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Books Are Us

by Anne K. Robichaux (Professor Emerita, Medical University of South Carolina) <awkr7721@sc-online.net>

Column Editor's Note: This column covers fictitious accounts of people in our industry—librarians, publishers, vendors, booksellers, etc.—people like us. All contributions, comments, suggestions are welcomed. —AR

Charleston Conference attendees, don't miss this! Jan LaBeause (Director of the Medical Library & Peyton T. Anderson Learning Resources Center, Mercer University School of Medicine, Macon, GA) is on the program this fall, both times on Thursday, November 4th. She has an entertaining and informative presentation on how librarians are depicted in film. I was fortunate to be able to hear her presentation, "SHH ... Your Image Is Showing: Hollywood Looks at Librarians," at the Georgia Health Sciences Library Association's meeting last year in Savannah.

And speaking of Jan, thanks to her and to Teri Lynn Herbert (Medical University of South Carolina Library) for alerting me to a planned Turner Network Television (TNT) movie, "The Librarian." The December 5th air date was announced in the September 10, 2004 edition of *USA Today* with "Bookmark this: Noah Wyle stars as heroic 'Librarian.'" Actor Noah Wyle (from the TV series "ER") has the lead role, calling his character more of a "brainiac" than a "cool, dashing, heroic type." The announcement at tv.zap2it.com admitted that the title "doesn't exactly set hearts racing" but that the premise for the action-adventure movie is "intriguing." Wyle's character, Flynn Carsen, is a librarian for a repository of mythical objects from throughout human history. As explained at cinescape.com, the library stores magical items and Flynn is an "overly smart curator." An article from *All Reuters News* (<http://tv.yahoo.com/news>) titled "Devlin Catalogs Librarian for TNT" further explained that the "cache" of mythical objects is "secreted beneath the New York Public Library" and Flynn must guard them against forces of evil. We wonder if Flynn will join the ranks of such superheroes as Spiderman, Superman, Batman, and Wonder Woman? As the *USA Today* article begins, "Bookworms of the world, rejoice! Now you can have an action-adventure hero: *The Librarian*."

Elizabeth Connor (Daniel Library, The Citadel) reviewed *The Image and Role of the Librarian* (Haworth Information Press, 2002, ISBN 0-7890-2099-8) in a recent issue of the *Journal of the Medical Library Association* (J Med Libr Assoc 2004 July; 92(3) 379-80). The book is edited by Wendi Arant and Candace R. Benefiel, outreach services librarian and senior humanities reference librarian, respectively, at Texas A & M University Libraries. Past and present images and perceptions of librarians in literature, entertainment, and actual work settings are included in this book of ten contributed articles focused on professional roles, cultural images, popular perceptions, and future

trends. One article is devoted to shedding the stereotypes! The cultural images section includes personality types of librarians in film, images of librarians in comic books, and librarian characters from almost a century of children's literature. Click on <http://www.pubmedcentral.nih.gov/> to read Elizabeth's excellent review.

In *Morality for Beautiful Girls* (Anchor Books Edition, 2002, ISBN 1-4000-3136-2, pbk.), author Alexander McCall Smith mentions "the ever-helpful librarian of the British Council Library" who was able to produce a requested book within mere minutes for one of the characters in this novel. *Morality* is the third title in the charming *The No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency* series. Set in Botswana, the featured character, Precious Ramotswe, has started a detective agency and has gleaned all of her knowledge from her professional bible, *The Principles of Private Detection*. Mma Ramotswe's resourceful assistant, Mma Makutsi, prefers the more scholarly *Theories of Crime*, and frequently delves into issues of *The Journal of Criminology*.

Author Kathy Reichs describes a couple of exchanges between her main character, forensic anthropologist Temperance Brennan, and a "lilac-haired dragon" of a librarian in *Fatal Voyage* (Scribner, 2001, ISBN 0-684-85972-6). The librarian is officious about policy, allowing Dr. Brennan only one box of microfilm at a time when her research required multiple film boxes. When Dr. Brennan explained that she knew how to use the microfilm reader, she interpreted the librarian's expression as seeing her worst

nightmare: a "civilian loose in the stacks." Later, when Dr. Brennan answers her cell phone in the library, the librarian admonished her as loudly as she could "without using vocal cords," then asked her to leave, being further described as "the gestapo protectress of the printed word." Hmm. I just may side with the librarian on that one!

There are several descriptions of a character named Daisy who works in a small New York town library in *Dangerous Behavior* (Carroll & Graf, 2002, ISBN 0-7867-1043-8), a novel by Walter Marks.

Daisy is a looker, hot-looking, a fox, and a "nice, bright lady" who generally wears tight clothes that show off her most attractive assets. She has clear, gray eyes, long, unruly blonde hair, a girlish smile, and "white-as-Chiclets" teeth. She also has a penchant for painting her fingernails various colors—blue, purple, silver, orange—whenever she appears in the story. As the story progresses, Daisy is also described as mixed-up, manipulative, dangerous, calculating and obsessive. We learn that she is in love

with a man who is serving time in prison for killing a young mother in front of her child a number of years ago. Daisy is intent on marrying the prisoner, and attempts to use her feminine wiles to convince the prison psychiatrist, another main character, that her beloved is innocent. Fingernail polish colors aside, Daisy is a colorful character and is key to the story line of the novel.



And They Were There

Reports of Meetings — Fifth Timberline Acquisitions Institute and ALA Annual Conference

Column Editor: Sever Bordeianu (University of Mexico) <sbordeia@unm.edu>

Fifth Timberline Acquisitions Institute — "New Discoveries on Lost Lake." Portland, Oregon, May 15-18, 2004.

Report by Thelma Diercks <thelma@hawaii.edu>

Clouds of fog enveloped us as we snaked upward toward our destination at the 6,000 foot level of Mt. Hood northwest of Portland. When we finally rose above the wet swirls, we could see the massive Timberline Lodge standing in stony silence under overcast skies.

I thought a bit apprehensively, "So, this is the Overlook Hotel of movie fame. But, I was not there as a film buff. No, I was there

to attend, of all things, the Fifth Timberline Acquisitions Institute: "New Discoveries on Lost Lake."

Set in a unique venue, the Institute, May 15-18, 2004, brought together librarians, vendors and publisher to discuss acquisitions issues held in common. With a total of eighty-five registrants, the conference included a

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