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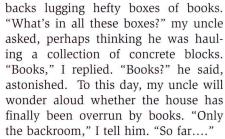
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ening Remarks

Awash in Books

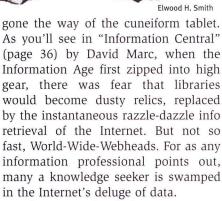
Books have always had.

a seductive quality for me. I rarely wander into a bookstore without walking out with a new read. Naturally, like any bibliophile, I have enough books to last me a lifetime, but the stacks around the house keep growing. When my wife and I moved into our home several years ago, we were fortunate that none of our volunteer movers • threw out their



I've spent most of my life within reaching distance of books, even though I was almost banished from the elementary school library for a rather ill-timed-yet genuine-remark I once made to the librarian. She was lecturing the class about the importance of washing your hands before handling a book. As the son of a registered nurse who indoctrinated me with healthy hygiene habits, I piped up and, sharing my mother's advice, told the librarian that you should wash your hands after reading a book because it has other people's germs on it. The librarian was momentarily taken aback, but she scanned the grimy group of runnynosed third-graders, understood that my statement wasn't totally without value, and calmly opined that clean hands would prevent germs from getting on books.

Fortunately no one sneezed and the librarian didn't ostracize me from the world of books. I'm grateful for that. I'm also thankful that libraries haven't



To keep your head above water, you may need guidance on information sorting; otherwise, you can drown in an abyss of impertinent—and even erroneous-information. Local librarians can be lifesavers in such situations. They also serve as the link between today and back-in-the-day, skillfully navigating among all available resources that can lead to a promising nugget of knowledge. Aside from that, there's still great charm in combing through the stacks of a library and finding where serendipity takes you, as well as in settling into a comfortable chair with a book of choice. Your hands might get dirty from uncovering an intriguing old hardcover, but at least you won't have to worry about catching one of those Internet viruses.

JAY COX