

REVIEW OF: *THE PORTABLE MLIS: INSIGHTS FROM THE EXPERTS.*

By Ken Haycock and Brooke E. Sheldon, eds. Westport, Connecticut: Libraries Unlimited, 2008. \$50.00 (ISBN-13: 978-1-59158-547-3). Available in paperback only.

by Michael F. Bemis

"So you think you might like to become a librarian?" (p. 65). While serving as an opening chapter on library management, this query could do double-duty, with a slight change in punctuation, as a statement of the overall theme of the book itself. Editors Haycock and Sheldon essentially say as much in their Preface, wherein they state, "...this work is designed to be accessible, comprehensive, and useful as an introduction to the work of the professional librarian" (p. ix). They add that this goal is to be met by the cadre of contributors touching upon "the knowledge, skills and abilities" that the modern day information professional is expected to possess, as well as exposing the reader to "...current and emerging applications and trends and issues (ibid.).

The writers as a whole have done a commendable job in achieving their purpose. Those already in the field will immediately recognize most of the names, as they have well established reputations. Michael Gorman, for example, is a past President of the American Library Association, while Richard E. Rubin is the author of a standard textbook, *Foundations of Library and Information Science*, now in its second edition.

The material presented is divided into three broad categories. "Part I: Foundations, Values and Context" contains chapters on the history of librarianship, the ethical underpinnings of the profession and the multitude of roles one has the opportunity to play.

"Part II: Functions and Competencies" takes a look at the nuts and bolts of this career choice. Not surprisingly, this entails reference work, marketing, management, reader's advisory and other traditional aspects of what we do.

"Part III: Moving Beyond Boundaries" peers into our collective crystal ball in an attempt to discern what the future holds. The emphasis here is on the already apparent drift of events, such as the ever increasing interconnectedness of people and places, i.e., the proverbial "global village," the library as both literal community center and virtual resource treasure trove, the ongoing evolution of what we do and how we do it (read: less face-to-face contact with patrons, more techno-toys) and lastly, issues of LIS education, such as the sometimes considerable gulf between theory and practice (hint: what we are taught is how to conduct a reference interview, what we experience are people whining about the laptop computers they drag in).

Rounding out the text is a very helpful set of appendices - an even dozen - containing various resolutions and declarations of professional associations (code of ethics, library bill of rights, etc.), a section of citations to literature referenced in the individual chapters, an index and an editors/contributors list containing biographical sketches of each writer whose work appears in this title.

With a minimum of jargon and a maximum of topics, this book provides an excellent overview of librarianship as we find it in the early days of the twenty-first century. Anyone contemplating this most contemplative of vocations would do well to spend time with *The Portable MLIS* before striking out for the other MLIS they can hang on their wall.