Comic Relief at the Annual Conference

Bill Barnes and Gene Ambaum, creators of the cartoon strip *Unshelved*, were the presenters for “Graphic Novels from the Inside” at the 99th annual OLA conference in Tulsa.

They began with a brief history of comics. The first comic character was the Yellow Kid. When another cartoonist created his own Yellow Kid, it created a legal battle between the sponsoring newspapers. From this, the term “yellow journalism” was born.

In 1954 Frederick Wertham, a medical doctor and psychiatrist, convinced the public that comics were the cause of juvenile delinquency. Bill said that we now know it’s video games which cause juvenile delinquency!

They then talked about Will Eisner, Art Spiegelman and Scott McLoud’s graphic novels, emphasizing that even though they look like comics, they are novels.

Trends in graphic novels include focus on writing and breaking away from superheroes. Most are creator-owned properties and self-published. Bill and Gene recommend the following graphic novels: Frank Miller’s *Batman: The Dark Knight Returns*; Neil Gaiman’s *Sandman: Dream Country*; Jeff Smith’s *Bone*; Art Spiegelman’s *The Complete Maus: A Survivor’s Tale*, Judd Winick’s *Pedro and me*; and Andy Runton’s *Owly*.

To read *Unshelved*, go to www.overduemedia.com.

The Unshelved Guys did another presentation at the Friday night banquet. Their talks were not only informative, but quite humorous.

*BJ Vinson, ODL*

Joe Raiola [left], senior editor of *Mad Magazine*, spoke at Thursday’s Joy of Censorship luncheon. After briefly outlining the history of the magazine’s development, he talked about the state of censorship in America today. He also showed slides of some of *Mad Magazine’s* most memorable and controversial covers featuring *Mad*’s signature character, Alfred E. Neuman. Mr. Raiola was an animated and entertaining speaker, a great spokesperson for the satirical magazine.
Jeanie’s Jots

What a great year for the Oklahoma Library Association we have had! As I contemplate our accomplishments as well as challenges during 2005-2006, I must go back to this time last year. The OLA Leadership Team began the year with a Leadership Retreat at the Quartz Mountain Resort. The goal for the Leadership Retreat was that the members of the leadership team, the committee, division and roundtable chairpersons, have their say, speak their voice while learning about each other as well as the association. With the theme, “Just So You Know,” ensuring that we know as many sides of issues as possible, know who the key players are, understanding the context of issues by learning the history of these issues was very important. So, we focused a bit on getting to know each other.

Also at the very beginning of the year, we examined the Long Range Plan for OLA to make sure that every workshop, committee meeting and conference program or plan fell under the umbrella of that mission. In addition to the Long Range Plan which is available on the OLA Website, we developed a list of ten key issues facing this association.

The key issues are:

- Oklahoma legislature—censorship and funding
- Advocacy for libraries
- OLA infrastructure: staffing and headquarters
- Increasing membership through recruitment and retention
- Active involvement of membership
- Libraries as advocates
- Opposing censorship
- Professional image and higher profile
- Raising funds
- Building a stable financial situation (Tie for tenth)
- Keeping libraries relevant in a digital world (Tie for tenth)

The path was set that we would follow during the year. I’m not sure that “follow” fits the nature of this group. OLA has many committees and round table groups that seem to dance, celebrate and play their way to success! Speaking of celebrating and playing, one of the goals of the Program Committee which plans and carries out the annual conference was to have fun! What a group to be a part of!

As you can tell from the first concern or issue listed, OLA was ready for a legislative year fraught with challenges for the library community. We were not surprised, though a bit dismayed, when Representative Sally Kern brought a bill to the House which would segregate books and materials dealing with homosexuality or sexual content in public libraries. This bill got worse and worse as the legislative term progressed. The final bill, HB2158, which passed in the House but was not heard on the Senate floor would have devastated our public libraries because state funding was tied to compliance with the bill. We have a true debt of gratitude to the 33 Representatives who voted against this bill as well as to Senator Johnny Crutchfield and Senator Mike Morgan who worked diligently to keep it from coming to a vote in the Senate.

Be ready for this to resurface next year! Representative Kern makes no bones about bringing this to the level of school libraries next. This WILL be an issue in the legislative session this year. We are seeing similar activity nationally, so be ready.
Be sure to get to know your local legislators, get out to support the candidacy of those running for office who know about and support libraries!

Advocacy for libraries must be phrased as advocacy for those we serve! This is critical. When we speak, we must talk about changes that come about in people because we are there. We must talk about how literacy and being able to read and know changes lives. We should tell stories that personalize the issues of freedom to read, freedom of information and access to information. With the media focusing on horrible situations such as the murder of the child in Purcell and mentioning library services in the story, good stories are desperately needed.

The third issue, staffing and headquarters for OLA, was dealt with this year in a “temporary” way. We are now renting an office and have a part-time office assistant. We are very pleased to have a location very near the State Capitol as well as the Oklahoma Department of Libraries. When you are in Oklahoma City, give Kay Boies a call at 405-525-5100 and then drop by to visit the office.

Recruitment and retention is an ongoing work for the association. Five regional meetings were held this year which had good attendance. The notion behind these meetings is to bring OLA to you! Too often, our members feel isolated geographically. This effort is one to break down geographic barriers, to create networks, to encourage membership in the association and to provide opportunities for those librarians working near each other to get to know each other.

Many of the committees, divisions and roundtables (DRoCs) held meetings utilizing videoconferencing, online chat as well as e-mail and phone conference calls. These efforts paid off in members being able to attend meetings without long drives and time away from their jobs.

Legislative Day at the State Capitol was successful this year. Our jobs as advocates, though, are not limited to a one-day event. Letters, phone calls, conversations with legislators and school board members, city decision makers, and others of influence must take place throughout the year. The same is true of influencing national legislation and decisions. We MUST get to know our legislators, their staff members and have our voices heard.

Opposing censorship—standing up for freedoms—is basic to librarianship. We must look at events and decisions through a perspective broader than how it affects oneself. When freedoms are taken away from any of us, we are each diminished.

The final three issues have been addressed very well by ongoing efforts by the association. The Endowment Committee has led an effort this year that culminated in a fantastic evening at the Governor’s Mansion, Saturday, June 3, 2006. This committee, co-chaired by Jennifer Paustenbaugh and Marty Thompson, created a very successful fund-raising event that will surely have elevated the Oklahoma Library Association and librarianship in the minds and hearts of all involved. With a pre-screening of the Disney/Pixar movie Cars, special presentations by Michael Wallis, an Oklahoma author and authority of Route 66 as well as the voice of “The Sheriff,” this afternoon and evening was spectacular! There was even a car show on the Mansion grounds with cars representing the “stars” in the movie.

A very special thank you to the committee members who worked incredibly hard to make this day successful! From the vision of Kathryn Lewis and Pat Weaver-Meyers, to the enthusiasm and connections of Lynn McIntosh, and the efforts of each committee member, this event emerged. Congratulations on an incredibly successful afternoon and evening!

So, as I finish this final article as president of the Oklahoma Library Association, I am again reminded of my debt to you, the members of the association, for a wonderful year. We have been diligent, we have made our voices heard, we have grown and stretched as we learned. Thank you for allowing me to serve as your president. It is a great honor and I am grateful.

Jeanie Johnson
As I entered the exhibit hall, I saw Bob Motter leaning against the wall and walked over to help him hold up the veritable structure. We exchanged pleasantries about the need to support the wall and Bob said, “My feet don’t hold up like they used to. Ever since I served in Korea and slept in 40 degree below, my feet have been messed up.”

“I didn’t know you were in Korea, Bob.”

“Yes, I was called back after World War II.” Now, it seemed like a pretty good story might be in the making. We sauntered over to another story teller, John Hinkle, and thus begins the tale you are about to read...

I turned toward John and exclaimed, “John, Bob here has some real history that we need to get recorded! Did you know he served in Korea?” John smiled. He’s known Bob for a few years. We looked around the exhibit hall and I began to calculate just how far back Bob’s history might go and how much of that history coincided with the Oklahoma Library Association. I was looking for some stories that might be part of the centennial.

I’m a little slow when it comes to calculating math in my head, but John’s a bit quicker. He prodded, “Bob, when did you get started with OLA?”

“It was actually my dad who started; he was one of the originals. I started helping him.”

John chimed in, “Did you know that both Bob and his father are both recipients of the OLA Distinguished Service Award?” I didn’t, but I sure thought some people besides me should know that.

“My grandfather was what they called a ‘blank book binder’. You probably don’t know what that was. He bound the county record books; his name was Frederick Rudolf and my father was Robert Traugott Motter. My grandfather started the business here in 1911 after coming over from Switzerland where he learned his trade. My dad joined him and my uncle after returning from Alaska where he spent 10 years working and panning for gold during the gold rush days in Alaska. It was my dad who saw the need for a library bindery in Oklahoma and bought out my grandfather and uncle. We sold the business in 1994 which turned out to be a mistake. I helped my dad set up exhibits right after World War II. Then I came back to it after I was called back to Korea. I guess that was about three years beginning in 1946 and then back again in 1952. I’ve been doing it ever since.”

As I calculate, with John Hinkle’s help, Bob Motter has been in the OLA exhibit business about 57 years. Between Bob and his dad, the Motters have shared a history with OLA for pretty much the 100 years we’ve been around. While I ponder the fact that Bob Motter has been setting up exhibits since before I was born and that I’ve already retired once, John says, “I remember when the exhibits were in the underground parking lot of the old Lincoln plaza and that a heavy rain storm forced us to tear down the exhibits in a hurry. We barely finished when the parking lot began to flood. What year do you think was the worst conference (for the exhibitors)?”

Bob looks at his feet and chuckles. “I remember a lot of places we put up the exhibits. Alva, Muskogee. At Pawnee, we set up in the fairgrounds with horse blankets separating the exhibits from the livestock.” My mind was just awakening to how much had changed in the last 100 years. Bob mused, “It got so bad that after a while we did some lobbying with the OLA Executive Board to hold the conferences in Oklahoma City or Tulsa. That’s when they voted to alternate between the two cities.”

John Hinkle remembers, “I seem to remember some pretty bad mosquitoes when the exhibits were set up outside at Lake Murray.”

John looks like the memory is painful enough that he is still scratching the bites.

John and I exchange glances. He prompts, “What keeps you doing this?”

Bob reflects, “In the past, exhibitors had a lot more fun. We used to throw parties in a hotel suite. Bill McIlvain and Guy Logsdon both played guitar and would sit around and play for us. Bill...”

Cont. on next page
wrote his own songs, uncensored. I remember one song about a flag pole painter who started painting the flag pole at the old Skirvin Hotel in downtown Oklahoma City but instead of starting at the top he started at the bottom. When he finished, at the top, he used his coveralls as a sail and landed on the cabana at the hotel swimming pool breaking up a bridge game." Somehow, Bob transitions to telling me that the song ended with the flag pole painter in Alaska with a waitress and a bottle of Ballantyne Scotch. I can tell from the twinkle in Bob’s eye that he has curtailed the story quite a bit in the telling and that gives me a pretty good picture of a suite of guitar – playing vendors hooting it up in a hotel as a suggestive song is ballyhooed. Given the unevenness of the story, I suspect that the lyrics were not of a type Bob cares to share in these more politically–correct times. Bob notes that Bill McIlvain’s wife still lives in Norman, Oklahoma. Her name is Clarice. In his next breath, Bob proves the old adage that art mimics life that mimics art.

“I remember one conference when a representative from ALA was flown in to make a speech at the conference and got drunk the night before. He threw a glass pitcher into a bathtub and the hotel had him thrown in jail. Jim Gourley and Edmon Low called me to see if I could get him out of jail so he could speak the next morning. I went to the police station and explained our predicament. The officer wasn’t sympathetic, but I saw he had a Masonic ring on his finger, so I asked him as a fellow mason to help me out. He told me I was going to get in trouble for trying to bribe him and the guy was going to spend the night in jail. I got out of there and I guess they put him on a plane later and sent him home. Jim Gourley was one of the best OLA presidents; he was a heck of a guy.”

John asks, “Remember any famous speakers or guests?”

“I guess Will Rogers, Jr. was the most famous speaker, but two presidents happened to be staying at the hotels when we had conferences - George Bush, Sr. and Bill Clinton. Clinton came for the Murrah bombing memorial.”

John asks, “Is there a psychology in organizing the exhibits?”

“The main thing is not to get the competitors next to one another. It’s important to get a reliable decorator. We’ve had good and bad. We had a fiasco in Enid. The civic center there gave us the wrong floor plan and we couldn’t fit all the booths in the space. When I got there Kay was having a fit, but somehow we managed to arrange things. The decorator should have known.

Last year, many of the exhibitors were happy. They want to go back to the postal center in Norman. I always like to mention that we couldn’t have a conference without our vendors. I remember in Alva half the librarians and vendors had to stay in Motels in Kansas. The only place in Alva was the College dormitory and there weren’t nearly enough rooms there.

One year, not awfully long ago, the powers that be decided to hold a joint conference with the Arkansas Library Association. Since they normally have their conference in the fall and always start on Sunday we being the younger state had to change our routine. I guess that was the reason. It wasn’t a great success and neither state has mentioned doing it again.”

Bob pauses and I ask, “Why do you keep doing it after so many years?”

“Last year would have been my last year, but Kay said I couldn’t quit until she retires.”

About this time, my feet are getting sore too, but it’s hard to stop. As the conversation closes, Bob talks about what he does when he isn’t planning OLA annual conference exhibits. “I drive a blind lady around who works for the disabled. She’s got an eight-county region and she needs help setting up equipment, you know, a CCTV and other stuff. I enjoy helping her. They are wonderful people.”

As I leave to catch a presentation upstairs, it occurs to me that helping people set up equipment and ‘other stuff’ is what Bob Motter has been doing his whole life and we are all the richer for it.

Pat Weaver-Meyers
OLA President-Elect
All-Conference Event

Alice in Wonderland
At the OASLMS luncheon, Michael Korenblit began talking about his book *Until We Meet Again*. He told of asking his parents if they would be willing to tell him about their experiences of the Holocaust. They were so glad to find out that he was interested. He was surprised that they were willing to share. None of them had talked about it while he was growing up – each waiting for the other to broach the subject.

His parents were teenagers in Hrubieszow, Poland when it all started. They were already in love. They also loved their parents so when they made the decision to leave each of the parents hiding places, it was difficult. But the decision saved their lives. The rest of the family members were eventually discovered and shot. The people who discovered the families received an award of 1 kilo of flour! Michael’s parents each went through several concentration camps before being liberated. Later they reunited in Hrubieszow, and eventually migrated to Ponca City.

Michael talked about going to Israel, Poland and Germany with his family in the 1980s; the people which whom they reunited, the visits to Hrubieszow, concentration camps, and dealings with communist officials.

During the program, he continued the story of his parents’ life. He also spoke about how the Third Reich was able to slowly convince the people under their rule that Jewish people were worthless. Did you know that the Nuremberg Laws which placed so many restrictions on Jews were the same as the Jim Crow Laws in the U.S.?

Michael went on to stress the need to defend intellectual freedom, tolerance and respect of diversity, and exercising the vote. If more of the German people had voted in 1932, Hitler’s party may not have ever come to power; and the Holocaust might not have happened. (Fewer than 49% had voted.) He demonstrated that the 6 million Jews killed in the 1940s equaled the combined population of Oklahoma, Vermont, Montana and Rhode Island! Imagine driving through any of those states and not being able to find a single person.

The Allies vowed “Never Again” at the end of WWII, yet genocide continues in Iran under Hussein, in African countries, in South American countries, and in Asian countries. What will we tell our children or grandchildren when they ask what did we do to try to prevent this?

Thank you, Michael.

*BJ Vinson, ODL*

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**Can You Hear Me Now?**

Vivian Cisneros and Mary Jo Venetis presented a program on using Instant Messaging (IM) to help provide library services to deaf and hearing-impaired patrons. A popular means of communication among teens, IM is a free or low-cost way to communicate in real-time using computers. IM is already being used to serve deaf patrons in some school and college libraries.
OSU’s Electronic Publishing Center may well be the leader in our state among colleges and universities in digitizing materials of interest to Oklahomans. Administered by Cokie Anderson, The Center has digitized eight collections that you will find useful. The collections use a common Google search engine to search either within each collection or within as many of the collections that you choose or all.

**Indian Claims Commission Decisions (ICC)**
This collection is a cooperative project with the University of Tulsa Law Library and the National Indian Law Library. You will find all 43 volumes of this historic set of Indian law decisions here, including ICC decisions for such Oklahoma Indian tribes as The Five Civilized Tribes, Fort Sill Apache, Sac and Fox, Ottawa, Cheyenne-Arapaho, Creek, and others. It also includes decisions for the tribes of all other states.

**Oklahoma Ornithological Society Bulletin**
This collection is a cooperative project with the Oklahoma Ornithological Society. You will find the first 37 volumes of the *Bulletin* here (1968-2004). It includes such articles as these: “An Oklahoma Nest of the Common Raven,” “Birds to Be Looked for in the Black Mesa Country,” “Sage Sparrow: a New Species for Oklahoma,” and “Status and Distribution of the Least Tern in Oklahoma”.

**Chronicles of Oklahoma**
This collection is a cooperative project with the Oklahoma Historical Society. You will find the full texts of volumes 1-40 here (1943-1962); volumes 41-80 (1963-2002) feature only tables-of-contents, not full texts. You already know how useful the *Chronicles* are for libraries—if your library doesn’t have the 1943 to 1962 volumes, here they are for free.

**Indian Affairs: Law and Treaties** (popular name: Kappler’s)
This was OSU’s first digitization project, and consists of all 7 volumes of this historic set of treaties, laws, and Presidential Executive Orders for our nation’s American Indian tribes.

**Publications of the Oklahoma Biological Survey**
Published from 1929 to 1933, then resuming publishing in 2005 (The Survey published nothing from 1934 through 2004), you will find articles here such as these: “The Ecology of the Western Oklahoma Salt Plains,” “Oklahoma Spiders,” and “Vascular Flora of the Deep Fork River in Okmulgee, Creek, and Okfuskee Counties, Oklahoma”.

**The Proceedings of the Oklahoma Academy of Science**
This is the official website of The Academy, and consists of the full texts of articles from 1976 to 2002; for the years 1921 to 1975 you will find only tables-of-contents, not full texts. You will find articles here such as these: “A History of Bald Eagle Nesting Activity in Oklahoma” and “New Species Distribution of Ants in Oklahoma, Including a South American Invader”.

**The Proceedings of the 27th Southern Forest Tree Improvement Conference**
Because OSU was the host site of this biennial conference at which forest experts from across our nation met, their conference proceedings were a natural to digitize. You’ll find articles here such as these: “Pioneering Tree Improvement in Oklahoma,” “Cone and Seed Insect Pest Research: The Role of the Southwide Studies,” and “Seed Source Comparisons in 100 Tests in Arkansas and Oklahoma”.

**Speeches of Boone Pickens**
To digitize the speeches of the great benefactor of Oklahoma State University, T. Boone Pickens, is also a natural for OSU. The earliest of Mr. Pickens’s speeches included here is from October 6, 1980; the latest, May 23, 1989.

*Steve Beleu, ODL*
Advocacy How-Tos

At the Quartz Mountain planning retreat for this year’s OLA leadership, advocacy for libraries was recognized as a top priority. With threats to the very existence of libraries becoming more and more common, advocacy is more and more a matter of survival. But how do you change the minds or influence the decisions of legislators and other government officials?

A blue-ribbon panel gave plenty of practical advice about advocacy to a room full of interested listeners on March 30th at OLA’s annual conference. Sponsored by the Legislative Committee, the two-hour program "Advocacy: Turning Adversity into Opportunity" was very timely. With active threats including full-blown censorship in public libraries, the possible elimination of most school libraries, and extreme tax cuts that threaten all publicly-funded libraries, March 2006 was a time of great concern.

The panelists were: Keith Michael Fiels, Executive Director of the American Library Association and former state librarian of Massachusetts; State Representative Jeannie McDaniel; Nancy Anthony, long-time Oklahoma City library trustee; Jim Connor, regional vice president of the American Library Trustee Association; and Joe Raiola, senior editor of Mad Magazine, who had just presented his program on "The Joy of Censorship" to a laughing and appreciative combined luncheon audience.

Here are some of the key points that were made:

- Advocacy involves marketing: you have to find out what legislators and officials want and then give it to them.
- Advocacy requires collaboration.
- Rehearse. You don’t have much time to deliver an effective message.
- Stick to the message. You are there to advocate libraries, not another cause.
- Don’t scold. Your goal is to sell libraries, not sermonize about them.
- Wrap yourselves in the flag. Libraries are a basic and necessary institution of American liberty. One way of putting it to a would-be censor: “You are standing on my freedom.”
- Don’t repeat the words or charges of the opposition. That reinforces them. (Note: watch Arch Lustberg’s video, "Controlling the confrontation" for more on this.)
- Be blunt. Call censorship what it is.
- Libraries have supporters on all sides, not just on one side, and a spectrum of advocates is needed. One panelist said, “We need conservative advocates.”
- Library opponents have created a climate of fear. Confront it.
- Regarding the excerpts about sex from critically-praised library books that pro-censorship groups have been trying to shock people with: "Farm kids don’t even need to read those books."
- Be positive about the library — all the time.
- Invite legislators — all the time.

Wayne Hanway
Legislative Committee Conference Programs Chair
Ruth Brown Award

A mentoring program that has helped more than 300 underprivileged students become better readers has been honored with the 2006 Ruth Brown Award.


The Ruth Brown Award honors the memory of the Bartlesville public librarian who worked to fight segregation during the 1940s and 1950s in her hometown. The $500 grant is given annually to an Oklahoma program that uses libraries, books or information for a socially responsible cause, Antell said.

"Fittingly, this year, the Ruth Brown Award goes to a Bartlesville program," she said.

OLA Board Actions

January 2006

• Approved the purchase of a book in memory of Gerald Hodges, to be donated to the Oklahoma Department of Libraries.
• Approved the income from basket sales at the 2006 annual conference be used in support of the new OLA office.
• Approved the Centennial committee’s purchase of 150 sets of printed note cards to be sold with profits benefiting the Endowment. Also approved a free one-year OLA membership and conference registration for the artist.
• Approved a change for clarity in the wording of the Sequoyah procedures manual.
• Approved a 15% discount on registration to the TSRT pre-conference for MPLA members, as an MPLA grant helped fund the pre-conference.

February 2006

• Adopted a resolution to use TIA/CREFF funds to pay for a year of office space rental.
• Authorized the treasurer to automatically pay rent on the OLA office each month.
• Accepted the nomination of Senator Cal Hobson for the 2006 Library Champion Award.
• Approved proposed by-laws changes regarding membership dues and fees structure and a new Excellence in Library Marketing (ELM) Award.
Me-ow! CATS members turn out in force for the All Conference Event.

The editor would like to thank the following people for submitting photos for this special conference edition of the Oklahoma Librarian: Michael Kim (official conference photographer), Karen Bays, Sara Schieman, Rita Howell, and Vivian Cisneros.