

Consult the Cat

by Shannon Roy, Continuing Education Coordinator

The Cat was recently given an Internet gift that was more welcome than fresh salmon steak or thick cream. Now it is easy to search for millions of out-of-print books with one hotlink.



Rhonda Machlan, the State Library's Resource Sharing Specialist, is a cat lover, which is how she got to be a good friend of the Cat. The Cat considers Rhonda's computer skills to be responsible for a number of things that wouldn't have happened without them. The constant mischief of the flame point Siamese called Daktari is only one example.

Another interest shared by the Cat and the librarian is older fiction. The Cat was speaking wistfully of some favorites that had long since been weeded out of public libraries. The familiar click-click, click-click produced AddALL, a great site for locating Used and Out of Print Books. It is a place to access millions of used and out-of-print books from many dealers and bookstores at one site. As far as the Cat was concerned, it was the biblio-equivalent of a lifetime supply of catnip. She curled up and promptly punched in the most obscure titles she could recall. They all came up.

The price range on old books is simply amazing. The same book can range from \$3.00 to well over a hundred. But those who wish to avoid either fiscal sin or heartbreak can specify a price range. The Cat, like most cats, has fairly simple needs; but even so, several stern lectures were called for. She finally decided on *Thomas, the Ship's Cat*, by Charlotte Baker, *Frog: The Horse That Knew No Master* by S.P. Meek and *Manalive* by G.K. Chesterton.

Public libraries are usually about newer books. In fact, public librarians put a lot of effort into returning, selling or disposing of older titles. But they do have an occasional need to replace an out-of-print title. This site will also have great value to both librarians and library users who are seeking lost loves. AddALL can be found at:

<http://www.addall.com/Used>

It is sometimes astonishing to see what will be re-issued and appear in the major bookstores. The Cat didn't have to enquire about such favorites as *The Little White Horse* by Elizabeth Goudge, *The Cat Who Went to Heaven* by Elizabeth Coatsworth, *The Sherwood Ring* by Elizabeth Pope, *Merlin's Mistake* by Robert Newman or *Shadow Castle* by Marian Cockrell. All of them had come back on the market and each of them marked a joyous day when they were found on the shelf. Nothing has a stronger hold on the heart than the books adults loved when they were children. The people who want to hold those priceless memories again certainly deserve a purr from the

Cat.