

# An Ode To Librarians Everywhere

Out with stale stereotypes. I'm before you today to testify to one-and-all that librarians rule! For I hereby declare with unbridled zeal and heartfelt passion that librarians are *The Original Knowledge Workers*.



Cold, repressed spinsters, not. Old ladies before their time, hardly. How many librarians have you done serious hang time with? That's what I thought. Many if not most are hipper than you and I, believe you me.

Troves of books, periodicals, recordings, CDs, maps, databases in all shapes and sizes, photographs, sheet music, microfilm, and more.

And to think that all librarians come armed with superhuman search powers, near-deity abilities to glean and harvest hidden packets of data across borders, cultures, and time, and verbal skills to boot.

Forget your orphaned sock, we're talking about the ethnobotany and psychopharmacology of New World plants, the US presidents' wives' maiden names, the 100 brightest stars visible in the southern hemisphere in the spring sky sorted by date of discovery, Tokyo teen slang, the math behind solar greenhouses, and soybean harvests 1932-1948 in Kansas by county mapped against rainfall patterns. The kind of tidbits we dream of dropping at the dinner table on any given night. Yeah, right; in your dreams bozo.

Librarians have been online longer than most of us. Don't argue with me on this one. It's true. Librarians were doing convoluted Boolean searches back in the day of text-based terminals. Pulling answers out of the pre-web net basking in green and orange glows. And they're still online.

You use a search engine? Thank a librarian, directly or indirectly. The world

would be a hell of a lot better off if we had more librarians behind what passes for search results today. I'd pay for the privilege too. Cash money.

Librarians can read. Don't laugh. Do you realize how many people are functionally illiterate, and of the remainder, how few read anything heavier than *TV Guide*, supermarket tabloids, and 5-yr old *Readers Digest*? Don't take my word for it; check the circulation figures for the top 20 magazines. Not a lot of intellectual heavy lifting on the list, is



there? This alone sets librarians waaaay ahead of the average schmuck. Not only do they read the good stuff, they understand and appreciate it. Can you say that about the person sitting next to you? And you thought that cutie you flirted with at the bookstore was well-read. Right...

Because people want to know about a wide range of things and use libraries to find that information, librarians are exposed to a wide spectrum of knowledge. An ad hoc liberal arts seminar each and every workday. Seasonal waves and trends, fickle fads and fashions. And then some. Librarians are awash in a sea of inquiries, feasting at a buffet of inquiries.

Original source material is Close to God. Second hand interpretations are someone else's cerebral regurgitations. Blech! Librarians catalog and connect us to original works. This allows us to tap into the great minds throughout human history and dare to reflect and think for ourselves, enriching our meager lives in the process. Books allow us to teach ourselves, a truly recursive miracle. Don't forget, it was your school librarian and neighborhood librarian who read to you and helped you learn to read in the first place. See how this all begins to fit together? Conspiratorial, isn't it?



Above all librarians revere and respect knowledge. They enjoy language(s) and words for their innate joy and inherent beauty. A noble end unto itself. It is this passion that they strive to share with us all. A respect for the written word and captured knowledge so many of us lack.

Bow down before the High Priestess of Knowledge, you unwashed GED heathen. You're not worthy of anointing her feet, you sports-obsessed sloth, subsisting as you do on a diet of junk food, girlie mags, and mainstream tee vee. Exalt your local Queens of the Stacks, for they are the keepers of our cultural memes. Dare to struggle, dare to read a book.

So don't tell me librarians aren't sexy. For all the reasons above: they're smart, they read, they're online savvy, and they're nuts about knowledge. Robust, well-rounded backgrounds, they actually think for a living and enjoy it, and are prone to a wit at every twist and turn. Gives me the shudders just assembling this humble list, unworthy as I am.

And if the above doesn't convince you, remember that throughout human history fascists, dictators, and other misc. oppressors always try to ban, if not burn, books. They know information leads to knowledge and knowledge to freedom.

So who did we agree were the undisputed Book Demigoddesses? Repeat after me: "librarians". Again: "LIBRARIANS!" Good.

Now who wants to read a story?