STILLWATER LIBRARIES REMEMBER THE DUST BOWL AND THE WPA THIS SPRING

This spring Stillwater will be revisiting the 1930s—the Dust Bowl, the Great Depression—and celebrating the 75th anniversary of Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s Works Progress Administration. There will be a series of programs hosted at the Stillwater Public Library, the Oklahoma State University Library, and the Sheerar Museum and Cultural Center in Stillwater centering around that worst hard time in Oklahoma history and the hard-working individuals who struggled to make a living during that time. The OSU Library has received an outreach grant from the American Library Association and the National Endowment for the Humanities to sponsor a series of programs on the time period to take place in conjunction with the documentary “Soul of a People: Writing America’s Story,” produced by Spark Media and airing on the Smithsonian Channel HD this spring. The “Soul of a People” project will feature public programming focusing broadly on the WPA Federal Writer’s Project, a New Deal initiative in which many of the nation’s greatest writers collaborated on state guides and collected oral histories and other cultural records to be preserved for posterity. In addition to the “Soul of a People” programming, there are other events occurring in Stillwater locations showcasing other segments of the WPA and life during the “Dirty Thirties.”

This winter and early spring Stillwater Public Library premiered a new book discussion series, “The Worst Hard Time Revisited: Oklahoma in the Dust Bowl Years,” for the Oklahoma Humanities Council’s long-running “Let’s Talk About It, Oklahoma” program. OSU Librarians David Oberhelman and Barbara Miller developed this series for LTAIO in conjunction with the OSU Library’s “Soul of a People” project. Books and featured scholars in this series included The Worst Hard Time by Timothy Egan, Scholar: Dr. Kenny Brown, University of Central Oklahoma; Now in November by Josephine Johnson, Scholar: Dr. Jennifer Paustenbaugh, OSU Library; Letters from the Dust Bowl by Caroline Henderson, Scholar: Dr. Alvin Turner, Turner Museum Associates; Whose Names are Unknown by Sanora Babb, Scholar: Dr. Jennifer Kidney, LTAIO Coordinator; and Out of the Dust by Karen Hesse, Scholar: Dr. Harbour Winn, Oklahoma City University.

On February 28, 2009 at 1:00 pm Stillwater Public Library sponsored a celebration of the WPA’s Federal Art Project, one of the other cultural initiatives from that time, with a presentation by Lynn Schwan, architectural historian for the Oklahoma Historical Society, and an exhibit on Stillwater WPA artist Grace Lysinger Hamilton.

On March 8, 2009 at 2:00 pm the Sheerar Museum in Stillwater hosted the kick-off event for the “Soul of People” with presentations on the 1930s, the WPA, and Stillwater in the 1930s. Dr. Bill Bryans and Dr. Ron McCoy from OSU along with David Peters, Coordinator of Special Collections at the OSU Library, and representatives from the OSU Library’s Oklahoma Oral History Research Program, talked about the legacy of the New Deal programs, and the Sheerar featured an assortment of food from the 1930s with a talk by local historian Adelia Hanson, and a special exhibit on the life and times of that era. Then on April 2, 2009 at 7:00 pm there will be a presentation at the OSU Library Browsing Room on Angie Debo, the renowned ethnohistorian who served as one of the administrators of the Oklahoma Federal Writers’ Project. Dr. Patricia Loughlin from the University of Central Oklahoma and Dr. Glenna Matthews, Professor Emerita from OSU, will be the featured speakers. On April 23, 2009 at 7:00 pm, the OSU Library Browsing room will host a program on the African American slave narratives that were gathered and preserved by the Federal Writers’ Project. Lynne Simpson Scott of the OSU Library and Dr. Jason Kirksey of OSU will be among the speakers. The final program, featuring clips from the “Soul of a People” documentary and an overview of the Writers’ Project, will take place at the Stillwater Public Library on May 9, 2009. This program will also give people the opportunity to record on-site oral histories about their memories of the 1930s.

These programs continue the tradition of cooperation in programming among the libraries in the Stillwater region, and we look forward to future collaborations to highlight the history and culture of North Central Oklahoma.

—David Oberhelman
Oklahoma State University Library
President’s Column: Annual Conference

Circle your calendars for April 20, 21, and 22! We are gathering at the Reed Center and the Sheraton Midwest City Hotel for the 102nd annual OLA Conference. OLA Program Chair Kathleen Lienke and the OLA Program Committee have planned a packed three days of conference programs and social events. The Local Arrangements Committee, co-chaired by Shari Clifton and Melissa Huffman, has planned menus, tours, and comfortable meeting spaces. Our OLA leaders have been working to bring together a fantastic agenda that will inform, entertain, inspire, and invigorate.

The Conference opens on Monday, April 20, with four preconference sessions. Do you need to prepare online tutorials for library users? The University and College Division has a 9:00-3:00 preconference for you. Do you have non-book stuff to catalog? The Technical Services Roundtable will be presenting solutions at their “Not Books: Cataloging All Kinds of Non-Print Stuff” preconference program. And, if you dread annual employee assessments, the Leadership Institute’s preconference will offer ideas and techniques for turning ugh! into positive change. The fourth preconference is the CATS’ “Level Up @ Your Library: Gaming Tournaments.” In the late afternoon there will be multiple receptions, and if the 102nd OLA conference is your first, you will want to attend the “First Timers Orientation and Reception,” sponsored by the Membership Committee.

Monday evening, the OLA Banquet celebrates the Sequoyah 50th Anniversary with Oklahoma’s own S.E. Hinton, who ushered in a new era in young adult literature in 1967 with the publication of The Outsiders, her first novel, which became the second best-selling YA book ever (eight million copies). She received the ALA’s Margaret Edwards Award in 1989 and the Oklahoma Center for the Book’s Arrell Gibson Lifetime Achievement Award in 1997. At this year’s banquet she will receive the OLA Young Adult Sequoyah Award, first offered 20 years after the publication of The Outsiders. After the banquet, CATS challenges you to “Level Up for the Festival of Books” until 11:00 p.m.

Tuesday morning, following a continental breakfast in the Exhibit Area, Joseph Janes will deliver the keynote address, “Libraries and Librarians: Both Somewhere and Everywhere.” A dynamic speaker, professor, Internet Librarian, and author of Introduction to Reference Work in the Digital Age, he will also present a Tuesday afternoon program, Where Are Library Careers Headed? The opening session also includes the presentation of a number of awards. Following the opening session, enjoy a light continental breakfast in the exhibit area.

Visiting the Exhibits during the Exhibitor No Conflict Time is a great way to keep up with newest resources and technologies (and friends and colleagues), Please take time to get acquainted with the exhibitors and to thank them for their support of OLA and the conference.

Plan now to fill your lunch hour with fellowship, food, and lively discussions and presentations. Luncheons include “The New Congress, Library Issues, and You” (Legislative Committee) and “Writing and Publishing the Young Adult Novel” (CATS, OASLMS, and the Sequoyah Awards). Walk or travel by van to nearby Rose State Student Center and participate in table talks on recycling (SSRT) or OLA Gold or attend UCD’s “Professional Presentations.”

The OLA Program has booked an ALA speaker this year: Jim Rettig, ALA President, whose “ALA Forum” will address issues all our professional associations face in the future. His is one of Tuesday afternoon’s 18 different programs among three sets of concurrent sessions which feature other out-of-state and in-state presenters, including Joe Janes and Connie Van Fleet. Addressing wide interest and services within librarianship are programs featuring children and young adult library services; Oklahoma authors; advocacy issues; technical services; and public, school, and academic libraries.

Tuesday evening is for fun and food. The all conference event offers desserts and the Vegas-style musical and comedy act, Lola and Sparkle, which will be followed by the dine-around (a great time to visit Bricktown).

Wednesday morning begins bright and early with an OALSMS business meeting and includes two concurrent sessions that address OLA leadership, Sequoyah, American Indian law collections, undergraduate research, ethics, graphic novels, and energy conservation and includes opportunities to meet two association presidents: Jim Rettig (his second presentation) and MPLA President Eileen Wright. The morning also provides for Exhibitor No Conflict Time for a last visit and a final thank you to OLA vendors.

You will have two luncheon choices: PLD’s “OH Dewey,” presented by Laura Raphael, and a talk by Theresa Miller, coordinator of Celebrate Books, TV interviewer. Oklahoma author, and recent guest on the Diane Rehm Show, sponsored by FOLIO. There will also be a presentation of awards and scholarships at the FOLIO luncheon.

The conference wraps up with the annual Membership Meeting. The Local Arrangements Committee has been gathering an array of great door prizes; however, most important will be your presence for the voting and resolutions. You and your presence are important to OLA!

I write this with many thanks to Kathleen Lienke and the Program Committee and to Shari Clifton and Melissa Huffman and the Local Arrangements Committee for planning strategically and working behind the scenes to produce a conference rich in opportunities for professional development, invigoration, creativity, fellowship, basic principles and new ideas and techniques in librarianship, games and entertainment, and dining and dining, again.

So, be ready for a great conference at the Reed Center and Sheraton Midwest City Hotel, April 20-22. I am looking forward to seeing you there!

Best wishes,
Kathy Latrobe
The Oklahoma Library Association will be celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the Sequoyah Book Award at the 2009 OLA conference, and you are invited to be a part of the festivities.

History of the Sequoyah Book Award

The first Sequoyah Children's Book Award was given in April, 1959, making the award the third oldest children's choice award in the nation. The award was given to Fred Gipson for Old Yeller. In 1988, the first Sequoyah Young Adult Book Award was given to Hadley Irwin for Abby My Love. Both awards are given annually, usually as an event at the Oklahoma Library Association’s Annual Conference.

The Oklahoma Library Association honors Sequoyah for his unique achievement in creating the Cherokee syllabary, the 86 symbols representing the different sounds in the Cherokee language. His statue is one of two representing Oklahoma in the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C.

The stated purpose of the Sequoyah Book Award is to encourage school children to read more widely and selectively from the most distinguished books published during an established time period. The Award was initially sponsored by the Oklahoma Library Association, Oklahoma Education Association, Oklahoma Congress for Parents and Teachers (PTA), Oklahoma State Library, State Department of Education, Oklahoma Council of Teachers of English, and the Library School at the University of Oklahoma.

How You Can Participate in the Celebration

Do you have an all-time favorite Sequoyah Award winning book, either from your childhood (if you are young enough to have participated in the Award) or an adult? Do you have a vivid memory related to your Sequoyah experiences? Do you know someone who has served on a Sequoyah committee? If so, the 50th Anniversary committee wants to hear from you. Please email the committee chair Lynda Reynolds at Sequoyah50@yahoo.com. A complete listing of the award winning titles is available at http://www.oklibs.org/sequoyah/winners.htm.

The 50th Anniversary of the Sequoyah Book Award will be held during the 2009 Oklahoma Library Association’s Annual Conference April 20-22, 2009, at the Reed Conference Center in Midwest City. At the banquet, S.E. Hinton will receive the first recently inaugurated Sequoyah Book Award medal for her contributions to the field of literature for young people. Throughout the conference hall posters will highlight the history of the Sequoyah Book Award. There will be a chance to win a $500 certificate from the Friends of the Oklahoma Center for the Book for an author visit or an autographed copy of “The Outsiders” for correctly answering Sequoyah trivia questions. Sequoyah memorabilia will be for sale at the OLA Store and the Endowment Booth.
Created by Oklahoma State University at Tulsa, this website is about Oklahoma’s “…extended community of internationally known writers,” but is also meant to provide opportunities for new writers.

**The Celebration of Books** – This is their conference of writers, artists, and musicians that is held every two years. The next one will be September, 2010.

**Homecoming and Ambassador Awards** – They present two awards. Their “Homecoming Award” goes to writers from Oklahoma, the south, and the southwest, and includes such luminaries as Tony Hillerman and Maya Angelou. Their “Ambassadors Award” goes to writers from the world over whose accomplishments cross national boundaries, and includes such renowned authors as Isabel Allende and Amy Tan.

**The Oklahoma Writers Hall of Fame** – They honor Oklahoma writers who have lived and written in Oklahoma at some point in their lives. Their most recent member is N. Scott Momaday. Brief biographies are included only for the most recent honoree.

**The Literary Archives** – Information about their archives. Some materials are available online for these three authors from collections that are named for them: William Bernhardt, Carolyn G. Hart, and Michael Wallis.

**Upcoming Events**

**Writing Out Loud** – They sponsor a show on the statewide OETA television channel. This includes program schedules about the authors they’ll be interviewing.

**Oklahoma Authors** – These are interviews with authors who are associated with Oklahoma, such as Rilla Askew and Carolyn Hart.

**Special Honors** – Look for this link at the bottom left of the screen to read about the “Distinguished Achievement Award in the Arts” that they presented to Marsha Mason. If others have also been given this award previously, it’s not noted.

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Created by the University of Oklahoma’s Center for Health Policy Research, this is an archive of 100+ policy studies and papers written or compiled by The Center that dates from 1989 through 2007. What's available here ranges from Powerpoint slides that Center staff have given at presentations to data from the Census Bureau’s website to reports from the Tulsa City County Health Department’s website as well as their own reports. There is much information about the health of Oklahomans in general and those who live in the Tulsa area in particular. The studies and papers are organized by year. Some of what it features includes such studies as these:

- The Lewin Study: A Regional Strategic Plan for Tulsa's Health Care Safety Net
- A Statewide Survey: Uncompensated Care in Oklahoma Hospitals
- Causes of Premature Death [in Oklahoma]
- County Estimates of the Uninsured in Oklahoma

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―Steve Beleu, Oklahoma Department of Libraries
EARLY ATTEMPTS AT ORAL HISTORY:
THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
SLAVE NARRATIVES DATABASE


Stillwater, Oklahoma, is currently abuzz with several community programs on the 1930’s from January to April, 2009. One of the more unique databases to come out of a WPA Federal Writers Project Grant, and the topic of a program at OSU Stillwater in April, is the Slave Narratives. The database itself is freely available on the web at [http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/snhtml/snhome.html](http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/snhtml/snhome.html). This project resulted in over 2,300 first-person accounts of slavery collected by unemployed writers serving in the WPA. The database contains narratives from participants in 17 states (there are 79 narratives from Oklahoma respondents), and as added value contains over 500 black and white photos to accompany the narratives. While many slave narratives were collected before the Civil War, over a third of the extant narratives were collected for this 1930s project. The narratives were first collected and microfilmed for a 17-volume publication entitled *Slave Narratives: A Folk History of Slaves in the United States from Interviews with Former Slaves*. Over 200 photos which were not included in the microfilm edition have been added to the database. Because these documents were digitized from microfilm, some of the pages were hard to read because of the pale writing on the original, but for about 50 of these pages (out of nearly 10,000) facsimiles have been made and are clearly marked for the researcher.

These narratives are a gold mine primary resource for historians or genealogists interested in the Civil War period all over the U.S. They are in a sense some of the first “oral histories” collected in America, and can serve as examples to those continuing the oral history movement enlarged in the state with our centennial. In addition, most of the narratives are short and easily read by students, and could be used to introduce slavery as a topic in grade schools or high schools. Those interviewed were for the most part over 80 years of age, but in spite of the 65 year gap between emancipation and the interviews, the respondents remained alert and full of memories of slavery. They speak of topics related to various duties of slaves, of how they were sold to other owners and were separated from children and parents in the process, and of the harshness of their condition. The narratives can be accessed by name of respondent, or by state, and keyword searching is also available.

Of course, the Library of Congress American Memory web site always provides value-added resources to their digitization projects. Those interested in further study will find many articles about the WPA project itself, about key players in the effort, and about efforts to collect and later to publish the data. Those interested the Federal Writers Project, or in the WPA, or even in the Roosevelt Administration, will find articles guaranteed to spark their interest. There is also information on collections of slave narratives which never made it to the 17-volume work and were published later as supplementary materials. There is also a comparison of information collected by white researchers from the black former slaves, to information collected by black researchers. The authors ask whether the former slaves would give truthful answers to whites or not. This could be of interest to social scientists interested in racial interaction of former slaves.

All in all this database is a mine of information, and it is available to you all free of charge courtesy of the Federal Government. Take advantage of this great resource!

—Barbara Miller, Oklahoma State University
Managing and providing access to electronic government information presents a challenge for all librarians. This book provides a thorough explanation of what is currently going on with government information, as well as a historical context. Issues are discussed in Part I of the book, including technology, digital preservation and access to diverse populations. Part II, on practices, deals with different aspects of government information such as collection development, cataloging, bibliographic control, reference services, instruction and digital preservation. The accessibility and preservation of local, state and international government information are also discussed as well as accessing foreign countries’ web sites. The chapter on cataloging electronic records is informative because it discusses specific MARC fields within a Government Printing Office (GPO) record. Throughout the book there are lots of web addresses, the majority of them either containing information pertaining to the Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP) or providing access to government information including information for children. This book is very informative for not only those who work with government documents but also any librarian who wants to learn more about government information. -- Brandon Burnette, Southeastern Oklahoma State University

Thematic Guide to Popular Nonfiction. Lynda G. Adamson. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2006. xiv + 352 pp. 0-313-32855-2. $65.00. In this superbly organized book, 155 popular nonfiction works are discussed in relation to fifty themes ranging from animals to technology. Each chapter discusses three books which tie into one of the fifty themes, and lists additional titles relevant to that theme. Appendix B lists 24 additional themes and the popular nonfiction books that include them. In the preface, Adamson says that the authors of the works discussed in Thematic Guide to Popular Nonfiction present “their facts through techniques of fiction. These writers provide a view of the world based on their position in it…” (xi). The themes presented are “appropriate for high school and college courses in various disciplines” (xii). Each of the chapters in this book could be developed into a literature course of its own. However, the author’s purpose was not curricular, but to provide a guide for independent readers to select books related to their own interests (xiii). Incidentally, and of especial interest to librarians, this book is also a great retrospective collection development aid. Many of the titles discussed in Thematic Guide to Popular Nonfiction have achieved the status of classic nonfiction, and should be a part of high school, college, and public library collections. – Christine Dettlaff, Redlands Community College

New Faces, News, and Farewells

Chickasaw Regional (Public) Library System welcomes two new Assistant Librarians to the staff of the Ardmore Headquarters. As December 2008 graduates of the University of Oklahoma’s MLIS program, Laura Birkett (left) and Claire Miller (right) are both excited to begin their professional careers in Ardmore. Birkett is originally from Bartlesville, and Miller hails from Sullivan, Missouri. They were each previously employed with Pioneer Library System in Norman.

“We are thrilled to have Laura and Claire on staff,” Lynn McIntosh, CRLS Director, said. “They will significantly add to our ability to better meet the needs of the citizens we serve in our five county region.”

Putnam City’s Executive Director of Information Technology Services, Bettie Estes-Rickner, has been selected as 2009 District Director of Technology of the Year by the Oklahoma Technology Association. The award, presented during the annual conference of the Oklahoma Technology Association at the Cox Convention Center in Oklahoma City, honors a district administrator who has demonstrated exemplary leadership in the establishment and support of technology initiatives throughout his or her school district.

“Bettie Estes-Rickner is at heart a teacher, and her support of teachers using technology is evident in every decision she makes. She directs and coordinates the efforts of many to guarantee our students and teachers have the best technology opportunities available. Bettie has the vision that has contributed to the growth and development of our department and the Putnam City School district. She’s very deserving of this award,” says Terri Pelley, instructional technologist for the district.
Oklahoma Authors to Present at 4th Annual Scissortail Creative Writing Festival

The fourth annual Scissortail Creative Writing Festival will be held April 2-4, 2009 at the Estep Multimedia Center, located on the campus of East Central University. This event is free and open to the public. In addition to the three featured authors, Rilla Askew, Elmer Kelton and LeAnne Howe, the festival will showcase an additional fifty regional authors.

Askew graduated from the University of Tulsa in 1980 and went on to study creative writing at Brooklyn College, where she received her master of fine arts degree in 1989. Askew’s first novel, The Mercy Seat, received the Oklahoma Book Award and the Western Heritage Award in 1998. Her novel Fire in Beulah received the American Book Award from the Before Columbus Foundation and the Myers Book Award from the Gustavus Myers Center for the Study of Bigotry and Human Rights. Askew’s latest novel, Harpsong, won the 2008 Oklahoma Book Award and Western Heritage Award for Best Novel.

Elmer Kelton is the author of over 40 novels. Four of his novels have won the Western Heritage Award from the National Cowboy Hall of Fame and seven have won the Spur award from Western Writers of America. In 1998 he received the first Lone Star award for lifetime Achievement from the Larry McMurtry Center for Arts and Humanities at Midwestern State University, Wichita Falls, Texas. He also received honorary doctorates from Hardin-Simmons University and Texas Tech University. He was given a lifetime achievement award by the National Cowboy Symposium in Lubbock, Texas. His book The Good Old Boys was made into a 1995 TV movie starring Tommy Lee Jones for the TNT cable network.

LeAnne Howe is a member of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma and is an American Indian author, playwright, and scholar. Her work primarily deals with American Indian experiences. She attended Oklahoma State University, majoring in English. She obtained her master of fine arts degree in Creative Writing from Vermont College in 2000. Howe’s first novel, Shell Shaker, received an American Book Award in 2002 from the Before Columbus Foundation. The novel was a finalist for the 2003 Oklahoma Book Award, and awarded Wordcraft Circle Writer of the Year, 2002, Creative Prose. Evidence of Red received the Oklahoma Book Award for Poetry in 2006.

The Darryl Fisher High School Creative Writing Contest winners will also be awarded during the festival. For more information contact Dr. Ken Hada at 580-559-5557. To view the schedule of readers, visit www.ecok.edu/scissortail.
East Central University
Ada, Oklahoma
Presents the 4th Annual
Scissortail Creative Writing Festival

April 2 - 4, 2009
On the campus of East Central University

Also featuring
Over 50 regional author presentations
The Darryl Fisher High School
Creative Writing Contest

This event is free and open to the public.

Contact Dr. Ken Hada, 580-559-5557
www.eok.edu/scissortail