Book Reviews

Accessible Libraries on Campus: A Practical Guide for the Creation of Disability-Friendly Libraries. Ed. Tom McNulty. Chicago: ALA, 1999. 191p. $30, alk. paper (ISBN 0-8389-8035-X). LC 99-34534. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 should have been a wake-up call for academic libraries to attend to the needs of students and faculty with disabilities. Libraries that were proactive about 504 were ready to go to the next level of meeting those needs, as addressed by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990. Since 1990, much has been written about making library facilities and information technologies accessible. Still, the accessibility levels in academic libraries around the country vary considerably. Editor Tom McNulty and the other contributors to *Accessible Libraries on Campus* have created a guide for librarians—from those whose institutions have barely started the accessibility process to those who work in libraries that are in full compliance but wish to be kept abreast of the latest changes in law and technology. It is a book that explains the why and how.

The table of contents covers most of the major access issues for academic libraries. In his Introduction and chapter "Disability in Higher Education: An Overview," McNulty writes a brief history of disability laws and of the major groups of people with disabilities served by academic libraries. Four important issues are briefly discussed: campuswide services for disabled students, coordination of library service for people with disabilities, specialized sections of the ALA that address library-related disability issues, and the ADA definition of disability.

Other topics discussed in this book include: wayfinding and universal access; service for patrons with hearing loss; accessibility of text formats; access systems for blind and partially sighted PC users; needs of the hand-disabled library user; access for blind and visually impaired users; issues concerning staff training; and a case study of NYU's Bobst Library's use of Bobby (an accessibility Web page checker). The book has three appendices: "Noteworthy Access Programs and Projects," Janet Bedney's "Planning for Service: A Model for Academic Libraries," and Nicole McKay's "Directory of Resources." *Accessible Libraries on Campus* is an excellent companion to another ALA publication, *Library Buildings, Equipment & the ADA: Compliance Issues and Solutions*, edited by Susan E. Cirillo and Robert E. Danford in 1996.

The chapter on hand-disabled library users, which includes valuable information on using voice recognition programs in the library, and the two on Web access and Bobby describe newer developments for improving the disabled people's access to information. Other authors provide detailed descriptions of assistive technology, both old and new, that make possible the inclusion of library users with a wide variety of disabilities. The contributors each have their own distinct voice, but the language and styles blend to make the book one unit that speaks clearly and consistently. A common theme is that academic libraries should provide access for everyone by living up to the spirit of the ADA, not just the letter of the law.

The book title proclaims that it is a practical guide for the creation of disability-friendly libraries. If by "practical" they mean the presentation of all possible options, this is a practical guide. Although the book does include some theory, most of it is information to help librarians make decisions concerning their libraries. The model survey can be copied from the book needing few adaptations for local use. The bibliography is brief, but selec-

tive; each chapter also has its own list of references. Two big omissions are the contributors' credentials and an index.

A few errors remain in the text. One is in the Introduction, where the passage date for the ADA is given as 1991; the ADA was signed into law July 26, 1990. In his chapter on accessible text formats, Steve Noble states that library patrons have the option of ordering "large-print texts through the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS)." This mistake is repeated six pages later. The Library of Congress, through NLS, does not distribute large-print material.

More should have been done concerning furniture, library-produced material (flyers, brochures), and descriptive videos. And Susan Beck's reliance on Phonic Ear products to the exclusion of other brands for certain types of listening aids leaves the uninformed reader underinformed. Moreover, it is surprising that there is no chapter on learning disabilities, especially because McNulty indicates how this population has grown in recent years, in colleges and universities.

There is a great deal to know about the ADA. It impinges on all areas of academia, not just the library. Concern about the law, and full compliance with it, needs to be part of our organizational culture. Access is not a static entity. It changes as quickly as new technology. Books such as this one assist in the decision making about what we must do to create a disability-friendly academic library. It is in everyone's best interest to do so—because it is the law, because it is right, and because "the disabled" is the only minority group anyone may join.—*Joann Block, Broward County Library, Fort Lauderdale, Florida.*

Krummel, D.W. *Fiat Lux, Fiat Latebra: A Celebration of Historical Library Functions.* Urbana, Ill.: Graduate School of Library and Information Science, Univ. of Illinois (Occasional Papers No. 209), 1999. 27p. $8 (ISSN 0276 1769).

The chief virtue of this engaging and informative overview of library history is brevity; if the old adage is right, this essay contains much wit and perhaps some useful wisdom. The overtaxed reviewer is suitably grateful for this contribution from a distinguished music bibliographer and long-time library educator at the University of Illinois. Here is a broad and sweeping vista, seen from the accommodating position of an elevated view after a moderate climb. Even those who avoid the study of history will welcome it and perhaps even point to it as a reminder that not all historical works can be dismissed as too long, too ponderous, or too pompous and pedantic, for it is none of these. And though properly documented, it is not surrounded by academic barbed wire as much—perhaps too much—academic writing is. Perhaps it is best described as a contribution in the tradition of the familiar essay, which tries to approach and contextualize a broad, significant topic in accessible language. If in doing so, it sacrifices analytical precision and empirical detail, it does so for a commendable, and perhaps more worthwhile, purpose.

Although much library history consists of journeyman spadework that only an aficionado could really love, D.W. Krummel has come on the scene to look over the entire valley, indicate the general pattern of succession among the species, pause occasionally to describe curiosities, and encourage the visitor to explore on her or his own. The central theme is reflected in the complementary opposition, suggested in the title and elaborated in the text, between light and the inevitable blind spots that light automatically creates; when one place is illuminated, countless others are hidden. The motto might be, Whatever reveals also conceals. This may sound flip and deliberately paradoxical, but it is really obvious, as the old joke about the drunk looking for his keys under the lamppost suggests. Asked why he isn't checking anywhere else, he says, "Well, I can only look where the light is." Thus, the writer is suggesting, our familiar library technolo-