Everyone has heard of the Home Turf Advantage – the reason why sports players tend to win when they play at home rather than away. I like to say that field librarians also have the home turf advantage.

As a field librarian my office resides in the UM School of Art and Design, rather than in the library (I’m like a branch librarian without the library). The library Art, Architecture and Engineering Library is actually just across the street from the School.
One of the big reasons for a home turf advantage are the cheering fans. Like the home-team player, I am seen as a member of the School of Art & Design community and I see the School as my community too.
I often run into students in the hallways who are quick to say hello and occasionally ask a question or two. They know me like they know everyone on the staff – but if I were off in the library a quick, casual conversation like this might not be so easy.

I also work to get the Library involved in the art students’ lives. For example, the Library has sponsored an annual photo contest for the last couple of years. I make sure to advertise this to A&D students who, because they are such a talented group of people, inevitably win something.

I also work to bring student expertise into the school. At the beginning of fall semester, I had a conversation with the Dean of the School of Art & Design. He was concerned that there was little formal information about the history of the School. I mentioned to him that the School of Information had students who my be interested in working on such a project. That is how I became a mentor to Rachel Lwin who is now working on documenting the history of the School.
Because of my unique situation as a field librarian, everyone knows I am a librarian, so they tell me about their own books.

Of course the faculty write books . . .

Here is a graduate student with comic book created as part of her graduate work.

Here is a staff member in the advising office with a book he wrote.

Students also create artists’ books.

It’s great to be able to acquire student and faculty publications for the library. I also get the opportunity to answer questions about ways to promote their books to libraries (particularly book artist’s), how to find publishers, etc.
Being a part of the A&D community, I also get the opportunity to eat with people.

I was invited to dinner with Harvey Pekar and Joyce Brabner. At this dinner I also met a local scholar, Nancy Goldstein, who was writing a book about Jackie Ormes, the first African American Woman cartoonist.

I also occasionally invite a faculty member out to lunch. This is a photo taken by a faculty member. I had asked several faculty if they would be willing to have lunch with me to talk to a visiting researcher about field librarianship.
One of the real honors of this good community relationship is being able to contribute to A&D exhibitions as an artist and as a librarian:

Stories:

Co-Curated the Book Show – incorporated books from the library with work from students, faculty, staff and the Ann Arbor community.

Staff Show – collaborative artwork with other staff members

So, as you can see, working within my community of artists helps build strong relationships – a fan base, if you will. We cheer each other on.