

## SOURCES

David Wright states in his article, “Library Consortia: Do the Models Always Work?” that “librarians must be creative in seeking solutions. . . . It takes work, but it is possible to change existing structures to improve access to information” (59). This volume helps motivate us to “play a critical role” (Kranich, p. 94) in our communities beyond our library walls.—*Emma Duncan, Branch Manager, Brampton Library, Brampton, Ontario, Canada*

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***The Library As Place: History, Community, and Culture.*** Ed. by John E. Buschman and Gloria J. Leckie. Westport, Conn.: Libraries Unlimited, 2006. 260p. \$50 (ISBN 1-59158-382-9).

In an exploration of how libraries are more than the resources that they contain, Wayne A. Wiegard and John Carlo Bertot, coeditors of *Library Quarterly*, had determined to devote a special issue to libraries as place. The great amount of received submissions led to this present work of fourteen essays, each focusing on different aspects of library as place, and there is quite a bit to say on the topic. Buschman and Leckie’s introduction does a fine job of critically situating the concept of place and space and the library as place, grounding the subject historically within scholarship, touching on theories of space espoused by Newton, Descartes, and Locke as well as theories of place supported by Alexander von Humboldt, Walter Christaller, and others, and charting how discourses have changed, through feminism, Marxism, or humanism, for example, in addition to a description of the concept of the public sphere. What emerges from the introduction is a very thorough picture of the issues at play in a discussion of place and space.

That picture becomes somewhat disjointed, however, when looking at the book as a whole. Much of the theory covered in the introduction does not get addressed again in any of the essays. In addition, the book is divided into four sections—“The Library’s Place in the Past,” “Libraries As Places of Community,” “Research Libraries As Places of Learning and Scholarship,” and “Libraries, Place, and Culture”—the effect of which is that the essays seem oddly placed existing together in the same book: essays contained therein address such topics as military libraries in the British Empire, Carnegie libraries in both Vancouver and Greensboro, knitting and storytime groups in a public library, private scholarly spaces within academic libraries, the erotic nature of reading, and the fantasy library of the television series *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. In addition, some essays would likely fit well in more than one of the sections, making their placement feel somewhat arbitrary. The editors are well aware of this fact, however, justifying the book’s structure with the idea that the subject has been overlooked in scholarship for too long, leaving little recourse but to cover the subject rather broadly. The perspectives represented in this book do feel fresh and timely, despite the disordered feeling one gets from the volume. And, it should be pointed out, in approaching a subject as all-encompassing as place and space, perhaps a cluttered impression is the best that can be hoped for, and the assign-

ment of essays to particular sections can be understood as an attempt to at least try and maintain some sort of order.

It also should be pointed out that the essays in this book strongly focus on English-speaking countries, primarily the United States and Canada, but also a bit on Great Britain. This fact is not unexpected, especially given the breadth of material contained, as an even larger focus would likely be unwieldy. However, it would be very interesting to see future scholarship examining the topic of libraries as place and space from the points of view of other nations.

It could be argued that the fretting over libraries as place and space, in particular, reflects librarianship’s current insecurities regarding its importance, function, and meaning in the current world, and its fears for its own place in the future. *The Library As Place* is a fine jumping-off point for a first exploration of these concerns, in spite of its structural issues.—*Sarah McHone-Chase, Information Delivery Services Librarian, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, Illinois*

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***Library Juice Concentrate.*** Rory Litwin. Duluth, Minn.: Library Juice Pr., 2006. 238p. \$25 (ISBN 0-977816-3-6).

Selectors who are unfamiliar with this title and take only a cursory glance might dismiss it as a vanity publication (as the book is, essentially, self-published). However, *Library Juice* is one of very few serials that delves deeply into current philosophical and social issues within librarianship. *Library Juice Concentrate* is a rare print copy of this resource.

*Library Juice* began in January 1998 as an electronic magazine edited and published by Litwin. It ceased publication in autumn 2005, but was recently revived as a blog (see [www.libraryjuicepress.com/blog](http://www.libraryjuicepress.com/blog)). A complete, searchable archive of *Library Juice* is freely available at <http://libr.org/juice>. For *Library Juice Concentrate*, Litwin selected a subset of “articles that [invite] readers to think a little bit more deeply, or at least a little differently, about questions in librarianship that are typically given ready-made but inconsequential and poorly thought-out answers” (xv). Thus, the book reprints about twenty articles, plus a selection of limericks, paper topics, quotations, and a reading list “for Progressive Librarians.” Many of the essays are written by Litwin, but the work also includes contributions from Larry Oberg, Mark Rosenzweig, Jessamyn West, and others.

*Library Juice Concentrate* is written with an unapologetically left-wing perspective. As Kathleen de la Peña McCook (a member of the Library Juice Press advisory board) writes in the preface, *Library Juice* “captured the spirit of a time that began in great hope with the Clinton-Gore optimism for a new century with widely available information for all people and ended in a time of great despair with the oppressive regime of Bush-Cheney and the structure of the USA PATRIOT Act and CIPA” (xiii). In fact, Litwin feels that librarianship and socialism are “deeply compatible” (145), though modern collection development practices (heavy purchasing from media conglomerates), commercialization of library services, and other trends threaten this relationship. Yet Litwin and his co-

authors also have corrected some misconceptions surrounding leftist causes-célèbres, such as anarchist librarianship (see Section 4, “Librarians: Culture and Identity”) and dissident librarians in Cuba (see Section 5, “Cuba”).

Currently the arts and humanities librarian at the University of Minnesota at Duluth, Litwin utilizes his experience in reference and collection development, particularly in reflecting on “amusing” Internet searches that patrons have performed on library computers (see Section 6, “Various and Sundry Readings”). As he points out, these searches reveal much public naïveté about what the Internet is and how to use it. Yet Litwin explores philosophical depths that professional journals and continuing education seldom approach. The “Foundation Building” and “Intellectual Freedom” sections of the book are important reading, especially for LIS students and new librarians. In them, Litwin explores the distinct meanings of neutrality, objectivity, and political centrism, as well as the implications of the rise of “information professionals” over humanistic librarians. He also exposes readers to the alternative press (particularly through an interview with Chuck D’Adamo, compiler of the Alternative Press Index). These would make good assigned readings for library foundation courses.

One wishes that Litwin had published more responses to his essays (including both critical and supportive reactions). This would have revealed the intellectual give-and-take that often is the best feature of online publications such as *Library Juice*. Also, more commentary (or more references to people, books, and Internet sites relating to the topics at hand) would be useful to help neophytes place Litwin’s work within the context of others’.

This being said, and despite the fact that the full text of *Library Juice* is available online, this volume is a worthy purchase for universities supporting library science programs. If (heaven forbid!) the online version of *Library Juice* disappears, *Library Juice Concentrate* provides a permanent (if abridged) copy of Litwin’s and others’ progressive views. Although some of the contributors have published in other journals, one finds few works by Litwin in Library Literature, Library and Information Science Abstracts, ERIC, and other professional databases. There are few comparable serials other than *Progressive Librarian*, the ALA-SRRT newsletter, and Internet lists (notably, all these are hosted by one Web site for progressive librarians, <http://libr.org>). At only \$25, *Concentrate* is an affordable, thought-provoking summary for busy practitioners.—Bernadette A. Lear, *Behavioral Sciences and Education Librarian, Penn State Harrisburg Library, Middletown, Pennsylvania*

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**Out Front with Stephen Abram: A Guide for Information Leaders.** Compiled by Judith A. Siess and Jonathan Lorig. Chicago: ALA, 2007. 204p. \$40 (ISBN 0-8389-0932-4).

Information professionals deal with constant change and a variety of challenges in their work. Views on how to understand and address such issues are plentiful in the literature.

Recurrent topics concern societal factors and technological innovations that influence the nature of information work and affect professional roles and identity. Such writings commonly include exhortations that information professionals strive to retain their relevance and stay true to a certain core purpose or set of values. Some focus on single issues or frame their discussions in terms of specific types of libraries, while others take a broad view of present circumstances or the future. This book stands out because Stephen Abram thinks and writes masterfully about both particular and general concerns that affect the profession. He is a prolific writer whose interests and expertise range widely, and whose perspective is pertinent to work in many different settings. Abram often recognizes societal forces and trends that influence information work early in their emergence, and he has a talent for understanding their significance and contextualizing them for his readers. He has not been timid in his assessment or in proposing strategies and solutions.

This book brings together a number of Abram’s writings, first published as journal and newsletter articles, posted on blogs, or presented at conferences. Although his output has been extensive and diverse, the editors have organized this collection into four topical chapters representing areas in which Abram has been particularly vocal: advocacy, technology, communities and generations, and the future. These themes arguably embody the most important issues that information professionals face today and will struggle with over the next several years. An excellent index provides access to the numerous topics covered in the book. A two-page biography of Abram, a selected bibliography of his work, and a list of relevant additional readings by other authors enhance this anthology.

Passionate in his writings, Abram is ever-positive and encouraging, and never fatalistic, alarmist, or patronizing. Given his track record and demonstrated wisdom on these matters, information professionals should consider his views. Those familiar with Abram and his work will want to read this book; others may want to add his work to their reading lists, beginning with this collection.—Anthony Stamatoplos, *Associate Librarian, Indiana University–Purdue University, Indianapolis*

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**Reading Raps: A Book Club Guide for Librarians, Kids, and Families.** Rita Solan. Westport, Conn.: Libraries Unlimited, 2006. 354p. \$35 (ISBN 1-59158-234-2).

Starting a book club as a library program can be daunting. Rita Solan’s *Reading Raps: A Book Club Guide for Librarians, Kids, and Families* offers a step-by-step plan for implementing book clubs in a variety of settings.

In the opening chapter of *Reading Raps*, Solan includes the essentials for planning this event. As with any new program, knowing your community is crucial. Solan offers tips for determining what kind of book club to offer and to whom. Also discussed at length is how to lead discussions and select Web sites to find ideas and discussion questions. Some reading group ideas include family book groups,