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Places to Grow: Public Libraries and Communities in Ontario, 1930–2000 by Lorne D. Bruce (review)

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Reviews

Comptes rendus

Lorne D. Bruce. *Places to Grow: Public Libraries and Communities in Ontario, 1930–2000*. Guelph, ON: Self-published, 2010. ISBN 978-0-9866666-0-5.

Places to Grow is a historical survey of the development of public libraries in Ontario from the time of the Depression to the present. The volume is a continuation of *Free Books for All: The Public Library Movement in Ontario, 1850–1930*, published in 1994. That work showed how late Victorian ideals and changing societal norms led to the creation of the free public library movement in Ontario. *Places to Grow* builds on those themes to discuss how educational reform, provincial restructuring, and the creation of professional governance bodies shaped libraries in Ontario up to the turn of the twenty-first century.

Lorne D. Bruce, former head of archival and special collections at the University of Guelph Library, has worked in public library administration and has authored numerous articles on library history. His archival expertise makes him well suited to writing about libraries from the perspective of a local historian. *Places to Grow* contains a wealth of references to primary sources; notable among these are association meeting records, government correspondence, diaries of library inspectors, and library board memoranda. The inclusion of these sources illustrates the complexity of public library governance and operations, and furnishes telling and amusing anecdotes. The book contains numerous figures, tables, and photographic illustrations, which are helpfully cited at the end of each section.

Chapters are arranged chronologically, covering seven decades from the Great Depression to the end of the millennium. Chapters 2 to 4 focus on the economic milieu in Ontario in the years following the Depression and World War II, and discuss the impact of government austerity measures on public libraries. Chapter 5 highlights how libraries responded to societal and communal changes, establishing their role in building communities and expanding services in a time of relative prosperity. Chapters 6 and 7 deal with professionalism, service to underserved populations, freedom of expression, and new media, and outline the challenges that libraries faced in responding to these emerging social trends. The final section is devoted to the impact of political events, budget cuts, and amalgamations that occurred in Ontario in the 1990s, and concludes with a discussion of the reformulation of library services in the “Information Age.”

Perhaps because *Places to Grow* is self-published, it reads very differently from Bruce’s earlier published work. The writing style is mostly descriptive, which may puzzle readers looking for an analysis of the key issues rather than a detailed recounting of the processes of local library operations and governance. Still, *Places*

to Grow will be useful to students in academic MLS programs and researchers with an interest in Canadian social history and public policy: It fills a gap in the library literature by addressing the history of public libraries from a regional and organizational, rather than strictly social, perspective. The book is accessible to non-historians, and readers will find many parallels to contemporary issues in the administration of public libraries in Ontario and elsewhere in Canada.

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Beth Ashmore, Jill E. Grogg, and Jeff Weddle. *The Librarian's Guide to Negotiation: Winning Strategies for the Digital Age*. Medford, NJ: Information Today, 2012. ISBN 978-1-57387-428-1. US\$49.50.

The Librarian's Guide to Negotiation begins with two key premises. The first is that negotiation is a basic job function for all twenty-first-century information managers, particularly for those dealing with digital content and services, but also for those in other areas of public and technical services. The second is that negotiating can be intimidating and that few library and information science (LIS) programs explicitly address negotiation skills in their curriculum, so few graduates feel prepared to negotiate effectively. As a result, many information managers equate negotiation with conflict rather than seeing it as a necessary form of communications, and thus seek to avoid it.

This new publication seeks to demystify key negotiation skills and does so in a sequence of nine clearly written and engaging chapters that focus on practical topics such as the power and pitfalls of consortial negotiations, strategies for negotiating in the era of publisher consolidation and the "Big Deal" and for negotiating in the age of open access, and open source and free internet resources. In addition, five appendices include useful supplementary information such as tips on how to research a forthcoming negotiation, an annotated bibliography of useful resources, sample licensing and negotiation checklists, a brief overview of digital tools and their impact on negotiation communications and strategy, and a brief overview of communication theory.

While many of the examples provided relate specifically to aspects of acquisitions and collections management, the negotiation principles outlined by the authors are broadly applicable to other types of negotiations as well and could be used when negotiating with funding agencies, staff, co-workers, and administrators. The authors clearly explain the differences between interest-based and positional negotiation strategies and give practical advice about when to use each approach. They also tackle the controversial issue of the role of gender in negotiations and, while they do not reach a definitive conclusion, raise some provocative questions. Most importantly, the authors emphasize the importance of preparation and research before negotiations are begun and provide many practical examples of effective preparation that can be applied to any negotiation scenario.