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Librarians virtually can get any information

Dear Abby: I read with interest today that you have a "secret weapon" — a librarian at the Hollywood library. Thank you for broaching the subject of public libraries finding information for people.

Perhaps you could let your readers know that anyone, not just media celebrities, can get virtually any information through their local public library. In California (and many other states), if your local library can't find a piece of information, a published item, an old song, a definition, an address or a repair manual — they have "second-level reference centers" to which they can refer the question. These second-level centers are staffed by professional reference librarians who will go to great lengths to track down whatever is needed.

They use not only the print resources of our host library and the World Wide Web, but they also call and fax corporations and other organizations, e-mail all over the world, confer with colleagues in special-interest libraries, and appeal for assistance on librarians' e-mail lists — to name only a few of the sources. They also research questions in nearby libraries and farm out some questions to other centers with strengths in certain areas.

Many people, unfortunately, do not ask for assistance from a librarian because they don't want to bother her or him, or because they don't



ABIGAIL VAN BUREN

Dear Abby

think their question is important enough. Librarians are in this line of work because we enjoy helping people find what they need, and we welcome the opportunity to provide information.

Thank you, Abby, for promoting library services — they encompass far more than just books and videos!
— **Chris Gallery, Santa Barbara, Calif.**

Dear Chris: I'm pleased to promote library services. Our libraries house a wealth of information — not to mention entertainment — for anyone with an inquiring mind. It's all there for anyone with a thirst for knowledge.

Dear Abby: This is in response to "John in Santa Monica," who agreed to host his 17-year-old cousin for a week. I am not very close with one of my sisters. However, one day last year, her 14-year-old daughter,

Lee, called to ask if she could spend the spring break with me.

I had separated from my husband recently and was on an extremely modest budget. I didn't have a lot of money to spend, but we didn't need it. The week that Lee spent with me turned out to be one of the best weeks of my life. Lee had so much fun that she returned for a week last summer.

In late October, Lee was killed in a house fire. I can't express how fortunate I feel to have spent that time with her.

Please let John know that he should embrace the opportunity he has been given; he may never have it again. — **Dawn in Blackshear, Ga.**

Dear Dawn: Please accept my sympathy for the loss of your niece. You have written a powerful letter, and I'm sure that other readers besides John will appreciate the message you've conveyed so well.

Dear Abby: The letter from "Outraged," whose stepmother wanted to be buried between the woman's father and her birth mother, reminded me of the story about the man who remarried after his first wife died. He said when he died that he wanted to be buried between the two wives, "but tilt me toward Tillie." — **Louise in Largo**

Write to Dear Abby, c/o Universal Press Syndicate, 4520 Main St., Suite 700, Kansas City MO 64111-7701.

Librarians

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