



Library podcast

Jodi Green and Mike Halperin

[00:00:00] Jodi Green: I'm not sure who took me to the library for the first time when I was young. I wonder if it was my grandmother, who lived right upstairs, but it was the only place that I thought books came from. I didn't know that you could buy a book from a store until I was probably a teenager in high school. Every single book I ever read came from the library, and that was where I did every book report or research project. That's where the encyclopedia was, if I needed research information, I'd go into that library, talk to the librarian, get some ideas for key words, go over to the card catalog and start searching for books. And then I would sit down at one of the big tables and do my work.

[00:00:58] Mike Halperin: Going fast forward a little bit, you are known to me as well as both of our children, now aged 21 and 16, if we say, "What is Mom to us?" Well, lots of things. But one of the descriptions is going to be, guarantee it, "our personal librarian." And so you're constantly bringing books into the house for all of us. There's a piece of furniture that we have named "the fungal," named by our daughter, which sits near our front door and the fungal is where we get our books. None of us have to go to the library because you go to the library. And we all love that.

[00:01:33] JG: There's always books next to everyone's bed, in case you get into bed, and you don't have something to read, you've got a little something.

[00:01:39] MH: The guest collection is often the most fun.

[00:01:42] JG: The guest collection is often the most fun.

[00:01:44] MH: 1942 Scout Manual.

[00:01:47] JG: E.B. White's Letters. The Audubon Society Essays.

[00:01:52] MH: Do you remember that Carnegie quote about libraries? I can paraphrase it.

[00:01:57] JG: Please.

[00:01:58] MH: So the idea is that libraries are places where no one checks your credentials at the door and that you, everyone mixes regardless of the color of their skin, their ethnic background, their sexual orientation, their socioeconomic class; that they're mixing places, as you visit different

branches around the city of Seattle one learns who lives in the neighborhood, so if you go, for example, to the Greenwood branch in Seattle, there are many women who are wearing headscarves, and there's that particular segment of the immigrant population. So the demographics may shift, but everyone is still there together. And everyone feels comfortable and accepted and there aren't that many places you know really –

[00:02:38] JG: Not any more.

[00:02:39] MH: Yeah, where that happens.

[00:02:41] JG: Well, and when I think back to growing up and going to the library I felt totally comfortable there. I completely felt like I belonged. There were people there to help me and then there were strangers sharing the table with me, taking turns using the card catalog with me, and it was okay, and it was okay to be talking to them, and it was okay to be exchanging ideas with them. It was okay to be asking for help from them. I just don't remember many other places that were like that -- that were both so welcoming and where I could feel so comfortable. And I think the library still represents that and is still like that.

[00:03:27] [MUSIC]