

***Writing and Publishing: The Librarian's Handbook*. Chicago: American Library Association, 2010. 189 pp. Index. Ed. By Carol Smallwood. ISBN 978-0-8389-0996-6. \$65.**

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This anthology of nearly one hundred short essays strives to provide a quick-and-dirty guide for librarians desiring to see their names in print. Other books aiming to guide librarians through the publication process have appeared in recent years (Crawford, 2003; Gordon, 2004); these focus exclusively on publishing in the field of library science. *Writing and Publishing* instead attempts to cover the breadth of publishing options—from fiction and poetry to restaurant reviews—available to writers who are also librarians.

Striving to add something new and innovative to the literature is an admirable goal; wanting to be all things to all librarians, though, results in not enough content for anyone. The tacit goal of the book seems to be aiding librarians who wish to write, whether professionally or beyond the job; however, it could benefit from a more focused approach. Several of the essays do not tie the subject matter to librarianship at all, some essays overlap in subject matter, and others are illogically organized within chapters. For example, the essay “Learn How to Review Books” appears after two other pieces on book reviewing. A brief introduction to each essay would be helpful to tie all the pieces together. In addition, the preface states that the contributing authors were instructed to submit 1,900-2,100 word essays. While this works for some pieces, others lacked sufficient space to impart useful information.

Despite the structural flaws, there is much useful information to be found in this anthology for new librarians. Essay topics include publishing for tenure, finding one's niche, how to write articles, and how to edit a book for the first time, as well as several articles on the process of submission to revision. Other pieces discuss how to build a portfolio of published works, time management skills for writers, and how to get started if one has not yet published. While some of the articles on non-professional writing seem out of place, others make an excellent case for tying fiction- and poetry-writing to librarianship and describing how the research, commitment, and imagination required is beneficial. Some authors discuss author-editor, author-agent, and author-publisher relations and the proper etiquette for correspondence in the world of publishing.

Overall, Smallwood has put together a collection of essays of definite value to the new librarian. For the \$65 price tag, librarians seeking advice for professional advancement may decide to spend their money on a book more focused on professional writing and simply use one of the many how-to-get-published manuals available at their local library. Librarians with an itch to write but without a clear idea of what to write, however, are strongly encouraged to peruse *Writing and Publishing*.

References

Crawford, W. (2003). *First have something to say: Writing for the library profession*. Chicago, IL: ALA Editions.

Gordon, R.S. (2004). *The Librarian's guide to writing for publication*. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press.