



Volume 58 | Issue 1

Article 3

2015

Soloing with Friends

Jeannie Ferriss

Yellowstone Christian College

The Christian Librarian is the official publication of the Association of Christian Librarians (ACL). To learn more about ACL and its products and services please visit <http://www.acl.org/>

Follow this and additional works at: <http://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/tcl>

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

Recommended Citation

Ferriss, Jeannie (2015) "Soloing with Friends," *The Christian Librarian*: Vol. 58 : Iss. 1 , Article 3.

Available at: <http://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/tcl/vol58/iss1/3>

This Column is brought to you for free and open access by Digital Commons @ George Fox University. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Christian Librarian by an authorized editor of Digital Commons @ George Fox University. For more information, please contact arolfe@georgefox.edu.

Soloing with Friends



**Jeannie Ferriss, Library Director
Ida Dockery Owen Library
Yellowstone Christian College**

I just returned from a wonderful conference in New Mexico; the sun was warm, the chilies were hot and the friendship was amazing. It made me think about networking and how important it is for new librarians, solo librarians and all librarians who seek to get to know other professionals.

Why network?

Networking has many advantages: friendship, sharing expertise, learning new technologies, visiting different institutions, creating sounding boards, mentoring, and discovering opportunities for professional advancement or a first time career posting. There are many ways to network, such as conferences, social media, e-mail, snail mail, listservs, organizations or personal visits. The following are a few ideas I use when networking in different venues.

The most important rule I use in networking is business cards. By always having cards which contain my correct name, title, institution, address, e-mail and phone numbers; I can insure that the person I am in contact with has the information they need to communicate quickly and in multiple forms. If I meet someone who I really connect with, I may write my cell on the back for easier communication. Business cards also fit nicely in my luggage and allow for large amounts of information carried in a compact form. I also write something about the person on the back of their card to help distinguish them when I am meeting large numbers of people at the same time. Remember friendships develop over time through shared experiences, and having a system of making people stand out avoids embarrassing mistakes. I also make a note of the time zone the person is in. It helps me to call during appropriate hours, especially if I am calling a cell phone.

How do I start?

One of the easiest ways to begin networking is within your own geographic area. Introduce yourself to other secular academic librarians, public librarians, ACL members, school librarians. They often may be the first contact for local, state, regional and national organizations. This will lead to a plethora of information on local conference, programs and trainings. Montana has two universities with a number of satellite campuses. Their librarians have been a warm, welcoming, presence in my professional life and invited me to numerous trainings and events I would not have

known about without their kindness. The librarian at Rock Mountain College was my first contact in the state organization and a wealth of information about the state shared catalog. Don't forget about your state library. In Montana, all libraries have access to their free database system, which includes a large professional collection. Local connections also had a face-to-face component which is a real boost to those who are solo librarians.

For those who are more comfortable with electronic connections, the ACL listserv is a wonderful place to meet many friendly and helpful people. I once posted a question and was overwhelmed with the thoughtfulness of so many people who took the time to reply. Take the time to assist others with your own expertise, everyone has something to offer others; just be aware of your own skill set and experience.

Social media is also a great way to interact with others. Many libraries have their own Facebook pages. My patrons recently helped me setup Facebook messaging on my phone so all of my contacts can connect at any time. Evidently texting was taking too long when they were already online. It is a wonderful instant communication but like all social media it may be a time thief. Being respectful of others time constraints as well as their responsibility level may help you to be a welcome visitor and not a burden. Different social media accounts help to keep personal information and events separate from professional contacts. I understand that not everyone wants to see pictures of my grandchildren when asking me about a theological commentary set. (But they are available if you would like a look).

Finally, I would recommend several articles about networking that I found very helpful. The first is "10 Twitter Tips for Higher Education" by Heather Mansfield. It contains information on Twitter etiquette as well other excellent information. The second is "Schmoozing for Beginners" by Patrick Sweeney on attending conferences. Both are full of excellent information and would be helpful to anyone trying to network with others.

Librarians are friendly people and reaching out to others makes the entire group stronger. Now if I can just get Connie to ship me a case of green chilies! †

Are you a solo librarian? Do you have thoughts or ideas that might assist other librarians? Please consider sharing your ideas with others in ACL by submitting to this column. Contact Associate Editor, Jeannie Ferriss (jferriss@yellowstonechristian.edu) for information.

REFERENCES

- Mansfield, H. (2009). 10 Twitter Tips for Higher Education. *University Business*, 12(5), 27-28.
- Sweeney, P. (2014). Schmoozing for Beginners. *Library Journal*, 139(20), 1.