

February 2008

You Gotta Go to School for That? -- Love and Roses in the Library

Jared A. Seay

College of Charleston, seayj@cofc.edu

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



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

Recommended Citation

Seay, Jared A. (2008) "You Gotta Go to School for That? -- Love and Roses in the Library," *Against the Grain*: Vol. 20: Iss. 1, Article 34.
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.2716>

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.

You Gotta Go to School for That? — Love and Roses in the Library

by **Jared A. Seay** (Reference librarian and Head, Media Services, College of Charleston) <seayj@cofc.edu>

As I found out one night serving my public late on Valentine's Day evening, the stately aisles in the library can be the perfect place to express love to that special someone — even if they are not particularly the library type. Seems a young student (okay, so ALL of them are young) was all a-twitter because she could not for the life of her find a book on the shelf. Seems she had never looked for a book in the library before and ... well ... all them numbers did not make sense to her. After I explained to her the LC system (in easy to understand vernacular) the wee lass came back ten minutes later quite distressed and unable, still, to locate the book in question. It was all the more important because her boyfriend had said that she must find this book, as it contained some information vital to their relationship. I accompanied the nervous young miss to the third floor and found the book (*Poems* by **Lord Byron**). Lying upon the book was a yellow rose. A message was stuck



in the pages of the book. Imagine the surprise of both of us when the note told us (among other mushy things to which I was not privy) to locate yet another book on another floor, which also (you guessed it) had a yellow rose and another love note with instructions at the end to find yet another book.

This same thing went on for about six more books — with us running up and down floors and the increasingly embarrassed lass collecting an increasing handful of yellow roses. The girl seemed truly embarrassed and thanked me for helping her inasmuch — as she admitted — “I don't know much about the library, and I could never find these things. You see my boyfriend loves books and he does not know that I don't.” Methinks the lad was the intellectual, romantic one of the pair.

Well, the boyfriend certainly had varied tastes in books as we wandered across classic poetry, art books, philosophy, history, and for

some reason ended up in the technology books with the last yellow rose on top of the book and a long, fancy note attached. She read the note (perhaps a bit too quickly considering the effort that had gone into the whole endeavor) and thanked me profusely for assisting her.

“Don't guess you ever helped someone find roses in books in the library before, huh?” she said. I admitted that I had not, expressed surprise that the roses were actually still there, and pined that such things need happen much more often around here. She kept thanking me as we descended the stairs and she hurried out the front door (presumably to fulfill the request on the final secret message).

I returned to my reference duties, well exercised, and contemplating how the library had been so intricately involved in this particularly energetic Valentine effort. Glad to know I was part of making someone's Valentine evening a grand success. Times like these make one really appreciate being a librarian for more than just the intellectual stimulus and high salary.

Just trying to figure out how to record the ref stats on this one — one per rose? 🌹

Little Red Herrings from page 75

much closer to monitoring the actual information seeking behaviour of their users.”

If you can diagram either of those sentences, please send them to me. I don't know about you but if we have promiscuous, volatile users in our building, I'm calling security. Sure, I understand the idea, I'm just not sure I buy into fully. Yes, such users probably are the wave of the future, but it's a wave I'd rather not surf just yet.

On balance this is a report every librarian should read. Its unquestioned acceptance that libraries as we all know them are not only a thing of the past or dying dinosaurs at best, but by golly it's about time and are we ever glad! It will rattle but maybe it's what we need to hear to wake us from our reverie. Not the prognosis I wanted to read from a putative library-friendly entity, mind you, but what we may need to hear regularly. And in any event, what exactly is anyone — i.e., you and me — doing about it? I mean, really.

ALA rushes to embrace any new technology and almost — almost mind you — dismisses anything that reeks of real reading (unless of course you count those inane READ posters featuring **Brittney Spears** reading an upside-down book). I wish we could mount some truly engaging campaign about libraries, one that distinguishes mere information, data, from what we all want it to grow up to be.

Knowledge, and yes, in some cases, even wisdom. 🌹

Adventures in Librarianship — Performance Appraisal

by **Ned Kraft** (Ralph J. Bunche Library, U.S. Department of State) <kraftno@state.gov>

Considering the implementation of the new Capricious library system, the failure of the University's accounting system (MUDL), and the basement flood in December, it has been a trying year for all Acquisitions staff. However, **Floyd Doormat** rose to the challenge and met each hurdle with flying colors and soaring confidence.

SYSTEM IMPLEMENTATION: **Mr. Doormat** learned how to log into the new Capricious library system and find “Order Create.” We are confident that in the upcoming year he will become proficient at entering titles and authors into acquisitions bib templates. With any luck, actual order entry won't be far behind!

TEAMWORK: **Mr. Doormat** spends almost every moment networking with fellow staff. When the university issues an early holiday or snow dismissal, he is the first to know and he generously shares that information with all his coworkers. Those without windows depend on him for meteorological updates.



MAIL SORTING: After more than twenty years of experience, **Mr. Doormat** can still be counted on to ask his supervisor where the weekly *Economist* should go. His insight allows him to not only dispose of unwanted catalogs, but to dispose of all catalogs, regardless of importance with little or no supervision.

TRAINING: It is safe to say that **Floyd Doormat** has more training than any other employee! His supervisor knows that having **Mr. Doormat** out of the office for long stretches is certainly a benefit to the whole team in the long run.

This is his 14th year in the **Microsoft Word** class, his 5th year in the Accounting Basics class. Several instructors have commented on the rate of his improvement and the depth of his understanding.

SERIAL CHECK-IN: Although he was adept at listing incoming serials on official University stationary, because of **Mr. Doormat's** strenuous mail sorting duties, the

continued on page 77