**Profile: Karen Hildebrandt
Circulation Service Coordinator, Concordia University,
College of Alberta**

How long have you been working in libraries?

Ten years (since graduating in 1998 from the Grant MacEwan College Information Management and Library Technician program) but volunteered for six years prior to that in an elementary school.

What was your first job?

My very first job was in grade 3 as a library helper. No pay but the fringe benefits were great! First I had access to all these great books in my school library and secondly I didn't have to go outside for recess in the snow and cold. My first paid job was a newspaper route. Delivering the papers, collecting payments and fending off or out running the dogs.

Describe your first library job.

My first paid library job was in an inner city school (K-Grade 9). I was hired to automate their library. I was taken into this large room with great window but dingy dark carpet and dark brown tables and shelves filled with books from the 1960's. Did I mention I was "locked" in this room for 8 hours a day. Being inner city I thought I was locked in the room to keep me safe, but in reality it was so that the students wouldn't come in and interrupt me because they were so

curious as to what I was doing. I was hired to stay on and that summer we got new carpet, some new tables and colourful book displays and a rocking chair for story corner. The library was now the place that the kids wanted to come to and felt safe at.

If you weren't a librarian/library worker, what would you be and why?

I would have to be doing something that served people and could make a difference in their lives even if only in a small way.

What do you like best about your current job?

There's so many things I like about my job.

1. The environment is great. Not just in the library but on campus. There's something about working in a caring and nurturing environment.
2. The opportunity to go above and beyond and try new things.
3. The opportunity to be involved in other campus activities and programs. I serve on our United Way campaign and am now involved with some of our Development Offices events.
4. The support for continuing education as well as association involvement.

Becoming a LIT has made a huge impact on my life and opened many doors, being involved in CLA and provincial associations helps me give something back to the profession that I've benefited from.

Describe your favorite conference experience.

There are so many things I love about conferences that it's hard to describe just one favorite. Maybe it's the enthusiasm from the people there and the networking opportunities.

What do you do for fun?

I love to laugh. I spend a lot of time with my husband and our baby (a 6 year old black lab/border collie X) and as much time as I can get with our grown children. We try to travel regularly and spend time visiting family and friends.

Name one person you admire, and explain why you admire them.

Tony Fell. Tony IS the Grant MacEwan LIT program. He is still personable, he remembers all his students, he is passionate about the profession. He is encouraging and people are just naturally drawn to him. Tony provided me the opportunity to go back to school and earn my LIT diploma and I will always be thankful to him for that.

If you could say one thing to someone who is interested in a career in libraries, what would it be?

Go for it. If it's something you are interested in and think you would like to do then you should do it. Keep an open mind because you may find doors and options for a library career coming your way that you may not have expected or even thought you'd like. You just never know where life is going to take you.

If you were stranded at the airport, what would you want to have with you to read, and why?

I probably would want some kind of trashy romance to read. The reason why is that I would want something to escape from the reality of life and that would include the realities of being stranded in an airport. Been there, done that.