A Little Library History

In my 64 years I’ve lived a lot of places around this country. Eight states, 3 or 4 times that many towns. Most of these had a library. Even a few of the more remote places. One was only open one day a week for 4 hours. You can bet where I was that day.

When I first arrived here on the South End, I was 18 miles from the old Stanwoodopolis Library, but first thing, I went into town for a card. The librarian back then in 1977 wouldn’t loan me a book until I could prove residency. She wanted a letter sent to me with my address. I guess Stanwood had a lot of book thievery from out of town transients --- that, or she didn’t like my long hair and shifty looks. I didn’t much care for her dismissive attitude or officious bearing so I guess we were even.

A week later I came back with an envelope bearing ‘proof’ of residence. I think I sent it to myself, but if the mailman trusted me, that was plenty for the librarian. Well, not really. She made it pretty clear I was still under suspicion. I made it clear she was too.

The Stanwoodopolis Library and I have held a truce for 37 years. And because the mizzus is a librarian and even worked there a few years, I got to be friends with most of the librarians over the years. When their levy to build a new library failed by a few votes, no one was more bereaved than me.

A lot of Stanwoodopolis library boosters think now that we got a library on Camano, they’ll *never* get a new one. In a week the townsfolk vote to raise their taxes or not to support their library. It’s a complicated issue and what most of those beleaguered taxpayers who probably are going to vote NO don’t realize is that the Sno-Isle system is going to pull the plug on their home-grown, home-owned library if they don’t vote YES. The city council knows this, the Stanwoodopolis Gazette knows this, but you won’t hear Word One what the implications of a NO vote are, mainly that Stanwood is going to get cut loose from the larger system and its resources. I’m even betting my old crabby librarian will be coming out of retirement when salaries and staff and services are cut. If nothing else, it’ll keep library users to a minimum. That, and maybe the Stanwood folks will have to prove residency to use ours. Save your mail and your letters, is all I can advise.