

Hello Everyone! December, 2009

Hope you and yours are enjoying a lovely holiday season!

Did you know that....

The tradition of giving gifts at Christmas is attributed to the wise men who gave gold, frankincense, and myrrh to the Christ Child. However, the true origin of gift giving at Christmas is this. *"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son. That whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life."* (John 3:16)



Did you know that.....

The tradition of placing lights in and around windows and houses began in the Middle Ages. These lights, which began as candles, became a symbol of Christ, the Light of the world. These lights held a two-fold purpose, to guide the Christ Child to Christian homes so that He would leave His blessing on the house and presents for those inside, and to be a sign to weary travelers that they would find a welcome in that house.

Finally, I should probably give you a few updates. My family is doing fine. My Brother Dick and his family are doing well in Seattle. He is still with the army at Ft. Lewis. My Sister and her husband are very busy this time of year. Geri works at Mt. Vernon Nazarene University and my Brother-in-Law is studying at Asbury Seminary (long distance).

I am doing fine. The big news of the year, is I finally did it! I am now **OFFICIALLY RETIRED** from my job at the State Library. As of June, 2009, I no longer work there. Honestly, I am as busy as ever. I have a part time job as a babysitter at the McConnell Recreation Center. I receive a free membership with the job. I am walking about three times a week with my friend Ted. I have lunch with friends every Thursday.

I have also taken a few trips this summer. In early November I went to New Orleans with former colleagues for a week. We had a great time! I went to Michigan with my friend Judy and I'll be traveling back to Little Rock in Mid December. Life is very good, indeed!

My kitties Smokey and Princess are as ornery as ever. I hope you and yours have a wonderful holiday season and a very safe and happy new year!!!

Your Friend,

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New Orleans Library Stories

I recently spent a week's vacation in New Orleans. This is something I have done every year since my first visit, which was the ALA annual conference in 2006. This year, my usual cohort in crime (a Wisconsin librarian who will remain nameless) was unable to attend, and, instead I met some of my former colleagues from the Collaborative Summer Library Program board of directors.

In a lot of ways, I am more at home in New Orleans than I am in Wisconsin. Many of my favorite things are there. The MUSIC (I spent every night but one in jazz clubs getting my jazz fix) and the FOOD (gulf shrimp, beignets, jambalaya, café au lait). Somehow I feel like I am more like the self I was 25 years ago: carefree, willing to go with the flow, gregarious. (Well, okay, MORE gregarious, anyway.)

So on this trip, my fifth, I fully expected to visit a library! I was with librarians. We'd talked about visiting a library or two. And I almost always visit a library wherever I travel. And for all of our good intentions, the three of us never stepped foot in a library.

But, in looking over the notes I wrote each day, I see that I found plenty of library connections with the people I met. Everyone, it seems, has a library story or knows a librarian or has been influenced by a librarian. And while I wanted to write about the libraries we visited, or at least intended to visit, the stories are more compelling.

Here are my three favorite stories.

I went to the Jazz Park at the French Market to buy my daughter a book, and got to talking with the gentleman working there. The Jazz Park is part of the US National Park Service; I don't know if they're called rangers or not. He spent the good part of fifteen minutes trying to convince me to apply for a job at the federal court, in spite of me telling him that I am a youth services librarian, not a law librarian. It didn't matter, the federal court needed librarians!

At dinner one night, my friends and I learned that our waiter's mother had been a librarian at his hometown public library in Missouri. We must have made an impression on him, he planned to sightsee with us one afternoon.

One evening the three of us went to a club to hear Charmaine Neville's band. We'd met her drummer at another club the previous evening and he introduced us to her before her show started as his new librarian friends. She told us that she loves to read, loves the public library and had two library books in her bag with her. I don't recall if we even stammered out a response, I know I was a bit starstruck. I did get my picture taken with her later.

And, yes, I'm already planning my next New Orleans trip. And maybe I'll finally get to that library.



*Retired Ohio state youth services consultant Ruth Metcalf,
Charmaine Neville & Rhonda Puntney*

—Rhonda Puntney, Lakeshores Library System, WAPL Past Chair