One of the beauties of our association is that it is made up of librarians of all types and backgrounds. In this segment we focus on some of our Public Librarians! We asked these librarians to reveal how they feel about their work and what they do when they are away from the library. We hope you’ll enjoy getting to know them better.

**Please Note: Some photos still need attributions. If you find your photo labeled such, please email us at mlafocuseditor@gmail.com with the correct attribution information!**

Jack Albrecht, Thompson-Hickman Madison County Library
Q: What do you enjoy most about being a librarian?
A: Helping customers with their research and reading inquiries.

Q: What do you wish more people knew about your library or the work you do?
A: Library work is not run-of-the-mill and hum-drum, and neither are librarians. We’re an indomitable group of people dedicated to providing the best possible service to our customers. We’re also a fun-loving breed, not the straight-laced stereotypes of old!

Q: What do you enjoy when you're not at the library?
A: Reading, skiing, dining out.

Q: What is something people may find surprising or unusual about you?
A: I am a lapsed actor/musician.

Q: Describe something in your library career that you are proud of accomplishing.
A: I am proud to have been a part of the expansion project for this library.
Karen Anderson, Glasgow City-County Library

Q: What do you enjoy most about being a librarian?
A: The people and variety of work; working with the kids.

Q: What do you wish more people knew about your library or the work you do?
A: That it’s not just checking books in and out.

Q: What do you enjoy when you’re not at the library?
A: Family, gardening, reading.

Q: What is something people may find surprising or unusual about you?
A: Not sure—it seems like there is something new to learn every day.

Q: Describe something in your library career that you are proud of accomplishing.
A: Original cataloging.

Honore Bray, Missoula Public Library

Q: What do you enjoy most about being a librarian?
A: Everyday is different because you are working with people who bring many challenges and rewards.

Q: What do you wish more people knew about your library or the work you do?
A: All the services provided by the library and staff.

Q: What do you enjoy when you’re not at the library?
A: Family and Friends.

Q: Describe something in your library career that you are proud of accomplishing.
A: Passing a bond issue to build a new library. This was a group effort but the service provided to the community by the library is the reason it passed.

Christine Call, Butte-Silver Bow Public Library
Q: What do you enjoy most about being a librarian?
A: I love everything about my job. I work in Technical Services, and my favorite thing to do is open boxes of new books. It is like Christmas every time a new order arrives. I also love helping patrons at the reference desk. There is something about the thrill of hunting down the right information that gives me a thrill.

Q: What do you wish more people knew about your library or the work you do?
A: We have so much to offer! A lot of people in our community think that all we have are books. There is very little that we cannot find for a patron. We have everything from books to ukuleles!

Q: What do you enjoy when you're not at the library?
A: I love to read and collect books. I also enjoy a good tv series binge. I love to spend time with my husband and three grown sons.

Q: What is something people may find surprising or unusual about you?
A: I may look like a middle-aged librarian, but I am a grungy rocker girl at heart. My music tastes are stuck firmly in the 90's grunge scene. I also have bright red highlight in my hair and love it.

Q: Describe something in your library career that you are proud of accomplishing.
A: About 15 years ago, we lived in a tiny rural town in northern Mexico. There was a bilingual elementary school there, and while the education they offered was excellent, the school library was a sad mess. I was asked to go in and assess what was needed. There was no method for checking books out to the children, some serious weeding needed to be done, and there was no programming at all. With the help of amazing volunteers I was able to bring the library up to
date and install a simple computer program to help keep track of the collection and circulation. We also implemented programming during the lunch hour such as story time, chess club, and poetry contests. It was a very satisfying experience.

Erin Casey, Missoula Public Library (Lolo Branch)

Q: What do you enjoy most about being a librarian?
A: Helping people find information and working with young families.

Q: What do you wish more people knew about your library or the work you do?
A: I wish more people knew how libraries can enrich their lives in so many ways. The library I work at is a combined elementary school library and branch library. The ability to share our collection and resources is really a benefit to the Lolo community.

Q: What do you enjoy when you're not at the library?
A: When I am not working, I enjoy making quilts, reading, gardening, crossword puzzles, and foraging in the wilderness.

Q: What is something people may find surprising or unusual about you?
A: I love to travel to other countries and photograph the outside of libraries in the places I visit.

Q: Describe something in your library career that you are proud of accomplishing.
A: I am looking into an online masters degree in library science and will be very proud when I accomplish the completion of this program. Otherwise, I am proud of the opportunities to

(Photo courtesy of Erin Casey. She says: "This phone booth would make a great Little Free Library!")
provide library instruction as a site supervisor for teachers who are completing their library endorsement.

**Angela Claver, North Lake County Public Library District**

(This picture was taken during a recent adult coloring session at the North Lake County Public Library in Polson, Montana. They have an entertainment segment, and on this occasion members of the Mission Valley Choral Ensemble sang for the participants. Angela Claver, at the keyboard, accompanied the ensemble. Photo by Mary O’Brien.)

**Q: What do you enjoy most about being a librarian?**
**A:** Giving library users ‘of a certain age’ a feeling of empowerment with technology.

**Q: What do you wish more people knew about your library or the work you do?**
**A:** I wish more people knew about digital resources on our website; including Freegal, Flipster and Montana Library to go.
Q: What do you enjoy when you're not at the library?
A: I love to play piano!

Q: What is something people may find surprising or unusual about you?
A: I had a tattoo before a lot of these kids were even born.

Q: Describe something in your library career that you are proud of accomplishing.
A: I am glad that I've been able to work in a variety of functions including circulation, technical services and children's services; in both public and school library settings.

Sarah Creech, Belgrade Community Library

(Photo courtesy of Sarah Creech, center right and in the orange dress. Taken outside the New York Public Library in July.)

Q: What do you enjoy most about being a librarian?
A: Helping people find their next favorite read. Encouraging people to branch out in their reading and their program attendance.
Q: What do you wish more people knew about your library or the work you do?
A: We don't get to read on the job!

Q: What do you enjoy when you're not at the library?
A: ... Reading :) and spending time with my small family (husband and greyhound)

Q: What is something people may find surprising or unusual about you?
A: I have a degree in food science and worked in the food industry (research and development, sales, and quality assurance) for 6 years before moving to Montana. I grew up in Ithaca, New York and all of my family still lives in central NY.

Q: Describe something in your library career that you are proud of accomplishing.
A: Starting my MLIS degree! I am attending the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee's online program and I'm in my second term.

Heather Dickerson, Lewis & Clark Library

Q: What do you enjoy most about being a librarian?
A: I love CONNECTING people with the things they want to know about! Our library fosters interest, self discovery, and the development of personal passions.

Q: What do you wish more people knew about your library or the work you do?
A: Libraries are about connection...not just books! Also, people that work in libraries are FUN, silly, and super interesting.

Q: What do you enjoy when you're not at the library?
A: I love being outside and volunteering for trail work opportunities with Montana based organizations. I look forward to an annual trip into the Bob to work on my crosscut skills!

Q: What is something people may find surprising or unusual about you?
A: I never planned on being a librarian. It just sort of happened! It's a reminder to be open to the opportunities the universe presents.

Q: Describe something in your library career that you are proud of accomplishing.
A: The Montana Library Association generously sponsored my attendance at National Library Legislative Day in May 2017, and I had the opportunity to visit with Senator Tester and staffers from the Montana Delegation in DC. I feel so honored to have represented our libraries and young people!

Michelle Fenger, Ronan Library District

Q: What do you enjoy most about being a librarian?
A: Hearing people enjoy themselves in the Library.

Q: What do you wish more people knew about your library or the work you do?
A: We are very family friendly.
Q: What do you enjoy when you're not at the library?
A: Gardening, camping, hanging out with my family.

Q: What is something people may find surprising or unusual about you?
A: I love crafting using recycled materials.

Q: Describe something in your library career that you are proud of accomplishing.
A: Creation of a Library District.

Angela Giono, Townsend Public Library

Q: What do you enjoy most about being a librarian?
A: I love to help kids get books that they love. The library being kids favorite part of their school week.

Q: What do you wish more people knew about your library or the work you do?
A: All the services we can provide.

Q: What do you enjoy when you're not at the library?
A: Reading, exercise.

Q: What is something people may find surprising or unusual about you?
A: I used to hate to read.

Q: Describe something in your library career that you are proud of accomplishing.
A: Masters degree online.

Sarah Karbassi, Butte-Silver Bow Public Library

Q: What do you enjoy most about being a librarian?
A: I'm proud that I'm able to provide services that enrich people's lives. And I enjoy being able to connect with so many different sorts of people and hopefully provide them with a sense of community.

Q: What do you wish more people knew about your library or the work you do?
A: I wish more people knew how much we do for people who are struggling, and those who fall between the cracks of other social services.

Q: What do you enjoy when you're not at the library?
A: Cooking, Netflix, Reading, Gardening

Q: What is something people may find surprising or unusual about you?
A: I love folk horror, and am currently learning to speak Farsi.

Q: Describe something in your library career that you are proud of accomplishing.
Karen Ketchu, Madison Valley Public Library

Q: What do you enjoy most about being a librarian?
A: Besides touching all the books, the thing I most enjoy is knowing that because of what I do, our community is a better place.

Q: What do you wish more people knew about your library or the work you do?
A: The same—that without question how our library makes the community a better place. And, how hard we work to make it happen.

Q: What do you enjoy when you're not at the library?
A: My family and being outdoors.

Q: What is something people may find surprising or unusual about you?
A: That I once worked as a firefighter in Antarctica.

Q: Describe something in your library career that you are proud of accomplishing.
A: How my staff and I have brought this library to the center of this community.

Jessica Ketola, Meagher County City Library

Q: What do you enjoy most about being a librarian?
A: Helping people.

Q: What do you wish more people knew about your library or the work you do?
A: Just that we are open and growing is phenomenal for our community. Plus, we are preparing to start building our new library building!

Q: What do you enjoy when you're not at the library?
A: Animals!

Q: What is something people may find surprising or unusual about you?
A: I have 2 dogs, 2 cats, 4 kittens, 1 hamster, and 1 bearded dragon.

Q: Describe something in your library career that you are proud of accomplishing.
A: I achieved Montana State Library Certification within one year of starting at my essentially one-man library, having gone in with no experience!

Dawn Kingstad, Glendive Public Library
Q: What do you enjoy most about being a librarian?
A: I feel like Indiana Jones. Every day is a new adventure. I never know what path a question/inquiry from a patron will take me down. Books (reading) is vital for a healthy community, but we are so much more. Our libraries are safe havens for our citizens, one of the last few places where everyone is equal and encouraged to reach their own potential.

Q: What do you wish more people knew about your library or the work you do?
A: I wish that people understood that this library activity may look like fun, and it is, but it is so much more. For example, at coding club this week the teens were having fun making their sprites say silly sayings, but they were actually learning how to code random variables, and how computer programs make choices. When our time was up, half of the teens stayed longer to tweak their program. The teens wanted to be there. I wish more people understood that many of us want to see them succeed and we want to provide resources and tools to help them with their personal goals and self-motivated learning.

Q: What do you enjoy when you're not at the library?
A: I am obsessed with my library so I think of ways to better our programming, but I also like to work-out. I have joined Crossfit, love to Zumba, a newbie yogi, and I like to fast walk with intermittent running sprinkled in. I have found a fitness family that gets me out of my workaholic mode and we run 5ks in our area. I also love hanging out with my family. We have been traveling on weekends to watch the boys swim in Glasgow, Plentywood, Sidney, etc... Of course, I love to read :)

Q: What is something people may find surprising or unusual about you?
A: I always feel like I am not a “true” librarian professional because my books of choice are sci-fi. I have read the great classics, but my true love is a book that has a splash of supernatural, with a pinch of mystery, and a whole lot of happiness at the ending. :)

(Dawn with her kids. Photo courtesy of the Kingstad family.)
Q: Describe something in your library career that you are proud of accomplishing.
A: I am very proud of the programming that we have created at our library. I put my heart and soul into Baby Bookworms, Sensory Story-time, Coding Club, Lego Club, etc. I want the kids in Montana to be immersed in situations that will get them ready to be successful adults. These adults will be our future community leaders and have the chance to make a positive impact on our world.

Joey Kositzky, Whitefish Community Library

Q: What do you enjoy most about being a librarian?
A: I love the feeling of accomplishment at the end of every working day. Being able to assist patrons find information, conversations regarding favorite books and authors, answering questions about our community, and knowing that sometimes people stop in just to say "hi". It is the most rewarding, satisfying job a person can have.

Q: What do you wish more people knew about your library or the work you do?
A: I would like them to know that we do so much more than just check books in and out. We offer informational and recreational programs, local history information and directional information.

Q: What do you enjoy when you’re not at the library?

Q: What is something people may find surprising or unusual about you?
A: That I started my library career as a volunteer in an elementary school over 31 years ago.

Q: Describe something in your library career that you are proud of accomplishing.
A: The hundreds of friends I have made.

Keiley McGregor, Belgrade Community Library
(Halloween 2015: Keiley poses as her favorite villain. She says she "still remembers the *Batman: The Animated Series* episode when Harley Quinn captures Batman for her unappreciative Puddin'." The *FOCUS* editors would like to clarify that 'Puddin' is, in fact, the Joker. Photo by Paul Calabro.)

**Q: What do you enjoy most about being a librarian?**
**A:** Ordering and getting my greedy little hands on new books for...cataloging? Yeah...definitely cataloging. Indulging in my "detail-oriented" tendencies on a daily basis. Pushing the boundaries of eyewear fashion. Surrounding myself with like-minded book enthusiasts (read: nerds) while making sure that a variety of viewpoints find room on the shelves.

**Q: What do you wish more people knew about your library or the work you do?**
**A:** I concur with one of my favorite literary librarians who mused that, "she didn’t want great secrets of necromancy, or any other sort of magic. She just wanted—had always wanted—a good book to read. Being chased by hellhounds and blowing things up were comparatively unimportant parts of the job."

**Q: What do you enjoy when you're not at the library?**
**A:** Gotham needs a hero.

**Q: What is something people may find surprising or unusual about you?**
A: I met the love of my life thanks to Conan the Barbarian.

Q: Describe something in your library career that you are proud of accomplishing.
A: Helping to create the kind of safe, welcoming space that made my hometown library a formative part of my childhood.

Susie McIntyre, Great Falls Public Library

(Brandon, Katie, and Susie on a hike. Photo taken by a fellow hiker.)

Q: What do you enjoy most about being a librarian?
A: Having a job that I can be proud of—knowing that we are an essential community asset.

Q: What do you wish more people knew about your library or the work you do?
A: I wish that more people knew about all our great services, but especially MontanaLibrary2Go.

Q: What do you enjoy when you're not at the library?
A: Friends, family, books, activism, hiking, running, biking, swimming...

Q: What is something people may find surprising or unusual about you?
A: I am a third degree black belt.

Q: Describe something in your library career that you are proud of accomplishing.
A: The strong relationships that I have with my co-workers and other librarians in Montana.
Q: What do you enjoy most about being a librarian?
A: Since taking over here at Fallon County Library I love watching the transformations made and also the way we are able to join with the schools to offer the students a much greater source for them to gather the information need.

Q: What do you wish more people knew about your library or the work you do?
A: I wish that people understood that we do more than just sit around and read books. We are here to assist them in whatever they need.

Q: What do you enjoy when you're not at the library?
A: I love being with my family, riding horses, traveling, watching our girls in all the sports they play, hunting, and fishing.

Q: What is something people may find surprising or unusual about you?
A: The one that makes me laugh the most is when they find out I drive a Ford Raptor. Most of them just can't believe a librarian would drive that.
Q: Describe something in your library career that you are proud of accomplishing.
A: I started as the grade school library aide although I was the one who completely took care of both grade school libraries. I decided to apply for the Director position at the Fallon County Library and got it. That I feel is one of my great accomplishments and I am very proud to be a director/librarian.

Jodi Oberweiser, Drummond School & Community Library

Q: What do you enjoy most about being a librarian?
A: Connecting with people - connecting people with books, activities, answers, and other people! I especially love "small world" connections that happen in Montana libraries all the time!

Q: What do you wish more people knew about your library or the work you do?
A: I wish more people knew about all of the resources and activities in our library.

(**NEEDS ATTRIBUTION**)
Q: What do you enjoy when you're not at the library?
A: I like to quilt, scrapbook, journal, and read.

Q: What is something people may find surprising or unusual about you?
A: I always check the dessert menu first!

Q: Describe something in your library career that you are proud of accomplishing.
A: I'm proud that we are a school and public library and I've helped to create a welcoming place in our community where everyone can come to learn, read, recreate and meet. I'm also proud of our part in the Montana Shared Catalog and in our recent efforts to create a dementia friendly community.

James Parrott, Lewis & Clark Library

Q: What do you enjoy most about being a librarian?
A: Data analysis - really understanding a library collection and how it is used in order to improve both.

Q: What do you wish more people knew about your library or the work you do?
A: I'm relatively new to my position, so I'm still at the point of wishing I knew more about my library.

Q: What do you enjoy when you're not at the library?
A: Hiking, computer games, reading, and spending time with my dog.

Q: What is something people may find surprising or unusual about you?
A: I have an MA in Experimental Psychology.

Q: Describe something in your library career that you are proud of accomplishing.
A: Participation in a collection redesign project at my previous library in Indiana that made the collection much more user-friendly and easier to process.

Mary Drew Powers, Whitefish Community Library

Q: What do you enjoy most about being a librarian?
A: Knowing about books and passing that on; a well-answered reference question; finding new ways to engage the community (or old ways - I'm not above copying someone else's good ideas).

Q: What do you wish more people knew about your library or the work you do?
A: Everything. :) That they can get books, movies and music for free and how easy it is to do that. Honestly, they can get the most convenient service from home or anywhere using their phone. How many services can say that?

Q: What do you enjoy when you're not at the library?
A: Gardening, cooking, hiking or walking on trails, birdwatching, kayaking, bicycling, reading, watching the Mets baseball team.

**Q: What is something people may find surprising or unusual about you?**
A: I've worked at four Montana libraries: Flathead County Library System (now ImagineIf), the former Parmly Billings Library, Missoula Public Library, and Whitefish Community Library.

**Q: Describe something in your library career that you are proud of accomplishing.**
A: I would say I am most happy with the relationships that have come because of working all around the state and volunteering with MLA. Montana has a great Library community and I'm proud to be a part of that.

**Barbara Riebe, Billings Public Library**

(Photo taken by Lynne Puckett at Billings Public Library on May 3rd, 2017)

**Q: What do you enjoy most about being a librarian?**
A: The feeling of satisfaction I get when a patron finds what they need or want, or when a program goes well, or when the collection I manage is looking good.

**Q: What do you wish more people knew about your library or the work you do?**
A: That the library has something for everyone, including programs and classes for adults and teens that are developed around a variety of interests. It’s not just a space for kids!

Q: What do you enjoy when you’re not at the library?
A: I attend fan conventions, play games, write a little and enjoy movies, gardening and fishing with my family.

Q: What is something people may find surprising or unusual about you?
A: That I’m a gray-haired gamer girl.

Q: Describe something in your library career that you are proud of accomplishing.
A: I took part in a program for a grant that the Library had received through Redbox and OCLC called Outside the Box, promoting community partnerships and making use of previously unprogrammed spaces. As part of our grant, we put on our first Summer Block Party, which has become an annual event tied to our Summer Reading program, and I led the committee for three years. This year we had music, participation from community clubs like the SCA and the Sons of Norway, and over 200 people attended.

Nancy Royan, Wedsworth Memorial Library (Cascade)

Q: What do you enjoy most about being a librarian?
A: I love meeting the patrons, visiting with them, and interacting with the children

Q: What do you wish more people knew about your library or the work you do?
A: These is so much more to working in a library than checking out books and reshelving them. The library is full of so many resources and historical archives.

Q: What do you enjoy when you’re not at the library?
A: Reading

Q: What is something people may find surprising or unusual about you?
A: All the places I have lived and the different jobs I have performed

Q: Describe something in your library career that you are proud of accomplishing.
A: Developing a website

Billie Rudolph, Boulder Public Library
Q: What do you enjoy most about being a librarian?
A: I enjoy helping and visiting with our patrons. When you take time to get to know your patrons, you discover more ways that the library can help in the community to make it a better place. Also with the help of our head librarian I have fine tuned my creative nature.

Q: What do you wish more people knew about your library or the work you do?
A: I wish people could understand that a small library can offer most if not all of the services the big library's have. I wish people knew how much thought and work goes into selecting and keeping our selections of books as current as possible.

Q: What do you enjoy when you're not at the library?
A: I enjoy reading, doing paper crafts such as origami and quilling, and getting out in Montana's great outdoors geo-caching. But first and foremost I love spending time with my grandson.

Q: What is something people may find surprising or unusual about you?
A: I love teaching kids new things and seeing the excitement on their faces when they achieve something new.
Q: Describe something in your library career that you are proud of accomplishing.
A: Since I have been working at the Boulder library we have started adult craft classes. We have had classes in origami, pop-up art, quilling, sewing, bead making, card making and painting. After the first few classes we began getting volunteers to teach other classes. It has been fun and rewarding to meet other people and learn new things. We also have started a Lego club and kid crafters class.

Gina Vale, Philipsburg Public Library

Q: What do you enjoy most about being a librarian?
A: Helping people.

Q: What do you wish more people knew about your library or the work you do?
A: I wish more people knew about our programs and the endless possibilities of things we can do for the community.

Q: What do you enjoy when you're not at the library?
A: Reading and anything outdoors.

Q: What is something people may find surprising or unusual about you?
A: I can ride a unicycle.

Q: Describe something in your library career that you are proud of accomplishing.
A: Changing the perception of the library in town. People are happy to come here now.

Brooke Weiss, Stillwater County Library
Q: What do you enjoy most about being a librarian?
A: I love working with people and being able to provide a wide range of services. No two days are alike.

Q: What do you wish more people knew about your library or the work you do?
A: I wish people knew that I don't get to read all day!

Q: What do you enjoy when you're not at the library?
A: I spend time with my family (husband, 2 kids, 3 dogs, and a cat). I play piano and love music.

Q: What is something people may find surprising or unusual about you?
A: I've played piano for almost 30 years and used to teach piano lessons.

Q: Describe something in your library career that you are proud of accomplishing.
A: I love how we have evolved as a library, from "shhhhh" to a social, educational resource center. I'm thankful to be part of teaching patrons what all we have to offer now.

Debbie Wellman, Chouteau County Library
Q: What do you enjoy most about being a librarian?
A: I most enjoy listening to patrons of all ages tell about how they enjoyed a book, new author or how a book impacted their lives.

Q: What do you wish more people knew about your library or the work you do?
A: I wish more people knew that we not only have materials for checkout and computers/wifi to use but that we occasionally try to bring programming to our community for free.

Q: What do you enjoy when you're not at the library?
A: Reading of course, but I also enjoy family and making greeting cards.

Q: What is something people may find surprising or unusual about you?
A: I enjoy going on wine-tasting trips and usually bring home a few bottles.

Q: Describe something in your library career that you are proud of accomplishing.
A: Pretty much everything as I had no training in librarianship yet I was hired as Director after 10 years as assistant librarian, asked to be on a statewide task force and voted to be coordinator of our federation.

Mark Wetherington, Bitterroot Public Library
Q: What do you enjoy most about being a librarian?
A: The countless coincidental and serendipitous interactions with patrons, co-workers, and volunteers that allow me to learn something new everyday or make a connection between things I hadn't made before, and working with amazing colleagues to help serve our community.

Q: What do you wish more people knew about your library or the work you do?
A: I wish more people were aware of the variety and frequency of our programming for all ages and what a tremendous resource the Partners Sharing Group is for its users.

Q: What do you enjoy when you’re not at the library?
A: Backpacking (especially in the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness), bicycling, reading, cooking, and writing.

Q: What is something people may find surprising or unusual about you?
A: I will be a co-author, along with Doug Lorain, of the third edition of the guidebook “Backpacking Washington” published by Wilderness Press (expected release summer 2018). I'm spending the 2017 hiking season doing trips over to Washington to update old descriptions and write up a few new backpacking trips for the book. So currently I have two jobs I love instead of just one!

Q: Describe something in your library career that you are proud of accomplishing.
A: I am most proud of working with the library board to increase our library’s staff wages to be more similar to city and county positions and other libraries in Montana.
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