

wave feminism, and the counterculture transformed the self-indulgent entertainments. In the Midwest and elsewhere, Jewish and African American families successfully agitated for inclusion, and debutante balls increasingly became fund-raising events for worthy charities.

The traditional coming-out celebration continued to create a variety of spin-off rituals: African American debuts celebrating a young woman's educational and community service accomplishments, *quinceañeras* commemorating a Latina's fifteenth birthday, elaborate high school proms, and glamorous beauty pageants. Although Marling does not always make the connection explicit, these festivities function as dress rehearsals for the formal wedding. Like the original debutante balls and teas, these recent coming-of-age events cast a young single woman in the role of practice bride as she struts or dances to music in a floor-length gown. And like a wedding, the coming-out party and its more democratic imitators are organized by and for women to celebrate traditional gender roles and display the female body in ways that highlight its sexuality. As Marling notes, these are rituals that showcase both the "empowerment of women and their subjugation" (16).

The title of Marling's study is a bit misleading. Although the work's main title spotlights the *Debutante*, the voices of real-life debutantes and other coming-of-age celebrants are largely absent from the study. Marling forgoes oral histories and personal correspondence in favor of sources that explore the book's subtitle: *Rites and Regalia of American Debdom*. In the process, she provides a thorough exploration of the form and content of female coming-of-age celebrations—albeit with little reflection by participants. Written in an informal style, generously illustrated, and lacking footnotes or endnotes, it is readily accessible to a popular as well as an academic audience.

*Reinventing the Museum: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives on the Paradigm Shift*, edited by Gail Anderson. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2004. xii, 402 pp. Notes, bibliographies. \$78.00 cloth, \$34.95 paper.

Reviewer Fred E. H. Schroeder was, before his retirement, director of graduate liberal studies at the University of Minnesota, Duluth. His most recent work on local history is *Front Yard America: The Evolution and Meanings of a Vernacular Domestic Landscape* (1993).

*Reinventing the Museum* is an excellent collection of 34 provocative articles divided into five areas of concern among museums. Each is preceded by a summary by editor Gail Anderson, who has been active in museums for the past 25 years. The "paradigm shift" of the book's

subtitle is from the museum as a "collection-driven" institution to "visitor-centered." The five subsections derive from this shift: the challenge to remain relevant, understanding visitors, the role of public service in exhibits, responsible stewardship of collections, and leadership.

Most of the essays have been published during the past decade, but the first is the 1917 classic "The Gloom of the Museum" by John Cotton Dana. The articles that follow are all critical of museum traditions such as the dominance of curatorial expertise, elitist attitudes toward audiences, and ghettoizing museum educators in the hierarchy. However, all point to new directions, often with specific examples of success stories.

Aside from allusions to museums in Davenport and St. Paul and high-powered museums in Chicago, there is nothing immediately relevant to the Midwest, or, for that matter, to state and local history. Yet I heartily recommend this volume to all museums, historical societies, and collegiate history programs because of "big picture" issues. Museum staff members often are stifled by the day-to-day minutiae of their work, while many college programs still ignore material objects. Using almost any one of these articles for in-service or seminar discussion could prove both informative and refreshing.

*Starting Right: A Basic Guide to Museum Planning*, by Gerald George and Cindy Sherrell-Leo. Second edition by Gerald George. AASLH Book Series. Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press, 2004. 160 pp. Illustrations, bibliographies, index. \$24.95 paper.

Reviewer Jerome Thompson is state curator for the State Historical Society of Iowa. He directed the State Historical Museum for 18 years and is past president of the Iowa Museum Association.

When the first edition of *Starting Right* was released in 1986, the count of museums in the United States numbered more than 6,000. Today there are more than 10,000. This primer on starting or reinvigorating a museum aptly lays out what is involved. In a very readable and logical fashion, George presents the case for the importance of local historical museums and what must be done to make one a successful and viable community resource. It provides direction on where to find help, texts, and references for subjects related to exhibit planning, collections management, and governing a local museum. Additionally, it provides sample organizational charts, board responsibilities, by-laws, budgets, gift agreements, and cataloging records.

There are two major changes to the second edition. The stark reality of the reduction in funding for museums in the past ten years is

Copyright of Annals of Iowa is the property of State of Iowa, by & through the State Historical Society of Iowa and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.