

THE LAST WORD

Stay Amused, Not Annoyed

Sharon Verbeten

Ever been on the *It's a Small World* ride at Disney World? It's one of my favorites...even when, as it did a few years ago, it stops near the end of the ride for about thirty minutes.

Most of the riders were not apprehensive—obviously nothing bad could happen at the Happiest Place on Earth, right? So, we sat back, looked around at all the colorful signs that bid us goodbye in many different languages...and listened (and sang along) to the ride's saccharine theme song on repeat. *Ad nauseum*. When we finally lurched ahead again, we never wanted to hear that song again.

Sure, it was inconvenient. Unexpected. But my takeaway from the ill-fated ride, however, was one of amusement rather than annoyance. That's a good lesson to keep in our back pocket as librarians.

Sometimes our programs can go off the rails, stopping us in our tracks. *Uncertain*.

Sometimes, our departments are chaotic to the point of stress overload. *Overwhelmed*.

Sometimes, patrons can be, well, beyond difficult. *Sigh*.

Sometimes, we have to deal with things *we never imagined could ever happen in a library*. *Mind. Blown*.

So many things can happen to cause us to get annoyed and apprehensive during the course of our day. Maybe that's partially a symptom moving out of a pandemic.



Still, like many before us, we persist. Just like on that ride . . . we're here because we want to be. We love the thrill and, let's face it, even the unexpected. We keep coming back despite some setbacks.

Let's try to stay amused in the face of annoyance. Or maybe even sing a verse of "It's a Small World"—quietly or out loud!—when stressed. Who knows? It could just make our libraries the happiest places on Earth (or at least runners up!).

Sharon Verbeten is Youth Services Manager at the Manitowoc (WI) Public Library; this is her twenty-first year as editor of Children and Libraries.

Got a great, lighthearted essay? A funny story about children and libraries? Books and babies? Pets and picture books?
A not-so-serious look at the world of children's librarianship? Send your Last Word to Sharon Verbeten at childrenandlibraries@gmail.com.