

"Librarian Chic" Is Not an Oxymoron

by Edna S. Dixon

Do you take personal umbrage at the prevailing stereotype of librarians: dowdy bun-wearers in clunky shoes? When you tell people your occupation in social settings, is the usual response one of outright disbelief that one so sophisticated and stylish could possibly be a librarian???

a stir in the library world the likes of which has not been seen since those radicals at the Library of Congress convinced academic libraries to toss out Dewey in favor of LC.

The site declares before the whole world what the majority of law librarians have always known—many librarians are in possession of not only a wealth of information but an enormous sense of style. (We have seen you at meetings and parties, and yes, we are impressed.)

While the Lipstick Librarian is focused on women—librarianship is after all still a female-dominated profession (darn it!)—Absher makes it clear that lipstick librarianship is not solely the domain of women. Lipstick librarianship is "a state-of-mind, an outlook . . . To be a Lipstick Librarian, one does not need to be of a particular gender, sexual orientation, or even color-coordinated!"

A tongue-in-cheek rejoinder in the fight against librarian stereotypes, the site includes an explanation of What Is a Lipstick Librarian?, Bibliographies, hilarious Beauty Tips!, and a column in which "The LL Explains It All For You."

AALL Spectrum: *What or who inspired you to create the Lipstick Librarian?*

Linda Absher: I got a little tired of doing a spit take every time someone said to me "You don't look like a librarian!" Seriously, my inspiration came from all those looks people would give me—everything from benign sympathy to questioning stares, as if I'd just announced to them I'd decided to become a kind of bibliographic nun.

AALL Spectrum: *When can we expect the movie to come out and who would you like to see play your role?*

Absher: As soon as Spielberg returns my calls, I can see it now: "Lipstick Librarian—The Lost World." I see Sandra

Bullock playing me, but knowing Hollywood, it'll probably be Brenda Vaccaro, with a special guest-star appearance of Barney the Dinosaur playing the critical supporting role of "The Serials Cataloger."

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She's
Bold!!
She's
Sassy!!
She's
Helpful!!!



She's...

The Lipstick Librarian!



If so, you just might be a Lipstick Librarian. Created by Linda Absher of Lewis and Clark College, the Lipstick Librarian! Web site (<http://www.teleport.com/~petlin/liplib/>) is creating

The Essential Law Librarian Bibliography

by Linda Absher (*The Lipstick Librarian*)

created for *AALL Spectrum*

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Dornan, R. "'What Happened to the New Shelver?': Human Sacrifice as a Time Management Tool." *Prehistoric Law Library Management*, Sept. 16, 1997, pp. 467-468.

Greene, L. "'Have We Got an Assignment for You!': Tips on Getting that Summer Law Intern to Clean Your House." *Inside Law Libraries*, Jan. 7, 1991, pp. 17-827.

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Mendelsohn, V. "Optimize Your Job Search: The Definitive List of Law Firms Within a Half-Mile Radius of Major Department Stores." In *Dress for Legal Success*, San Francisco: Designer Outlet Press, 1995. pp. 17-29.

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Think you too might be a Lipstick Librarian? Take this quiz (excerpted from the Lipstick Librarian! Web site):

1. Do you have an MLS or MLIS?

- My degree's from Southeastern Mississippi Technical Institute and I haven't touched a mascara wand since 1972. (0 pts.)
- My degree's from Central Wisconsin State U. and I once thought of purchasing a pair of moderate high-heels at Macy's during an ALA conference in New York. (2 pts. for women; 25 pts. for men)
- No degree, but I played a glamorous yet evil librarian for three episodes of *All My Children*—I died in a mysterious cataloguing accident! (35 pts.)

2. My idea of erotic literature is:

- The *Diary of Anais Nin*. (10 pts.)
- The newest bodice-ripper in our popular fiction collection. (5 pts.)
- AACR2, especially the section on corporate-added entries. (0.5 pts.)

3. If you could, what would you wear at the reference desk?

- Comfortable separates in cotton knit. (2 pts.)
- Sequins, but my library director won't let me. (35 pts.)
- Discontinued journals, clear masking tape and scratched CD-ROMs, but my library director won't let me. (0.16 pts.)

SCORING:

80–60 pts: Congratulations! You're a high-flyin', rouge-smearin' Lipstick Librarian! You spend countless hours trying to find Post-Its in aubergine and sage. We know you've got a little shrine to RuPaul somewhere back in your cubicle. In short: you go girl!!

59–40 pts: You have definite Lipstick Librarian tendencies. You're probably the kind of person who spends your annual serials budget on *Marie Claire* and *Interview Magazine* yet you run a one-person library for a hydrologic engineering firm. The cure? Give in and go buy those Vivienne Westwood wedgies and that Donna Karan body stocking you've been dreaming about!

39–20 pts: By now you've realized that upstairs there's a lonely fashion synapse firing hopelessly in the dark. You want to be a Lipstick Librarian, you need to be a Lipstick Librarian, but somehow you always wind up in the murky back aisles of K-Mart amongst those granny sweatshirts and ammo supplies. Your idea of sexy footwear is Birkenstocks with a sling on the back. An erotic evening for you would be trying to wash 10 of your long-haired cats while listening to NPR. Take comfort in knowing you're not alone—after all, you are a librarian. . . .

Under 20 pts: Sigh . . . let's be blunt, shall we? You're probably reading this right now over a mound of pathfinders from the 1960s you've saved in case of a bibliographic instruction emergency, or (if you're a cataloger) while you're building a catalog database of your canned goods. ("Does the can shape count as an access point?") The closest you've come to make-up are the perfume samples you rip out of magazines 'cause you have a chemical sensitivity to everything except that strange gritty soap in the ladies room. You must learn to live with your fashion-impaired state—after all, can you really see yourself standing at the reference desk in a vinyl jumpsuit and 6-inch platforms?

Linda Absher, creator of the Lipstick Librarian, is a Reference Librarian (and closet lipliner junkie) at Lewis & Clark College in Portland, Oregon.

Edna S. Dixon, an aspiring Lipstick Librarian, became a cataloger at Georgia State University College of Law Library out of concern that her regular presence at the Reference Desk might be too distracting—much too sexy, who could study?