You've been at the College since 1972 – what’s changed the most?

The change has been steady and constant. When I arrived, we had one electric eraser and one electric typewriter, and that was technology.

Most of our readers don’t realize that you were behind the visionary decision to have the College be a founding member of the consortium (now called CARLI) through which we get I-Share.

When I arrived, I could see that Lake Forest was really a post-WWII/post-McCarthy college. Resources were thin, but by the late 1970s, faculty were interested in publishing books and doing more research, so I-Share seemed like a good approach. Before that, we were very tied to the card catalog and it was a mess – we had 2” cards and 3” cards. Joining the consortium equalized us – we were able to have the same resources as a school that had been collecting material over time. Before 1972, there was no interlibrary loan here – faculty and students had to rely solely on what was available at our library.

What book(s) do you find yourself using again and again to answer reference questions?

Lots of biographical sources – if I had to pick one title, it would be The Book of Chicagoans, for the years 1926, 1931 . . . they’re still under copyright, so you can’t find that material online.

What single item would you save in a fire?

Probably the oldest book in the collection, the 1493 Nuremberg Chronicle. It’s covered in contemporary pigskin over boards and looks pretty good for something that’s 500 years old. And it gets used – I take it over to Professor Ann Roberts’ print class and show it to the students.

I assume it’s kept in the vault. How many people know the combination?

Rita Koller and I. And maybe Jim Cubit.

So many people think librarians get to read lots of books while at work. You and I know that isn’t true. Now that you’ll have some free time, what books do you plan to tackle?

I’ll be writing more than reading. A history of the Lake Forest Garden Club [founded in 1912 and the westernmost founding member of the Garden Club of America]; a book about the log cabin at Crab Tree Farm with John Bryan; something about Edward H. Bennett. I’d like [Professor of Art Emeritus] Franz Schulze to write something about Market Square. I’d like to work on a free-standing biography of Joseph Medill Patterson – our most heavily used collection is the Patterson papers.