Something to Think About -- The Cultural Standard

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It seems that our days fly by in a mixture of advancements, discouragement, challenges, and changes. Now that I am retired, I have the privilege of visiting many different types of libraries and talking with the stewards of knowledge. You have no idea how important you are to the quality of our culture and the wellbeing of its actuator. Sometimes we come to work looking for those special answers for individuals, not knowing if it will make a difference at all. In academic libraries, it is easier to understand our impact on the success of students and faculty, and some general public. Special Libraries are devoted to the advancement of knowledge in specific subject areas for researchers. School Libraries help those beginning to understand the world and its functions at the base levels. I am particularly curious about Public Libraries. When we dashed into the new millennium, I worked in academic and public venues as a way to earn privileges and money to further my education. I began to understand the interesting association of libraries and the community at large. As the general public used our facility, I saw the way our information specialists influenced and aided each human being. Of course, we helped the children from nearby schools, as our branch endeavored to encourage and enlighten children of all ages understand all the various subject areas and develop wonderfully creative papers for their classes. But, I also understood the various other community inhabitants who were undergoing different problems. We used to help families look up information on a number of different physiological and health problems that their family members were being treated for in the Veterans’ Hospital only a few blocks from our door. We not only found information for them, but we held their hand or gave them a shoulder to cry on when they understood the severity of the diseases.

We have spent time helping teenagers explore grief, bullying, and specialized learning as they strive to understand their roles and new coping abilities. We were always watchful for suicidal tendencies and gave them positive alternatives instead of the more common negatives imposed by families and friends. We were special friends.

We became helpful to those people trying to recover from work shutdowns in nearby industries. People came in depressed and they walked out holding their heads higher, finding reasons to have hope because we helped them develop resumes, get them ready for interviews, or walk them through the establishment of a home business.

Speaking of which, this issue is excellent and I became instantly ensorcelled learning more trends about health sciences and biomedical libraries, ably guest edited by Ramune Kubilius. Papers are by Maria Collins, Martha Fishel, and John Doyle, Patricia Hammond, Sally Gore, Stephanie Kerna, Heather Stecklein and Nathalie Wheaton and Leslie Czeshowski and Nancy Tannery and talk about assembling orchestras, mobile access, eBooks, and much more!

Our Op Ed this issue is by David Mash who conducted a small, unscientific survey of reading habits in airports. We don’t have a back talk this time since Tony Ferguson was at a Birthday Party for his Mom but Greg Tananbaum has taken his place discussing the excellent discussion at the 31st Charleston Conference by Anne Kenney and Kevin Guthrie. And even more is in this issue — how serials departments are changing, Octavio Paz, Occupy Wall Street, the future of the book conference in Tallahassee, the death of cable and much more.

Oops! Excuse me! I think it’s the UPS guy hoping to find the UPS guy hopefully with my Atlas of WWII Battles that I just ordered for my birthday present!

Happy New Year and many good thoughts and love y’all’s way! Love, Yr. Ed.