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Costumed Rabbits in China

by **Janis F. Hauser** (Retired Elementary School Teacher, Newport News, Virginia) <awphjfh@att.net>

At various times in my life, I have collected whole sets of china, hand-made pottery, English bone china cups and saucers, children's books, fabric, cookbooks, rabbit figurines, family photos and stories.

Having to downsize took care of many of my collections. My daughters received an early inheritance of their great-grandmother's and great-great grandmother's china. My step-granddaughter received another set. They also took the hand-made pottery. After realizing I would never have infant grandchildren, I donated the baby-themed fabric to **Edmarc** (www.edmarc.org), where it would be used for quilts for children suffering from cancer. More fabric went to the **Peninsula Agency on Aging**, to be used for lab robes for nursing home residents. When I had to retire, the children's books went to other teachers. While many of the cookbooks were given away, I kept those I use, have purchased a few more, and created two binders of recipes clipped from magazines and newspapers that I want to try.

Many of my collections have begun by accident, seeing something pretty that I'd like to have in my home, or were given me by family members. The bone china cups and saucers came from my maternal grandmother's visits to Canada. When she died, the collection was split between me and my sister-in-law. I have the cups with pink flowers, she has the blue ones. The miniature cup and saucer collection began with two that my grandmother played housekeeping with as a child. I added one or two from "rummage sales" at my elementary school, purchasing them for 10 or 25 cents. Even at that age I was on the lookout for pretty things!

My father became interested in tracing the family's history and handed down copies of all he'd learned. He even made copies of old photos for us. It makes it more interesting to put a face with a story. Even so, many sto-

ries died with him. This is my most important collection.

I collected things because I never turned down any offers of items by others. I made it easier for others to downsize, never thinking that I'd eventually have to do the same. Most of the items were useful or pretty, all for my home. Many trigger memories of favorite relatives. Even as a young girl I thought about my grandmothers using the items they had given me. That made me feel good, to be a link in the chain of life. The photos and stories help me to preserve those memories.

Once you begin to collect things, it is difficult to stop. I no longer collect bone china cups and saucers, but I still look. There may be a rabbit figurine that jumps out and catches my eye, but I try not to add any. Rabbits do have a way of multiplying. I do still add a cookbook, if I think the recipes are unique and useful. I still collect family photos and stories.

My collections are important only to me. Everything I collect serves as a memory, a bridge between generations. To use a grandmother's favorite cookie recipe and

place the warm, fragrant result on her flowered plate with tea from her flowered bone china cup makes the bridge tangible. I feel her presence. The photos and stories help me to understand what has passed, why I am like I am. Because we all have similar physical traits, I can even see how I will look as I age: shorter, rounder, chubbier chipmunk cheeks. I am beginning to link historical events with my own family's time line. As I read books about the **Civil War**, I think of my great-grandfather, a musician from the North. It helps me feel part of the big picture. I wonder what my ancestors thought and felt at certain periods of time. If I am lucky, they wrote it down. Mostly, they didn't and I'm left to speculate.

In 100 years, I imagine most everything will be gone. The blood line does not continue. It will be as if I, and all my collections, never existed — a sad thought. If by some remote chance the stories were ever published, there might be some continuity, for I (and perhaps others) like to read about others' lives, no matter how mundane. 🐰



Adventures in Librarianship — Encyclopedia Redux

by **Ned Kraft** (Ralph J. Bunche Library, U.S. Department of State)
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For those who heard that specialized encyclopedias were dropping out of the market, we beg to differ. Some recent selection slips lead us to believe the business must be quite healthy.

Stanik's Encyclopedia of Cloud Formations. **Stanik Publishing**, 2005. From Altocumulus to Stratus, from the highest halos to plain old fog, they're all here. Students and scholars alike will appreciate the succinct definitions and etymologies of difficult technical terms such as wispy, buoyant, and low-lying. \$254.

New World Illustrated Encyclopaedia of New Worlds. **Droopy House**, 2006. The "NWENW" is a continuously updated database of all planets that have been discovered around stars other than the Sun. Customers will swoon for the digitally-enhanced renderings of Pulsar Planets, Gas Giants, and Terrestrials. Should the apocalypse draw near,

how many planets could support human life? How long would it take to get there? Are the beaches crowded? Find out! \$154.

Encyclopedia Faucetica. **Fanway & Slander**, 2005. For your customers interested in faucets, the **Fanway & Slander** covers from prehistoric stone faucets, Mayan antler faucets, to Andy Warhol's Elizabeth Taylor Faucet. If faucet history is not adequately covered by your collection, this one purchase will cover it. \$277.

Online Encyclopedia of Juvenile Slang. **Pungent Publishing**, 2006. The fifteenth edition retains the Micropaedia/Macropaedia/Propaedia structures used to great fanfare in 1974, augmented by the often-scorned Trapezia indexing format. So many library patrons misunderstand

the word "sweet." They may use "s'up" improperly. Or they may fall short of the many

continued on page 28



Wild Rocks from page 24

at least. I could have done worse!

Once I expressed a desire to have a sword — I can no longer recall why — and friends humored me by bringing me a fancy brass sword (evidently a ceremonial Masonic piece) which I had forgotten about til recently. Somewhere along the line I must have given it to my son **Jim** to keep (along with a lot of other things) and when he visited an antiques store to see about selling the old rural phone we'd brought from New Richland after they went to more modern phones there, he brought the sword in also. Amazingly, he came out with \$265 for me from the sale of those two items! I'll never understand the lure of antiques! 🐰