

# You Gotta Go to School for That? — Love and Roses in the Library

by **Jared A. Seay** (Reference librarian and Head, Media Services, College of Charleston) <seayj@cofc.edu>

As I found out one night serving my public late on Valentine's Day evening, the stately aisles in the library can be the perfect place to express love to that special someone — even if they are not particularly the library type. Seems a young student (okay, so ALL of them are young) was all a-twitter because she could not for the life of her find a book on the shelf. Seems she had never looked for a book in the library before and ... well ... all them numbers did not make sense to her. After I explained to her the LC system (in easy to understand vernacular) the wee lass came back ten minutes later quite distressed and unable, still, to locate the book in question. It was all the more important because her boyfriend had said that she must find this book, as it contained some information vital to their relationship. I accompanied the nervous young miss to the third floor and found the book (*Poems* by **Lord Byron**). Lying upon the book was a yellow rose. A message was stuck



in the pages of the book. Imagine the surprise of both of us when the note told us (among other mushy things to which I was not privy) to locate yet another book on another floor, which also (you guessed it) had a yellow rose and another love note with instructions at the end to find yet another book.

This same thing went on for about six more books — with us running up and down floors and the increasingly embarrassed lass collecting an increasing handful of yellow roses. The girl seemed truly embarrassed and thanked me for helping her inasmuch — as she admitted — “I don't know much about the library, and I could never find these things. You see my boyfriend loves books and he does not know that I don't.” Methinks the lad was the intellectual, romantic one of the pair.

Well, the boyfriend certainly had varied tastes in books as we wandered across classic poetry, art books, philosophy, history, and for

some reason ended up in the technology books with the last yellow rose on top of the book and a long, fancy note attached. She read the note (perhaps a bit too quickly considering the effort that had gone into the whole endeavor) and thanked me profusely for assisting her.

“Don't guess you ever helped someone find roses in books in the library before, huh?” she said. I admitted that I had not, expressed surprise that the roses were actually still there, and pined that such things need happen much more often around here. She kept thanking me as we descended the stairs and she hurried out the front door (presumably to fulfill the request on the final secret message).

I returned to my reference duties, well exercised, and contemplating how the library had been so intricately involved in this particularly energetic Valentine effort. Glad to know I was part of making someone's Valentine evening a grand success. Times like these make one really appreciate being a librarian for more than just the intellectual stimulus and high salary.

Just trying to figure out how to record the ref stats on this one — one per rose? 