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Book Review of Handbook for Small, Rural, and Emerging Public Libraries

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408. Gervasi, Anne, and Betty Kay Seibt. **Handbook for Small, Rural, and Emerging Public Libraries.** Phoenix, Ariz., Oryx Press, 1988. 196p. index. \$27.50pa. LC 86-42966. ISBN 0-89774-303-2.

This handbook is intended, in the authors' words, to provide a "single source that would introduce lay people to the breadth of library service in a way that opens doors and explains rather than a way that closes doors and confuses" (preface). It succeeds quite well as an overview of how to establish and administer a small public library.

The book is divided into three sections. The first section is addressed to those who want to establish a small or rural public library, and the second is directed to library boards. The audience for the third section is the library director. The seventeen chapters discuss a wide range of topics, including evaluating community needs, legal issues, fund raising, space planning, hiring practices, outfitting the library, collection development, public and technical services, and cooperative services.

The authors readily acknowledge that their coverage of these topics is not deep; their goal is to provide a broad overview of the issues that need to be addressed in creating and running a small or rural library. They get quite specific in stating how certain library functions should be performed, however, which is the primary shortcoming of the book. Because of the intentional lack of depth, I would feel a little more comfortable with the book had the authors spoken in more general terms about running a small or rural library. I am troubled by statements such as "periodicals are not cataloged" and by the authors' acceptance of the notion that the public catalog must necessarily be a *card* catalog.

Notwithstanding these criticisms, the handbook clearly meets a need in library literature. It should not be used alone, however, but rather in conjunction with other books such as Katz's *The How-to-Do-It Manual for Small Libraries* (Neal-Schuman, 1988). Gervasi and Seibt's handbook is recommended for librarians and trustees of small or rural libraries. [R: CLJ, Dec 88, p. 395; WLB, June 88, pp. 124-25]

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