

Both of us have strong feelings about the importance of public libraries. Laura grew up within walking distance of a branch of the Louisville Free Public Library and became a voracious reader, spending hours on end either in the library or at home with the maximum number of allowable check-outs. With the encouragement of the librarians and her parents, she sampled all sorts of books, from fiction to non-fiction to reference works, and became interested in, well...almost everything. She has too many "favorite" books to count, but her favorite authors are pretty consistently Dickens, Hardy, Conrad, Melville, DeLillo, McCarthy, Joyce, Nabokov, Pynchon, Eco, Borges, Faulkner, T.S. Eliot, and Thurber. She loves serial fiction and mysteries, from Arthur Conan Doyle to Raymond Chandler...to more current writers like Val McDermid, Tana French, and Ian Rankin. She's a big fan of poetry, particularly Donne, Blake, the Romantic poets, and 20th century poets like Neruda, O'Hara, Roethke, Nemerov, Amiri Baraka, Sexton, Bishop and Rich. Her current favorite poets are John Ashbery and Charles Wright, but this changes pretty regularly. She also loves history, philosophy, social theory and anthropology — any writers and thinkers that can inspire reflection and conversation to help make sense of a complex world.

Kelly grew up as a regular visitor to the Topeka-Shawnee County Public Library, and an avid user of the Bookmobile. He also developed a love of reading as a child, becoming a fan of science fiction, fantasy, graphic novels, comics, and detective fiction, though lately has been more of a non-fiction reader. He loves books about history, music and the music industry, memoirs, and books on popular culture. Of late, his favorite fiction authors are Don DeLillo, Colson Whitehead, and a graphic designer/author named Richard Littler, best known for being the creator of an online project called ["Scarfolk Council,"](#) which has spun off several books that are a wonderful combination of surrealism, pop culture, history, and cultural criticism.

The idea of the public library, with its doors open to all and its contents free to sample, is a cornerstone of any community's cultural, academic, and artistic life. We love the idea of the library as a kind of living organism (think the works of Borges, Eco, Lem, Svevo and Ranganathan) that thrives with the addition of books, of course, but also readers. Every time we've moved from town to town, there are always three things on the immediate agenda: get the electricity hooked up, register to vote, and then go get a library card. Everything else can wait a day. The Lawrence Public Library is a wonderful example of how the heart of a community can be seen in the halls of its library. It's a physical manifestation of what the community values. We're proud to be supporters of the LPL and its programs.