

## Two SUNY Fredonia seniors choose librarianship

*A conversation with Darryl Coleman, Reference and Cataloging Librarian*

Ask any librarian at Reed why they decided on this career and most will typically give the same answer, "I love books and the passion to work as a librarian was always there". All of us have our own story as to why we decided to do this; but the stories of two 2009 SUNY Fredonia seniors say it best!

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You can't major in librarianship until you received a college degree. All of us were college students somewhere majoring in Music, English, History, Education, Computer Science and Business to name a few. Every year students approach us with wonderful stories of how they considered librarianship. Each has a wonderful story to tell. Many are or were influenced by us at Reed, some are not; so I thought why not share the stories of two graduating seniors who have chosen this wonderful career. You will see that like many of us, their unique stories are based on a love of books and the passion to help others.



Elizabeth Koehler, a senior English Adolescent Education major and an English tutor in the Learning Center stated while she was not directly influenced by any of the librarians at Reed, "(Reed Librarians) didn't in anyway discourage her, though" in deciding to become a librarian. Elizabeth, like most students began conversing with me at the desk and just acknowledged that she too was going to become a librarian. Elizabeth's encouragement came from her mother and from her former high school librarian. When told that librarians with backgrounds in Education generally consider becoming "school media specialist librarians, because of previous experience in schools"; Elizabeth said she: "knew this was the perfect job for her". She loves the opportunity to teach and help students in a one-on-one setting and school librarian was right for her.

Elizabeth's 3 choices for library school were SUNY Albany, University of Kentucky and University of North Carolina. She has decided to attend UNC. In response to my final interview question "What do you feel will be your strongest asset as a librarian?" Without hesitation she responded, "My educational background and love of reading. As stated earlier, her mother was a great influence also. She would take her to the library as a child and allow her to borrow as many books as she could read. When I first met Elizabeth, she asked if I would pick out a good book for her to read on her college visit to UKY. Eventually, she chose two books and read both before she returned to Fredonia. My impression of Elizabeth after our initial meeting is that she is a people person. She enjoys talking and helping to educate others; and all librarians generally do! I know Elizabeth will be a fine school librarian and a credit to SUNY Fredonia in pursuing her career.

Peter Moll, a senior History major was influenced by two SUNY Fredonia librarians. Peter, like many graduates, was undecided about what do with his life after graduation. Contemplating his future, he considered graduate studies as one of his options but was as he said' "suffering from a severe bout of senioritis". He admitted that he really

had no clue of what to do after graduation, because of the daunting options. He knew he loved historical research but his career path was uncertain.

One day while talking with Kerrie Wilkes, one of Reed's Reference and Instruction Librarians, he asked her about possible alternatives on what to do with his History degree, and she suggested that he speak to Jeremy Linden, Head of Archives & Special Collections at Reed library. After many discussions with Jeremy and after viewing some of the historical treasures within Reed library Archives, Peter asked if an internship existed. Jeremy took on Peter in June 2008 as a student intern. Now a year later after completing 240 intern hours (6 credit hours), Peter will be entering the University of Maryland, College Park to start his studies in librarianship with a concentration in Archives this fall. Peter's future is certain; the smile on his face says it all! He now knows what he will do with his History degree.



In response to my question on his best asset, Peter answered "My patience and my attention to detail". Peter feels that he has the temperament and focus to tackle the tedious job of historical research. In talking with Jeremy on Peter's progress he agrees that Peter certainly has exhibited those necessary traits. Historical research of any kind requires a person who is even-natured and able to concentrate to ensure that all facts are revealed. As with Elizabeth, my perception of Peter is that he loves research which is necessary to become an excellent archivist at any college library. But first he will be an excellent librarian!

Elizabeth's and Peter's brief stories not only give their individual perspectives but reveal how each of us came to be the people you see at the reference desk. In many ways, our path to Reed Library began in much the same way as Elizabeth and Peter did. And I guess this is the main reason why I wrote this article. Deciding on a career is a scary and confusing process. Each choice is different and there's no magic to it. Each of us ultimately writes his/her own story towards a career path. This is the story of two of our students from the perspective of librarianship.

Congratulations SUNY Fredonia Class of 2009.

## Download the New Library Toolbar

Want to quickly search the library's services without having to go the library's website? Download the library toolbar. The toolbar can search the library catalog, WorldCat (for books), the SUNY Union Catalog, Central Search (for Articles), as well as tools such as the library's electronic journal list and Google Scholar.

Download the toolbar (for Mac/PC – IE6+ and Firefox) at <http://libx.org/editions/download.php?edition=37D63D58>. Tips on how to use the toolbar are also available there.

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