Against the Grain

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Book Reviews- Monographic Musings

Corey Seeman

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Book Reviews — Monographic Musings

Column Editor: **Corey Seeman** (Director, Kresge Library Services, Stephen M. Ross School of Business, University of Michigan; Phone: 734-764-9969) <cseeman@umich.edu> Twitter @cseeman

Column Editor's Note: *There are so many ideas you kick around in your head. Opportunities you might go for. Articles you might write. Presentations you might want to give. And columns you might want to edit. Typically you have the good sense to walk away and let these opportunities fall into the category of considered, but not pursued. Think of the extra time you would have doing Sudoku puzzles, or photographing squirrels, or catching up on work. Yep... that would be great.*

*Only it was not meant to be. When my wonderful colleague **Regina Gong** decided to go back to school to pursue a doctorate at Michigan State, she knew she would not have the time to devote to the **Monographic Musings** column. **Regina** did a fantastic job getting this column running in **Against the Grain**. She also developed her skills at negotiating, which is how I found myself as the new section editor. I learned a great deal during the transition to yours truly as column editor and will be thankful for her leadership for this column.*

So like a football coach who has been charged with the leadership of an exceptional team, I hope I do not mess up anything big! I am starting to build up a group of reviewers who are interested in critiquing books on collection management, library issues, reference trends, library administration and anything else that matches with the diverse set of interests for the Charleston Community.

*The one thing that I am introducing is a standard rating reference. Being a big fan of **Ebert and Siskel** (may they both rest in peace), I loved the way that they presented a clear way to show if something was worth watching. **Roger Ebert** used four stars (for his newspaper reviews in the **Chicago Sun Times**) to let you know quickly if this is something worth the time and money. So to that end, I have created the **ATG Reviewer Rating** that would be used from book to book. I came up with this rating to reflect our collaborative collections and resource sharing means. I think it helps classify the importance of these books.*

- **I need this book on my nightstand.** (This book is so good, that I want a copy close at hand when I am in bed.)
- **I need this on my desk.** (This book is so valuable, that I want my own copy at my desk that I will share with no one.)
- **I need this in my library.** (I want to be able to get up from my desk and grab this book off the shelf, if it's not checked out.)
- **I need this available somewhere in my shared network.** (I probably do not need this book, but it would be nice to get it with three to five days via my network catalog.)
- **I'll use my money elsewhere.** (Just not sure this is a useful book for my library or my network.)

*Thanks to **Rachel Bishop, Sheila J. Bryant, Jane Meland, Steven W. Sowards, Katherine Swart** and my colleague **Sally Ziph** for writing my first set of reviews. (Seems I too am also capable of bugging my fellow Michiganders to write these). If you would like to be a reviewer for **Against the Grain**, please write me at <cseeman@umich.edu> or find me at the **Charleston Conference**. I'll be the dude with the squirrel tie. And you don't have to be from Michigan. You can be from any state or country for that matter! Even Ohio...*

Happy reading and be nutty! — CS

de Farber, Bess G., April Hines, and Barbara J. Hood. *Collaborating with Strangers: Facilitating Workshops in Libraries, Classes, and Nonprofits*. Chicago: Neal-Schuman, 2017. 9780838915424, 160 pages. \$55.00 (\$49.50 for ALA members.)

Reviewed by **Katherine Swart** (Collection Development Librarian, Hekman Library, Calvin College) <kswart20@calvin.edu>

Look no further than TED Talks or Lean process improvement kaizens, and you'll see why people are inspired by innovation. TED Talks gather an audience to listen to a dynamic speaker, undoubtedly sparking conversation (if not reposts on social media). Lean kaizens gather individuals who play key roles in a process (e.g., a library's book ordering process), and together they collaborate on mapping the broken process and envisioning a leaner workflow (e.g., fewer handoffs).

Enter CoLABs, the facilitated workshop model created by **Bess G. de Farber**. CoLABs gather strangers who otherwise might not have met and stimulate discussion around common research interests, assets, and goals. Outcomes might be knowledge of untapped resources, collaboration on new research, or problem resolution. But, isn't that just another term for networking? It is, but it's even more so about innovation.

Just as higher education has followed the Lean trend (for better or worse), libraries are branding themselves as incubators for innovation. To help with this, **April Hines** and **Barbara J. Hood** have collaborated with **de Farber** on a how-to book about facilitating CoLAB workshops in libraries, classes, and nonprofits. The authors all work at the **University of Florida's George A. Smathers Libraries** — **de Farber** as a grants manager and nonprofit management specialist, **Hines** as the journalism and mass communications librarian, and **Hood** as the director of communications.

The authors lay a foundation of why collaborating with strangers can lead to innovative ideas. They walk through examples of two kinds of CoLABs: 1) individuals representing their own interests and assets, and 2) representatives from different organizations. But, it's not until page 28 that the reader learns how libraries fit in to everything. As commonly labeled "third spaces," libraries can be ideal locations for CoLABs and librarians can serve as facilitators. Still a little fuzzy on what a CoLAB is and what it can accomplish? That's okay. The authors say to embrace the ambiguousness of it all.

Imagine a large university library hosting a CoLAB for its librarians and staff. Individuals identify their skills and research interests, and then participate in one-on-one "speed-meetings" with people they don't know. This structured networking is meant to spark ideas, such as individuals with similar research areas collaborating on an article or simply knowing that Jane is the one who knows about instruction strategies. Alternatively, imagine a public library hosting a CoLAB with representatives from area nonprofit organizations. Individuals do "speed-meeting" and learn about grant opportunities or similar projects. Another example is professors asking librarians to facilitate a CoLAB for one of their classes.

The added value of CoLABs is that the facilitators assess the process before, during, and after the event and glean success stories. After a chapter on evaluation, the authors map step by step how to conduct a CoLAB workshop in various scenarios. Clearly, they are experts in anticipating many potential situations, and they provide email templates, sample agendas, and even floor plans. This makes this book useful as a library considers these types of services.

Overall, I think CoLABs offer creative ways for people to network with purpose and proof that the time was well spent. However, I have my doubts about whether all librarians will have time to plan the CoLABs, advertise, make handouts, act as facilitators, and conduct follow-up interviews. In some of the examples, I wondered why the library had to be the one to do all the work. Couldn't the grants office run the event? I think the authors would say, "absolutely." They have a workshop method that's worked in their library, so it's obviously feasible. In the end, if libraries are looking for ways to promote themselves, build community, and ignite innovation (there's that word again), then CoLABs could be the way to go.

ATG Reviewer Rating: *Available somewhere in my shared network. (I probably do not need this book, but it would be nice to get it within three to five days via my network catalog.)*

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Flaherty, Mary Grace. *Promoting Individual and Community Health at the Library.* Chicago: ALA Editions, 2018. 9780838916278, 144 pages. \$50.00

Reviewed by **Sheila J. Bryant** (Science Librarian, Michigan State University Libraries, East Lansing) <bryants@msu.edu>

In today's society, it is important for people to "be their own best advocate"; therefore, the public's reliance on finding useful and helpful information on the internet has shifted into high gear. Especially when it comes to Health Information. When locating and deciphering health information, patrons in the community turn to public libraries for assistance. Public librarians are using resources at their libraries and in their communities to provide patrons with health information that is informative, credible, and easy to comprehend. People should have access to information resources to enable them to make informed health care decisions. Therefore, it is important that librarians engage with community patrons concerning health information.

Mary Grace Flaherty's book focuses on the importance of assisting library patrons with finding the necessary medical/health information they are seeking. It emphasizes presenting programs to inform patrons of resources and services they may not know are available. Collaborating with community organizations allows libraries to recommend materials and connect patrons with organizations and agencies who can provide in depth and needed assistance. **Mary Grace** has done an impressive job of demonstrating how things related to disseminating health care information work in a public library.

Author **Mary Grace Flaherty** is an Assistant Professor at the **University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill** in the **School of Information and Library Science**. She teaches courses on Resource Selection and Evaluation, Health Sciences Information, and Seminar in Public Libraries. She has written extensively on Public Libraries and Health Information, focusing on rural public libraries, outreach, and health literacy. She provides excellent examples throughout the book that include case studies and overviews of relevant topics. The key is to make medical knowledge more accessible to the average individual and the library's role in bringing that to fruition. Collaborating with the community to take advantage of working with outside groups to tap into the wealth of resources available.

In one example of note, **Flaherty** wrote a chapter on Health Programming in Libraries and focuses on programming resources, activities, initiatives and examples. The online resources provided and the case studies presented represent just the tip of the iceberg of the resources that are available to help plan programs for patrons. She also covers objectives, promotion, marketing, and evaluation, which all tie into the assessment of the programs libraries offer. It's key to know how well something works. Public library patrons, compared to other type of libraries, are from all age groups so it is important that programs be age appropriate and planned accordingly. The "In the Nutshell" section at the end of each chapter does an effective job of compiling the chapter contents.

I definitely find this work valuable. This book is a must have for all public libraries. Especially those with a consumer health collection. I believe all librarians, no matter their subject area, can benefit from this book.

ATG Reviewer Rating: I need this on my desk. (This book is so valuable, that I want my own copy at my desk that I will share with no one.)

McNeil, Beth. *Fundamentals of Library Supervision, Third Edition.* Chicago: Neal-Schuman, an imprint of the American Library Association, 2017. 9780838915547, 256 pages. \$59.00

Reviewed by **Jane Meland** (Assistant Director for Public Services, Michigan State University College of Law, Schaefer Law Library, East Lansing) <jane.meland@law.msu.edu>

Beth McNeil, professor and dean of the library at **Iowa State University**, draws upon her extensive leadership experience to create a modern version of this definitive text. This 3rd edition of *Fundamentals of Library Supervision* is updated with a contemporary new look and layout, while retaining the valuable leadership advice for which it's known. The book covers a wide variety of management topics, including facilities management, budgeting, communication, inclusiveness and diversity, and legal issues, but its strength lies in its extensive coverage of classic personnel management.

The book is organized into three overarching themes, starting with the smaller scale responsibilities of individual supervision and moving through the progressively more complex tasks of managing groups and leading organizations. The chapters covering supervision of individuals provide common-sense guidance on hiring, training, and evaluating employees; and **McNeil** includes several practical tools such as checklists, sample schedules, scripts and policy statements that could be adapted to any library.

Throughout the book, **McNeil** uses practical examples to illustrate concepts. She brings the examples to life using fictional characters, **Chris** and **Jamie**, who are new managers leading separate departments within a library. I found these management scenarios exceedingly effective, especially in the section devoted to managing groups. Group management concepts such as team building, group dynamics, work styles, and project management are reinforced using these case studies. For example, in the chapter on planning and organizing work, **McNeil** explains the planning and implementation process for establishing SMART goals and objectives and provides a list of key steps in this process. She then provides an example of how unit manager, **Jamie**, would employ and execute this process in a library's cataloging department.

In the third part of the book, the focus shifts from the practical day to day aspects of library supervision to the broader goal of creating a professional and inclusive organizational culture. This section includes chapters on communication skills, diversity, motivation, the legal environment and career management. The book does a nice job providing an overview of each of these topics, but I found myself wanting more in-depth guidance and advice. For instance, the chapter on communication skills included information on email etiquette that is common knowledge for most employees in the 21st century, while library managers who find themselves grappling with inclusion and diversity issues would want to seek out sources that are more comprehensive.

Overall, this book is filled with valuable information on the fundamentals of library supervision and is a must-have for new and aspiring library supervisors. Further, the book offers something for seasoned library managers too. In fact, as a 15-year veteran library manager, I found this text reassuring and enlightening.

ATG Reviewer Rating: I need this in my library. (I want to be able to get up from my desk and grab this book off the shelf; if it's not checked out.)

Atkinson, Jeremy (ed.). *Collaboration and the Academic Library: Internal and External, Local and Regional, National and International.* Kidlington UK/Cambridge MA: Chandos Publishing, 2018. 9780081020845, 252 pages. \$82.95 pb.

Reviewed by **Steven W. Sowards** (Associate Director for Collections, Michigan State University Libraries, East Lansing MI) <sowards@msu.edu>

The critical role of collaboration among academic librarians cannot be overstated. And while librarians might feel that they have been collaborating forever, and doing quite well, the need for assessment of our collaborations remains important.

Author and Academic Librarian **Jeremy Atkinson** argues that collaboration on a wide scale is necessary in a 21st century information landscape, to reduce the risk that library activities will be siloed, overlooked, bypassed or marginalized. Current trends — especially the capacity for digital communication at all levels — make collaboration imperative for library visibility and success. The Index underscores

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Atkinson's interest in barriers and drivers that affect the success of collaboration; the importance of leadership, governance, trust, technology, and communication; and areas of operations that can benefit from collaboration, such as work with Information Technology entities, the exploration of Open Access, and success in licensing.

Jeremy Atkinson has written an ambitious anthology with two primary goals. One involves factors in successful collaborations involving academic libraries. The second — and more important — involves “critical reflection” as an approach to improving the quality of library services. Noting recent work in healthcare fields where “self-consciousness (reflection) and continual self-critique (critical reflection) have been ... useful to the development of continuing competence” (p. 5), the editor aims not only to present examples of collaboration, but also to reveal the contributions of a reflective and self-critical perspective. The selected case studies intend to introduce and illustrate this method and its potential, which is relatively new in librarianship. The case studies deal with projects that relied on cooperation between units within individual libraries, between units on a single campus, between library staff and library users, and between elements of consortia. About half of the case studies strongly embrace the editor's intent. Those articles can appeal not only to librarians interested in the specific situations under review, but to those interested in the features and utility of reflective analysis. Other articles may appeal to readers with specific interest in situations that are similar to those described, even if those chapters are less effective in describing the reflective model.

Jeremy Atkinson is a British academic librarian and consultant who has long been active with important British consortia. **Atkinson** has written the introduction, a reflective conclusion, and one of the content chapters. The other 17 case studies come from 33 contributors representing primarily British and Australian academic libraries; four of those 17 chapters draw on experiences with library organizations in the United States, Finland and New Zealand. To the extent that the point of each case study is illustration of the reflective technique, content may be interesting to American readers even when their experiences differ from practices in other countries.

As part of the *Chandos Information Professional Series* (**Elsevier**), the intended audience for the text consists of academic library professionals. The content can be dense at times, but when writers have taken seriously the editor's wish to highlight self-reflection, they often inject candor and insights and make particular chapters quite readable. Tables, figures and half a dozen color photographs support the text. An appendix of abbreviations and acronyms will assist readers who have never encountered SWALCAP, SCURL, among others. The brief chapters allow the reader to grasp the fundamentals of that particular collaboration and learn more with suggested readings (although the length of the reading lists varies widely). The editor provides his own selection of 100 significant books and articles about reflective practice and specific areas of library collaboration.

The editor relies on the case studies to move beyond reflection as a concept, to identification of key themes, areas ripe for collaboration, and wider social contexts. The following case studies do a good job illustrating the reflective technique while also describing and analyzing projects of potential general interest. Chapter 5 by **Stephen McVey** and **Sophie Farrar** discusses the use of communities of practice (CoPs) to improve communication among scattered branch libraries in an Australian university. Chapter 9 by **Steven Yates**, **Melanie Thorn**, **Amy Han** and **Megan Deacon** discusses team production of a copyright-orientation guide at a major Australian library. Chapter 8 by **Starr Hoffman** describes effective and less effective practices for “embedded” library liaison duties at **Columbia University**, and is one of only two entries about work in the United States.

ATG Reviewer Rating: *Available somewhere in my shared network. (I probably do not need this book, but it would be nice to get the book or specific chapters within three to five days via my network catalog.)*

Buchanan, Heidi E. and Beth A. McDonough. *The One-shot Library Instruction Survival Guide*. Second Edition.

Chicago: American Library Association, 2017.
9780838914861, 168 pages. \$50.00

Reviewed by **Rachel Bishop** (Research and Instruction Librarian, Van Wylen Library, Hope College, Holland, Michigan)
<bishop@hope.edu>

One shot library sessions commonly occurring at academic institutions have long been a topic of discussion over the past several years. The value and use of these sessions has been explored recently as our librarians are seeking to support students in a quickly changing information gathering landscape. Many librarians have lamented that a single library classroom opportunity, or the one-shot library session, has often been thought of as an incomplete attempt to teach students the skill sets necessary to navigate information, let alone to understand the broad and complex structures of information literacy and its applications. Yet, due to limited resources and sometimes a lack of institutional understanding and support towards these important skill sets, many librarians find themselves tied to teaching one-shots as their only course of action.

Heidi Buchanan and **Beth McDonough** have written the second edition to their first book published in 2014. Both **Buchanan** and **McDonough** are librarians at **Western Carolina University** and have (from their biography) “more than thirty years of combined experience teaching information literacy.” In this book, the authors provide an excellent resource to guide readers through the special situations of the one shot library session by offering tips and insights gathered from the experiences of academic instruction librarians from various institutions. Their first edition was written in response to inquiries from their **ACRL** preconference workshop on the topic. Their second edition addresses these concepts and while incorporating how the one-shot library session can work well within the 2015 **ACRL Frameworks on Information Literacy**.

The authors have done a great job in not just writing a cookie-cutter recipe book for instruction. The authors understand the myriad of different situations that arise in teaching one-shot library instruction sessions. They offer different methods to illustrate ways of tailoring approaches to instruction in order for librarians to accommodate these differences. The book is organized so that each chapter separately addresses several pedagogical and organizational issues to the one-shot library session. Chapter topics include: student engagement, assessment, scope of instructional content, and collaboration with academic instructors. The emphasis on flexibility throughout the book allows the reader to create customizable instructional programs. For example, the chapter on student engagement provides several different and varied strategies to facilitate successful active student learning derived and cited from seasoned/expert librarian teachers in the field in order to provide the reader with many examples to follow. **Buchanan** and **McDonough** have done a good job of incorporating key aspects of the **ACRL Frameworks on Information Literacy** and have devoted an entire chapter devoted to this topic. Chapter three (“but how will I cover everything”) breaks down and specifies the six **ACRL** frameworks in the context of one-shot instruction sessions. The authors focus on student learning to provide instructional librarians with tools to create meaningful learning outcomes for each student.

Like all resources, I find value in guides offering examples from various sources and this one provides that to any librarian who needs some inspiration for informing their goals of achieving a successful one-shot library session within the **ACRL** framework.

ATG Reviewer Rating: *I need this in my library. (I want to be able to get up from my desk and grab this book off the shelf, if it's not checked out.)*

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Wryly Noted — Books About Books

Column Editor: **John D. Riley** (*Against the Grain* Contributor and Owner, Gabriel Books) <jdriley@comcast.net>
<https://www.facebook.com/Gabriel-Books-121098841238921/>

The Revenge of Analog: Real Things and Why They Matter by **David Sax**. (ISBN: 978-1-61039-821-3, Public Affairs 2017, \$16.99 pb.)

The Woman Reader by **Belinda Jack**. (ISBN: 978-0-300-12045-5, Yale University Press 2012, \$30.00 hb.)

Nam June Paik: Global Visionary by **John G. Hanhardt** and **Ken Hakuta**. (ISBN: 978-1-907804-20-5, Smithsonian American Art Museum 2012, \$55.00 hb.)

Comic Book History of Comics: Birth of a Medium by **Fred Van Lente**. (ISBN: 978-1-63140-925-7, IDW Publishing 2017, \$19.95 pb.)

My column for this issue is an omnium gatherum of books that reflect a summer's worth of reading and traveling. I always like to buy books whenever I visit a museum or new bookstore. I feel like supporting the effort of the booksellers and I always find something unique while I'm at it. This summer I visited the new Harvard art museum which brings together three older art museums under one roof in a new building designed by **Renzo Piano**. The **Fogg**, **Sackler**, and **Busch-Reisinger Art Museums** have all been brought together in a collection that rivals any other art museum in New England, including the **Museum of Fine Arts** in Boston. I came

specially to see their multimedia exhibit dedicated to Nam June Paik and found an excellent book on his career there.

Later in the summer I visited the **Clark Art Museum** in Williamstown, Massachusetts. This is another World Class museum that houses some of the finest Impressionist paintings in the world. The Singer sewing machine family amassed a grand collection at a time when, oddly enough, Impressionism was out of favor in France. The Family also funded the building of the **Museum of Modern Art** in New York. I had come to the museum to view a special collection of women Impressionist painters. While there I found *The Woman Reader* a unique

book which is focused on books that women have read over the ages.

While on vacation in Maine I visited a new bookshop in Portland that is owned by the daughter of New England author **Richard Russo**. The shop is called simply "Print: a Bookstore." It is a perfect example of *The Revenge of the Analog* with its expansive sections on writing, editing, and books about books.

Luckily *Comic Book History of Comics* came across the desk at my bookshop **Gabriel Books** and I avidly took it home to read, as I had never been a huge comic book reader other than during the Underground Comic era in the 60s and I wanted to know about the history of such a popular medium.

In research for his book, *The Revenge of Analog: Real Things and Why They Matter*, **Mr. Sax** says he found that it was less a case of older generations reaching back to familiar formats from their youth than teenagers and 20-somethings discovering turntables and LPs, paperback novels and film cameras. "The younger someone was, the more digitally exposed their generation was," he writes near the end of this book, "the less I found them enamored by digital technology, and the more they were wary of its effects." These kids were falling in love with analog.

The author explores the so called "analog technologies" such as vinyl records, print

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Hibner, Holly and Mary Kelly. *Taking Your Library Career to the Next Level: Participating, Publishing, and Presenting*. Cambridge, MA: Chandos Publishing, an imprint of Elsevier, 2017. eBook ISBN: 9780081022719 Paperback ISBN: 9780081022702. 120 pages. \$78.95

Reviewed by: **Sally Ziph** (Librarian, Kresge Library Services, Ross School of Business, University of Michigan)
<sweston@umich.edu>

We all know professional development is important, but how do you get started, especially if you're new to librarianship? Public librarians **Holly Hibner** and **Mary Kelley** (both from the Plymouth District Library in Michigan) have written a wonderful guide to lead the way. **Hibner** and **Kelley** are the creators of the website *Awful Library Books* (<http://awfullibrarybooks.net/>) and are the authors of the *Public Library Association Weeding Manual*, 2016 and *Making a Collection Count: a Holistic Approach to Library Collection Management* (Chandos, 2013).

Taking Your Library Career to the Next Level: Participating, Publishing, and Presenting has answers that you will need to take that next step. This is an indispensable little book for any librarian who wants

to ramp up their professional development efforts with an eye toward gaining tenure or credentials. It's packed with useful strategies for creating a "personal brand" as well as gaining name recognition through social media, publishing and presenting. It would be especially useful for early career librarians.

According to **Hibner** and **Kelley**, "Brands are short-handed labels for you as a person and a professional." They suggest creating a personal brand by focusing on a topic of interest in your job or in the larger profession. Your personal website is the "home base for your brand efforts," and the book contains helpful tips for creating content and leveraging social media, with tips for Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, etc. Examples of a brand include the authors' website, *Awful Library Books* (<http://awfullibrarybooks.net/>).

The book also contains useful advice on publishing and presenting. The chapter on "Publishing" includes advice on partnering with other librarians, open access, self-publishing, the peer review process, copyright and more.

The chapter on "Presenting" is particularly useful to the new professional, covering common concerns such as stage fright, advice on writing conference proposals and practical tips for creating dynamic presentations. Finally, the book is an easy read at 120 pages and a goldmine of information on "how to do" professional development in an enjoyable, down-to-earth and career-enriching way.

ATG Reviewer Rating: *I need this on my desk.* (This book is so valuable, that I want my own copy at my desk that I will share with no one.) 🌿