

## Against the Grain

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## Booklover – One Day

Donna Jacobs

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should not be overlooked, and contacts made at conferences can prove valuable for the library in the future.

Honesty can make or break a relationship. Trust and honesty are also part of the relationship between libraries and serials vendors. Libraries need to trust that their serials vendor is staying abreast of industry changes and has accurate data since change is inevitable in serials work, whether it is a simple title change or a title moving from one package to another. The world of vendors is a competitive one and sometimes the relationship with a library can put a serials vendor over the top in a vendor choice decision on the part of the library. Most importantly, serials vendors have an ethical obligation to be open and honest about financial viability. This honesty not only improves but assures long term relationships between the library and the serials vendor.

It is a mutual benefit for serials vendors and libraries to have a positive relationship. **Rossmann** (2016) surveyed libraries about their relationships with vendors and an average of five or more people at the library have contacts with vendors. Vendors have a real presence in libraries. Stating vendors and librarians are friends is cliché. Libraries pay for their services. However, many serials-vendor relationships are akin to friendship and there is a level of mutual respect. Libraries rely on serials vendors to have the knowledge to help them find the right products and services and to connect them to resources for what their users want. Libraries and their serials vendors know a lot about one another going into the relationship. This knowledge is the basis of a long term healthy relationship. The important elements of the personal touch — communication, collaboration, trust and honesty, and mutual respect — ensure that the library workflows are efficient and moving in the right direction in this ever-changing world of serials. These are just a few of the ways the human element in the library/vendor relationship can be employed to enhance library workflow. 🌱

**Author's Note:** These comments are my opinion and not necessarily the opinion of all serials vendors. — **BA**

#### Endnotes

1. **Roth, P., & Daniels, J.** (2014). Doing more with less: Exploring batch processing and outsourcing in academic libraries. In *Proceedings of the Charleston Library Conference*. Paper from presentation at **Charleston Conference**, Charleston S.C. (2014).

## Booklover — One Day

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**Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn** is one of the **Nobel Laureates** whose name recognition is huge. In spite of the weightiness of his subject matter and the efforts made to subdue him and his works, this is quite an accolade. Truth: in drilling down the list of **Nobel Literature Laureates**, I have been skipping over his name as I have found it daunting to tackle his work. It is January 2019, time to get over it and check a book out of the library. I found two pieces of his work at the main branch of the **Charleston County Library**. *Cancer Ward* and *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* were wedged between *Blood and Milk* by **Sharon Solwitz**, a Pushcart Prize recipient, and *Chum, A Novel* by **Jeff Somers**. Association by alphabetical order is quirky and interesting to me — just something to ponder.

*One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*, is my choice maybe because the book is only 159 pages and that seems doable to overcome daunting, or maybe because the book has a woven gold thread bookmark — a delightful accent for a library book. Another delight, it was a fast, entertaining and amazing read. But I jump ahead.

**Aleksandr Isayevich Solzhenitsyn** won the 1970 **Nobel Prize in Literature** “for the ethical force with which he has pursued the indispensable traditions of Russian literature.”

The intensity that surrounded his life began in the womb. His mother, **Taisiya Shcherbak (née) Solzhenitsyn** was widowed shortly after learning of her pregnancy.

Born in 1918 in Kislovodsk, Russia, he was raised by his mother and an aunt in very humble circumstances. Nevertheless, **Taisiya** was an educated woman and encouraged **Solzhenitsyn's** studies in literature and science. **Solzhenitsyn** married in 1940 while at university. Five years later, he would be arrested while serving in the Red Army in East Prussia for writing derogatory comments in communications with his friends. This would escalate to charges of creating anti-Soviet propaganda under Article 58, paragraph 10 of the criminal code. In July of 1945 he was sentenced to work camps for eight years. His experience in the camp located in Ekibastuz, Kazakhstan was the experiential “inspiration” behind *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*, the novella published in 1962 — interesting that this was my choice.

**John Bayley's** introduction presents the reader a beautiful ten-page window into this quasi-autobiographical work: “For the greatest strength of *Ivan Denisovich* is its exemplary force, its total commitment to a vital and heroic purpose. Russian speakers, readers of *Novy Mir*, were at once bowled over by the confidence, forcefulness and brilliance

of its style, a wholly new amalgam of simple Russian narrative (**Daniel Defoe's** *Robinson Crusoe* affords us some sort of English parallel) blended with colloquialisms, pungent slang and prison-camp jargon, the whole giving that unmistakable impression of the new which is decisive in the authority of a literary masterpiece of this kind. Ordinary reportage about the real nature of the camp system would have had some effect on the reading public, of course; but the shock achieved by **Solzhenitsyn** was a literary shock as well as a social one.” He continues... “There is something altogether admirable about **Solzhenitsyn's** obsession with discovering what went wrong in Russia, and devoting his great literary talents to an elaborate postmortem. Yet it must also be admitted that *The Red Wheel* was, in a sense, out of date before it appeared, whereas *Ivan Denisovich* still has the air of changeless freshness — the shock of the present — which it had when it first broke upon the Russian public.”

**H.T. Willetts** provided the English translation for *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* as well as a few other of **Solzhenitsyn's** works.

Now for a few intriguing excerpts of **Ivan Denisovich Shukhov's** day from the early morning when he rises to eat, then assembles for the morning work detail, to the minutia of the arduous labor, assembling to return for the evening mess, and then to retire. Every detail and thought is shared.

“Can a man who's warm understand one who's freezing? The frost was cruel. A stinging haze wrapped around him and set him coughing. The air temperature was twenty-seven below and **Shukhov's** temperature was thirty-seven above. No holds barred!”

“For two months the Power Station had stood abandoned, a grey skeleton out in the snow. But now Gang 104 had arrived. What kept body and soul together in these men was a mystery. Canvas belts were drawn tight round empty bellies. The frost was cracking merrily. Not a warm spot, not a spark of fire anywhere. All the same — Gang 104 had arrived, and life was beginning all over again.”

“**Shukhov** was eating his supper without bread: two portions with bread as well would be a bit too rich. The bread would come in useful tomorrow. The belly is an ungrateful wretch, it never remembers past favours, it always wants more tomorrow.”

“The end of an unclouded day. Almost a happy one.

Just one of the three thousand six hundred and fifty-three days of his sentence, from bell to bell. The extra three were for leap years.”

The day is over. 🌱

