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Profile-Alison M. Armstrong

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what you want *in the catalog* is often the only way to go.

A colleague said to me the other day, “they’ll never make indexes like they used to.” She is probably right. Full-text keyword searching is here to stay, and I wouldn’t have it otherwise. But the library catalog’s subject index is a tool we all own. It’s already designed, built, paid for. **Library of Congress** continues to modify it to suit emerging topics and trends.

So what’s a librarian to do? Reference librarians, make sure the subject heading browse display is available to you. Learn to use it. If you’ve never seen it, ask about it. And when a foundering freshman wails, “I just want to write about gun control, and my professor says I have to narrow the topic,” don’t start typing. Instead, perform librarian magic. Pull up the browse screen and read off a few choices: “How about public opinion, social aspects, or ownership?”

Catalogers? Keep up the good work and recognize how important it is that your work be understood by those *outside* of technical services.

All librarians, when you implement the best discovery catalog, beautifully designed with the user in mind, don’t abandon “essential components of information discovery” like the subject heading browse display. No, they’re not for the amateur. In fact, that’s the point!

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Rumors from page 28

Speaking of Cambridge, with **Anthony Watkinson**, the wonderful (where does he get his energy? he travels all the time), visited with the energizer bunny **Julie Carroll-Davis** (Vice President, Global Content Alliances, **ProQuest** — I had always wondered where the Quorum was and what it was, quite a group of offices and buildings), **Serpil Pavay** (her name is Turkish and means “to blossom” and she does indeed

against the grain people profile

Alison M. Armstrong

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BORN AND LIVED: I was born in Greenville, SC, raised in Asheville, NC, lived in Essex Junction, VT and currently live in Blacksburg, VA.

PROFESSIONAL CAREER AND ACTIVITIES: My professional career started June, 2011. My library experience began in 7th grade, “working” in the middle school library.

I was lucky enough to work as a student assistant in Special Collections while I was an undergraduate at **UNCA** and then, briefly as a Page in **Asheville’s Pack Memorial Library**. I worked as a paraprofessional at **Radford University** for four years, got my MLIS and I was hired as the Collection Management Librarian this June.

FAMILY: My family consists of my husband and our Cavalier King Charles Spaniel. My extended family (especially, my favorite niece) resides in Asheville, NC and my husband’s extended family resides in Upstate New York.

IN MY SPARE TIME: I knit, make jewelry, volunteer, hike, camp, travel and, of course, play with the dog in my spare time.

FAVORITE BOOKS: Anything by: **Barbara Kingsolver, Carl Hiaison, Bill Bryson, Tom Robbins, David Sedaris.**

PET PEEVES: Cutting corners to save time but sacrificing quality. I would rather do it right the first time than do it not-quite-right quickly and then have to do it again.

It means that I am also a fan of “if you want it done right, do it yourself” which, in reality, isn’t a good way to live.

PHILOSOPHY: Social action, social justice play a big part, so does my religious viewpoint. On the humorous side, I trend toward bumper sticker philosophies to capture the essence. (Syracuse Cultural Workers and Northern Sun.)

“Your silence will not protect you.” ~ **Audre Lorde**

MOST MEMORABLE CAREER ACHIEVEMENT: It’s coming. One day.

GOAL I HOPE TO ACHIEVE FIVE YEARS FROM NOW: I hope to have contributed in some way to my field. I want to be on my way to being known as a thinker/mover/leader.

HOW/WHERE I SEE THE INDUSTRY IN FIVE YEARS: We will better serve our constituents by having more direct feedback about what they want and what they are looking for. We will be more closely tied into what they are doing and seeking at a multitude of contact points (social network, Web analytics, interest groups, etc.) that we will no longer be “divining” what they want, but, in some fashion, hearing what they want and need from them. In the past five years, I think we have seen a shift toward the individual in terms of how the individual expresses their needs, thoughts, experiences and so forth (Facebook, Yelp, TripAdvisor, blogs) that give individuals a place and the power to share all of that information. Along with that trend, I think that, it is no longer just the squeaky wheel that expresses what they want, but everyone has been given the means to express themselves and the affirmation that (to a degree) other people are listening to them. 🍷

blossom as a meeting organizer extraordinaire) and the equally energetic **Heather Crossan**. We are planning for the **16th Fiesole Retreat**, which will be in Cambridge at the DoubleTree by **Hilton** tentatively April 10-12, 2014. If you are interested, we can tell you more. www.casalini.it/retreat/

Speaking of which, Cambridge is a charming town, like Oxford but more rural. There’s the **Fitzwilliam Museum** with wonderful ancient artifacts and gorgeous mosaic floors that put wood to shame, tons of charming and walkable colleges, the most impressive of which is **King’s College**

which was founded in 1441 by **Henry VI** (1421-71) and is one of the 31 colleges in the **University of Cambridge**. (Did you know that **Anthony** himself studied at Peterhouse?) Since I have a son in the Army, I was very interested in the **Eagle Pub** when our cab driver told us about it. Since it was on flat land, Cambridge was where many RAF WWII missions originated. Of course the **Eagle** fed and watered many pilot types. There is a ceiling in a back room that is decorated with mementos from the pilots and also a plaque to them in the pub. And

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