


Librarians...

Oh, How Merry!



It's finally here! The holiday season with its excitement and surprises is upon us. Although it seems a bit less sparkly amidst the economic depression that has strangled us for more than a short time (Bah!), 'tis the season nonetheless, and we should be joyful for all the right reasons. We are alive, and we in libraries have undoubtedly provided good things for people from every walk of life.

So what is it that you wish to find in your stocking this month? Warm feet, a new friend or two, happiness in the form of healthy family members we cherish, and a good stiff nog come to mind, but, hey, everyone's list is special.

I have already taken the liberty of asking a few colleagues what they wanted for the holidays. Of course, I have spoken only to members of the Illinois Library Association recently, so my report is limited to regional wishes. I was happy to find that so many of us are truly into the spirits of the season, and are having quite a bit of fun talking about issues of the day, over and over, if you know what I mean.


For example, it is hard to ignore the buzz surrounding the newly forming library system organizations in both the north and south. Folks seem pleased at the prospect of fewer boundaries and acronyms to worry about, more member libraries per each system, and a sense of relief that there may be some peace of mind on the horizon for all our colleagues who have been worried to a frazzle about this situation during the past year.

Let's toast to the Spirit of New Beginnings as regional planning committees busily carve the way.

Someone from near I-55 has suggested that the next delivery system for Illinois libraries should come from a company called North Pole Overnight. They say they are reliable, quick, and have a lot of experience; plus they already know the territory. Although our State Ethics Test and Procurement Act prohibit this, I called their number and asked a few questions. Their rep spoke in a tiny voice, but assured me that Illinois libraries would save money on gas and tires if we went with their service, and there would be no problem selling our old delivery vans because they could fit them into one of their vehicles snip-snap and slip them into someone else's stocking next year. It's a win-win all around.

I was imagining the smell of cinnamon coming from the phone as I chatted with the rep. He was oh so nice, tittered a lot, and then asked me a few questions. How many different colored bags would we need this year? Could they all be red? Did we want to wrap each book or DVD separately? And, oddly, would we want to deliver to all libraries, or just the good ones?

Well, that last question made me stop and lay a finger aside of my nose. What did he mean? Were there libraries that had not been good? Then something stirred in my head, and I remembered what another librarian had mentioned about her neighbor. Why, they apparently were not playing well together recently and were beside themselves about what to do with each other. It did not seem seasonal, to say the least. Libraries must cooperate with each other or become entities unto themselves, meaning... play the game or get out of the game altogether. We have all heard about being good, no matter what age... or you know what will happen.



Let's toast to the Spirit of Library Cooperation, keep it twinkling throughout the year.

I must report on what the librarians near I-80 had to say when I asked them what they were looking for in the next few weeks (or months, since some could not make up their minds). They thought governance had been problematic this past year, and felt that libraries might wish for an ideal set of policies and agreements. Perhaps the answers could be found in a grand, golden bottle, which could be rubbed just the right way as to produce an all-knowing executive director. I thought that was a bit far-fetched, but it might happen if the administrator was jolly, was wearing eco-friendly fur, and could keep shoes free of soot. Certainly no used book peddler would be cheery enough for the job, but librarians have been known to fall for dancers and a few vixens have crossed the desk with a red date stamp or two, but I digress... (It was all in the past, and if we could just get them to quit telling stories at the conferences...)

Anyway, they wanted this bottle to also produce valuable coins upon touch as well as all the latest materials for each library, not just for those who live near large chimneys. The resident of the bottle would be expected to offer sage advice and tell librarians about upcoming potholes near the Capitol. They agreed that some regulation might be necessary to keep all member hands off the bottle, as everyone could remember when squeaky mice always got the cheese and contented introverts never found out how to move their fish.

Let's toast to the Spirit of Shared Governance, rights and responsibilities included.

Finally, I should mention, for this is a season of nostalgia, that the historians among our librarians, even though they think they outnumber the English majors among us, (which they never will, by Cratchie), feel it essential to recall the glorious work achieved this year and for many years past by the libraries and library professionals of Illinois. With some retiring, others expiring, others barely firing, for the most part our people are going off like fireworks on the Fourth of July and are worthy of praise and compliments, curds and whey, turkey and dressing and all the trimmings.

Let's toast to the Future of Illinois Libraries! Like stars circling overhead, beacons to all who want merriment, sugar-plums, and contentment in their heads. **ILA**

Some things seasonal for librarians

- ★ holiday goodies
- ★ collegial staff relations
- ★ gift books and hearty donations
- ★ banned books with no explanations
- ★ sound facilities without ruination
- ★ a check list for acquisitions
- ★ all patrons happy, no inquisitions
- ★ but most of all, holiday goodies
- ★ love and peace

