



3-2009

From the Editor

Julie Miller

Butler University, jlmlle5@butler.edu

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.butler.edu/librarian_papers



Part of the [Library and Information Science Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Miller, Julie. "From the Editor." *Alki: The Washington Library Association Journal*, Vol. 25, No. 1 (March 2009), p. 4.

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the University Libraries at Digital Commons @ Butler University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Scholarship and Professional Work by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Butler University. For more information, please contact omacisaa@butler.edu.

From the Editor

By Julie Miller

Have you read Rita Dove's poem, "The First Book"? It's one of my favorites, a deceptively short and simple poem about the transformative power of reading. "Open it," Dove writes. "Go ahead, it won't bite./Well, maybe a little."

I am the reader in my family. My parents discouraged me from reading too much as a child, preferring that I experience life in the flesh. But for me, the world experienced through reading was as real as—if not more real than—my backyard. I navigated the swirls and eddies of the muddy Mississippi with Huck and Jim and performed in attic theatrics with the March sisters. Later, Harper Lee taught me about injustice, Flannery O'Connor about danger, and Tennessee Williams about the possibility of redemption. I was lucky to have an appetite for reading, and fine teachers, some of whom were librarians, to guide my tastes.

What is the state of reading in Washington? From early literacy initiatives, to book groups and "big reads," to outreach to special populations, this issue of *Alki* explores the state of reading from the point of view of Washington libraries. In "Read or Die," Michael Cook gives an overview of the latest report from the National Endowment for the Arts on reading trends and their impact. State Librarian Jan Walsh tells the story of the Washington Reads program. Debbie Lahue from ESD 101 describes reading assessment in Washington schools post-WASL.

Sit up straight and take a deep, cleansing breath before starting "Our Job Is to Promote Reading" by Dan Howard and Dean Marney. They are men on a mission to transform the communities served by the North Central Regional Library system. If you think strategic plans and mission statements are mere intellectual exercises, this article will change your mind. Literally.

Have hope: reading lives in Washington. WLA's annual conference will be held in Spokane in April and happens to overlap with *GetLit!*, the annual literary festival sponsored by Eastern Washington University. WLA is partnering with *GetLit!* to bring author Jane Smiley to read during the conference. Shawn Vestal's article "Libraries and Literary Festivals" is a great introduction to *GetLit!*. Solinus and Angelina Benedetti are back, after a brief hiatus, with

Julie Miller is Associate Dean of Libraries at Eastern Washington University

“Sit up straight and take a deep, cleansing breath before starting 'Our Job Is to Promote Reading' by Dan Howard and Dean Marney. They are men on a mission.”



Julie Miller

"Writing Is the New Reading," while David Wright praises (and laments the passing of) Washington's small presses in "Made in Washington."

The ability to understand symbols, to translate characters on a page into language—reading is a powerful act of discovery. Go ahead—open it. "It's not like it's the end of the world," as Rita Dove writes. Just "the world as you think/you know it."

Go to Rita Dove's home page at <http://people.virginia.edu/~rfd4b/> to hear her read "The First Book." 

Dream. Discover. Do!

Spokane Falls Community College Library Technician program offers:



- Online A.A.S. degree option
- Library technician certificate option
- School Library Media emphasis option
- Bachelor's degree transfer option

Students also can take advantage of college credit for work experience, independent study and internships.

For information:

Paula Duffy Swan, library technician program at 509-522-3809, or librarytechnician@spokanefalls.edu

www.spokanefalls.com



Community Colleges of Spokane provides equal opportunity in education and employment. DL