February 2004

"My Love of Books" -- The First Rachel K. Schenk Memorial Scholarship Award Winning Essay

Ann S. Doyle

University of Kentucky Libraries, asdoyl2@email.uky.edu

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

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

Recommended Citation

Doyle, Ann S. (2004) "'My Love of Books' -- The First Rachel K. Schenk Memorial Scholarship Award Winning Essay," *Against the Grain*: Vol. 16: Iss. 1, Article 27.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.5430>

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.

"My Love of Books"

The First Rachel K. Schenk Memorial Scholarship Award Winning Essay

by Ann S. Doyle (Serials Acquisitions Librarian, Co-Leader, Young Library Serials Team, University of Kentucky Libraries, 500 S. Limestone, Lexington KY 40506-0456; Phone: 859-257-0500 x.2132; Fax: 859-257-0508) <asdoyl2@email.uky.edu>

In childhood, books initially served as an escape for me. I loved them because through them I could remove myself from my immediate environment. It wasn't long, though, before I discovered that in addition to providing a distant refuge, they also entertained, instructed, guided, and informed. Sometimes people express surprise at the kinds of crafts and skills I've taught myself from books. I learned to crochet from a book, for instance, and then, 25 years later, taught myself to knit from another book.

When I was a girl, I became fascinated with how a book was made. I wrote, illustrated, and fashioned my first cloth-bound book when I was 12. The story and pictures were important to me in one way, but not nearly as fascinating as the construction itself. Shortly after that, I became distracted from book making by typical adolescent diversions, but I did keep on reading.

And I kept reading books like a gourmand eats, at times like a glutton devours. As I read my way through lists of recommended books for the college-bound, I kept getting waylaid by authors I discovered—on and off the lists. Tolstoy and Vonnegut, especially, served as constant companions between the other authors.

The renewal of my love for the book as artifact began with a class in papermaking nearly 25 years ago. A paper artist gave workshops out on her farm in rural West Virginia and I was hooked. I attended as many papermaking classes in the region as I could find. I built my own molds and scoured thrift shops for wool blankets to cut up for couching. I even spent the week that was my honeymoon at Elkins Heritage Arts Festival making paper with novices, book artists, paper artists, printers, and printmakers. After this rich exposure to the book arts I became a true student, devotee, and sometimes practitioner of making books. I still enjoy attending book arts workshops, programs, and exhibits when the opportunity arises.

I have worked in libraries and with books for decades now. I began as a student assistant in college doing preorder searching, typing orders onto self-duplicating paper forms, and unpacking boxes of new books for the acquisitions unit. From there I worked as library clerk, then went to library school while working as a library technician. I ended my technician career working with gifts: sorting, searching, shelving, boxing, and moving books.

As a librarian I still find myself immersed in books. Their abundance has not made them any less valued to me, but I must admit that I don't love specific books equally. I have no hesitancy to shove the superceded telephone book into the recycle bin. Nor do I have any compunctions about leaving a paperback in an airport or coffee house, to be, I hope, found by another and read, but perhaps collected by a custodian and trashed.

I do love my hard-bound travel journals where I record my thoughts and impressions as I make my way through Scotland or Japan. I love my cookbooks, which I still refer to frequently (and treasure them not only for their recipes and my notations, but even for their evoking memories in their stains from the ingredients I've spilled on them over the years). I love the latest volume by one of my favorite authors that I cradle in bed as I fall asleep. I love my personal collection of books that each has its own meaning to me. I love finding just the right book to give as a gift. I love being a librarian surrounded by books and making them accessible to people who need them. Come to think of it, probably the largest part of my identity revolves around my love of books.

Reference Universe

Reference Universe is a growing database of integrated article titles and back-of-the-book indexes for more than 3000 specialized encyclopedias and reference works, with real time links to local holdings.

*"...an exciting product....
Highly recommended."*

*Booklist/Reference Books Bulletin,
Nov. 1, 2003*

*"...invaluable as a
way to promote holdings
information easily to
patrons as well as
an in-house collection
development tool.*

'A' Rating."

*Net Connect/Library Journal,
Winter 2004*

*"A godsend
for reference
librarians."*

*Thomas Mann,
The Oxford Guide
to Library Research*

P A R A T E X T
Electronic Reference Services

www.paratext.com