The Big Read Comes To Lawton

The highlight of the Big Read program in Lawton, Oklahoma, was the Kick-off event on September 30, 2007. What made this event so outstanding was the community support. The mayor, the deputy school superintendent, and a House of Representative member, the Lieutenant Governor, the Great Plains Technology Center director, and the director of Morale, Women and Recreation at Fort Sill all spoke about the importance of reading as one community. In addition, entertainment was provided by community artists, food was provided by a local bank, and the 77th Army Brass Quintet provided the music. Approximately 300 community members as well as representatives of each Big Read partnership joined in the festivities. We gave 500 books, 500 Reader’s Guides and at least 250 CDs to individuals and groups.

The planned events were successful. Although the book discussions attendees were not large in number, they were large in enthusiasm. The book discussions averaged fifteen per session. The only events which were not well-attended were the movie showings, particularly at Nye Library on the military base.

The Big Read programs enhanced community partnerships and collaborations. Although the Lawton Public Library was the main sponsor, each partner shared in planning and providing events. A variety of groups participated: seniors at retirement centers, veterans, pupils in the public schools, students at the university, elders of the Comanche Nation, non-English speaking Hispanics, and students in a literacy program. The Big Read in Lawton offered such a variety of activities (book discussions, museum exhibit, panel discussion, musical production, historical enactment, theatrical reading, etc.) that there was something for everyone. It was most interesting to note that in the book discussions, different groups of participants viewed the events of the westward migration of the “Okies” from different perspectives. In fact, the Comanche individuals recalled the dust storms but not so much the poverty as described in The Grapes of Wrath. At one of the retirement centers there was a woman who had actually made the trip from Oklahoma to California as did the Joad family in the novel. A veteran recalled his work on WPA projects and in camps much like those described in the novel.

Non-readers were targeted through the Literacy First Program at Zoe Learning Center. Also, Cameron University students enrolled in developmental reading courses (indicating reading levels below college entrance requirements) read the The Grapes of Wrath as part of their classroom assignment. We also furnished books in Spanish to our citizens who typically do not come to the library and do not participate in book discussions.

There were many examples of productive partnerships. As space will not permit discussion of all, only a few will be mentioned. First, the Museum of the Great Plains provided space for the auction and the Kick-off event. The museum also created and exhibited photographs of “The Dirty Thirties.” All attending the Kick-off event were treated to a free browsing of this excellent exhibit. Second, three professors from Cameron University provided a stimulating panel discussion of The Grapes of Wrath. Each presented the book in relation to his and her area of expertise: history, literature, and agriculture. Cameron University also hosted an illustrated presentation of mural projects supported through the Fine Arts Program of the WPA in the 1930’s. Last, all secondary schools in the Lawton Public School system read the The Grapes of Wrath; students participated in an essay contest. A local bank provided gift cards for the five winners of this contest. Nye Library at Fort Sill hosted book discussions as well as movie showings.

State Representative Don Armes provided his services as auctioneer at the event to raise funds to supplement the Big Read resources. In addition, he was a spokesperson for one of the television ads.

(continued on page 4)
President's Column...

Keys to Our Future

As I was trying to decide what to write for this column, I was thinking about the future and the words to an old song ran across my mind. Some lines of the song are “…Whatever will be will be/ The future’s not ours to see/ Que sera sera/ What will be will be.” (“Whatever Will Be, Will Be” sung by Doris Day in The Man Who Knew Too Much). This makes for good song lyrics but it is absolutely not an attitude we in OLA can afford to have. As members of OLA we must constantly keep in mind that we do hold the keys to the future both to the libraries in Oklahoma and to OLA.

As “keys” we have several opportunities in the coming months to have an impact both on the organization and on the future of our libraries. On February 26th the Legislative Committee is sponsoring a very valuable workshop which will help all of us become better advocates for libraries. The workshop is “Getting Your Legislators’ to ‘Yes’: Building Winning Relationships with Policymakers” and the presenter is Stephanie Vance. I attended the Advocacy workshop last June at ALA and Ms. Vance was one of the presenters. She is probably the most practical person I have ever heard on working with legislators or other political leaders. You leave her training not only having heard excellent information but with some strategies you can use. Therefore I want to encourage you to attend this workshop and to bring members of your Friends group, Trustees, or other supporters. The future of libraries in Oklahoma depends on us becoming very savvy advocates. Also, again, the future of OLA depends on us supporting workshops such as this.

On March 11, 2008, you will have the opportunity use what you learned in the legislative workshop when we go to the Capitol for Legislative Day. This event is so important because it is the one time in the year when we all stand united, speaking with one voice to our legislators on behalf of libraries. We must keep before them the need for additional funding as well as continuing the support for school media specialists and reminding them of the importance of freedom of speech and freedom of information. It takes all of us working together to make this a successful event. And again, I remind you the work we do here is key to our future.

Then of course the “key” event of the spring is the conference which will be held April 21-23, 2008, in Tulsa at the Southern Hills Marriott. The conference will provide many opportunities for you to learn and grow professionally as well as make new friends from all types of libraries and from all across the state. There are excellent programs planned and great speakers. The keynote speaker is George Needham, who is vice president of member services with OCLC, and the Monday night banquet speakers are Oklahoma Attorney General Drew Edmondson and his wife, Linda. Both of the Edmondsons are long-time library supporters. Linda was one of the original Muskogee Public Library Friends group. We will also have the privilege of having ALA President Loriene Roy with us. The conference not only helps prepare you for the future as a librarian and gives you ideas for the future of your library, but again provides for the future of OLA because it is the second largest source of revenue for the organization.

Therefore, please mark your calendars and join us at these upcoming opportunities to be keys to the future. Then rather than singing “What will be will be,” we will sing a song of victory for the future of libraries in Oklahoma.

—Jan Bryant
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The Big Read Comes to Lawton, continued from page 1

State Senator Randy Bass, a former professional baseball player, not only starred in a commercial for the Big Read, but he also donated one of his signed baseballs for the auction. State Representative Ann Coody, a retired educator, was featured in a television spot inviting citizens to attend the Kick-off event; she was a speaker at the Kick-off as was our State Lieutenant Governor Jari Askins. The mayor of Lawton, Oklahoma, Mr. John Purcell, set the Big Read in motion at the Kick-off.

All seven secondary schools in the Lawton Public School System participated in the Big Read: the three local high schools taught The Grapes of Wrath, and the four middle schools read a more appropriate grade-level novel, Out of the Dust. Fifty-four essays were submitted by students in a district-wide contest. A nearby school district, Cache ISD, also read and discussed The Grapes of Wrath, and participants in Zoe’s literacy program read the novel as well.

All local media outlets covered the Big Read. Three different commercials were aired on Lawton Cable. Coverage was provided in the newspaper, The Constitution, as well as the university newspaper, The Collegian, and the newspaper on base, The Canoneer. The local commercial radio stations as well as the public broadcasting station KCCU all aired information. Three interviews were done on the radio; one interview was done for a Sunday morning talk show on television. The City of Lawton website, Lawton Library website and the KSWO/TV website all provided information on events and contacts. The Lawton Public Schools program channel provided information and updates.

Especially effective marketing efforts included a van in the Lawton Birthday parade in August 6, 2007. This van aroused much interest as parade viewers all wanted to know what the “Big Read” was all about. The auction, held prior to the Big Read initiation, also created community awareness of events to come. A local professional basketball team cheerleading squad attended the auction and two basketballs were donated. All television ads for the Big Read events were done by local celebrities. Another effective marketing effort was a book discussion held at a nearby winery. This event was broadcast on the evening news.

Lawton, Oklahoma, had never sponsored a community-wide reading program in the past, but the Big Read was such a success that Lawton will definitely sponsor a community-wide reading program again!

— Judy Neale, Cameron University

REVIEWS


In this noteworthy book on the devastation extremist violence wreaks on books, libraries, and cultural institutions, Knuth describes the systematic destruction of texts as an expression of a deliberate struggle for power and a rejection of pluralism and modernism in favor of imposed, homogenous orthodoxy. In her 2003 Libricide, Knuth concentrated on the eradication of books by authoritarian regimes; in this companion, she expands her focus to include the actions of a wider variety of extremists. The bulk of the book presents meticulously researched case studies of cultural destruction, organized according to the circumstances and motivations of the perpetrators. They range from local attempts to seize a voice in political discourse, such as the 1984 vandalism against Amsterdam’s South African Institute by anti-apartheid activists, to cultural destruction as a product of total war, such as that caused by the Allied bombing campaigns against Germany and Japan. Knuth concludes with a thoughtful, persuasive discussion of the responsibility of U.S. policy-makers in the cultural destruction in Iraq in 2003. Of greatest interest is Knuth’s compellingly articulated theoretical framework of biblioclasm, which rejects the notion that cultural destruction can be dismissed as senseless violence and instead posits that it must be understood contextually as an intentional act whose motivations can range from affective pleasure to the calculated advancement of an ideological goal. Drawing persuasively from history, political science, and social theory, Knuth creates a challenging and forceful framework for understanding violence against books and libraries. Knuth balances the rigor of her scholarship and the weight of her subject matter with an engaging, accessible style, creating a work deserving the attention of any educated reader interested in intellectual freedom or political extremism.

— Molly Strothmann, University of Oklahoma


Books on Trial: Red Scare in the Heartland provides a fascinating account of the 1940 raid on the Progressive Bookstore in Oklahoma City and the subsequent trials of the proprietor and customers for membership in the Communist Party. Shirley A. Wiegland, Professor Emerita of Law at Marquette University, and Wayne A. Wiegland, F. Summers Professor of Library and Information Studies and Professor of American Studies at Florida State University, carefully document the events that led to the raid and the charges leveled against the defendants Bob and Ina Wood, Eli Jaffe, and Alan Shaw for violating Oklahoma’s criminal syndicalism law. Their subsequent trials sparked protest across the United States and inspired civil liberties advocates and proponents of free speech form the worlds of publishing and libraries to rally to their cause. The Wieglands offer a fascinating glimpse into the political and social climate of Oklahoma before and during the Second World War, and write a compelling history that all those interested in intellectual freedom issues should read.

— David D. Oberhelman, Oklahoma State University
Oklahoma Webpages: Three Blogs and a Wiki

Here is information about three new blogs that have been created late in 2007 and a Wikipedia project designed to improve access to Oklahoma State government information.

The Saint Francis Health System Library created a blog in November that will collect historical stories about the hospital in preparation for their 50th anniversary in 2010 (there were no entries in the blog yet on the day that I accessed it): http://sfharchives.wordpress.com

The Oklahoma Chapter of ACRL began a blog this year. You don’t have to be an ACRL member to read it: http://blog.library.okstate.edu/blog

The Documents Department of OSU began a blog about federal government information topics: http://okstategovdocs.blogspot.com/

Adri Edwards-Johnson, who is teaching the government information class at the University of Oklahoma School of Library and Information Studies this semester, reports about an ALA GODORT Wiki project that she has had her students work on (these are her words):

“For their midterm this year the OU SLIS Government Publications class worked on a project for ALA GODORT. GODORT is using a wiki to track state databases for all 50 states at http://wikis.ala.org/godort/index.php/State_Agency_Databases.

“The OU students searched Oklahoma governmental agency websites for databases available to the public on a wide range of topics. The completed midterm project can be located here: http://wikis.ala.org/godort/index.php/Oklahoma.

“Students found databases for everything from social services to tax forms, and even a database for the film industry. The OU class is the first SLIS group in the nation to work on this particular project and, working as a group, the ten students in the class developed one of the most detailed annotated collection of links to Oklahoma state databases available. And because the list is on a wiki anyone can go in later and update the list as new databases are located or developed.”

ADDENDUM: did you know that the Library of Congress has a blog? It is available at http://www.loc.gov/blog/

Reviewed on December 12, 2007 by Steve Beleu

Oklahoma Librarians Attend Leadership Institute in New Mexico

Karen Neurohr, Assessment Librarian at Oklahoma State University Library and Amanda Owens, Branch Manager, Tulsa City-County Library System, Pratt Library recently attended the 6th Leadership Institute @ Ghost Ranch sponsored by the Mountain Plains Library Association (MPLA).

Participants are selected based upon their leadership potential, their previous experiences as a leader, and the personal qualities that they address in an application essay. Typically, the number of viable applicants is two to three times greater than the number of positions available for the institute. The goal of the Leadership Institute is to help emerging leaders in the library profession develop their full career potential. MPLA’s funding partner, EBSCO Information Services, has provided one-third of the necessary funding for five of the past six years.

Twenty nine emerging leaders from MPLA’s twelve state library associations came together as participants in the 2007 Leadership Institute session. Maureen Sullivan, a nationally known library consultant and executive trainer, was the primary Institute Facilitator. Among the concepts Sullivan invigorated with her participative, inclusive style were interpersonal communication, group problem solving, and project and change management. The list of regional library leaders who served as mentors included Carol Hammond, Director & Vice President for Information Services at the Thunderbird International Business School in Arizona; Jane Hatch, Librarian in the Kansas City, Kansas, library system; Judy Zelenski, MPLA Executive Secretary from Colorado; and Mary Bushing, Library Consultant and Institute Coordinator from Bozeman, Montana.

Ghost Ranch, north of Abiquiu, New Mexico, is located in a unique natural landscape and served the process of learning, sharing and assimilation well. Ghost Ranch is associated with artist Georgia O’Keeffe as her home and the inspiration for much of her art. Originally part of a Spanish land grant in the 1700s, Ghost Ranch was a privately owned vacation retreat that operated as a dude ranch from the 1930’s until it was donated to the Presbyterian Church in 1955. The working ranch at the edge of the Colorado Plateau in northern New Mexico has served as a conference center since that time.

MPLA is a twelve-state regional library association that includes Arizona, Colorado, Kansas, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Utah and Wyoming in its membership. Its purpose is to promote the development of librarians and libraries by providing significant educational and networking opportunities. The Association meets annually in joint conferences with member states on a rotational basis. The 2008 conference will be held with the Utah Library Association in Salt Lake City. The Leadership Institute grew out of MPLA’s strategic planning process, and after three years of planning, the first institute was held in 2002.
Federal Documents 101:
Subject Portals, Easy Access to Online Federal Information

By Barbara Miller

Besides general topic search engines, previously discussed in this column, the federal government has created search engines or portals which guide you to all federal information on a single topic, searching across all agencies. Let’s look at a few.

A current hot topic in both academic and public libraries is information for aging populations (baby boomers rejoice!). The government has responded with agingstats.com, a site with access to aging information from 15 federal agencies, plus electronic forms of key publications by the Dept. of Health and Human Services. The site has direct links to excel spreadsheets and maps, etc.

Interested in Science? Science.gov has access to over 50 million pages of scientific information, including current research, in twelve major categories from math to astronomy, earth science to computers and engineering. Also included is science education, with teaching aids and science internships available.

Public health is handled by health.gov, a portal to multiagency health initiatives and activities of the various sub-agencies of the department of health and human services. Included are links to topics such as women’s health, obesity, health news, diet and exercise, and a link to the publication Healthy People 2010. There are also links to health topics on various federal agency pages such as Veterans Affairs and Occupational Safety and Health (OSHA) and links to state and territorial health departments.

Have questions about small business loans? home based business? government contracts? help in hiring? Then you need business.gov, a portal sponsored by the U.S. Small Business Administration. Find information here on minority owned businesses, women-owned businesses, on various industries such as food and drugs, pharmaceuticals, consumer goods. You can learn tips on how to start a business, end a business, finance a business and anything along the way. Finally, you can link by state to agencies providing permits for various businesses such as barbershops and plumbers! This site is a one stop shop for all your business-related questions.

Another current topic is drought. The government has responded with drought.gov, a website created by the National Integrated Drought Information System (NIDIS). Information on locations of drought, forecasts, impact statements and preparedness is included here, and there are links to articles on drought, and to education on drought, including a section for kids and lesson plans for teachers.

For your more advanced patrons who wish to comment on new regulations, the government has created regulations.gov. You can go in by broad subject, such as benefits, education, environment, business, public safety, travel or voting, or you can search for regulations by agency if you have a patron who needs to know any new regulations in a particular department. This site is a bit techie to use, but well worth the effort.

Finally, there is even a government site to get you through the red tape of government forms! Yes, forms.gov is your portal of choice for tax forms, social security forms, FEMA forms, small business forms, veterans forms, alien change of address, temporary status and/or citizenship application forms — you name it, it’s here. You can search by subject or browse an A to Z list, or by agency. This site really takes the sweat out of government red tape. Remember, though, your friendly patrons cannot ask your help in filling out the forms; all you can do is locate the forms for them.

There are many more of these portals appearing every day, such as recreation.gov, exports.gov, govbenefits.gov. If you cannot find one on your topic, consult you favorite depository library for help!
This legislative session was significant in a number of ways. The House of Representatives was under the leadership of Speaker Lance Cargill, the youngest Speaker in the nation. This was the second Legislature where the Republicans were the majority party in the House of Representatives. The first time was under Speaker Todd Hiatt in 2004.

Meanwhile the State Senate was evenly split between Republicans and Democrats, 24 to 24. The leaders of each party, Senator Mike Morgan, a Democrat, and Senator Glenn Coffee, a Republican, shared leadership as Co-Presidents Pro Tempore — a first in the state of Oklahoma’s 100 year history.

For all libraries and most librarians, 2007 was not a contentious year — unlike some in the past where the Oklahoma Library Association fought long and hard against various forms of censorship, removal of materials, filters, and tax evasion, to name a few familiar problems. What librarians have experienced is a slight increase of state aid, support for technological and informational services, and a growing awareness of the importance of advancing themselves as leaders and advocate for libraries and librarians.

A major effort of OLA in 2007 was its campaign to assist and improve state aid and funding to libraries. Working with Friends of Libraries in Oklahoma (FOLIO), OLA set a goal of $2.50 per person in state aid. A voluntary campaign raised $2,800.00 in funds used to place informational materials in a number of newspapers throughout the state.

The newspaper informational campaign was just one of many efforts to solicit support for libraries in the state. Result? A $425,000 increase in state aid to local libraries. Considering that the campaign cost $2,800.00 to yield $425,000 provides a return of $151.00 for every dollar invested by OLA and FOLIO. However, it is short of OLA’s major goal that state aid be one mill (1/10 of one cent) of the state budget to provide adequate materials and modern facilities to every library — under that scenario, state aid would amount to $7.5 million.

When support is not given to libraries, it is given to others with tax cuts. 2007 was another year of tax cuts which will add $15 million next year and $74 million a year later. In all, taxes have been cut nearly $700 million in the past three years. In a session that began with an estimate of only $18 million in surplus, it ended with an astonishing $200 million in surplus. Result? The state’s income tax rate will be reduced, stay-at-home parents will receive a $200.00 credit on taxes paid, there will be a sales-tax “holiday” (in August) for back to school materials, and the franchise tax on small business will be eliminated.

As the session came to an end OLA, along with other groups, questioned how the so-called “Illegal Immigration Act” (H.B. 1804) might impact certain services provided by libraries such as library programs and access to materials. That piece of legislation became law November 1st. As it affects various entities, both private and public librarians will await various interpretations of Section Two of the bill.

OLA president Jan Bryant (2007-2008) has as her theme for OLA “Oklahoma Libraries — Keys To The Future”. One major key is librarians’ personal membership and involvement in the state’s library association, OLA. The growth of this association is vital and essential — numbers do matter, numbers do influence elected officials, and participation by the member at the local and state level in affairs that impact all libraries is fundamental. As we have said many times in the past: “If you think it is expensive to win, wait until you lose.” Membership, participation, advocacy — these are essential to the future growth and development of all libraries.
Phillips Theological Seminary Celebrates National Theological Libraries Month

TULSA: Phillips Theological Seminary (PTS) celebrated Theological Libraries Month, a time set aside by the American Theological Library Association (ATLA) to highlight the vital role libraries play in theological education. Sponsored by ATLA, each October is designated as National Theological Libraries Month. “This event is a great opportunity to generate awareness of library resources and services while creating a welcoming environment for students during a particularly hectic time of the semester,” said Mary Coniglio, technical services and special projects librarian for PTS, who coordinated the celebration.

The brightly-decorated library featured sign-up sheets for students to schedule individualized computer/information literacy training and various handouts including Top Ten Things to Know about the PTS Library (Q &A) and Theological Libraries Month bookmarks (provided by ATLA). Refreshments and door prizes completed the offerings with the main prize, a $25 gift certificate to Cokesbury, a Christian bookstore, won by Jason Williams, Master of Divinity student. The gift certificate was graciously donated by the Tulsa Cokesbury store.

The PTS Library boasts more than 90,000 bound volumes and extensive files of periodicals and other non-book materials. Students also have 24/7 access to full-text journal databases, including ATLA serials and New Testament and Old Testament Abstracts. As part of Phillips’ commitment to support the continuous spiritual and educational enrichment of pastors and other leaders in the church, the Library offers special borrower’s privileges to local clergy and their staffs.

“The event was highly successful,” said Sandy Shapoval, Director of the Library. “Foot traffic in the library increased by more than 25 percent and student patrons expressed appreciation for our effort.” Coniglio added, “The event increased the library staff’s awareness of the goodwill that can be created by such events; and, in addition to Theological Libraries Month, we plan to hold other special library