

Column Name: Library Libations

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I don't want to be a millennial. Alas, I don't have choice in the matter. We get a bad rap. I'm part of a generation who has one foot in an analog world and the other in digital. Take it from me, it is an exhausting game of tug of war.

Lately I've been thinking about community and what that might mean to my generation. It seems to me the community we interact with most is online - Facebook, Instagram etc. I enjoy connecting with people online. It is easy and fast. But it's not very personal or thoughtful. I may receive hundreds of birthday wishes on my Facebook page, but I'd prefer one handwritten card in the mail instead.

I wonder what could bring a diverse community together. What could a teenage boy, an elderly woman and a middle-aged man all have in common? I can think of a common denominator - FOOD. How interesting that food is necessary for survival but at the same time it can be recreational. Search Pinterest for "chocolate chip cookie recipe" and soon you will have hundreds at your fingertips. Go to the bookstore or library and you'll find loads of cookbooks. Turn on your TV and you'll find lots of reality shows involving cooking competitions. Food is everywhere. We share meals with our immediate family and close friends, but how can food bring a bigger community together?

Almost half of the public libraries in the state of R.I. offer cookbook clubs. The idea of eating in the library might seem foreign to some of you, but remember, librarians push boundaries and they love to promote books. While each club might be different, most librarians (painstakingly) select a cookbook and each member of the club agrees to make a recipe. On the big day, members congregate at the library with the recipe they've cooked. Everyone in the club is welcome to eat whichever

dish they like. If you're anything like me, you'll want to sample a little of everything! Members discuss how challenging the recipe is or even rate the book. When in our lifetime would we be able to prepare every recipe in a cookbook? Barrington Public Library's group will tackle Julia Child's *Mastering the Art of French Cooking* which includes 524 recipes! The librarians I spoke with said that the overall favorite book thus far is *Smitten Kitchen* by Deb Perelman.

Remember, the majority of events held at libraries are free. Think of the endless possibilities of attending these events - meeting new people, discovering new books and feeling part of a larger community. If you ask me, I'd say that makes for a fulfilling life.

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