

Library Letters

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all articles written by Lisa M. Carlson, THS Teacher-librarian [not responsible for bad/good puns and dry, satirical humor]

A New Adventure...Finding Common Ground for Three New Schools

I have created a few personas over the years, both as a teacher and most recently as a teacher-librarian, most notably the "Library Dragon", and on occasion, the "Good Book Faery".

But who is the woman behind the scales and wings?

There is no good way to give one's name—any way you introduce yourself, it seems so cliché:

"Hello, my name is Lisa Carlson."

"I'm Lisa Carlson, glad to meet you."

"Lisa Carlson's the name, library's my game."

Now that THAT is out of the way, I can tell you a bit about myself, 'cuz really what IS in a name?

I'm a born and raised Washingtonian. I remember when summers were wet and cold, and winters were wetter and colder. I lived and went to school in Chehalis until I left for Miyazaki, Japan as an exchange student through a program at the Evergreen State College in Olympia. I earned my bachelor's in history, literature and Japanese culture and language in 1989, and promptly returned to Japan where I taught ESL (loosely adherent to what many understand as ESL in the States) until 1992, when my husband and I returned to the States to work on my Master in Teaching from TESC. (Whew! Tired yet?)

In 1994, armed with endorsements in Japanese Language and English, I landed



Would the real Tyee Librarian please stand up?

But, wait...!

They're all me!

In a way.



a job at a rural-but-large high school along highway 101 in Shelton. (For those unfamiliar with that area, it is on the lower western portion of Puget Sound and near Hood Canal.)

I cut my teaching "teeth" at Shelton High School, teaching as many as 5 preps a day including three levels of Japanese, as well as English for grades 9-12.

I did this for five years until the high school moved to a 4-period daily schedule and Japanese was eliminated. I then became a full-time English teacher, generally junior literature (Early and 20th Century American), and Freshmen classes.

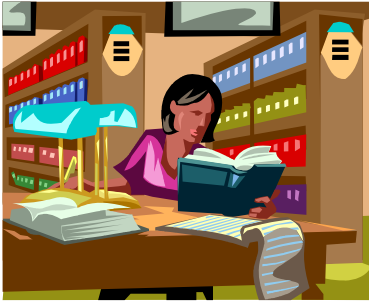
It was during this period that I became a recipient of the Bill & Melinda Gates Teacher Leadership Project grant (1999)

and began to integrate technology as a tool in my teaching. It has been part of my style ever since.

During my decade teaching, I became close to our librarian—she was definitely "old school" in many ways, but she was also very intelligent and wise. I loved to do research with my classes and she would help me find materials of all kinds to provide the students for their projects.

Prior to her retirement, she suggested that I consider replacing her as Shelton High's new librarian. I did not have a library endorsement at the time, but it seemed meant to be, because when I began the process to gain admittance to the University of Washington's library endorsement program,

WANTED: LIBRARY LOVERS



As I have done in the past, it is my intention to start a "Library Advisory Board" made up of teachers, a principal, and students.

One purpose of this Library Advisory Board (LAB) is to provide me with suggestions, guidance and insights into the needs of this library's patrons.

A second purpose is to act as a decision-advising body for local library events, changes, and implementations.

And, third, for LAB members to act as liaisons between the library and other faculty and staff which are not normally contacted through other means (such as newsletters, announcements, flyers and direct contact). As such, it would be my hope that Library Advisory Board members would talk-up the library when positive things happen, and to bring to the meetings ideas or suggestions from those whom members are in contact.

My intention is to have 4, one-hour meetings each year, starting in October.

I hope to keep this group relatively manageable, but since I am not acquainted with anyone closely, I have selected to put forth a general call for membership. You simply need to **e-mail me of your interest to be on the board.**

I will send out a date and time (location--library) as the month rolls on.

Hope to hear from you!

Signing Up For Library. . .

Several teachers have already found me lurking about the library and have wanted to "sign up" for class time.

In order to keep order, and to get a sense of what you will want from me and your students, I have a "procedure" I would like everyone to follow—I promise it is not too painful and it will help me help you.

More about this will be in a brochure that will come to you shortly, but for now follow these procedures:

1. Get a sign up form from me (they are color-coded for the semester)
2. Fill it out as best you can (I can help)
3. Submit ASAP (forms get on my calendar, e-mails do not)
4. I will e-mail you to confirm the scheduling
5. Conference with librarian, if needed, for instruction plans

Common Ground, con't.

things just fell into place.

In a whirl of events, I found myself endorsed and officially the new librarian at Shelton High, where I served the teachers and students until June 2006.

So, how did I end up at Tyee?

Again, things just seem to have a way of happening when they are supposed to:

I applied for the position last fall (2005), but I was still under contract with Shelton so it wasn't until May/June of this year that I was interviewed for Tyee.

Two elements played a major part in my decision to leave Shelton—gas prices and the need for change.

Yes, I still live in Olympia, and my husband and I don't particularly want to

move. However, we can now carpool together, since he works only minutes away from Tyee—which is very convenient in some ways even if it means long travel times and early wake ups (I am most decidedly NOT a morning person).

As for change, I suppose I'm going through a mid-life crisis of sorts. I'm always seeking ways to grow and better myself, professionally and personally, yet after 12 years at Shelton, I was beginning to feel stagnant, perhaps a bit too settled. Coming to Tyee presents me with a significant challenge - coordinating the needs of three separate schools using one library facility.

As a literature teacher, I'm all about themes. As a teacher-librarian, I like to use themes to focus my work throughout the year and to help those I serve to see the library services in a new perspective.

Bringing three schools together under one service needs a clear theme and focus (at least for me), that will communicate how I envision the library—and how I hope you will envision it, too.

Thus, "**common ground**" has become my central theme for this year, since the library offers a "commons" for all who use its space and services.

It is my sincere hope that as the year progresses the library will serve well as a **common ground** for all.