inmates to cope within the prison and to prepare for re-entry into society. In the second feature article, Glen Singer tells us how the prison library differs from the "traditional" library and presents us with an invaluable inside look into the constant demands and ever-present challenges faced by prison librarians today. A third aspect comes from the writings of four inmates of the correctional system. They relate (one in fiction format) how the use of the prison library has significantly helped them personally in expanding their education and alleviating stress during their incarcerations.

We owe thanks to our long-time Department contributors. Their columns direct us to the latest reference works, journal articles, and net resources and provide plentiful leads to further exploration for those interested in the theme of prison libraries. News from ERIC continues to point readers to new publications in education and how to order them.

Our book reviewers represent a varied sampling of librarians, teachers, information specialists, and education consultants. Books selected for review here range from guides to children's fiction, the World Wide Web, and multimedia materials, to an encyclopedia of American humor and an investigation on how education helped disadvantaged girls achieve success.

Education Libraries will continue to present thought-provoking themes in its articles, columns and book reviews, all aimed at alerting readers to current and useful publications relating to the library profession. The editors welcome readers' comments.