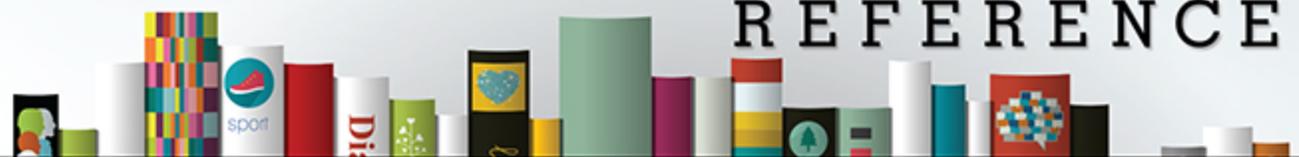


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BOOKLIST ONLINE'S TOP SHELF REFERENCE



I don't know about you all, but I'm tired of talking about the weather.

This doesn't bode well because I live in Chicago now, and it is only January, which means we've got, what, six months of winter left? (Don't worry, I got plenty of wool socks for Christmas.)

The likelihood of me getting out of talking about the temperature is about as likely as being able to accurately predict the precipitation. Sometimes I'm even guilty of starting the conversation. I'll be in line at the grocery store or the pharmacy or wherever and there will be six seconds of silence and I'll make a comment about how cold it is or how I'm glad I got wool socks for Christmas.

It's not that I'm particularly talkative (OK, I am): it's just that it's nice to connect, you know? And no matter what's happening in your life, you are always also dealing with the weather. So the six inches of snowfall gives us a little common ground.

I know this reluctant penchant for small talk has helped me out a lot at the reference desk. How many patron relationships start with banal observations? How many contentious conversations have been lightened by the fact that everyone thinks adults should get snow days, too?

This month's *Top Shelf Reference* is all about relationships, from familial sort-of-strife to a fondness for patrons who are reliably unpredictable. Plus, I had the chance to talk to Ryan Dowd, author of the forthcoming *The Librarian's Guide to Homelessness*; our conversation will give you lots of food for thought.

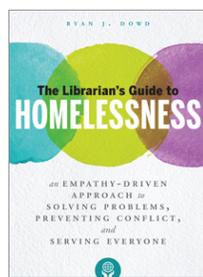
Good thing. With this weather, you'll need a full stomach to keep warm.

Speaking of warm (ha), will you be in Denver for Midwinter? If so, stop by the *Booklist* booth and say hi! I'll probably have on a pair of new wool socks!

—[Susan Maguire](#), Senior Editor, Collection Management and Library Outreach, *Booklist*

Meet the Author: Ryan Dowd on *The Librarian's Guide To Homelessness*

by Susan Maguire



As librarians, we often feel torn between our mission to serve all of the public and the realities of daily life. This is particularly true when serving patrons affected by homelessness. Arguably, these are the folks most in need of our resources, but, at the same time, it can feel like they are the most difficult to help.

Ryan Dowd has been working with the homeless in the Chicago area for decades, and, lucky for us, he's written a book. *The Librarian's Guide to Homelessness: An Empathy-Driven Approach to Solving Problems, Preventing Conflict, and Serving Everyone* is available from ALA Editions later this month. I spoke to Ryan about his work and what inspired him to connect with librarians.

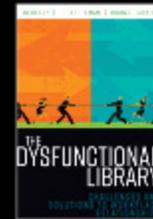
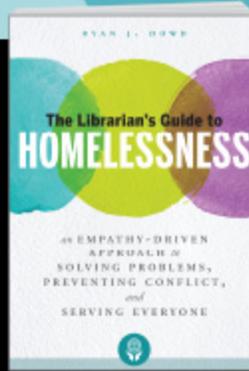
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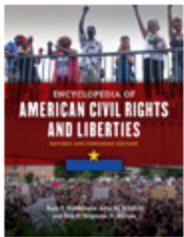
Dowd spotlights best practices drawn from his shelter's policies and training materials.

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Featured Reference Review: *Encyclopedia of American Civil Rights and Liberties*



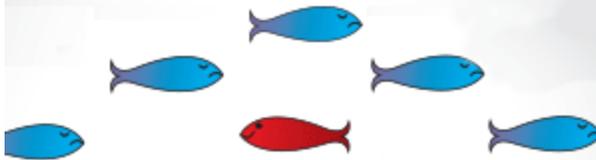
The revised and expanded *Encyclopedia of American Civil Rights and Liberties* is comprehensive, balanced, accurate, and up-to-date.

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Rogue Book-Group Choices

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Real Life Reference: Dinosaurs and Marmosets



by Nicolette Warisse Sosulski

I am a reference librarian. One whom my boss, bless his heart, has called a “somewhat pathological” reference librarian. (I am sure he meant that in the sweetest way possible.)

I like to help people. I like to delve into a subject. And, as a mother, I want to be valuable to my children. So I liked the

idea of my kids having research projects.

Alas. My dreams of snipping Gordian knots of information to the wonderment and awe of those two sets of brown eyes yielded not so much on the fruition front.

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Online Exclusives: Reference 2017

by Susan Maguire

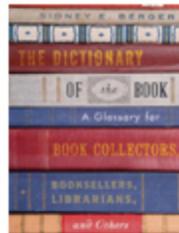
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If you're looking for the review of a specific title, you can still use the search box on the left. But the ONLINE EXCLUSIVE REVIEWS page gives you the chance to browse through new reviews, just like you would in the magazine.

Here's a quick roundup of the online exclusive reference reviews we ran this year. (This doesn't include professional reading, which will get its own roundup in a future issue of *Top Shelf Reference*.)

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Refer Madness: A Patron Mount Rushmore

by Chad Comello



In the office one day, my colleagues got to discussing who our library's Mount Rushmore of patrons would be. Not necessarily the nicest ones but the ones who have become iconic among staff largely because of the mystery that surrounds them.

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