

bibliographic essay, the essay format, rather than an alphabetical or topical listing (primary resource, book, article, website, etc.) makes quick referencing problematic. The author does not claim this volume to be that of a reference work and the reviewer would agree. Although the index is extensive and allows for easy location of topics, keywords, and people, this is the only strong reference work component. If one is looking for a true reference work on the topic, a better choice is *Encyclopedia of Women in the American West* (Sage, 2003), edited by Gordon Morris Bakken and Brenda Farrington. Two works are suggested as complements to the reviewed work especially when considering women's history course materials: *So Much to be Done: Women Settlers on the Mining and Ranching Frontier* (2d ed., Univ. of Nebraska Pr., 1998), edited by Ruth B. Moynihan, Susan Armitage, and Christiane Fischer Dichamp, provides the primary resource component lacking in *Women in the American West*. *Women and Gender in the American West: Jensen-Miller Prize Essays from the Coalition for Western Women's History* (Univ. of New Mexico Pr., 2004) edited by Mary Ann Irwin and James F. Brooks, is a collection of essays highlighting at depth many of the aspects of women's history covered in the reviewed work.

The historical survey provided by *Women in the American West* fills a gap for scholarship of this nature on this topic. It is not a traditional reference work, but has many merits as a course textbook. The work is suggested for academic libraries of all levels, especially those supporting a women's or gender history/studies program.—*Kristi L. Palmer, Assistant Librarian, Liaison to the Departments of History, Women's Studies and American Studies, IUPUI University Library, Indianapolis, Indiana*

## Professional Materials

Karen Antell

Editor

***Gamers in the Library?! The Why, What, and How of Videogame Tournaments for All Ages.*** Eli Neiburger. Chicago: ALA, 2007. 178 p. \$42 (ISBN-13: 978-0-8389-0944-7).

Public librarians today are constantly looking for ways to increase their visibility and their viability in their communities, especially with teenagers and young adults. Eli Neiburger, the technology manager for the Ann Arbor (Michigan) District Library, has a solution that may seem unorthodox to some—hosting video game tournaments in the library. An unapologetic video game fan since playing his first Atari game at age five, Neiburger makes a pointed and passionate case for why libraries should open their doors to gamers and how gaming can enhance libraries' relevance as community institutions. He covers all the areas necessary to have a successful library gaming program: providing and setting up the proper hardware and software; planning and promoting library gaming events; and expanding a library's gaming audience. With tongue-in-cheek, slangy writing (which some

readers may find too casual a tone), Neiburger shatters conceptions of proper library programs and suggests, in good fun, that librarians lighten up and embrace something new and, to many librarians, different. He also provides a handy and useful chapter on gaming resources and links. The author astutely points out in the first chapter that young adults use the Internet primarily to send e-mail and to play games, according to the Pew Internet and American Life Project, so it makes sense to harness this Internet usage of video games and welcome a new generation of library users (who can also be introduced to books, magazines, and other standard library fare). Neiburger, with his irreverent book, may be a new apostle for library programming for those librarians willing to try something new. This book is highly recommended for those brave souls who choose to do so.—*Larry Cooperman, Librarian, Everglades University, Altamonte Springs, Florida*

***The Handy 5.*** Ed. by Betsy Losey. Lanham, Md.: Scarecrow Press, 2007. 219 p. \$35 (ISBN 978-0-8108-5908-1).

Information skills are an important part of education at all levels. *The Handy 5* provides a model to help both librarians and classroom teachers incorporate information skills into curriculum areas beyond the four cores in a way that is accessible to K–12 students. Elements of the Big Six Problem-Solving Model (developed by educators Mike Eisenberg and Bob Berkowitz) were used to develop the five parts of the Handy 5. The book consists of three main parts. The first introduces the components of the model and covers how to introduce it to students at primary and secondary levels, how to use the model with an assignment, and how to use it as a tool for collaboration between teachers and media specialists. The second part of the book looks at current trends in education and the outcomes of testing the model in elementary, middle, and high schools. The third section of the book contains lesson plans using the model for various subjects and grade levels. These “real world” lessons come complete with follow-up comments about what worked and what did not. The accompanying CD-ROM includes bookmarks, posters, graphic organizers, and other materials introduced in the book to assist students with understanding and using the model.

With the emphasis on “No Child Left Behind” legislation, collaboration with teachers is becoming even more important to library media specialists. The Handy 5 model integrates the librarian and library skills as essential parts of the lesson. The step-by-step approach in the book is perfect for those who have little experience collaborating with teachers and for those who simply would like to try something new. Suggestions are given to help familiarize and reinforce the steps with the students, and the ancillary materials on the CD-ROM are helpful reminders of the model. The theoretical background and explanation of the research process give the model a solid platform for implementation within the entire school or school district. This book is ideal for a coordinator or librarian who is looking for a resource that includes

## SOURCES

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

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***Managing Children's Services in the Public Library.*** Adele M. Fasick and Leslie E. Holt. 3<sup>rd</sup> 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*

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***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*

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***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