Profile: Joanne MacDonald

Metadata Specialist
Western University
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Describe your early background:

I was born in Wales and immigrated to Chatham, Ontario when I was ten years old. We always had pets, and I spent a lot of time playing with and taking care of them. I enjoyed learning, reading and writing and couldn’t wait to attend university. I received my Bachelor’s degree in History and Political Studies from Queen’s University. I then attended Humber College for a year studying journalism but decided to leave the program and went to Australia on a working holiday instead. Upon returning to Canada, I worked in management at a transport truck manufacturing facility. After working there for two years, I moved to London to pursue my MLIS degree at Western University. I was lucky to start my career working as a Cataloguing Librarian at Library and Archives Canada for two years.

What (or who) influenced you to pursue a career in libraries?

My sister suggested library school to me. Once I started looking at the courses offered, I knew it was something that would interest me. Like many who pursue a career in libraries, I have always enjoyed reading and browsing through books. It also appealed to my love of research and desire to seek information as well as organise.

Where are you working now, and what do you like best about your current job?

Currently, I am a cataloguer at Western Libraries. At the moment, I am working on a donation of antiquarian music scores and books. It is an interesting and challenging project and one that allows me to flex my research skills as well as come up with ways to catalogue unique items.

What is your most memorable library experience?

I remember going on the bookmobile when it visited my school in the UK. I remember the smell of books and the fun of being able to pick out my own from so many packed into a small space!
What do you do for recreation?

I enjoy spending time with family and friends as well as my pets. I love animals and am interested in environmental issues. I'm also a news junkie and an avid follower of politics. I love movies, particularly those from the Golden Age of Hollywood, as well as playing and listening to music of all kinds. I enjoy going to ballets and have started an adult ballet class, which has given me a whole new respect for the art! As well, I do yoga and enjoy going to the gym. I have completed three half marathons and hope to run a full marathon this fall.

What issues do you think will have a big impact on libraries in the next few years?

One issue continues to be ensuring that resources are available in many formats, both old and new, to accommodate patrons of different backgrounds and with different needs. Another issue is competing with private information companies by highlighting specific services libraries offer for everyone, from providing free resources in many formats to assisting with research or resume writing.