

BOOK REVIEW / CRITIQUE DE LIVRE

Moorman JA, ed. **Running a small library: a how-to-do-it manual for librarians**. 2nd ed. Chicago: ALA Neal-Schuman; 2015. Softcover: 288 p. ISBN: 978-0-8389-1273-7. Price: USD \$80.00. Available from: <http://www.alastore.ala.org/detail.aspx?ID=11141>

How a library functions, and the roles librarians play, is greatly influenced by the size of the library. While recently completing my graduate education, I had suspected I would find employment in a medium-to large-sized library where I would focus on one particular aspect of librarianship, such as cataloguing, programming, or reference services. However, upon graduating, I found employment in a hospital library composed of three staff members – me, another librarian, and a library technician. I soon discovered that working in a small library required me to learn to do a bit of everything. Graduate studies had taught me the theory of providing reference services, cataloging, performing collection development duties, and even teaching, but I was ill-prepared to perform more administrative tasks, such as minor budgeting, writing policies and procedures, and supervising volunteers. I was ecstatic to learn about John A. Moorman's book, *Running a Small Library: A How-To-Do-It Manual for Librarians*, and jumped at the chance to read it and learn more about all aspects of working in a small library. For thirty-eight years, Moorman, the editor of the book and author of multiple chapters, served as a director of public libraries and multitype library systems in Texas, Illinois, North Carolina, and Virginia. His career provided him with extensive experience working in and running small libraries, experience which is passed on to librarians and library professionals in this book.

The content of the book is broken up into five parts: Introducing a Small Library, which provides an overview of libraries in different sectors, such as public or special libraries; Administration in the Small Library; Public Services in the Small Library; Collection Development in the Small Library; Computers and Automation. The separation of the book into the essential functions of running a small library allows the reader to quickly consult the sections of most relevance to them. In addition to the main content, the book contains an appendix titled "Running a Small Library Sourcebook", which provides a list of America's state library agencies,

book and periodical vendors, furniture and supply vendors, automation vendors, professional organizations, and professional statements. The information compiled in the appendix is intended to provide readers further assistance with any problems they may have and guide their research into more specific topics. An extensive index is located at the end of the book.

Moorman sets up a lofty goal for himself with this book: "It is to provide assistance to those operating or working in small libraries, no matter the individuals served or the units with which they are affiliated" (p. vii). The book makes a worthy attempt to meet this goal, particularly in the first section of the book in which multiple library settings are discussed, but this attempt falters from Part II to Part V, during which public libraries gradually become the focus until school, college, academic, and special libraries cease to be mentioned. Although the book is, ostensibly, meant to aid librarians working in all sectors of librarianship, it is best suited to those working in the public library sector.

In addition to attempting to appeal to all librarians, *Running a Small Library* valiantly tries to cover all aspects of running a library, with chapters addressing a variety of topics: budgeting, buildings, community partnership, collection development, integrated library systems, and more. However, as can be expected, it is nearly impossible to include every aspect of running a library—regardless of size—in a 288-page book. As a result, the information in the book is provided at a very superficial level. This is particularly evident in the section on collection development; the chapter on cataloging is only 6 pages long, which is long enough for a very brief summary of what cataloging entails, but not nearly long enough (or detailed enough) to provide more than cursory knowledge of how to actually catalogue resources. Throughout the book, detail is sacrificed for breadth of subject coverage. Fortunately, nearly every chapter ends with suggestions for further reading and the appendix provides readers with an ample number of sources to consult in order to deepen their knowledge of small libraries.

Despite its shortcomings, I believe *Running a Small Library: A How-To-Do-It Manual* is a valuable resource due to its focus on the practical skills and knowledge necessary to work in a small library. As a

student, the textbooks I encountered discussed the theoretical side of working in libraries (such as theories of information seeking) and rarely focused on the more concrete, practical or administrative tasks required. I believe this book would be a valuable resource for a library and information science course, particularly one focusing on public libraries, in order to generate discussion and instruction on the everyday administrative tasks librarianship entails.

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