

November 2013

On the Road / A glimpse at "Life in the Trenches"

Don Jaeger
Alfred Jaeger, Inc.

Lorraine Best
Midwest Library Service

Scott T. Schmidt
Midwest Library Service

Follow this and additional works at: <http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/atg>



Part of the [Library and Information Science Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Jaeger, Don; Best, Lorraine; and Schmidt, Scott T. (1994) "On the Road / A glimpse at "Life in the Trenches"," *Against the Grain*: Vol. 6: Iss. 4, Article 25.
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.1654>

This document has been made available through Purdue e-Pubs, a service of the Purdue University Libraries. Please contact epubs@purdue.edu for additional information.

On the Road

A glimpse at "Life in the Trenches"

Column Editor: **Don Jaeger** (Alfred Jaeger, Inc.)

All stories, all anecdotes, all shared experiences are welcomed. Fax them to 516-543-1537, or mail to Don's attention at Alfred Jaeger, Inc., 66 Austin Blvd., Commack, NY 11725-9009. — DJ

With the fall meetings fast approaching and many sales reps getting out to cover the multitude of regional conferences, I would like to include a story from **Lorraine Best**, the Canadian Representative for **Midwest Library Service**. I am sure many of us can relate to her story because when covering the university and college libraries throughout the country, parking places are difficult to find and the library itself sometimes is a chore to locate on a large campus. Many times people exit their car without taking the necessary materials or just leaving the car running and inadvertently locking the door. Here is her story. — DJ

A Membership Worth Twice the Price by **Lorraine Best**

The front door on the passenger side of my car can no longer be unlocked by key because the mechanism is jammed from being forced open so many times by automobile association employees summoned to my assistance. Always in a hurry to get where I'm going, and with a reputation for being punctual, I have the frustrating habit of locking keys in the car.

Unfortunately this also happens to me with rental cars when I'm "on the road." There is never a desirable time to be stranded in a parking lot, often in inclement weather, peering in all directions for that familiar logo on the side of a truck. One rental car company earned my loyalty by taping a spare key to the top of the rear-left tire in a parking garage while I was at an appointment in a college library on campus.

The most embarrassing situation occurred at the site of a corporate library a few years ago. In the parking lot I popped open the trunk in order to retrieve my laptop computer, and then proceeded to lock my briefcase and keys in the car. Flustered, I called for help at the reception area and continued on to the library. The focus of the meeting was a software demonstration so this wasn't a disaster although it was disconcerting. Wouldn't you know — the software program inexplicably failed. By the time I was able to adequately demonstrate the package on the library's computer with my diskette, it was lunch time. The automobile association had not yet arrived. I was extended the kind invitation to join the staff for lunch at the company cafeteria. This was my opportunity to compensate for the longer-than-planned meeting! I would offer to host the lunch. Alas, as I fumbled desperately in my purse in the line-up at the cashier, I suffered the gradual realization that my wallet was in my briefcase in the locked car. My potential customer generously treated me to lunch.

All goes well now between Midwest and the library, but it was a rough start.

Coincidentally, another story was submitted by a represen-



tative of **Midwest Library Service**. And here it is . . . —DJ

My Great Escape by **Scott T. Schmidt**

This happened to me when I was a fledgling librarian-type, not the itinerant book salesman I've since become. If there is a "lap of luxury," I must have been in the "armpit of poverty." I was living on a shoestring budget, driving a not-too-reliable car, and didn't often venture far from home for fear of being stranded somewhere and having to hitchhike.

Living in a rural area, it was not uncommon for the townsfolk to drive 50 miles for a day of shopping at the big city malls or to go to a nice restaurant. I can't quite remember why I was driving Old Unreliable all of 25 miles from home but I was — and nervous lest I get stuck (again).

Anyone who has lived in an agricultural region is well familiar with the television ads that seem to begin earlier each year touting the effectiveness of one chemical or another in combating the evils of pigweed, giant thistle, jimson weed, and lamb's-quarters. Thus my big adventure which transpired one spring day in the tiny town of Lamb's Grove will always stick in my mind as the showdown in Lamb's Quarters.

I had finished my errand, I remember, and was heading for home with the heady feeling of elation that comes on the home stretch. I'll just find my way out of town and be on my way. Suddenly, in my rearview mirror, I spotted a state trooper who seemed to be darn close on my heels. Was I speeding? (The speedometer had ceased divulging useful information long ago.) Did I have a brake light out? Had my jerry-rigged muffler patch come loose?

Sure that I had committed some jailable offense (and having watched too much television, I suppose), I decided to try a desperate tactic. I made a sudden left, then a right, then more turns down the circuitous streets of a completely unfamiliar subdivision. The policeman followed my every turn. I was vaguely aware that I had passed a sign, "Entering Lamb's Something-or-Other." I made another turn or two, the trooper in pursuit, and finally found myself on a dead-end street. I went to the last house on the lane, pulled into the drive, and switched off the engine with a cough and a wheeze (the car's, not mine). I got out of my car and walked back to the trooper's car, eyeing that big shotgun in that special holder they used to have.

"What have I done?" I asked him dejectedly. I was embarrassed but delighted to hear his reply. "I don't know what you're talking about. I'm going home to lunch and you're in my driveway!" ☛

It's great to see some original stories coming in. Keep those cards and letters coming. — DJ