



by Christopher J.J. Thiry

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I can't remember when I met Mary Larsgaard. No doubt I read her *Map Librarianship* book in grad school and consulted her writings regarding map cataloging. Our first encounter probably took place at the big map librarians' meeting in Washington, D.C. in the fall of 1993. Because I was totally enamored with map cataloging, I had questions for her. In 1995, I became the Map Librarian at the Colorado School of Mines, and found out that I was following in Mary's footsteps. Mary was the first Map Librarian at the Colorado School of Mines (1979-1988), and I was in awe of what she created. She cataloged everything, and increased the size of the collection many times over. I was blessed that I walked into a mature setup; the road having been paved by Mary.

Once in Colorado, I joined WAML and immediately began to correspond with Mary about all things including map cataloging, and her work here at Mines. In the mid-1990s, Mary was starting to work on Project Alexandria. This was a quintessential Mary project—big ideas, pushing the bounds of what we know and understand. She was always trying for long passes and some of them went incomplete. But she was always thinking big and new.

Through time, I got to know Mary on a social basis at WAML. And she was such a hoot! I purposely tried to sit near her at meetings and banquets just so we could talk. It was always fun and entertaining. Mary knew she wanted to be a map librarian from the age of eight. *Backpacker Magazine* featured her in April 1998 with a small article and picture entitled, "I'm Mary, and I'm a topoholic."

On 9/11/01 at about 9:30am MDT, I got a phone call. "Chris, this is Mary Larsgaard." Why, of all days, was she calling me? The towers had just fallen and our brains were spinning. "Chris, I'm at the airport in Denver. Our plane got grounded here. Can I and Sue [actually I have forgotten her name] come to your house while we figure things out?" Of course. She and Sue arrived in Golden around noon. Their plane had originated in Minneapolis. Sue's colleague had missed the flight, rented a car, and was speedily heading to Colorado to pick the two of them up and whisk them off to Southern California. I asked how Mary & Sue knew each other. They looked at one another and explained they just met. On the flight, Sue got up and asked who needed to go to LA and Mary said she did. Classic Mary—not shy, happy to talk to anyone. Sue, Mary, my girlfriend (now wife), and



several friends went out to dinner that night in an empty downtown Denver. Sue's friend arrived that night and the three of them drove to LA the next day. Being together with Mary and the others on that day helped make the whole situation less terrible and helped keep me sane.

I will sorely miss her.

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