On August 17th, the Metropolitan Library System of Oklahoma County celebrated more than 100 years of public service with the grand opening of the MAPS-funded Ronald J. Norick Downtown Library. The ribbon cutting ceremony took place at the Library's entrance on 300 Park Avenue.

"Our new library is a dream come true for so many," said MLS Executive Director Donna Morris. "People who are curious about this beautiful new structure in downtown Oklahoma City come by just to see what it is. We make new library customers right on the spot."

The opening of the $24-million, state-of-the-art facility completes the city’s decade-long MAPS project. Oklahoma City Mayor Mick Cornett praised the new library, calling it the "crown jewel" of MAPS (Metropolitan Area Projects). "The Norick Library is a wonderful centerpiece for our county’s library system and the crown jewel of the MAPS. It symbolizes our commitment to both the arts and education," he said.

The 112,356-square-foot library is named for former Mayor Ronald J. Norick, who is referred to as "the father of MAPS" for his leadership in putting together and winning voter approval for MAPS. The MAPS program - hailed as the first of its kind in the country - consisted of nine projects funded by a five-year temporary one-cent sales tax. The proposal was approved by voters on December 14, 1993.

The new library contains more than 175,000 volumes, an innovative children's area (designed with input from 100 local youngsters) and high-speed Internet access. Interior design features include the soaring four-story glass atrium and a wood-trimmed 137-seat auditorium. The fourth floor also includes classrooms and offices for the learning center.

"It's going to be a great place for families to spend time reading and exploring," said M. Scott Carter, Director of Marketing and Communications for the Metropolitan Library System. "And we celebrated the library in style," he said. On Friday, August 13th, MLS hosted its largest ever book passing. Library staff, volunteers, local celebrities and more than 3,000
Lynn’s Spin

As I have recently said many times, it is an honor and a privilege to serve as the President of the dynamic, vibrant Oklahoma Library Association! As a member-driven, member-centered organization, OLA has an impressive record of advocacy and accomplishments. For this I thank each of you…for your time, energy, expertise and commitment. I especially want to thank Anne Prestamo and other predecessors whose insight, vision and leadership has given OLA the ability to soar to new heights in the past few years. Thank you for setting the stage so OLA and library services to all Oklahomans can continue to grow as we redraw the bounds of possibility.

While thanking leaders and members for the success of our organization, I also salute our dedicated Executive Director, Kay Boies. Thank you Kay for your ongoing leadership, consistent guidance, incredible knowledge, and your love of the organization. Without you OLA would be a mere shadow of what it is today.

If you have not seen the colorful 2004/05 logo and conference theme, we have included a black and white version of the purple/aqua pinwheel. OLA and Oklahoma libraries of all types represent Connections, Destinations, Generations and, of course, Serendipity on many levels of serious pursuits and “delightful” journeys.

While we must Focus on the Future and the current year of our Association to strengthen libraries, library services and librarianship in Oklahoma, we must also continue to build on the excellent progress and initiatives of the recent years.

Marketing our libraries and the lives that libraries touch is essential. Marketing and promoting ourselves is critical to the survival of libraries in Oklahoma and to our profession. If we do not promote our libraries, no one else will. This was made abundantly clear to me when a colleague and I recently had a brief conversation with a state legislator who was not aware that most public libraries in Oklahoma teach computer classes to their customers. He was also unaware that the vast majority of participants in these classes and workshops are mature citizens who were initially reluctant to use computers, the Internet and e-mail! He was completely out-of-touch with how much libraries have embraced and promoted technology and access in all formats.

In the 21st Century, libraries must continue to increase their visibility in all of the communities we serve…academic, schools, cities, counties and special organizations. OLA must continue to be the moving force to help librarians, support staff, trustees and friends work together to promote the resources and values that library service brings to each unique community. Today we find ourselves competing for customers with retail giants and an ever-growing mirage of technology. We are fortunate that the creative talented members of the Publicity and Communications Committee are creating a “marketing tool kit.” But they need your feedback to determine what will be most helpful to you, our members! Please complete the survey which can be found on the OLA website or a hard copy, which you can obtain from Buffy Edwards at beverlys@norman.k12.ok.us or Gary Kramer at gkramer@pls.lib.ok.us.

OLA needs to promote the fact that Oklahoma libraries represent life-long learning opportunities for all of our citizens regardless of educational achievement or socio-economic level. At the recent ribbon cutting and grand opening of the Metropolitan Library System’s Ronald J. Norick Downtown Library, Penny McCaleb, Commission Chairman, stated that “education and libraries are the cornerstones of a community.” This is the message that we as members of OLA must promote!

As we focus on the future, we recognize that we have to have longevity. Linda Edmondson reminded our leadership, officers and DRoCs, that we need to “look behind” us to see who is following to take on the “volunteer” positions that we have embraced. This is true for our “graying” profession and our professional association.

Thanks to the vision of Kathryn Lewis, the dedication and support of Anne Prestamo and the leadership of Rachel Butler and her capable committee, OLA’s first “Leadership Institute, OLA Gold” will take place in November 2004. This is a “first” for OLA with great future potential. It is, in part, made possible by Patrick Brennen and The Samuel Roberts Noble Foundation of Ardmore who will host this first Leadership Institute. Bravo to those who are making this happen!!

As we look to the future for OLA, we recognize that our organization cannot survive on our low membership dues and “affordable” workshop and conference fees. Thanks to the vision of our leaders, the OLA Centennial Endowment Committee was created. And because of the strong leadership of Chairman Pat Weaver-Meyers and her current Co-Chair, Patrick Brennen, exceptional progress has been made over the past year. From $0 in endowment monies, OLA now has an endowment in ex-
cess of $40,000 and moving towards $1 million by 2007. After an outside, professional audit of OLA’s accounts, the Endowment Committee will make application to several foundations for matching funds for an OLA office with space for meetings and workshops. The Endowment Committee is also working on plans for mega fundraising events that will include OLA and non-OLA Oklahomans. "BRAVO" Endowment Committee! How can you help? If you would like an Endowment Campaign brochure contact Kay Boies at kboies@coxinet.net or write to her at 300 Hardy Drive, Edmond, OK, 73013. The same address works for donations! Have you made your annual donation yet?

The Program Committee (DROCS and Board) is hard at work planning workshops and our annual 2005 conference. The ideas and creativity are at an all time high! Stay tuned for news on both.

In recognition of OLA’s focus on excellent programming and professional development, I am pleased to announce that we have received a donation of $11,524 from the disbanded Metropolitan Libraries Network (MetroNet). The money is to be used for educational programming.

How fitting it was that the first workshop of the 2004/05 OLA year was the Support Your Support Staff Workshop. It was a well attended, enormous success with over 70 people attending! It was hosted in Ardmore at the Noble Foundation and Southern Oklahoma Technology Center. Both support staff and library managers enjoyed the day.

Congratulations to Donna Morris and Lee Brawner on the opening of the new Ronald J. Norick Downtown Library. The beautiful, functional and dramatic building is testimony to the love of citizens of all ages for their public library, both urban and rural. What an achievement for Oklahoma City.

Tulsa…we are looking forward to your new central library in the not too distant future…

OLA needs you, your ideas and your voices! For membership and/or to be on one of OLA’s great Committees, Divisions or Roundtables, contact Kay Boies at kboies@coxinet.net or me at crlsdir@oltn.odl.state.ok.us. I look forward to working with each of you. Dates for your calendar:

Encyclomedia: September 27th – 28th, 2004 at the Cox Convention Center
First Amendment Congress: November 11th – 12th, 2004 at Oklahoma City University
Oklahoma Reads Oklahoma with Billie Letts: Multiple Dates Around the State
OLA Annual Conference: March 30th, 31st and April 1st, 2005 in Norman

Lynn McIntosh, OLA President

Beyond OLA: Cooperation, Resource Sharing and Information Exchange through Oklahoma Cooperatives

If you are looking for a group that may have the answers or moral support you need to deal with certain issues at your library, look to Oklahoma Cooperatives. If you find yourself thinking “There has to be a better way. If only every library could come together and tackle this problem,” think about Oklahoma Cooperatives. If you are looking for a way to connect with other librarians, check out Oklahoma Cooperatives.

There are many library organizations in Oklahoma in addition to the Oklahoma Library Association. Some are specialized groups designed to promote cooperation between particular types of libraries. Some were created to share resources or to solve a particular problem encountered in many different libraries. Whether you are in an academic, public, or special library, there is a library organization for you, and now there is one place where you can find out about each one of these different organizations.

Oklahoma Cooperatives, a web-accessible list of different library organizations in Oklahoma, is now available courtesy of the OLA Interlibrary Cooperation Committee at the following address: www.oklibs.org/~ilcoop/index.html#cooperatives (or look for the Oklahoma Cooperatives in the list of Related Sites at the OLA homepage). Nine of these organizations were represented at the Oklahoma Cooperatives program presented at the annual OLA conference in April 2004. Representatives from the Oklahoma State Web Managers Support Group, the OU School of Library and Information Studies Alumni Association, the Serials Interest Group of Academic Libraries in Oklahoma, the Oklahoma Union List of Serials, the Council for Oklahoma Information Literacy, the Oklahoma Chapter of ACRL, the South Central Chapter of the Medical Library Association, the Greater Oklahoma Area Health Sciences Library Consortium, and the Oklahoma Chapter of the Special Library Association presented information about each of these groups. Participants and program attendees learned what each group does, how to get involved, and how the groups might help each other in areas of overlapping interests.

The Interlibrary Cooperation Committee (the committee that plays well with others) encourages everyone working in Oklahoma libraries to connect with one or more of the Oklahoma Cooperatives. By working with one another individually and on an institutional level, we can improve the service and quality in all libraries. If you know of other organizations that should be listed, let us know.

Karla Shaffer, Ponca City Public Library
Cooperative Library Instruction Program (CLIP) Update

The primary purpose of CLIP is the comprehensive provision of instruction in the use of information resources. The complexity, depth, volume, and diversity of the information infrastructure of the Internet increasingly necessitates the use of library instruction as an integral part of the identification and organization of information. For higher education the exigency is for comprehensive, as opposed to piecemeal, partial, or redundant, integration of instruction into the curriculum at the basic, program, and course levels.

While we have been busy building the base of CLIP routines available on the web site, the summer has been passing without workshops. We intend to provide more workshops in the fall. There are four areas that we will be addressing for the remainder of the summer. The first is to continue to increase the number of routines available for use. The second is to provide a method for producing CLIP routines through the use of auxiliary software like Robo Demo, Camtasia, or Turbo Demo. The third is to improve the CLIP web pages. The forth is to present CLIP at Merlot in August.

The success of CLIP as a method of providing systematic and comprehensive instruction in the use of information resources depends first upon the availability of CLIP routines that participating libraries find useful. The proof is in the pudding. We have 11 CLIP routines roughly completed. Many already need adjustments. Three PowerPoint scripts are ready for Flash production. A forth script lacks editing and seven modules are waiting for scripts. The 23 modules are listed in the table below.

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<th>Status</th>
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<td>1. Intro to tutorials</td>
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<td>PPT-edited</td>
<td>2. Overview of library’s electronic resources</td>
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<td>Flash</td>
<td>3. Tour of Physical Library</td>
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<td>4. Search Strategies—Computer Basics</td>
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<td>PPT-edited</td>
<td>5. Search Strategies—Selecting the Topic</td>
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<td>6. Search Strategies—Using the Resources</td>
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<td>7. Encyclopedias—Funk and Waganall’s</td>
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<td>Flash</td>
<td>20. Government Publications</td>
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<td>PPT</td>
<td>21. NSU Library Orientation—Ebsco &amp; Netlibrary</td>
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<td>PPT-edited</td>
<td>22. Academic Integrity, Peer Review, &amp; Plagiarism</td>
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<tr>
<td>PPT-edited</td>
<td>23. ProQuest—ABI Inform</td>
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All 23 modules are focused at the level of instruction relevant primarily to the freshman/sophomore classes and suitable for a one-credit-hour introductory course in information resources. The ABI Inform and Government Publications modules might apply to the next level of instruction—department or program specific. We have no modules designed for the individual class level.

While a mandatory one-credit-hour course in the use of information resources is not likely in the immediate future for NSU students, we have made some progress toward systematic and comprehensive instruction. The College Strategies course, which is mandatory for all incoming students, will include six CLIP modules. The modules have the three components—Flash presentation, exercise, and test. The modules will be homework assignments that will be available through the Blackboard class pages and the tests will automatically grade and post on the class grade books in Blackboard. We will be identifying another group of modules that we will attempt to have integrated into all freshman English Composition sections.

A team of NSU staff will also be working on scripts for modules that will be used to train work studies in library operations. The NSU John Vaughan Library has approximately 60 work studies. It is hoped that systematic instruction using CLIP modules will improve knowledge and therefore effectiveness of work studies. Passing the tests in the CLIP modules will become a requirement for continued employment as a work study in the library.

We would also like to increase the number and variety of CLIP routines available by converting PowerPoint scripts that librarians submit from other libraries. We would accept scripts in any format that we would be permitted to edit into our format and convert to CLIP modules. Please email your PowerPoint library instruction routines as attachments to Darren Tobey at tobey@nsuok.edu.

At NSU we will integrate as much information literacy into the curriculum using CLIP as the personnel resources available in the NSU library permit. However, a full integration through the program and class levels will likely require cooperation with other institutions. The problem with Flash is that it complicates cooperation. It is not easy to learn. We hope to include an alternative like Turbo Demo, Robo Demo, or Camtasia for producing Flash routines. We will take some time out to evaluate them. We intend to purchase the software and examine their potential for creating something close to the current CLIP routines. We would like software that creates Flash routines that closely mimic CLIP and also are easily convertible to the CLIP format. The software must also produce optimized files that will load over dial-up lines. Software of this nature should permit participation by libraries that do not have staff that are proficient with Flash.

We have created a CLIP web site that has functioned primarily as a clearinghouse for CLIP files. We intend to invest some time designing a more hospitable, informative, and user friendly environment. The site is currently very sparse. We have not started the redesign yet and therefore have no plan or concept for what it will look like. If anyone would like to contribute some suggestions or designs we would be very grateful for the assistance. Email them to Darren Tobey or call him at 918-456-5511 Ext. 3390. You can also call me at extension 3211.

Finally, we will be presenting at the Merlot International Conference in California this August. We will also be linking the CLIP website from Merlot. We are not quite ready for prime time yet, however, the opportunity arose and we decided to present the model at its current stage of evolution. We are building up the base of available modules, looking for software that will permit easier participation, and cleaning up the website largely to be presentable and optimally effective at attracting participation of more librarians through the presentation at Merlot.

Dr. Allen McKiel

Interlibrary Cooperation Committee Survey Results

Remember that online survey you filled out in April? Well, the results are in and can be viewed on the OLA website. There’s a link off the main page or you can go directly to http://www.oklibs.org/~ilcoop/#survey. Are you curious who is using the same bindery or acquisitions vendor? Do you wonder if anyone else is purchasing the same databases? Take a look at the results and I’m sure you’ll find someone in the same boat you’re rowing. Who knows what interlibrary cooperation will occur, and it’s always great to know there are others in your own backyard that may be able to help or that you might help.

Dana Belcher, East Central
Surrounded by nearly 500 friends, family members, war veterans and others paying their respects, Charles Chibitty, the last surviving Comanche code talker, was inducted into the Circle of Honor on March 6 as the highlight of Tulsa City-County Library’s American Indian Festival of Words.

“It is fitting that we stand in this place...a library, the people’s university, surrounded by diverse words, ideas and dreams...to honor a man whose language, history and stories were once silenced,” said Linda Saferite, CEO of the Tulsa City-County Library, at the ceremony held at the Central Library.

“Charles Chibitty is a beloved family man, a leader in the Indian community, a war hero and friend of many,” added Mary Shaw, member of TCCL’s American Indian Advisory Committee. “He exemplifies the characteristics that define the Circle of Honor. In the American Indian tradition of recognizing and honoring our elders, we acknowledge his good deeds and actions in the face of adversity, his commitment to preserving our culture and his legacy for future generations.”

Chibitty grew up near Lawton and attended government schools where he was forbidden to speak his native language, Comanche. Barely in his 20s, Chibitty was sent to World War II by the United States to speak the language they had tried to silence. He and 16 other Comanche men were sent to the European theater as code talkers to help prevent Germans from intercepting strategic information. These soldiers are credited with saving countless lives in WWII.

As a Circle of Honor inductee, Chibitty received a $5,000 prize and a bronze medallion. The Maxine and Jack Zarrow Family Foundation, Cherokee Builders Inc., the Tulsa Library Trust, Tulsa City-County Library’s American Indian Resource Center, Vickie Summers Mason and the Oklahoma Arts Council co-sponsored the ceremony.

Inaugurated this year, the ceremony is the highlight of the American Indian Festival of Words, a month long series of educational and cultural events celebrating the stories, voices and visions of our country’s native sons and daughters. The American Indian Resource Center hosts the festival, which is held each March. The Charles W. and Pauline K. Flint Foundation co-sponsors the festival. The Circle of Honor award will alternate each year with the American Indian Festival of Words Author Award.

TCCL established the American Indian Resource Center three years ago to provide a support system for this often-overlooked segment of the community and to highlight their history and culture. Currently, the library has more than 7,000 books and media by and about American Indians.

For more information on the Circle of Honor ceremony or the American Indian Resource Center, call (918) 596-7977 or click on www.tulsalibrary.org/airc.
BE YOUR OWN LEGAL BEAGLE:
TRACKING DOWN FEDERAL AND OKLAHOMA LAWS

At the beginning of the Be Your Own Legal Beagle workshop held March 18, attendees were divided into four groups. Each group would take a turn attending each of the four sessions.

My group began with "Federal Electronic Sources" taught by Melanie Nelson of the Tulsa University Law Library. Courts presume that citizens know what the law is. Therefore, she began by showing us how to access the U.S. Code by using FindLaw (www.findlaw.com), MoreLaw (www.morelaw.com), FirstGov (www.firstgov.gov), the Library of Congress' Thomas (thomas.loc.gov), GPO Access (www.gpoaccess.gov), and Cornell Law School's Legal Information Institute (www.law.cornell.edu). She explained the parts of the numbering of the laws — i.e. pub l. 93-205. Sec3, Dec. 7, 1944, 87 Stat. means this is public law (pub l.) 93rd Congress, the 205th law enacted by that Congress, Section 3 of the 205th law, enacted on Dec. 7, 1944, in part 87 of the U.S. Statutes at Large. She gave us the hint that sometimes one must go to a news source to find what the true title is when one has only the "popular" title. Other hints included: look at the authority of the online source and the currency of the information; concentrate on showing the patron how to use the sources; never interpret what the law says; and don't start a research on the Federal Statutes on an online source if you have the print source at hand. The print source is the LAW even though it may become available online first.

Our next session, also taught by Melanie, was to look at Federal sources in print. She covered what is meant by "primary sources" (the law itself) and "secondary sources" (writings or commentaries about the law). We were then shown the stages from "Slip law" to "Statutes at Large" to "U.S. Code". GPO prints the official Code, and the commonly used unofficial ones are printed by West (USCA) and Lexis (USC Services). Common features of all versions of the U.S. Code include a copy of the Constitution, laws in topical or subject arrangement, historical notes, indexes, tables, tables of popular names, and supplementation (usually called "pocket parts"). To access a comprehensive guide, go online to the George Washington University Law Center's research guide at www.aallnet.org/sis/ripssis/federal.html.

Louisa Voden, Law Librarian for the Oklahoma Dept. of Libraries taught the sessions on locating Oklahoma law. The procedure is very much the same as federal. She handed us a sheet comparing the types of law and titles between federal and Oklahoma sources. For instance, "Statutes at large" compare to the "Oklahoma sessions laws", U.S. Code compares to "Oklahoma statutes". There is no Oklahoma equivalent to the "Congressional record" nor for "Federal supplement" (U.S. district courts).

The main recommendation was to KEEP your Oklahoma Statutes in print. There are reasons for this: 1) print is the Official version, 2) print index is easier to search than online, 3) it is easier to browse titles and sections in the print version, 4) online searching is tricky at best, and 5) mistakes have been found online.

Other handouts were "Progress of a bill through the Oklahoma Legislature", "Oklahoma bill tracking quick reference", "Introduction to statutory law", and a problem set. Unfortunately time did not allow us to complete all of the searches listed.

BJ Vinson
Virtual Reference:
Oklahoma’s “Ask a Librarian” Experience, Year One

Libraries have always provided traditional reference service and in the last years offered e-mail reference to counter patrons’ massive exit to the Web for information. The Oklahoma Department of Libraries through its interlibrary loan encouraged subject requests, but those virtually (no pun intended) disappeared too. For several years ODL wanted to try the virtual reference environment beyond just patron e-mails to individual librarians.

The Oklahoma Department of Libraries funded a pilot project using a Library Services and Technology (LSTA) grant. The digital reference supplier selected for the project was QuestionPoint. QuestionPoint is a collaborative reference service developed by the Library of Congress and OCLC, with input from participating members of the Global Reference Network, a group of libraries and institutions worldwide that are committed to digital reference. According to the 2002-2003 OCLC annual report, about 1,000 libraries in 19 countries are using QuestionPoint.

Ten libraries responded from various e-mails sent encouraging and cajoling participation in this first year: Bartlesville Public Library; Lawton Public Library; Muskogee Public Library; McAlester Public Library; Oklahoma State University, Stillwater; Oklahoma State University, Tulsa; Robert M. Bird Health Sciences Library; Tulsa City-County Library; Tulsa Community College Learning Resources Center; and the University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma. ODL is the project coordinator. It’s a very good mix of types of libraries and there is safety in numbers as we explore new services.

On July 1, 2003, Oklahoma’s “Ask a Librarian” virtual reference service adventure began. The eleven libraries attended a one-day training session and began the process as an Oklahoma QuestionPoint Consortium. The loosely-organized consortium allows each library the freedom to develop the virtual needs of its individual clientele. QP Oklahoma uses standard communications and basic chat. Setting up the standard communication does not require additional hardware and OCLC maintains QuestionPoint on its server. Each library submitted a profile of its library strengths for participation in the worldwide Global Reference Network. Filling out the profile information was the most time-consuming aspect of getting started with QuestionPoint. Those libraries that use the Dewey Classification had to translate strengths into Library of Congress Classification. As members of QP Oklahoma subscription group, it is easy to refer to each other for those experts beyond the local library walls. The library can assign and answer the questions locally, route to libraries within the group or route to the global network. Another useful feature is the ability to move a query that has been received from a source outside QP into the “Ask a Librarian” queue to manage and answer.

It was decided that each library would be responsible for its own publicity. ODL provided customized web and chat templates with user defined fields that could be modified for the needs of each library. There are step-by-step procedures for using the templates. The group looked at several logos that were designed by the ODL Public Information Office and selected the one that is currently used. Each question answered is followed by a survey for the user to answer.

Survey comments have been rewardingly positive:

- Finding the service was a fluke. I now have it bookmarked for future reference. Thank you.
- I just stumbled across this library service. I had no idea that there was anything like this, but I am going to put it into my favorites, so I can use it again. Thank you very much.
- This is a wonderful service. Thanks for the help. It saved me hours of research.
- It is nice to have some where to find the answers to these odd things that come up now and then...I will use this service again...and am very pleased with the response. Thank You.

Five reference librarians at ODL staff the chat sessions between 10:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. The time from 3:00 to 4:30 p.m. was added recently. Each reference librarian rotates the Tuesday through Thursday schedule. Chat is handled from the librarian’s desk. That time is used to clean, answer e-mail, and ponder the meaning of life and its mysteries. The reference questions fall in several categories: genealogy for those people looking for their dead relatives and those looking for the live ones; Oklahoma
related queries such as historical and biographical information; those seeking information as related to state government business and agencies or legal questions; and those questions from people who may have no place to turn. The variety of questions is challenging. For instance:

- I am looking for information on my great-grandfather who served in the legislature in the 1900’s.
- Are there any biorefineries in the state of Oklahoma producing biodiesel or ethanol? If so can you send a listing of the refineries and where they are located?
- How do I get my notary renewed? Where do I go to get a birth certificate?
- Where would I find information on stacked or non-stacked UIM for commercial auto policies?
- Was there a “Sally's Saloon” in Tulsa in 1971? I had a dream about a place like that. Thanks.
- Recently my house burned down along with my discharge papers from Oklahoma...I would like to have another copy, please assist me.

During the implementation year (July 2003-June 2004), 1,000 Ask questions were received by the subscription group. Eighty-four of the requests were during training and testing that took place in May and June prior to launching the service officially in July 2004. The busiest time for QuestionPoint queries to come in via the Web started at 10:00 a.m. and extended until 7:00 p.m. with approximately 60% of the total. The second busiest time followed from 7:00 p.m. until midnight with approximately 25%. Apparently users do not care whether the library is open or not when information is needed and there is accessibility. This is of particular interest to ODL, which operates from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday only.

Chat is still not completely being embraced. The volume of chat sessions is still relatively low. Clearly, offering Chat in the evenings is necessary. The busiest time for Chat that is offered is at 7:00 p.m. as shown in the chart at left. Some of the libraries were quicker to start while others continue to proceed more cautiously.

The Oklahoma Department of Libraries has traditionally not marketed its services to its primary users, so the traffic to our “Ask a Librarian” service was very slow getting started. In June 2004 our “Ask a Librarian” service was put on the http://www.youroklahoma.com/ portal and as they say, “the rest is history.” We have been discovered so I conclude placement of your service on your Web site is critical. Even with this new-found prominence we still get comments that we are hard to find.

Speaking for only ODL, we are finding that accessing the proprietary databases for patrons who are not part of state government, has not been a problem as often predicted. The questions that we are receiving fall outside database-generated answers. And, virtual reference has energized the staff.

Two of the libraries participating in the first year opted out for the second year. One decided to stay with its successful e-mail service and the other had staff limitations. Rose State College and the University of Tulsa will be joining QP Oklahoma for the final year of the LSTA funded project.

The QP Oklahoma logo is being offered to those libraries that are not a member of the consortium to add to their web pages. The link takes a patron to the ODL “Ask a Librarian” web form and chat page. The link is at http://catalog.odl.state.ok.us/aal-images.htm.

Explore the usefulness of the local Oklahoma Knowledge Base. A year’s worth of queries shows repeated questions. It is thought that libraries answering reference questions and making referrals, as ODL does, might find a Knowledge Base more useful than those libraries instructing users.

Explore partnering with other libraries outside Oklahoma. Expand chat hours and coverage by other libraries within Oklahoma and possibly outside Oklahoma.

Stay tuned for the continuing saga of QP Oklahoma and its potential to reach virtual inquiring minds.

Mary Hardin, ODL
Mustang Library Receives Grant

Congratulations to Mustang Public Library, which received an Express Consumer Health Outreach Award from the National Network of Libraries of Medicine, South Central Region. Five organizations in the South Central Region received the award of up to $5,000. This award was designed to foster the use of online consumer health information resources among the general public by supporting collaborative projects between community based health organizations and public libraries.

The Mustang Library was awarded $4,997 to collaborate with Integris Canadian Valley Regional Hospital on a consumer health project. Their project, Find it Now! Health Information Online, will connect consumers to the health information they need by providing greater access to Internet service at the library, designing courses for the needs of their community, and teaching classes at the library and throughout the community. The community served is mostly rural, and Mustang Public Library is preparing to create a computer lab for the residents who use the library. Many of these courses will be taught in the new computer lab.
The 2004 Legislative Session was less traumatic than the immediate past and no less exciting at times. With issues such as the Uniform Computer Transactions Act (UCITA) out of the way and a proposal to reduce school library media qualifications dormant from 2003, the session began as predicted.

An Interim Study of 2003 proposed a major push to place some limits on property tax assessments. The results of the study were more than seven pieces of legislation regarding ad valorem taxes. The Oklahoma Library Association did support a targeted cap on assessments for low-income elderly, but opposed a general cap on property taxes.

Under State Question 676, Oklahoma in 1996 endorsed an annual five (5) percent increase in property taxes throughout the state. That has caused the metropolitan areas and senior citizens to complain about excessive increases compounded. However, to protect senior citizens from those property tax hikes arising from increased valuations on a home, existing state law freezes property valuations for senior citizens who earn $25,000 or less annually.

The result of the Interim Study and all these proposals introduced regarding property taxes is SJR 30 and State Questions 714, which will refer to Oklahoma voters a proposal to adopt federal calculations in homesteads of people 65 and older.

State Question 714 would raise the income threshold from $25,000 to $51,100 in the six-country OKC metropolitan statistical areas, and to $52,000 in the five-county Tulsa metropolitan statistical areas, for example. Other areas of the state will likewise modify the income thresholds for calculating fair cash value of homes of senior citizens. HB 2208, a companion measure, is enabling legislation to implement the new thresholds. SJR 30 and HB 2208 both passed the Legislature without dissent and were signed by Governor Brad Henry.

Early in the session a piece of legislation was introduced that would have required the filtering of Internet connections in all libraries of the state that receive any public funding. Such a proposal would have been a tremendously expensive proposition and one with less than success to date. In effect, HB 2222 was another unfunded state mandate which, together with the numerous budget constraints placed on the Department of Libraries, was regarded as unnecessary. Because? It was a duplication of existing regulations by the U.S. Government. On the recommendation of OLA, who argued that the proposal was unnecessary and expensive, HB 2222 was not heard by its legislative committee.

Dormant from 2003 was a piece of legislation that attempted to reduce the educational requirement for school media librarians (HB 1480) from graduate or masters degree to undergraduate degree. School media specialists worked diligently last year to maintain the current standards and OLA supported them in that endeavor. The measure died this year since it did not receive a hearing by the House of Representatives.

The state economy and expenditures improved this year but few, if any, state agencies had their funding fully restored to the level of the past, including the Department of Libraries. While OLA endorsed the restoration of funding of state aid to public libraries and construction grants, those aspirations fell short. OLA did support the Department’s budget for statewide licenses to full-text magazine/journal articles, which benefits all libraries in the state.

Over one-third of the Legislature will not return in 2005 due to term-limits or by choice. This is both an opportunity and a challenge. Some of those retiring from office are good friends and supporters of the library community. The challenge and opportunity for the library community is to identify those aspiring to serve in the Legislature, to invite them into your home and library, to be active in their effort to be elected. By getting to know your state representative and state senator you will be one of the first he/she will turn to for advice and suggestions.

Oliver Delaney
OLA Legislative Liaison
Six Oklahoma Libraries Receive “We the People Bookshelf” Awards

Five hundred libraries nationwide, including six libraries in the state of Oklahoma, received a “We the People Bookshelf” award from the National Endowment for the Humanities in conjunction with the American Library Association this past spring. The NEH’s “We the People” initiative supports projects that strengthen the teaching, study, and understanding of American history and culture. Each library was awarded free copies of 15 books for children and young adults that focus on the theme of “courage.”

The Oklahoma libraries selected to receive the books are:

Bethany Earl Harris Elementary School Library
Chickasha Public Library
Kaw City Public Library
Sperry High School Library
Tipton Public School Library
Waurika Public Library

“The library is fortunate to receive these wonderful additions to the collection that will fit so well into our children’s programs,” said Chickasha Public Library’s children’s librarian Terri Sharp.

The NEH has recently announced that the second “We the People Bookshelf” will include books with the theme of “freedom”. The books will appeal to children from kindergarten through high school and include historical classics, biographies, poetry, fantasy, and folk tales.

Libraries may apply for a “We the People Bookshelf” award online at http://www.neh.gov/wtp/bookshelf/freedom-guidelines.html until October 20, 2004.