

## Librarians, etc.

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My thanks to the school librarian who emailed me a copy of this note which she found on her library desk (I've erased the child's name, for privacy). Not that there is anything particularly eloquent or ingenious about it. It's just the charm of the child's printing combined with the passion of his (it was a boy) opinion.

Now: speaking of librarians, who are among my heroes in this world, along with teachers: most often my admiration stems from their willingness to defend the first amendment and to fight censorship attempts, often putting their own jobs in peril. But today I want to describe a librarian in a small Maine town—and I guess I can name names, because this has now been in the newspapers.

Linda Hall, the librarian in Sangerville, Maine, is a long-time friend of mine. The library where she works hired a local woman, Korean in origin but married to an American and living in Maine for some years, to teach art. Sae Hee Martin, according to Linda, generated such enthusiasm for art that they now have a waiting list for her classes.

And yet...AND YET! The town manager, in talking to Linda, and mentioning the art teacher, refers to her as "One Hung Low"...and when he saw her accompanying some students for an outdoor class in summer, wearing a wide-brimmed hat, said, "Don't you think she looks as if she belongs in a rice paddy?" I could go on, listing the incidents....but to make a long story short, after months of such piggish, offensive behavior, the board of the library, spearheaded by Linda, has voted unanimously to stand behind the victim as she brings charges against the town

manager.

I think it is probably only in this country that it would be a library—and its people—who move forward in this way to fight mindless racism.

So: three cheers for the Sangerville, Maine library. And peace on earth, goodwill toward men. But not toward the town manager.

Tags: Untagged