

CURIOSITY AND THE CAT

Do you ever ponder the reason you chose your career? Was it a simple love of books? Or the memory of one special library or museum that stirred a sense of wonder when you were young? Perhaps it was a passionate librarian at your school who opened your eyes to new worlds, or was it an English teacher who helped you uncover the deeper meaning of the stories you loved? Perhaps, like me, it was a little bit of everything, coupled with a tireless desire to understand and organise the world around me. However your career epiphany unfolded, have you ever wondered what transformed those experiences – ones that might have seemed fairly mundane or entirely forgettable to another person – into the impetus to pursue a career?

I sat and thought about this for a while, just me, my cappuccino and my cat named Scout. I thought of all the different words that we associate with our sector. Knowledge, imagination, experience, connection, creation, skill, learning, discovery, invention, inspiration; quite a hefty list! I think you would agree that all branches of the galleries, libraries, archives, museums and records (GLAMR) sector share a sprinkling of these traits, but I was still

curious to uncover the one core trait of our sector, a concept that could neatly define us all. And there it was. Curiosity.

I became a librarian because I love stories and knowledge, but why do I love these things? Because I am innately, annoyingly curious. I believe it is this, our collective curiosity, that is a fundamental driver of our sector. So, whilst I have your attention, I feel compelled to ask – what is it you're currently curious about? What is your community curious about? What is society in general curious about at this point in time? How can we harness this passion we share to our advantage, and use it to guide collection development, program curation and promotions? Most important of all though, in our current environment of information saturation where it's both easier and harder than ever to be curious, how can we spark curiosity in others and then guide that curiosity to be thoughtfully informed?

I realise I have provided many more questions than answers in my little cat-and-cappuccino-fuelled thought experiment, but sometimes it helps to point out the blindingly obvious, especially when your profession has the freedom to follow a multitude of different paths. Whether you're a public librarian helping a patron discover a new author, or a school librarian helping a child discover the Galápagos Islands, or an archivist helping a researcher follow an elusive paper trail, or a curator watching a patron react to a thoughtfully chosen item – each of our professions has the chance to offer a taste of the amazing rewards that come from being curious. In continuing to honour and follow our curiosity, we can help those we serve experience the joy of uncovering something new and unexpected, and so widen their window to the world. 🐾

Meg's cat, Scout

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