

## How a Diamond Necklace Made Me Think by Darin Bloomquist

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As I write this article, the entire library community in Columbus is gearing up for what we hope will be a huge night for the proposed new Library/Cultural Arts Center project that is slated for downtown Columbus in the near future. The 15th Annual Taste of Columbus will be held on Sunday, October 11th from 4:30-8:30 p.m. at the Columbus Ramada and River's Edge Convention Center. The Columbus Library Foundation will co-host the event and will be designating 100% of its share of the profits to the Library/Cultural Arts Center project. The event will be jam packed with gourmet food booths, wine vendors, live music, both a Royal and Silent Auction and a raffle for a \$3,400 diamond necklace donated by McChristy Jewelers. How great that necklace would look around the neck of my lovely wife Tricia! I am totally sure that the previous thought of mine is complete fallacy when I consider my track record of raffle drawing winnings!

In seriousness, I bought my raffle tickets with no thoughts of winning the beautiful necklace, no I bought them because I believe in what our Columbus Public Library stands for and what it means to the City of Columbus. I volunteered to sell McChristy Jeweler's diamond necklace raffle tickets on two occasions in the lobby of Hy-Vee (thanks Hy-Vee for allowing us access!) because I believe in being involved in the proposed new Library/Cultural Arts Center project and helping out in any way that I can. It is definitely not because I like 'cold' selling anything to busy people just trying to get their grocery shopping done! But what I found out was a pleasant surprise to me and my personal thoughts about whether or not the citizens of the City of Columbus would really support a new Library/Cultural Arts Center. The answer, from my very unscientific polling, was a resounding yes! The vast majority of people I had the pleasure of speaking to were much in favor of the project. I was particularly touched by the people who shared personal stories of very fond memories of theirs that occurred at the present Columbus Public Library home of 2504 14th Street.

Those people made me think of all the fond memories and momentous discoveries that countless children experienced as stacks of books were made accessible to them and literally at their fingertips to explore. I thought of the spaces that the library provides that help to construct a sense of community with patrons by offering classes, seminars and social activities. Those activities may help them to learn a new skill, enrich their lives through learning and it's a darn good way to make new friends! Most of all it is special for the transformative potential users find in reading, viewing and listening to the stories that the library supplies in a vast variability of word-based forms. I am truly amazed to think of all those 'ah ha' moments that have occurred right here in Columbus' own public library since it first opened its door for business in the current facility on April 22, 1977! How wonderful it would be if all those 'ah ha' moments could have been captured as they occurred in the halls of the library, how wonderful it would have been to see the face of a child that made a joyous discovery or was catapulted to a

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new land through reading. Then how wonderful to have those instances recorded in an inspiring manuscript for us to leaf through today as we endeavor to create a more modern, user friendly library that will be a shining star for the City of Columbus and the entire state of Nebraska to behold. I can't help but think that a manuscript like that at our disposal would make the decision of a new library building incredibly easy.

Please do make plans to attend the 15th Annual Taste of Columbus premiere fall event on Sunday, October 11<sup>th</sup>, it will be a night to remember!