

November 1992

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Recommended Citation

Seay, Jerry (1992) "You Gotta Go to School for That?," *Against the Grain*: Vol. 4: Iss. 5, Article 26.
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.1299>

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You Gotta Go To School For That?

by **Jerry Seay** (Rookie Librarian, College of Charleston)

Well, folks, it finally happened. All that schooling and fancy talk paid off. I went and got myself hired at a library as a real honest to goodness -- sensible shoed -- watch out for that bun librarian. The good folks here at the College of Knowledge figured it was high time I earned my keep and put me in as the coordinator for Interlibrary Loan. Good thing you don't have to be coordinated to be a coordinator.

Now I know what you are thinking. You're thinking, "Golly, Jerry, does this move to the exalted cultural elitist status of librarian and "Lord of Interlibrary Loan" mean that we should expect a personality change?" Probably.

It has something to do with numerals -- Roman numerals to be exact. I'm not just any Joe librarian. I'm a Librarian I. This is as opposed to being a Librarian III, a Librarian V or a Librarian CXXXVI. You see, putting Roman numerals at the end of a title can have a great psychological effect. The more I's, V's or X's a title has says something about stability, continuity, consistency and knowing how to put a few letters of the alphabet together to create numbers of a dead language so that people will be impressed that you didn't use normal numbers that anybody could easily read anyway.

Think about it. Which would you rather watch: Star Trek IV or Star Trek 4? There is just something about those Roman numerals. Or what about Rocky 5? What a wimp name! Now Rocky V, that's a gut grabber!

Anyway, I guess you can now see what psychological trauma it has been for me. I went from an LTA III to a Librarian I. I lost two I's just when I was getting used to the idea of getting a V stuck in there somewhere.

I must admit, though, it is great to be able to call myself a professional. I am now an official member of a noble band, an honored society. And I'm just waiting for those big bucks to come rolling in . . .

While I'm waiting, I'm able to relate to and interface with my "professional" friends. It feels so good to be on common ground. Just the other night, I was

at a neighbor's house with a group of friends talking about "professional" things. My friend who flies cargo planes for the Air Force told how grueling it was to fly back and forth between Charleston and Saudi Arabia during the Gulf War. Indeed, we wondered aloud how he had stood the strain.

My dentist friend related the scary tale of how he had to bring a patient out of anesthesia who was freaking out. Hushed sighs echoed among us.

Then my friend the fireman told about a raging house fire that had taken hours to bring under control. We responded with groans of agreement. Such a task was truly awesome.

You can imagine what happened then. I was a professional among professionals. It was my sacred duty to inform them of my grueling day at the library. I took a long cool sip from my ice tea, crossed my arms professionally and leaned slowly against the counter. "Yea, I said, "I know how it is. Last week a patron came into the library and checked out forty-three books at once."

There was a hush in the air.

My pilot friend gasped in his tea, "Forty-three books?"

"Yep, forty-three." I knew I had their attention.

"What happened then," the dentist wanted to know.

"Well, I'll tell you." I put my tea down. "This guy suddenly started yelling something about censorship, and access, and virtual libraries and closed versus open stacks at the top of his lungs."

"In the middle of a library, " the fireman asked. "I thought you were supposed to be quiet in a library."

The other nodded.

"Indeed," I continued, "But before you could say OPAC, this guy pulls out an AK-47, fires three rounds into the ceiling, grabs two hostages and runs out the door."

My friends were dumbfounded.

"Wow, Jerry, " my pilot friend finally asked, "did it really happen like that?"

I thought for a second. "Not exactly. I sort of added most of it for dramatic effect. But he really did check out forty-three books."

My friends sighed.

"Forty-three books," said the fireman. "How in the world did he manage to carry all of them with him?"

I looked over my glass of tea. "Oh, didn't I mention he was driving a fork lift?" ☞

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