

Patron Perspectives: What the Library Means to Me!

August 23, 2010 - Loretta Rogers is many things -- a fourth generation Floridian, wife, mother, grandmother, retired teacher, and a multi-published, award-winning author. A member of Romance Writers of America, Tampa Area Romance Authors, her novels have received the Readers' Poll Award, Cactus Rose Award, and the New Covey Award. Loretta is also a recipient of the Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Writing the Region award. Loretta uses the libraries in Citrus County for her research and information needs. This is what Loretta has to say about her *Library Memories* and experiences.

The more that you read, the more things you will know, the more you learn, the more places you'll go. ~ Dr. Seuss

At the risk of sounding nostalgic, this quote from Dr. Seuss takes me back to fond childhood memories of using the library. I attended a small rural elementary school that had no library. Each month I eagerly awaited the visits from the rolling library. Being a horse lover, I devoured books written by Walter Farley and Marguerite Henry. Caught up in an adventure, I'd place the library book inside my science textbook, and thought I was fooling the teacher. And who could blame me? Riding a black stallion or rounding up ponies from an island was far more exciting than reading about hydrogen and oxygen.



Through all my high school years, I worked as a library aide. Even during study hall, I'd find myself curled up in one of the leather wing-backed chairs, and lost between the pages of a book. Bless Miss Annie Belle Thorpe, the librarian. If not for her shooing me from my secret place, I would have been late for class on more than one occasion.

I acquired my love of books and reading from my father. In the days of my childhood, we didn't own a radio, and television didn't exist. At night, I would sit in my daddy's lap while he read aloud. He'd placed his finger under each word as he read. At the early age of three, I would place my finger on his and follow the words. Little did my dad realize the enormous impact he was making on my life.

When I entered college, I dreamed of majoring in library science. Sadly, during those years, jobs for librarians were few and far between. However, as a middle grades teacher, I, with the assistance of the school librarian swept my students away to exotic

places, wild adventures, and spine-chilling journeys through jungles, swamps and deserts. They met kings and queens, and searched for gold, and slew dragons, and we did it all through the pages of books.

I've always had stories going around inside my head. When I retired from teaching, I decided to write a book. Currently with six published novels, little did I dream my writing career would take off with such gusto? So, you're wondering what writing has to do with my love of the library. Writing entertainment fiction takes more than imagination. Research is required for period clothing, jargon, vegetation, animals, and what better place to research than the library. It is also with extreme joy that my novels are shelved in public libraries throughout the United States and Europe.

I wanted to give back to the institution that means so much to me, not only as an avid reader, but as a published author. That opportunity came when the Citrus County Director of Library Services invited me to join other authors to conduct workshops for the National Novel Writing events. Each October, November and March, I look forward to joining the authors' panels and presenting workshops that are held in various Citrus County library locations.

At the risk of sounding like a commercial, the Citrus County Library System is one of the most interactive and supportive libraries I've had the pleasure of patronizing. Most people don't realize that beyond the friendly faces at the book checkout counter, there is a taskforce working to bring interactive and creative workshops to the reading public, to the general public, to children, senior citizens, aspiring writers, and published authors.

To me, the library is an elixir for a bad mood, a lifesaver when researching material for new novels, and the most peaceful place on earth. A book is a loyal companion by the bedside, and a wonderful influence on our lives.

~ Loretta Rogers