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10-1-2010

Review of Writing and Publishing: The Librarian's Handbook. Edited by Carol Smallwood.

Sharon Leslie
Georgia State University, sleslie@gsu.edu

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Recommended Citation
Leslie, Sharon, "Review of Writing and Publishing: The Librarian's Handbook. Edited by Carol Smallwood." (2010). *University Library Faculty Publications.* Paper 62.
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Journal of Hospital Librarianship

V. 10, number 4, 2010, pages 417-418

Writing and Publishing: The Librarian's Handbook. Edited by Carol Smallwood. *Chicago, IL. American Library Association*, *2010*. 199 pages. $65.00. ISBN13: 978-0-8389-0996-6.

Mark Twain said, "I didn't have to time to write a short letter, so I wrote a long one instead". This book acknowledges that the ability to communicate intangible thoughts with clarity is not easy. Part of a series called *ALA Guides for the Busy Librarian*, this practical collection has over 90 separate essays that discuss different aspects of writing and publishing including textbooks, children's books, blogging, bibliographies, press kits, columns, editing, magazine articles, and poetry. It even has a section on how to review books. The entries are short, 2 or 3 pages at most, and Editor and librarian Carol Smallwood has assembled authors from all fields of librarianship, as well as LIS faculty.

Major section headings are: Why Write?, Education of a Writer, Finding Your Niche in Print, Finding Your Niche Online, and Maximizing Opportunities. Many of the essays are written in the first person, lending a personal "anyone can do it" feel to the material. The anecdotal tone is appealing and plenty of specific advice is offered such as, "Another technique for identifying possible journals is to register for tables of contents to be delivered automatically via e-mail or RSS and then to scan them to gain a better sense of the content and scope of a particular journal", from Deborah H. Charbonneau's *Preparing for Publication* entry. However, some topics do seem elementary and contain advice like "read the directions" or the well-worn "be creative".

One entry I found especially substantive was, "Find Out What is Currently Being Published In Children's Books" by Mary Northrup, a bibliography of websites and sources to discover what materials have already been written and brought to market. Other topics covered in the book include how to revise your textbook, chapter or journal article, how to peer-review literature, how to find an agent, and how to DIY publish. The black and white text has no illustrations but is laid-out well enough to maintain interest.

Librarians in any kind of library are often asked to write marketing materials, assessments, or grants, but not always for publication. For some, there is the obligation to publish to achieve promotion and/or tenure. Writing for professional literature like library journals or newsletters is a good way for first time writers and early career librarians to break into the field, refine her/his skills, and help build a portfolio. Joining a writing group with like-minded colleagues is recommended, as well as collaborative efforts with interdisciplinary co-authors.

What does this book offer librarians specifically that can't be found in other books on writing? It encourages librarians to do what we do so well; network and share ideas. Comparable texts for the general audience such as *If You Want To Write* by Brenda Ueland, *Bird by Bird: Some Instructions on Writing and Life* by Anne Lamott, or even *Elements of Style* present insight on writing but librarians are a unique, collegial group.

Writing and Publishing: The Librarian's Handbook could be helpful for a person interested in writing but the entries may be too broad to be worth the purchase price for an individual. This book is more suited for a library's professional development section or a library reference section where it can serve many interests at once.