

# Libraries

Nobody asked but ...

There are, I confess, two state-provided services I like — public libraries anywhere, and public restrooms in little villages in places like New Zealand and the Dolomite Alps. In the USA, We combine the two. I think the Library of Congress is the one federal government artifact I might argue for keeping. First of all, libraries are not mandatory. If they had their tax powers truncated they would be grand. Secondly, they have plenty of private competitors. In the third place, each is entirely distinct from any other (this is what happens when things are allowed to form in a natural way). Also, I am not afraid that NSA, CIA, HSA, Good Housekeeping, or Underwriters Laboratory will know my full reading habits — I am a card-holding member of every town, county, state, college and university library within half day's travel, and I have dossiers all over place. I do get cranky when I think of taxes and authoritarian librarians, but I must admit that whenever I visit a library, my main thought is, "life is good."

Kilgore