



Profile: Rena Bartsch
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What was your first job ever?

Server at McDonalds! I threw up my first day at work after standing over the hot fryer for hours. I did earn enough money in two years to travel to Paris with my French class and to go to university for a year.

Describe your first job in libraries.

I was a page and check-out clerk at a small college library, St. Thomas More, at the University of Saskatchewan. We had to shelve books on three levels of the library. The bottom two levels were accessible only by a narrow circular staircase. We called it the "dungeon."

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

An archaeologist. I love investigating the lives of ordinary people who lived long ago. Plus, you get to dig in the dirt.

Who has been a big inspiration/influence on your library career?

Muriel Dickson of the Saskatoon Public Library and Adele Fasick, Faculty of Library and Information Science, University of Toronto. Muriel was always an oasis of calm in the storm of office politics. She had great common sense and was an inspirational administrator. Adele Fasick brought librarianship alive for me and inspired me to make my career in public libraries. She was a truly great professor.

Name one person you admire (outside of libraries) and explain why.

Jane Goodall. She became a scientist at a time when few woman did so and yet she went places where men were afraid to go. Her courage in defending the great apes against human predators is inspiring. Her dedication in publicizing their plight is remarkable. Her message about the importance of understanding and preserving other animals is one that is desperately needed in our modern society.

What is the best part of your job?

Answering people's questions; helping others!

In terms of electronic resources, what is your favourite search interface and why?

No favourites - I use several depending on the circumstances. Personally speaking, they all are problematic.

What was a great conference you attended and what made it great?

PLA some years ago. It was focused on public libraries and several of its streams were directly applicable to my job. (Plus Michael Moore came and spoke.) I took away more great ideas from that conference than I have from any other.

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

If you love helping people and connecting people to books and other resources it is a wonderful career, but don't expect great wages.