CAN BIRDS FLY?

- From YouTube:
  - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rb0DR96FDn0
The reference librarian’s fundamental task is to translate the patron’s questions into one that can be answered with the library’s resources.

--Stephanie Willen Brown
FROM THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF BOSTON:

- Five main areas are:
  - Approachability
  - Interest
  - Listening/Inquiring
  - Searching
  - Follow up
APPROACHABILITY

- Body language
- Have a smile and eye contact
  - A handshake and a first name let the patron know they have your full attention
- Greet the patron as they approach your desk
- Let them know they have your full attention
INTEREST

- Asking about the patron’s research topic can be important
  - A business person researching tax code
  - A pro se litigant writing a parenting plan
  - Middle school student learning about your state

- Restate and rephrase the question

- Do not assume you know where the question is going
LISTENING/INQUIRING

- Nod your head
- Ask clarifying statements
- Ask open questions to gain more information
- Again, make eye contact!
SEARCHING

- Direct the patron to the most appropriate resources
- Be mindful of terminology.
  - Divorce versus dissolution of marriage
- Familiarize yourself with the topic
  - Google
  - Wikipedia
FOLLOW UP

- Check on the patron if they are looking in the stacks or researching online
- If I have conducted the research, I will contact the patron a day or so later to see if the information was useful and appropriate
DEADLINE

- Always ask when they need the information!
KNOW YOUR PATRON

- Legislators have certain expectations
- Provide both sides of an issue
- Prioritize your requests
If you have to turn your back to a patron, let them know what you are doing. “I have to look in these volumes behind me.”

As you are searching on the computer, let the patron know what you are doing, where you are searching and what sources you are using.
TEACHABLE MOMENTS

- Be prepared to teach along the way
  - Draw pictures, diagrams, or write out steps on how to drill down through a website
ONLINE INTERACTIONS

- Make sure your online reference link is working and has accurate information
  - Another state agency library had a standard e-mail stating that an answer would be sent within a week. Really???
  - Make sure the link works
  - Always be timely with your response
  - Use a salutation and signature line when responding which makes online chatting and reference more personable
Mary Whisner’s Article
Teaching the Art of the Reference Interview

Assistant Librarian for Reference
Marian Gould Gallagher Law Library
University of Washington
BE APPROACHABLE

- Yes, I repeat this
  - I think that phone number will be in a directory. Here, let me see
  - Can I help you find something?
  - Would you like a little help with our catalog?
OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

- Can you tell me more about what you are looking for?
- Could you be more specific about ________________?
- What sort of material are you hoping to find?
FOCUS THE QUESTION

- Do you think the statute was federal or state?
- Do you know what state that was in?
- How recent do you think the case was?
VERIFY

- You’re looking for some books and articles about school funding, is that right?
- You’d like to find out about the gun control statutes in Montana and California, correct?
RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

- For a question like yours, it’s a good idea to start out looking for recent periodicals. If you find a good article, the author will give you an overview and cite cases that you can then look up.
AVOID JARGON

- The Montana Codes Annotated versus the MCA
  - Let’s go out to the Montana Code Annotated – it contains the statutes that the legislature passed, arranged by subject

- Be aware of library jargon as well
  - Full-text
  - Ebsco
  - Classified
FOLLOW UP QUESTIONS

- Are you finding what you need?
- Was that source helpful?
LIFE IS MESSY

- Have Kleenex and hand sanitizer readily available
You Tube:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YMs0FMUPXJg
HAPPY BIRTHDAY

To Millie, my now fourteen-year-old Basset Hound!
DISCUSSION

- Questions?
- Stories to share?