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THE HOLLYWOOD LIBRARIAN
A Look at Librarians Through Film

Transcript

1950s ANNOUNCER: Your Life Work! These racks and shelves contain a lot of books. Tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions. How do you feel about them? Do they mean something to you? Are they your friends?

NARRATOR: The human word has no parallel in the rest of the animal kingdom. Many species have highly-evolved language, but as far as we know, human beings alone can save their language. Without the written word, where would we find our history, our memory, our knowledge of ourselves and others?

PAT LAWTON: It's mind-boggling. It is still just a miracle to me that this culture has somehow agreed upon marks in sand, on a page, whatever. That these marks – that we can all come out of our individual minds and agree upon what that means.

TEXT ON SCREEN: "Reading is a uniquely human privilege." – Daisaku Ikeda, Japanese philosopher

NARRATOR: Writing and reading cross the boundaries of time and distance. Without them, we are alone, isolated, as if in darkness.

FILM CLIP – The Miracle Worker

> *WOMAN*: Reach! Reach! I wanted to teach you – oh, everything the earth is full of, Helen. Everything on it is ours for a wink and it's gone. And what we are on it, the light we bring to it and leave behind in words. Why, you can see five thousand years back in the light of words. Everything we feel, think, know, and share in words. So, not a soul is in darkness or done with even in the grave.

TEXT ON SCREEN: "Books are one of the few authentic magics our species has created. – John Steinbeck, American writer

MONTAGE – David Copperfield film references

MAN #1: Mrs. Chester, have you ever read David Copperfield?
MAN #2: To know whether I shall be the hero of my own life, whether I shall turn out to be the hero of my own life. Chapter one. I am born. Whether I shall turn out to be the hero of my own life, or whether that station will be held…
WOMAN #1: …the personal history and experience of David Copperfield. Chapter one. I am born.
MAN #3: I am born. Whether I shall turn out to be the hero of my own life… or whether that station will be held by anybody else…
MAN #2: …or whether that station will be held by anybody else, these pages must show.

TEXT ON SCREEN: "I long to throw my arms around every librarian I meet on behalf of all the souls they never knew they saved." – Barbara Kingsolver, American writer

NARRATOR: With all that's ever been written down through the course of history, how on earth do we keep track of it?

1950s ANNOUNCER: We may mention the cataloguers who usually work behind the scenes. They organize and interpret library collections for you readers. There are the reference librarians, who help readers in their search for special information. We have the circulation librarian, who organizes and supervises the distribution of books. We have librarians who serve the young people, much the same as adults are served except that the children's levels of interest are emphasized. There are the school librarians who contribute to the educational programs of their schools. In the smaller schools the library is usually under the supervision and direction of a teacher-librarian, a challenging and rewarding job. When you have two important qualifications – love for books and love for people – you may well consider the vocation of a librarian, a vocation that gives full enjoyment to the librarian and radiates it to the public. Yes, there are many aspects to this worthwhile occupation, all of vital importance in the nation's life.

EUGENIE PRIME: Hypatia was the last librarian of that rich period in Alexandria, and that was the period of the scholar-librarians. They were the people who would be invited to the so-called White House. They were the most important people in the society, and this isn't about power. It's about an appreciation and an understanding of the role that librarians have played. Alexandria became a thriving city because of the library. That's the age when a lot of things happened in mathematics, in medicine, in geography – things which still help define those different subjects and specialties today.

NARRATOR: Hypatia was famous for her skill in mathematics, astronomy, and engineering. The library housed over 700,000 scrolls which the librarians probably arranged by size. The librarians of Alexandria were also trusted advisors and even tutors to the head of state.

FILM CLIP – Cleopatra

MAN: It is called an epilepse because of the arching caused by the muscular spasms – the contortions. The Greeks of early times considered those who suffered from it to be favored by the Gods.

WOMAN: The great Alexander, they say, had this falling sickness.

CHRIS EWING: I've always kind of had a passion for Egyptian stuff, but my passion for hieroglyphics comes with the crossover between information architecture and the soul of information. There is a direct correlation between the ancient Egyptian scribes and their ability to put a story on a small piece of stone or even a wall using hieroglyphics, pictograms, and ideograms. If they were looking at a small stone and the Pharaoh said, I need this story of this War depicted on this stone, they would look at the stone, and they would look at the size, and they would start to conceptualize where they needed to use pure hieroglyphics or single characters, where they needed to use the pictograms – which represent words or actions, and where they needed to use ideograms.

EUGENIE PRIME: We like to think of the library and disassociate the librarians from the library, and it's the librarians who make the library whatever it is. The librarian holds a very important role in a society, and I would like to think that in the future that there is still this very critical and important role – keepers of the flame. Whether it's the flame of democracy, whether it's the flame of freedom, whatever that flame is, that we are in a sense keepers of that flame – that civilizing flame.

TV CLIP – The Twilight Zone

MAN: You're a librarian, Mr. Wordsworth. You're a dealer in books and two-cent fines and pamphlets and closed stacks in the musty insides of a language factory that spews out meaningless words on an assembly line. Words, Mr. Wordsworth, that have no substance and no dimension, like air, like the wind, like a vacuum that you make believe has an existence by scribbling index numbers on little cards.

FILM CLIP – Plaza Suite

MAN: Killing's too good for her. She can go into a convent. Let her become a librarian with thick glasses and a pencil in her hair.

FILM CLIP – Big Bully

WOMAN: It's 8,862 days overdue.

FILM CLIP – Goodbye, Columbus

MAN: Would you take the main information desk this morning? Erikson just called, his mother's not well, and he can't come in. There's always something. Always.

FILM CLIP – Party Girl

WOMAN: I assume you're familiar with the Dewey decimal system?

NARRATOR: The fussy, bad-tempered librarian is a stock stereotype in film and television. Aside from a few positive roles, being a librarian – according to the movies – is usually anything but a wonderful life.

FILM CLIP – It's A Wonderful Life

MAN #1: Tell me where she is.
MAN #2: You're not going to like it, George.
MAN #1: Where is she?
MAN #2: She's an old maid. She never married.
MAN #1: Where's Mary? Where is she? Where is she?
MAN #2: She's just about to close up the library.

NARRATOR: For a woman who wanted to work rather than marry in the 1800s, few respectable options were open to her. Job descriptions for librarians advertised for the feminine virtues along with competence and intelligence. A female professional of any kind was considered suspect, and putting a woman in charge of a library was, for some, like hiring Eve to hand out apples. Perhaps this explains the ultra-proper image cultivated by early women librarians. It was commonplace to project an air of gracious domesticity in their libraries with such home-like touches as flowers and works of art. Women's progress into librarianship was also aided by an enterprising, if arrogant, librarian: Melvil Dewey.

FILM CLIP – Party Girl

WOMAN #1: When most women are struggling to demonstrate their intelligence, their complexity, here you are trying to prove just how stupid you can be.
WOMAN #2: Judy, please!
WOMAN #1: Look. Here is a card from an early card catalogue. See that handwriting. Look at the flowery script. That's what young lady librarians were taught – penmanship.
WOMAN #2: I am sorry!
WOMAN #1: Melvil Dewey hired women as librarians because he believed the job didn't require any intelligence. It was a woman's job!

NARRATOR: A woman's job – one with less pay and less respect than a man's. Today, librarianship – mostly female – is paid twenty-five percent less than similar professions – mostly male. Still, librarians insist they can't imagine doing any other kind of work.

MOLLY KLISS: I think it's different. Deciding to become a librarian is different for everybody, depending on what kind of a librarian they want to be or what they're interested in. I did my undergrad in comparative literature and German literature, and

kind of considered going on to graduate school in one of those fields but, for myself, I definitely think it was kind of a calling because when I kind of thought, maybe I should go to library school, it just – it felt right.

KLISS' PROFESSOR: *(in class)* …a lot of the reaction to this book that we've already seen, right? Especially in Christine Pawley's essay at the beginning. But there was another objection to this book I think you probably picked up on from that first essay and maybe from some of the other things we've been reading…

MOLLY KLISS: From the very first day when I went out on the reference desk and was learning about all the various resources and databases and helping people, I just knew that it couldn't get any better.

JAMIE LERUE: I was playing baseball, and I was probably six years old. I was way out in right field, and I was bored out of my mind. And then I saw a shimmering on the horizon – this blue bus. And this blue bus was a bookmobile. And I walked off the baseball diamond – just left – and stepped inside, and there the first thing I saw was Mrs. Dolores Johnson. And she had the little bangs, and the bun in the back, and she had the sweater with the little chain across this, and she looked at me like I was the person she had been waiting for all of her life.

NANCY PARADISE: When I turned fifty I decided that I would be a librarian because when you're fifty years old you can do anything you want to. And I had wanted to be a librarian my entire life. I have been a librarian for fifteen months. It is the best job in the world because every day you get to learn something new, and every day you get to talk to different people. And in my case I get to see children all day. And it's just really, really fun. Not much money, but really, really fun.

JAMIE LERUE: And around the bookmobile, about two, three rows up there was this blue line that was painted. Everything above the blue line was adult; below the blue line was the children's books. And in those days you could only take the children's books. And for a while I thought, how smart, you know? The kid's books are down here where I am, and there's so much to read. And about three months later, I decided that that was not good enough. And so I started trying to sneak the books from above the blue line, and you'd take the skinniest book you could find up there, and the fattest book you could find in the children's collection, and combine them, and hope that you could slip it past Mrs. Johnson and get out the door with an adult book. And so she'd go through it and very quietly remove all of the adult books from my stack. And I'd say, Mrs. Johnson, "no, I found that in the children's books." And she would say, "no, that was over the line." And I became a librarian to find out what was over the line.

EUGENIE PRIME: My earliest memory is sitting at my mom's feet. She's combing my hair in plaits, and I'm reading. I was born in Trinidad, Ver Cities, the thirteenth of fourteen

children. And there are all these stories about me as a kid hiding under the bed to read and falling out of closets in the middle of the night because I fell asleep there reading. And I do have problems with my eyes, and my family were convinced that it's all those times I used to crawl into the closet reading and just seeing from these chinks of light.

RAY BRADBURY: When I was twelve years old, we traveled on route 66 from Illinois out to Arizona and finally to California. But the first thing I did every night on the trip – it took nine days – but I could hardly wait for the day to be over. Why? Because a library was waiting for me. So I discovered in crossing America seventy years ago, and all the books they had there that they didn't have in Waukegan. So when my father stopped the car, I hit the ground running to the nearest library because there was mystery waiting and surprise.

EUGENIE PRIME: Library corner was how it's called and was right there at the opening of High Street. It seemed big. I mean it was a two-story building – that's big, by my standards. And I went in there, and the world became small. The world became my world because of all these books. The place just pulsated with life, and it seemed right because I think it was indeed the life of that city. It was a Carnegie library.

CHRISTINE PAWLEY: Carnegie himself, of course, made his money making steel, and he was a poor immigrant from Scotland. He was allowed to use the Library of a local colonel, and Carnegie educated himself, he later said, through borrowing the books. He wrote an article called Wealth for the North American Review, which was a high-culture, elite publication at the end of the nineteenth century, where he talked about people like himself receiving huge sums of money. He saw great disparities in wealth in America, and he saw philanthropy as a way of spreading that wealth more evenly. He was obviously uncomfortable with how rich he had become, and libraries were his way of sharing the goods that he himself had received. There were no boundaries around who could use the library and who could not. So men and women could use the library, rich people and poor people, because the library was free. And the outside of the Tipton Public Library does proclaim this – The Free Library. Black and white benefited from Carnegie munificence but in different ways. He didn't want the libraries to be seen to be a monument to him, but the libraries were to be a kind of people's university.

ANDREW CARNEGIE: *(speaking in 1913)* This, then, is held to be the duty of the man of wealth. First, to set an example of modest, unostentatious living. To provide moderately for the legitimate wants of those dependent upon him; and, after doing so, to consider all surplus revenues which come to him simply as trust funds.

CHRISTINE PAWLEY: Because it was not that Carnegie necessarily had a plan to fund two and a half thousand public libraries in the world, but that's what happened. Another aspect which people perhaps forget is that at the end of the nineteenth century, children were not necessarily welcome in public libraries. There was quite often a requirement that

children be at least ten years old or twelve years old before they could be issued a library ticket. But the Carnegie libraries made specific provision for children. There would be a children's room or a children's area, often scaled-down furniture, and with domestic interior architecture, little nooks, and fireplaces. And so Carnegie buildings, in a way, spurred the development of children's librarianship and service to children.

NARRATOR: John Steinbeck was only five when a Carnegie library opened in his town in 1907. Nurtured by librarians, he would grow up to win the Nobel Prize for literature.

JOHN STEINBECK: *(dramatization)* In the old library where Mrs. Carrie Strining for so many years presided over the stacks, I browsed the product practically to the roots.

NARRATOR: James Dean starred in the Elia Kazan movie version of Steinbeck's East of Eden. The Salinas Valley, the setting for his best-selling novel, remains largely unchanged today.

SUSAN SHILLINGLAW: His fiction is full of the texture of what it looks like and feels like to be here in California. He both loved the country around Salinas, the hills, the valleys, the trees, the insects, the plants, the birds, but he didn't like the town social structure. He grew up in a family with a father who was a businessman, his mother who was a former teacher, and three sisters. He was very, very close to his younger sister Mary, and together they would ride around the hills of Salinas on a pony named Jill – the red pony. Salinas was not pleased with the sort of political implications of much of his work because, you know, he was siding with the workers very much so in the late '30s. In Of Mice and Men, in Dubious Battle, his novel about a strike, and The Grapes of Wrath, Steinbeck's sympathies are very much with the marginalized, migrant workers – the people who are outside mainstream California culture. That he was, you know, telling the town gossip, so to speak, that didn't go over very well. The town of Salinas was both uncomfortable with Steinbeck's works and of course aware that he was a very well known American writer and wanted to honor him in some way, so they wrote him a letter in 1959 saying, how about naming the high school after you? The John Steinbeck High School? He said, heavens, no, you know. Name a bowling alley after me or something else, but not a high school because certainly my academic record is not going to inspire anyone. And then they thought next, maybe a browsing room in the library, and he was much more favorably inclined. He loved libraries, clearly, because he cared about books, and anybody who cares about books wants libraries as part of any community because books are important.

NARRATOR: Ultimately, Salinas named the main library itself after John Steinbeck. Over the years, the library has grown from a single downtown library to three full branches around the city. Then, after more than one hundred years of library service, the city council, due to steadily declining revenues, made a heartbreaking decision.

RADIO NEWS CLIPS: …that door and the doors of two more Salinas libraries will be slammed shut for children like thirteen-year-old… …the city council voted last fall to cut police and fire services and closed the town's rec centers and all three public libraries… …and also ironic. The hometown of Nobel Prize-winning author John Steinbeck would have been the largest city in the nation… …for over twenty-five years and called the council action shameful… …the next challenge will be convincing residents who voted against the November tax measures to keep the libraries open – though just barely, until a new tax measure could go before residents.

RUTH GILBERT: My name is Ruth Gilbert, and I've been a professional librarian for almost forty years. The image of the librarian has always been a little iffy. When I first got my degree, one of my friends said, how much is that per "Shh!"

MONTAGE – library users being told to "Shh!" in films

> *MAN*: *(singing)* Madam Librarian. (*Shh!*) What can I do, my dear, to catch your ear? I love you madly, madly, madam librarian, Marian. Heaven help us if the library caught on fire… (*Shh!*) …and the volunteer hose brigade men had to whisper the news to… (*Shh!*) …Marian? (*Shh!*) Madam librarian. (*Would you kindly lower your voice, miss?*) What can I say… (*Shh!*) …my dear… (*Shh!*) …to tell you, dear? (*Shh!*) I love you madly, madly, Madam Librarian… (*Shh!*) …Marian. (*Shh!*) It's a long-lost cause I can never win… (*Shh!*) …for the civilized world accepts as unforgivable sin… (*Shh!*) …any talking out loud with any librarian. (*Shh!*) Madam Labriarian.

GROUP SINGING: Got to shake, shake, shake my sillies out. Shake, shake, shake my sillies out. Shake, shake, shake your sillies out. Wiggle my waggles away.

MARIA MENA: The children who are exposed early to stimulus, through books and rhymes and music, develop better and are better able to become successful learners later on. So, basically this is a program that's teaching parents how to interact with their children. It's teaching the children early literacy skills, motor skills, memory skills. They have a larger vocabulary, they have longer attention spans. The children learn the rhymes – even children as young as a year old – learn the motions to the rhymes and do them at home. They do them in the car on the way to the library, if it's Tuesday or Wednesday, which ever program they attend. They know – very, very, very young ages – they know that they're coming to the library to do a program. *(to group)* Welcome. This is a program for babies and their caregivers. So we encourage you to participate and have fun, and if you feel that you need a break and you need to walk out, please feel free to do so. *(in interview)* Baby time books need to be very, very basic – very short story line, if at all. We like reading Chicka Chicka Boom Boom by Bill Martin. It teaches them cadence, it teaches them sequencing, has bright, colorful illustrations. That's the type of book that you can use for babytime. *(to group)* A told B, and B told C, I'll meet you at the top of the coconut tree. Whee, said D to E-F-G. I'll beat you to the top of the coconut tree. Chicka chicka boom boom, will there be enough room? *(in interview)* I can remember something that

happened when I first started working as a librarian. We called it a lapsit. And it was a program for very young children. And there was this woman who came who was from El Salvador, like I am, and she had a granddaughter. The granddaughter had some developmental issues, and we weren't sure how much she was getting. She was quiet and not very participatory, but the grandmother was very consistent about bringing her and incorporating her into the activities. One day this little girl actually did the motions to 'if you're happy and you know it.' And I noticed it, and the grandmother noticed it. And so, when the program was over I said, did you see? And she said, yes, I did see. And that actually brought tears to my eyes, because I never thought that that little girl was actually going to make it.

GROUP SINGING: [Itsy Bitsy Spider in Spanish] Salió el sol y todo lo secó. Y la araña pequeñita subió, subió, subió.

PEG PERRY: You're stupid to be a librarian if you don't like kids because you've got 'em, whether you like 'em or not. There were some children on the library lawn using very foul language, so I went out there and said, you're not to speak that way on library property. I know more four-letter words than you'll even dream of, so stop it now. And they looked very terrified and stopped. The library in Collinsville, which was the only public library, was open four hours a day with no telephone. So we had to fix that first. Went down and raised hell with the town officials 'til we got some money and got a phone. And then they needed a library at Cherry Brook School, so I got the Mother's Club volunteers and we put in a library there. Questions were the great thing. If they didn't ask questions, there wouldn't be any fun.

MONTAGE – "Reference, Miss Watson" from Desk Set

WOMAN: Reference, Miss Watson… Reference, Miss Watson… Reference, Miss Watson… Reference, Miss Watson… Reference, Miss Watson
MAN: Reference, Miss Watson speaking…

PEG PERRY: They wanted to ask me a question. They said, is it true that you're Katherine Hepburn's sister? And I said, yes. And their faces fell and they said, well, what are you doing in the Canton Public Library? But we read a lot. As a family we read aloud, too. My mother would read aloud, and my father would read aloud, and we'd all listen. Katty was golf state champion when she was sixteen. She was very good. And I think dad expected the rest of us to be that good, but we weren't. She was the best.

FILM CLIP – Desk Set

MISS WATSON: Ruthie, you got any memos you want me to check?
RUTHIE: There are a few, Miss Watson. Here they are, if you would.
MISS WATSON: I'd say the Times Index for this. The Old Farmer's Almanac for this, if not U.S. Weather Information Service. But check the Farmer's Almanac first and save time. This is from the Bible. Book of Amos, chapter one.

RUTHIE: Thank you.

MARILYN MARTIN: My name is Marilyn Martin. I'm a library media specialist in the Denver Public Schools, and I'm in the best job in the world.

YOUNG BOY: She has kind of crinkles in her cheek, only a little bit at the bottom like around here, and maybe really tiny ones around there, but she still looks nice.

TEEN GIRL: Mrs. Martin was my elementary school librarian, and I got to spend a lot of time up here just because - I don't know - at this school, being in the library was always encouraged.

MARILYN MARTIN: *(to children)* …the cow. We use the cow for milk, we use it for cheese, we use it for leather.

TEEN GIRL: And she was just a really fun and loving person and definitely gave me a lot of the things that I have now in life, you know.

PETER SHERMAN: Marilyn Martin, our librarian, is an incredible librarian. It's evident just from walking into the library. She's got this amazing space that is both welcoming and just really, really rich with books and resources. One of the great opportunities about a librarian in a school like ours is that they get to know all of the students. It's a really central place, and so kids are coming through all the time. And parents come through also.

MARILYN MARTIN: I do have a great advantage with the children because I see them, oh, maybe once a week – maybe every day if I'm on outside duty, or if they're coming in to do special projects – but I don't see them all day long. I notice them in a different way. And I notice the children who don't hear well. I notice the children who aren't seeing well. I also notice – I noticed one child, for instance, that – they were sitting in a circle with me, and I thought she was falling asleep, but she wasn't. I noticed the number of times, and I commented on it to the teacher. She was having petit mal seizures.

PETER SHERMAN: As kids walk through the door, Marilyn just says to them, you know, how did you like that book? And she's aware of what kids are checking out and what they're reading, and that's such an integral part to our school – to the literacy piece. But she also knows kids psychologically and emotionally.

MARILYN MARTIN: There's not many negatives, being a school librarian. I think we're lucky. I think I'm lucky. I'm a very lucky person.

FILM CLIP – A Tree Grows in Brooklyn

WOMAN: Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy? Are you sure you want this?
YOUNG GIRL: Yes, ma'am.
WOMAN: Don't you think it's a trifle over your head?
YOUNG GIRL: Yes, ma'am.
WOMAN: Well then, why did you select it?
YOUNG GIRL: Well, I read all the authors beginning with A's and all the B's down to Burton. It's next.
WOMAN: You mean you're trying to read your way straight through the library?
YOUNG GIRL: Yes, ma'am.
WOMAN: But a book like this, you'll only be confused.
YOUNG GIRL: Please, I want to read clear through the alphabet. I want to know everything in the world.
WOMAN: Well, all right. Only do something for me will you? Take another book, too. Here. When Knighthood Was in Flower, just for fun. It's Saturday. I'll have a headache thinking about you wrestling with the Anatomy of Melancholy all weekend. Will you?
YOUNG GIRL: Yes, ma'am.

FILM CLIP – Goodbye, Columbus

YOUNG BOY: Hey mister, what is this place?
MAN: That's Tahiti. It's an island in the Pacific Ocean.
YOUNG BOY: That ain't no place you could go, is it? Like a resort?
MAN: Mmm, you could go there, I suppose. It's very far. People live there.
YOUNG BOY: Look at this one. Man, ain't that the life. Who took these pictures?
MAN: No. He didn't take them, he painted them – Paul Gauguin. He was a Frenchman.
YOUNG BOY: He's a white man or a colored man?
MAN: He's white.
YOUNG BOY: Oh, I knew that.

FILM CLIP – Matilda

NARRATOR: Mrs. Phelps offered Matilda some valuable library information.
MRS. PHELPS: You know, you can have your very own library card, and then you can take books home, and you wouldn't have to walk here every day. You could take as many as you like.
MATILDA: That would be wonderful.
NARRATOR: So Matilda's strong, young mind continued to grow, nurtured by the voices of all those authors who had sent their books out into the world, like ships onto the sea. These books gave Matilda a hopeful and comforting message: You are not alone.

FILM CLIP – Dangerous Minds

TEEN GIRL: Do not go gentle into that good night. Old age should burn and rave at close of day. Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

PAT LAWTON: I remember it was after church one day. I was very small. I was not even in the first grade. And my parents were talking to the nuns that were going to be my teachers. And they were talking – something came up about reading – and I remember thinking, oh my god, how are they going to do this? How are they – how are they going to teach me how to read?

ROGER SIMPSON: The library have given me a chance to better my life. You see, at the age of forty I became homeless. I had problems with my reading and writing. I had to drop out of school in the ninth grade to go to work. So I came to the Center for Reading and Writing, also known as CRW, at Tompkins Square Library. Since I have been coming to the library, I have achieved a place to stay of my own and my first bank account. I have a good job and paying my own rent. Now I'm standing on my own two feet again. So I love this library. Thank you.

ESL INSTRUCTOR: Their teeth are chattering. Can you say chattering? Chattering.

CLARA RAMIREZ: She has an interest in every single person. Each problem is important for her. You can feel here important for her.

ESL INSTRUCTOR: I don't hear the chattering.

CLARA RAMIREZ: *(in class)* How do you spell chattering?

ESL INSTRUCTOR: How do you spell chattering? C…?

CLASS: H-A-T-T-E-R-I-N-G

ESL INSTRUCTOR: Good for you. That's excellent, Yumi.

CLARA RAMIREZ: I want to say thank you very much to Eileen, to the library. It's a great opportunity, and something very special that happened with me is I think I have good knowledge in English, but I have a lot of confusion. In here, class by class, I have a clear step by step. So I'm really enjoying the classes here. Thank you very much.

OLISH TUNSTALL: I had an eighth-grade education. I'm currently one class short for my AA degree from Pan College. I have my x-ray certification – I'm certified by the State of California as an x-ray tech. And I have to admit, the opportunities that were available to me – this is just a way for me to get back.

ABRAHAM GLASPER: Well I actually had a guy, his problem was phonics – phonetics, the pronunciation of letters together. And he had been in the program awhile, and I had been away for a while. No one could seem to, you know, get him going. After having sat down with him, and he explained to me exactly what his problem was, and it was like an epiphany. He doesn't know the function of two letters together and the sound that they make. So I ran around the room, attempting to find a book that dealt with sounds. And once we get him that book, and he was able to learn, you know – the sound that T-H makes, the sound that F-R makes. And you just saw his progression in reading just skyrocketed. And for me, you know, being that he was in here all this time feeling as though he couldn't find any help, and I was instrumental in giving him that help – that was a pretty cool feeling. Yeah.

INMATE: Everybody comes to jail is scared. It's important to catch the guys when they first come through here, either through the reception or transfer from other facilities. We try to befriend him and let him know, hey, this is a place – and do the best thing that you can with your time while you're here.

PHILLIP SEILER: I mean you see how busy it is here tonight, and there's actually a lot of students that aren't here because they're playing an outside team – they're playing soccer out – you know, they're playing a team that came from outside, and so, there's quite a few students that aren't even here.

OLISH TUNSTALL: The Marin Literacy Library is pretty much – they're like our outside sponsor. So they pretty much sponsor a lot of stuff for us. They provide the tutor training, to train the tutors that come in, any supplies or books or materials we need as far as different, various stuff. They supply all that for us. She's an excellent sponsor. She's been behind the program from day one.

JANE CURTIS: So library literacy programs are student-based, they're learner-centered. And what we wanted to do was create a program inside San Quentin State Prison – and really any correctional institution – where we would change the values and the culture of the community. We wanted to create an opportunity for inmates who have learned to read and improve their literacy skills on their own to be able to give something to, maybe, guys that were going to get out sooner than they were, younger guys – mentor them. And we wanted to support them in that effort, because we know that the best kind of teacher is the one who sits on the same side of the table with you.

PHILLIP SEILER: I just happened to be reading right now a pretty good book. I read a lot of different books. I read some books for fun, and there's other books that I read. I read, like, self-help type books, like that. You know, it's the first step to anything, really. I mean, you know, you start to learn how to read from age – what, three or four years old, you're getting read books and learning how to read. And so it's like the first step into learning some basics and being able to move on to whatever kind of, you know, education skills or

working skills or whatever. It's like the first step. I've had a few students where they was just really basic, down to like the, I don't know, fourth, fifth grade or whatever – really low – and it's just like they're rewarded. They're rewarded over and over, because you go through that process so quickly, and it just gets their esteem and their momentum going to move on to other things, other than academic.

OLISH TUNSTALL: Well, I have a parole hearing coming up next year, so, you know, hopefully I'll get a day to be paroled, you know. Right now I'm at twenty-three years incarcerated.

PHILLIP SEILER: My name is Phil Seiler. I'm from Sacramento.

ABRAHAM GLASPER: Abraham Glasper.

OLISH TUNSTALL: My name is Olish Tunstall. I'm from San Bernardino, California.

EUGENIE PRIME: To me, the library represents all that freedom represents. I mean if you really think about what is freedom? Freedom simply means the power to choose – that I am empowered to have choices. I have choices as I'm exposed to information. So think of the library as that living symbol of freedom.

PAT LAWTON: We're not just a bunch of women sitting around making marks on pages.

KATHLEEN DUNN: And hello again, I'm Kathleen Dunn. You're listening to the ideas network of Wisconsin Public Radio. Nancy Pearl is here in person. She's a regular commentator about books on National Public Radio. I read whatever she recommends. She's the author of the best-seller, Book Lust. In 2003, More Book Lust came out, and she's now working on book recommendations for children and also for teenagers…

NANCY PEARL: *(in interview)* In my experience, books are something that people are absolutely ravenous about. And the books that people love, they want to share with other people. *(on the radio)* I think that one of the reasons that book clubs are so popular now is that, in many ways, people are really – maybe desperate is too strong a word – but really interested in making connections beyond the very superficial kinds of interchanges that you have with people. And I once tested this, and I went for a whole day without talking to anybody. I mean I went to the grocery store and did my self-checkout at the grocery store. You can get your gasoline without ever talking to anybody. I mean you can do your banking without – so I think, I think that people are really eager to find people to talk about – about something that's not superficial. *(in interview)* For me, what's so exciting about book discussions, particularly book discussions that take place in public spaces, like libraries or community centers, is that all of those surface differences are, in many ways, not eradicated, but we move beyond those surface differences to see the common humanity. The fact that we all live in this world, and we all are going to

experience the death of people who we love, and we all are going to grow old. And by reading a book in which the character in some ways does some of those things, or even just hints that some of those things are going to occur, I think is a way of really saying, wow, you think that way, too?

KATHLEEN DUNN: You ought to do a book now on how to remember the books that you've read, because that's how you astound me. Does that happen to you? All these books I've read and I think, what's the name of that book? What's the name of that book? And it's right there for you.

NANCY PEARL: …by Marjan Satrapi called Persepolis… this is a book called Neverwhere by Neil Gaiman… there's a book called e=mc 2… Doris Kearns Goodwin's new book… and that book, Lincoln's Melancholy… Kite Runner would be a good one… A Game of Thrones, it's called… Nadine Gordimer… I think those would be really good books to read in conjunction with reading Lolita in Tehran… It's set in London… which is about Sri Lanka… her story of growing up… is nonfiction about Theodore Roosevelt… which is such an interesting book… a wonderful book that I just love… gorgeous, gorgeous writing… just heartbreakingly sad… the birth of the comic book industry, which is so interesting… terrific memoir… a wonderful novel.

KATHLEEN DUNN: So, Nancy, you got a book to recommend? This was wonderful. Applause for Nancy Pearl. Thank you so much.

ELEANORE SCHMIDT: We have a collection of probably thirty – in thirty languages – but some of them are collected to a lesser degree and some to a pretty extensive degree, and the most common would be Spanish. And we have a large collection of Spanish books, and also Khmai, which is the language of Cambodia. Long Beach has the largest population of Cambodians outside of Cambodia proper. In a short time, we're going to be having a Cambodian cultural festival here at the library that we are cosponsoring, and it's being organized by a Cambodian rapper that I became acquainted with.

praCh Ly: *(rapping)* …and damn, it seemed hard. An immigrant – in the wallet, a green card. A product of Cambodia, a beautiful country, but Pol Pot's war tore that apart. Now I live with shattered dreams and broken boulevards. And I can still feel it. My past is poisonous. I should conceal it and leave alone…

ELEANORE SCHMIDT: Some of his lyrics were included in this book published by the University of Hawaii on Cambodian artists. And we got to talking and we started to talk about, you know, what we could do to promote Cambodian culture and encourage Cambodian writers here in Long Beach, because we have such a large Cambodian community.

1950s ANNOUNCER: Then there are the specialists in subject resources, particularly in scientific, technical, and social science fields, who render a bibliographic and reference service to public, university, and special libraries. The specialized library in an industrial plant is different from the one owned by a law firm. Hospital librarians provide special service for patients and hospital personnel.

LARRY SEIDL: Oh, my goodness. The librarians at Denver Health Medical Center saved my bacon on more than one occasion.

RUTH GILBERT: Librarians have always felt that they were a part – sometimes not acknowledged greatly – but a part of patient care, education, and research – the three directives of hospitals.

RHEA LAWSON: Just recently, I sat with a woman who said, oh, you're a librarian? I like books. They usually go – I'm a librarian, I like books. And I just told her that, well, you know, I'm responsible for a multimillion-dollar business called a library – called a public library. I have a staff of six hundred and we have thirty-seven locations. So, I really am a businesswoman running a business, and I'm not just shelving books.

ELEANORE SCHMIDT: You need special skills and special training. You know, but yes, I do come up against that quite often, and it troubles me. You know – maybe it's because librarians make it look so easy, what we do.

FILM CLIP – Librarian: Quest for the Spear

WOMAN: What makes you think you could be the librarian?
MAN: I know the Dewey decimal system, library of congress, research paper orthodoxy, web searching. I could set up an RSS feed.
WOMAN: Everybody knows that. They're librarians.

PAT LAWTON: When people come up to me at parties and say, you know, what do you do? And I say that I teach. And what do you teach specifically? And I'll say, cataloguing. And they will then, most often go, oh, like 001, 002. And I laugh and I take it, you know. But what they don't understand – and I think this is a real misconception – that the 001, 002, is a fairly complicated technology, okay? So, it's just my opportunity here to disabuse people of the notion that cataloguing is mindless. It is one of the most intellectually stimulating disciplines that I've ever engaged in.

FILM CLIP – Party Girl

OLD WOMAN: For your information, Freud's study of Dora is not a biography. It is the cornerstone of his psychoanalysis. That's psychology, dear. The psychology section is, for your information, in the 100s, along with philosophy and logic.
YOUNG WOMAN: *(reading to herself)* Classification provides a system for organizing a universe of items, be they objects, concepts, or records…

PAT LAWTON: Prior to cataloguing records in computer systems, you had very limited fields. They could only have x-number, like ten, characters per field. It was very, very limited. And librarians came in and said, but I don't know how long the title's going to be. I have to get the whole title in there. And it pushed computer scientists to explore the idea of a variable-length field – of a field that could expand. And these kinds of contributions continue on and on. What librarianship brings in cataloguers – in particular to the organization of information – is at play in Yahoo, it's at play in Google.

EUGENIE PRIME: We are in a problem-solving business. Not merely throwing information at people, but solving problems. And not any problem. The real problem. We help people define what their information need is. Many people do not know what it is they really need. And they ask questions, and it's not the real question. We have a way of getting people to share with us what that problem is and then are able to package the answer in a way they would want. Google can't meet that, no way. The catalogue was the first tool that was hyperlinks. You go to your catalogue, and you look at the tracings on the catalogue card, and it told you that if you're looking on this subject, if you look at this other book – it is related. The first hyperlink! The people thought that they created hyperlink with the 'net. Come on, guys.

CHRIS EWING: Everybody thinks that everything's on the internet, but true data is hard to find on the internet. And that's why we use the user feedback, and that's why we use the stakeholders or the people who own the content. Why do you have this content? Who are you trying to get it to? Why are you trying to get it to them? And what do you want them to get out of it? You know, okay, you know that. Well, I take a user, and I say, here's the content that this person wants you to see, and this is the piece they want you to get out of it. What steps would you take to get to that information? And then I take those two, and I connect them together in the end. And that's what causes, you know, a very nice storyboarding of the website.

EUGENIE PRIME: A lot of who we are, a lot of our culture, is not only in words. It's not written. It's also in artifacts. It's also in painting. It's also in music. How do we capture that for future generations?

PAT LAWTON: When you're dealing with text, you have text. With an image, though, there are so many dimensions to it. Is it of a woman in a hat? Or is it about loss? What's it of? What's it about? What's important to you? What do you want to know? Simply women with hats? Or do you want to be able to get images that are about loss? About love? About longing?

MONTAGE – Librarian stereotypes in films

The Music Man
WOMAN: One hears rumors about traveling salesmen.
MAN: Oh, now Miss Marian you mustn't believe everything you hear. Why, after all, one even hears rumors about librarians.

The Station Agent
MAN #1: Hey, when were blimps invented?
WOMAN: I have no idea.
MAN #2: Yeah, me neither. You know, you can go down to the library and ask that little hottie.
WOMAN: She is cute.
MAN #2: It's the librarian fantasy, man – glasses off, hair down, books flying.
MAN #1: She doesn't wear glasses.
WOMAN: Buy her some, it's worth it.

No Man of Her Own
WOMAN: History?
MAN: Uh, well – that, uh, that blue…
WOMAN: The Land of Romance?
MAN: Oh, no, no, no. No, no – uh, that blue…
WOMAN: The British Isles?
MAN: No, no.

Threesome
WOMAN: I think there's something you should know. I find libraries very erotic. The smell of old books, the silence, the long aisles, to be lost in the stacks.

Desk Set
WOMAN #1: Bon voyage!
WOMAN #2: Goodbye, goodbye! Is this your first Mediterranean cruise?
MAN: Yes, but don't tell anybody.
WOMAN #2: Why not?
MAN: Because I'm the captain.
WOMAN #2: Oh, well, I'll help you steer. I'm independently wealthy, you know. I've made this cruise often.
MAN: Yes, yes, there's something about the way you wear that pencil in your hair that spells money.

Love Story
MAN: Uh, look, we're allowed to use the Radcliffe Library.

WOMAN: I am not talking legality, Preppie, I'm talking ethics. I mean Harvard's got five million books, and Radcliffe's got a few lousy thousand.
MAN: All I want is one. I've got an hour exam tomorrow, dammit.
WOMAN: Please. Watch your profanity, Preppie.
MAN: Hey, what makes you so sure I went to prep school?
WOMAN: You look stupid and rich.
MAN: Actually, I'm smart and poor.
WOMAN: Uh-uh, I'm smart and poor.
MAN: What makes you so smart?
WOMAN: I wouldn't go for coffee with you.
MAN: Yeah? Well, I wouldn't ask you.
WOMAN: Well, that's what makes you stupid.

The Music Man
WOMAN: Good afternoon, Mrs. Shinn.
MRS. SHINN: Don't change the subject.
WOMAN: Is something the matter?
MRS. SHINN: The same thing is the matter as is always the matter here. Look. Is this the sort of book you give my daughter to read? This Ruby Hat of Omar Ki-ay-y i-yi. I am appalled.
WOMAN: I did recommend it. It's beautiful Persian poetry.
MRS. SHINN: It's dirty Persian poetry. People lying out in the woods, eating sandwiches, getting drunk, with pitfall and with gin, drinking directly out of jugs with innocent young girls? No daughter of mine has ever…
WOMAN: Mrs. Shinn, the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam is a classic.
MRS. SHINN: It's a smutty book. Like most of the others you keep here, I dare say.

SUSAN SHILLINGLAW: It was a controversial text. And it was burned in St. Louis, burned in Buffalo, burned in Kern County. There was coverage in Life Magazine – how these stalwart men of the community, putting the book into an incinerator and trying to burn the book.

FILM CLIP – Storm Center
MAN: How in the world did this book get in our library?
MRS. HULL: Why, I purchased it.
MAN: Do you know what it's about, Mrs. Hull?
MRS. HULL: Yes, it's about the Communist dream. It's the one Robert took out the other day.
MAN: It's causing trouble. We've had a number of letters and phone calls about it.
MRS. HULL: Well, I'm sorry it's creating a commotion.
MAN: It's pure red propaganda.
MRS. HULL: Yes. It's not even subtle about it.

MAN: Then we certainly should remove it, shouldn't we?
MRS. HULL: Remove it?
MAN: That's right, remove it. You don't propose to defend it?
MRS. HULL: Well, on the contrary, I think it's a preposterous book. But don't you want people to know how preposterous it is?

NARRATOR: Over and over again in the movies, especially in science fiction films, a crumbling or destroyed library is synonymous with the end of civilization itself – where human life is reduced to animal survival.

FILM CLIP – Zardoz

MAN: The truth, the truth! We killed. It was enough. Man was born to hunt and kill.

NARRATOR: In these movies, the light of words has dimmed – words like life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. What appears to be a book in Lady Liberty's right hand is actually the Declaration of Independence. This symbol of the American character embodies the light of words. Andrew Carnegie, himself an immigrant, recognized this connection. His book-and-lamp motif appears on hundreds of Carnegie libraries across the nation. And in 1916, a sculpture was erected on the U.S. Capitol Building that has a young child seated next to a pile of books holding a torch. Above him is a strong female figure, stretching out her arm as if to safeguard his serenity. This sculpture is called Peace Protecting Genius. For all its progress, the twentieth century was the bloodiest hundred years in all of human history. During World War II, a ten-hour bombing campaign took place over London. This famous photo was taken of the Holland House, its library open to the sky. In 2001, an Iranian filmmaker won the Fellini Gold Medal for his film, Kandahar, about Afghanistan. On accepting the prize, Mohsen Makhmalbaf said: "If, during the last 25 years, the powers had poured books on these people's heads instead of bombs, no place would be left for ignorance, tribal affinities and terrorism. And if they had planted wheat under their feet instead of mines, millions of Afghans would not have been forced towards death and refuge." At the dawn of the millennium, a library containing some of the world's oldest and most precious cultural treasures was destroyed during the U.S. invasion of Baghdad. Despite repeated warnings from librarians around the world, U.S. soldiers could not – or would not – prevent the looting and burning of the Iraq National Library and Museum. Donald Rumsfeld, then Secretary of Defense, called the destruction "untidy." We may never know the full extent of the loss. An identical wartime tragedy befell another priceless library in the Middle East – the library of Alexandria in 300 AD.

FILM CLIP – Cleopatra

MAN: Aristotle's manuscripts, the Platonic commentaries, the plays, the histories, the testament of the Hebrew God, the Book of Books.

FILM CLIP – Caesar and Cleopatra

MAN #1: Help, help!
MAN #2: Who is slain?
MAN #1: Slain? Worse than the deaths of ten thousand men – loss irreparable to mankind.
MAN #3: What's happened, man?
MAN #1: The fire has spread from your ships. The library of Alexandria is in flames. Caesar, will you go down in posterity as a barbarous soldier too ignorant to know the value of books?

FILM CLIP – Cleopatra

MAN: We found it necessary to burn the Egyptian fleet.
CLEOPATRA: When last seen, the ships were in the water. Did you find it necessary to burn them in the city streets?
MAN: Some merchant ships caught fire. Their burning masts fell into the streets and houses.
CLEOPATRA: One of them the great library of Alexandria.
MAN: Yes, so I've been told. I'm extremely sorry. Now if you don't mind, I must ask you to –
CLEOPATRA: I do mind. Are you putting the fire out?
MAN: We're trying to form Egyptian prisoners into fire brigades.
CLEOPATRA: Oh, I see. Romans only start fires, is that it? How dare you and the rest of your barbarians set fire to my library? Play conqueror all you want, mighty Caesar, but neither you nor any other barbarian has the right to destroy one human thought.

EUGENIE PRIME: So, should you cry for your library? You should cry for your library, because to lose the library is to lose that symbol of freedom. To lose that symbol of freedom. That's why I think libraries are the ones who are very responsive to the issues of the Patriot Act.

MARTIN GARNAR: It's uniting and strengthening America by providing appropriate tools required to intercept and obstruct terrorism. If they had given as much thought to the law, as they had to the cute name, perhaps the law wouldn't be so bad. In the past there have been concerns about witch-hunts – for Communists in the '50s, radicals in the '70s, and now we're looking for terrorists in the twenty-first century. And there are valid concerns about all of these things. Librarians would like to submit that you do not need to see what someone is reading to understand what they're going to do. One of the scariest concerns that librarians have is that the FBI wants administrative subpoenas, which means that they don't even talk to a judge anymore. This applies not only to your library records, but it applies to your financial records, to your medical records, to your business records. This is what makes us so concerned. And librarians, of course, are mostly concerned about your library records, but when I start that list, when I'm talking

about it – say it's not just your library books. You might not care if people see what you're reading, but you might care what kind of blood tests you had done last month.

NARRATOR: Librarians were among the first to raise the alarm over the new far-reaching government powers of the Patriot Act. They have repeatedly asked that classified documents relating to the FBI's activities in libraries be made available. Attorney General John Ashcroft characterized the concerns of librarians as "hysterics." Librarians stood their ground. For them, the right to privacy is paramount.

MARTIN GARNAR: All they have to do is work with a special agent in charge to sign off on this administrative subpoena. No judicial review. No third party oversight. And it has the same power to go and demand records with the gag order – without being able to tell who's under investigation. And that's just insane.

EUGENIE PRIME: What I read in the library, how I read it, when I read it, if I read it, if I don't is my business. That's what freedom is all about. And until we do that – we would think that taking off our shoes when you're about to take a flight, that's your freedom – it reduces it.

RAY BRADBURY: Fahrenheit 451 is a remarkable book because it was written in a library. Back fifty-five years ago, I was quite poor. I had been married a couple of years. We had a large family, but I had nowhere to go to write, because there were too many people in the house. And I was wandering around UCLA one day, and I heard typing down below in the basement, and I went down to investigate what that sound was. And sure enough, by god, I got down there, discovered there was a typing room where, for ten cents a half an hour, I could rent a typewriter. And I thought, oh, good god, this is a great place to write. Well, how wonderful to be in a library writing a book about burning books.

FILM CLIP – Fahrenheit 451

MAN: Ah, Robinson Crusoe – the Negroes didn't like that because of his man, Friday. Nietzsche – ah, Nietzsche – the Jews didn't like Nietzsche. Ah, here's a book about lung cancer – you see all the cigarette smokers got into a panic, so for everybody's peace of mind, we burn it. You see it's no good, Montag. We've all got to be alike. The only way to be happy is for everyone to be made equal. So, we must burn the books Montag – all the books.

FILM CLIP – Storm Center

MAN: We're all to blame.
WOMAN: I'm to blame, too. I didn't fight back.
MAN: I hear you're going away. I hope you'll change your mind. You've got to help us rebuild this library. Don't leave.

WOMAN: I have no intention of leaving. I'm going to stay here, and I'm going to help rebuild this library. And if anybody ever again tries to remove a book from it, he'll have to do it over my dead body.

NARRATOR: Librarians have more customers than Amazon.com. They issue more cards than Visa and operate more outlets than McDonalds. People go to the library more often than all professional sports combined. Susan Terrell is the longtime Library director in Tunkhannock, a pleasant rural town near Scranton. She loves her job, but, like many others, working as a librarian means, above all, relentless fundraising. Susan's library serves all of Wyoming County – some 28,000 residents. She receives slightly more than a dollar a year per person from the county's budget.

FILM CLIP – Party Girl

MAN: Every single Hannah Arendt book on the shelf was out of sequence.
WOMAN: I am so sorry. You must understand. We are reeling from budget cuts.
MAN: Right.

SUSAN TERRELL: I get so many wonderful journals and catalogues, and I read, and then I start to salivate, because there's so many things that I cannot purchase for this library. I read about something and I think, well, before I read any further, I don't have a lot of time here. Let me just read and see what the price is. And most times then – whatever the brochure is, or whatever – has to go into the trashcan, because I just know that I can't afford that book. You know you have to pay for the heat, and you have to pay for the phone, and you have to pay for the electricity, and you can't – what are you going to do? Maybe you cut hours? But I couldn't do that. I couldn't stand the thought of – I mean, who was I going to penalize? Was I going to penalize the older people, who come in in the morning, or the people who come in with their children, or the kids who come after school? I didn't know what to do there. The one thing you can cut or have some control over, unfortunately, is your book budget. Without books you're not a library, but that's where you pare down the budget when you need to save money. And it just kills me, but that's what we have to do.

JUDY COOPER: Sometimes in the past, I've really felt like strangling the County Commissioners. When I was library board president, we need to go to the commissioners to ask for their help and their financial help, and it really has not been forthcoming. We could do so much more if we had county help, but we have to keep raising money to keep our doors open.

SUSAN TERRELL: I spend about – close to fifty percent of my time fundraising. And luckily I enjoy it, but it's hard for me to get to the work of a librarian because I'm spending all this time coming up with these events. We have a Christmas show… we had a run this year… a square dance… the talent show… the garden show… a golf tournament… a wine tasting.

PAT TROWBRIDGE: This community has a lot to thank Susan Terrell for. I came to this library nine years ago, and she told me at that time that she was going to build a new library for this community, and within a year or two she started setting into getting the plans, getting in touch with everybody. They had great big fund-raisers and everything that she's been working towards is right here – what we're looking at.

NARRATOR: This is the library that Susan built. The Tunkhannock Public Library presently occupies a brand new building, paid for one hundred percent with private donations. Wyoming County contributed nothing.

SUSAN TERRELL: When I first started the Tunkhannock Library, we were in a building of 2700 square feet. We had no parking. We were on two floors with very steep stairs. We were not handicap accessible. The heating system was terrible – it was often forty-two degrees in there. We started wearing our thermal underwear on the first of October and kept it on 'til the first of April. I had no office, so if I needed to make a private call, I would go in and sit on the john. I hope I can retire at some point. It's hard when you work for a nonprofit organization, because while you want to look out for yourself, and you want a pension – I have no pension. You want more pay – they can't afford to pay. You know, you want to go home and not worry about it, but you can't help worrying about it, because you're the one that's paying the bills, and you're the one that sees how it's trying to provide the best possible service on the least amount of money. So, how can you be selfish and think about yourself?

ELEANORE SCHMIDT: A very exciting development is a new branch that we're going to be building in Long Beach, and it's the first new library in thirty-two years. The current library is just a tiny shoebox. It's a 2,000 square foot building. It doesn't even have a restroom in it, which is pretty hard to imagine. You have to go outside, into the park to use the restroom. The staff actually, when we created the Family Learning Center at this library, we took over the staff room, and so the staff have been having their lunch and conferences and so on in their cars. They read these, you know, what they say are horror stories about, oh, my gosh, we're going to be reducing hours. And librarians not wanting to accept this and say, well, you know, tough, that's the way it is, you know, we have felt we've got to do better. I think the efforts, you know, to create a foundation and support groups and to do these, you know – they're not even special programs. A lot of the programs that we offer are what I think are truly core services, but they are funded by the private sector, or operated through partnerships, which these are all good things to have happened. But what it means is that the level of public support, through public monies, has not really kept pace with what the needs are, and so we are always having to hustle. And usually the funding is, you know, for a year or two years, and then we have to find another funding source or abandon the program.

JAMIE LERUE: The issue is what purpose does the public sector have? And I think one of the huge controversies in our time is, what is the place of the public sector? We have this notion that the marketplace is good, but the real truth of this is that the things that are given to government are things that you can't make money at. And then it's perverse to turn around and say, and run it like a business – even though there was no business opportunity there to begin with. Government is important, and I think going back to my childhood – I talked about discovering the bookmobile – but the truth was I was raised in a household where I had a very abusive father who always told me, you're stupid, you're stupid. And when I found the library, what I heard was a place where when you asked a question, they went, what a good question. Let's find out, and let's dig in and find these answers. And so to have in every community this place where you are treated as a live mind – as a worthwhile mind – is very, very important. And you can't make money at it if you're charging children.

RADIO NEWS FRAGMENT: The city of Salinas, like many small and mid-sized communities, is faced with spiraling budget shortfalls and tough choices about which programs to axe. The next challenge will be convincing residents who voted against the November tax measures to support the new proposal this time around. Closing the three Salinas libraries will save the city about $3.5 million annually.

SALINAS VOTER #1: People may have to pay a little bit more in taxes. Um, I think the future of our children is more important.

SALINAS VOTER #2: People voted no on this tax last year, and rather than respect the view of the people, they've come back. They've declared a phony emergency.

SALINAS VOTER #3: Well, I'm embarrassed because here in Salinas we're known famously for having John Steinbeck as our author, but we're also going to be known nationwide as having to close our libraries. So, I mean – it's just idiotic.

SALINAS VOTER #2: Our local city council and mayor are democrats. And so obviously they're protecting their friends, and they don't want to gore the ox of their friends.

SALINAS VOTER #1: I voted for measure V because I think it's an important issue for this community and the future of the children. You know, my son used to be able to ride his bike to the library at any time in the afternoon and the summer if he wanted to and just kind of hang out, and he doesn't have that availability.

SALINAS VOTER #2: They're going to the taxpayers, trying to make the taxpayers here feel guilty, and saying that this is the long-term battle – raising people's taxes. That's not the long-term battle.

NARRATOR: The library's public meeting room is, as usual, a polling place during elections. Today, voters are streaming in to cast their ballots, which will decide the fate of their three libraries. But although it's a Tuesday, they can't use the branch. Ironically, it's closed due to the funding cuts.

SALINAS VOTER #3: We'd be boycotting, we'd be picketing, you know. I did that with Cesar, you know, down here in Salinas. I've done that in Coachella Valley. He was a very quiet man but it was a voice. It was a silent voice, but a very strong, strong voice.

SUSAN HILDRETH: There have been very few total library systems that have closed in the United States, but I think no one anticipated the international attention that Salinas received, and I really think that was due to the fact that it is the birthplace of one of our most famous American authors, John Steinbeck.

JAN NEAL: Almost exactly this time last year, when measures A, B, and C failed in the city of Salinas so we did not get the additional revenue to fund the libraries, the city council had made the decision that the libraries would close. And there is no road map for that. You don't just show up one day and lock the door – and no one knew that was coming.

MARIA RODDY: This is not something new. We've been at this for almost four years. Our crisis is a long one. We have been in decline for many years. It's not new to us. We were always hopeful that the economical situation will get better, and that we will be able to ride the storm and, you know, a new day. But we didn't. It was the perfect storm.

JAN NEAL: Fortunately, a private foundation was started to raise money with the single goal to keep Salinas libraries open – each one of the three of them – one day a week. They called it Rally Salinas. The mayor spearheaded it. The way I'm feeling waiting for the results of the election is tired. It's been a long road to go down, and now we're just about at the end.

MARIA RODDY: It's very tiring to open the doors every day, working on three different tracks and what-ifs.

JAN NEAL: You have your physical facilities, you have the land that the buildings sit on, you have your collections, you have staff, you have serials – all those magazines and newspapers – that that you have to cancel. Contracts with multiple vendors. You start to categorize, but then when you really think down through the levels of what does it take to get to the end of that process?

MARIA RODDY: The impact on the children of this city is going to be enormous if we were to close. It is hard to imagine. Very difficult and very painful to imagine. There's anger. The children are angry. The high school students have rallied twice. They're angry. They don't understand why these things happen.

JAN NEAL: They're talking to you and expressing how upset they are or asking you, is this true? Are libraries really going to close? Or, I know the libraries aren't going to really close. That's not gonna happen. And you're the only person they can tell that to. They're not going to call their councilperson up.

MARIA RODDY: Ninety percent of the time I do very well. I'm a professional. But there's that ten percent of the time I don't do very well. And I look at politics in a different way. After one of my story hours, one of the mothers here at this library came, and that's when rally Salinas was in full force, and she said, you know, I don't have any money to give to your library – to my library – but if you tell me that I can go on hunger strike and get the PTA women in my school to go on a hunger strike, I'll go on a hunger strike – tomorrow. And I start crying in the middle of this library. I couldn't stop crying. And I'm looking at Cesar Chavez' picture right now. And it just – I flash back and I say, you know, Cesar died. And he died because of all the hunger strikes he went through. He was a young man. He shouldn't have died. That's the kind of politics I'm talking about.

JAN NEAL: It's confusing. It's disorienting. They feel, I think, that they've been abandoned in a way.

MARIA RODDY: That's what a closed library's all about. You're being left out. You're marginalized, and you know you are marginalized. And that is the tragedy of closing a library. That's why we're here talking to you, because that's the passion, the commitment, the dedication that we have as librarians to prevent that from happening. It can't happen in the United States of America. It cannot happen.

JAN NEAL: If the worst happens, and the doors are closed, then the city has lost much more than what the election is about.

SALINAS MAYOR: …between fifty-seven and sixty percent that yes, they were going to support measure V. So, I think we have to call it. I think we have to say the work was done.

MARIA RODDY: We have faith, we have faith, and we will continue to have faith in the future of all libraries, not just the Salinas Public Library.

TEXT ON SCREEN: That night, Salinas Measure V passed with 61% of the vote. Plans to restore full library service began immediately. Librarians nationwide have suffered the loss of more than $188 million in funding to their libraries in the last four years alone.

PHILLIP SEILER: It's great. I'm glad that we could play a part in, you know, kind of getting that ball rolling a little bit. I know there's a lot of other places that did some donations and, you know, we got the idea, and it was a wonderful thing. You know, we get to be a

little piece of that, you know. It's good that now it's actually going to happen automatic. You know – libraries. I mean, come on, you know?

OLISH TUNSTALL: So we gave the money to Salinas, and we made a donation to Marin.

ABRAHAM GLASPER: You know, and it was like juxtaposed with the budget – more money for prison. And to me that just smacked – it was just wrong. I mean, how could you bolster spending in prison and take away a library from kids? So, you know, I would just ask them to take advantage of the opportunity that they've been blessed to get, because, you know, the community – the powers that be – really didn't care if they had a library or not, you know. So actually our plan worked, because it was our plan to basically bring shame, because that was a shameful act. And heightened by the fact that an inmate saw it, and those in free society didn't. So we feel good about that.

MARIA RODDY: If we are a democracy, and we are saying that libraries are the core of the democratic ideal, we cannot marginalize people. Because we have the access to the world, to information. It's a sacred place of knowledge. No one else provides that.

TEXT ON SCREEN: The U.S. Government spends around $250 million every year for all types of libraries. That amount is spent in Iraq and Afghanistan in a single day.

RAY BRADBURY: The wonderful thing about a good library is going in blindly and reaching your hand out, and you open a book and, well, that one's not quite it. And you open another one, that's okay. And you open a third or fourth one, and suddenly there's a mirror image of yourself. You're looking for yourself in the library.

EUGENIE PRIME: And I have been a librarian for nearly thirty years.

NANCY PEARL: Almost forty years.

MARIA MENA: Fifteen years.

ELEANORE SCHMIDT: Thirty-two years.

NANCY PARADISE: Fifteen months.

JAMIE LERUE: Twenty-eight years.

RUTH GILBERT: Almost forty years.

SUSAN TERRELL: I've just started my eighteenth year.

MARILYN MARTIN: Twenty really good years.

MARIA RODDY: Thirteen years.

JAN NEAL: Thirty-one years.

NANCY PEARL: People absolutely adore being librarians. And who wouldn't? I mean, it's a perfect job.

ELEANORE SCHMIDT: I can rap, you know, but not with – I am a Read-a-saurus, a rare breed, it's true. I've come from the past with a message for you. The dinosaurs vanished long, long ago. They couldn't read to learn about the things that they should know. But you can read and know – it's fun. So join me now everyone. Become a Read-a-saurus. Hip hip hooray. If Bronto and Rex had, they would still be here today.

You won't put that on tape. But anyway…

[END]