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Something to Think About-Libraries are Dangerous Places

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Something to Think About — Libraries are Dangerous Places!

Column Editor: **Mary E. (Tinker) Massey** (Serials Librarian, Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, Jack R. Hunt Library) <masse36e@erau.edu>

I guess I've worked in libraries a little over forty years, and there have been a lot of problems and dangerous situations from the earliest of times. My biggest problem when I first started working was not having a ladder to gain access to the higher-shelved materials. I used desks, chairs, trash cans, and all manner of boxes. Almost invariably, I would end up six feet below in the middle of a trash can full of papers. Well, at least it was a soft landing.

We also had occasion to rescue some of our student workers from electric pencil sharpeners, electric eraser burns, scalpels removing fingertips and not old signage or call numbers, irons to put on labels or take off old ones, and even the typewriters that would catch unwary typists trying to unstuck the keys or loosen the new balls. I hated the extra large/heavy-duty staplers that would catch you off-guard when you put pamphlets together. THEN, we acquired "Compact Storage," first with manual controls and then those with electric controls. Sometimes it wasn't the controls, but a way to move boxes from the shelves onto dollies without wrenching your back into knots so tight that you couldn't feel your toes anymore.

I can remember a few years when we gave up the unusual machines and dangerous stuff to just sit back and enjoy the dust of eons scattered around us. No band-aids! No splints! No crutches! It was heaven! Then, the electronic age drifted in and we began again finding out what could hurt us. Yet...there were still some old items around that could get you good. Libraries have all kinds of dangerous situations, and we never realize it. A week ago, I stopped to help a patron find some titles he needed and then returned to my business of measuring titles we were about to move. As I came around the corner of some shelving, I ran into something. From the noise and heft of the piece, I knew it was a Kik-Step, our friendly step stool that has wheels on the bottom to move when it is attacked. Whoops! It didn't move and I went flying over the top step and down on the floor behind it. Crumpled beyond belief, my first thought was why didn't it move? I heard the jangle as it sprang up from my bodyweight. I just stayed on the floor expecting someone to come to my rescue and help me. Nope! A room full of people, and no one to help. If only they would call Circulation?! Nope! Get up, you fool! You need to get out of the aisle. It's like falling in the middle of the street, you're afraid you'll get run over if you stay there. If there's one thing I hate, it's paperwork. I hobbled into the Secretary's office and began filling out the papers, then I was filling them out with a policewoman. Where did she come from? In shock, I was answering questions from everyone, **Scott** was bandaging my leg so I wouldn't bleed on everything, and I was getting worse from the loss of blood sugar, having not eaten at the proper time. Our resident EMT ran for the glucose tablets, then went to my car for my cane. As I sat there, I watched a large goose egg rise on my right leg, and my left knee was swelling into a permanently fixed appendage which wouldn't bend even a micron. I won't bother you with the craziness of the rest of the afternoon. It always reminds me of a clown circus filled with prat falls and all kinds of idiocy. I survived and still look forward to seeing what's around the next corner. I think retirement is not too far away!

Watch out for the cranky chairs and the unruly foot stools! They'll get you every time!! I should have thought about that one quicker!!



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had the time. This year we did do a poetry reading at our local library and last year I acted in a one act play that **Howard** directed for the **One Act Play Festival** in New Jersey.

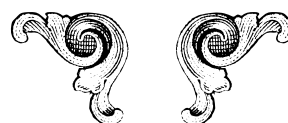
I look forward to volunteer work — maybe even in a library! And oh yes, continuing to collect and read books.

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