

SOURCES

a model for collaboration and library skills instruction.—Melanie Wachsmann, *Reference Librarian, Lonestar College, CyFair Branch, Cypress, Texas*

Managing Children's Services in the Public Library. Adele M. Fasick and Leslie E. Holt. 3rd ed. Westport, Conn.: Libraries Unlimited, 2008. 248 p. \$45 (ISBN 978-1-59158-412-4).

This ambitious work offers an overview of the role of Manager of the Children's Department in a public library setting. In the authors' words, the book "explore[s] the ways librarians can manage their work, so that their collections and services give the maximum value to all the children of a community" (xvi).

The book's contents are as extensive as the job description is long, beginning with a section on planning services within the context of community, strategic planning, and evaluation. The second section concerns managing the children's department and covers a plethora of topics from human resources management to finances to safety concerns. Section 3 delves into the management of services within the department, such as collections, programming, outreach, and marketing. The last section focuses on professional development for children's librarians.

Fasick and Holt, whose lengthy experience is noteworthy, provide a list of references and suggestions for further reading at the end of each chapter, as well as a full bibliography. Pictures, tables, and screen captures are used to illustrate several examples, but it is somewhat disappointing that they are reproduced only in black-and-white.

The information covered in this title is exhaustive, indeed some details offered border on the condescending—most library workers considering a managerial position will already know the basics and perhaps do not need them rehashed here. Unfortunately, the book is poorly edited. There are many redundancies, missing words, and typos that might distract readers. That being said, the authors have covered all the bases, and those who want a comprehensive guide will find this book useful.—Sarah J. Hart, *Information Services Librarian, Brampton Library, Brampton, Ontario, Canada*

The Quality Library: A Guide to Staff-Driven Improvement, Better Efficiency, and Happier Customers. Sarah Laughlin and Ray W. Wilson. Chicago: ALA, 2008. 144 p. \$55 (ISBN: 978-0-8389-0952-2).

The Quality Library is a comprehensive guide for library administrators who are serious about wanting to improve their libraries. The authors use real-life stories to support their use of the Deming approach to institutional improvement. W. Edwards Deming's distinctive principles involve thinking of the institution (i.e., the library) as a system comprised of processes, suppliers, and customers and understanding the purpose of that system. In six chapters, the authors discuss the "continuous improvement approach" and the steps toward achieving the desired results.

According to the authors, to ensure continuous improvement, library administrators should encourage active participation of the staff and empower them to be creative and take risks. Administrators should also attempt to cultivate long-lasting relationships with vendors and suppliers while reducing variation among the processes necessary to run the library system (circulation, communication with customers, policy adherence, etc.). Process standardization and reduction of variation are essential to overall library improvement. The reader is reminded that satisfying the customer is more important than pleasing the supervisor. Laughlin and Wilson have included a chart for every step of the process. These charts help the reader envision the library as a system, select the key processes to improve, put the tasks in order, determine measurement opportunities, and record measurements and data.

The Quality Library tackles practical questions such as "where do we find the time for process improvement?" It also provides specific instructions for creating the charts and managing ongoing documentation. The inclusion of real library stories reassures the reader that this method is tried and true. The appendixes and glossary help make the information easy to digest. By using realistic scenarios and tangible examples, the authors manage to create a sense of "can-do" for the library administrator and leave the reader feeling ready to start the process of improvement. The use of the Deming method as a means to improvement is fresh in a world of workflow mapping and streamlined techniques.—Candice Gwin Oliver, *Regional Branch Administrator, St. Louis County Library, St. Louis, Missouri*

Questioning Library Neutrality: Essays from Progressive Librarian. Ed. by Alison Lewis. Duluth, Minn.: Library Juice Press, 2008. 156 p. \$18 (ISBN 978-0-9778617-7-4).

According to the ALA Code of Ethics, as a profession, librarians ideally "distinguish between our personal convictions and professional duties and do not allow our personal beliefs to interfere with fair representation of the aims of our institutions or the provision of access to their information resources." Is it possible, or even desirable, to neutrally present all points of view on any issue or historical event? Are all points of view even available to us? Don't publishers, approval plans, and budgets at least partially dictate the materials we can offer our patrons?

In *Questioning Library Neutrality: Essays from Progressive Librarian*, Alison Lewis collects a chronologically arranged series of essays originally published in *Progressive Librarian*, the journal of the Progressive Librarians Guild, intended to illuminate the issues surrounding the "founding myth" of neutrality in librarianship. A few of the topics covered include the history, present, and future of activist librarianship; the myth of the neutral professional; and the lack of information criticism in library education and scholarship. While the essays vary in quality, taken as a whole this book very thoroughly and critically fills a gap in library literature by positing that