Out of the City! Enid hospitality welcomes librarians from across Oklahoma

"This is one of the best conferences I have been to. All of the meetings I attended were great! I especially enjoyed the “small town” atmosphere. Let’s get away from Oklahoma City and Tulsa more often!" – from conference evaluations

Four hundred and fifty seven people registered for the OLA annual conference in Enid, March 24-26, 1999—not including the 600 teens who came to the Sequoyah Young Adult Award presentation on Wednesday or the hundreds more at the Sequoyah Children’s Award on Saturday! We heard the wisdom and experiences of presenters, authors shared stories of their journeys, and countless conversations took place in the halls and rooms of this spring’s Annual Conference.

➢ Downtown Enid, plenty of parking, sparkling sunny days, almost no wind! Meetings in the Cherokee Strip Conference Center, the Price Arena (Convention Hall) immediately south, Enid & Garfield County Public Library directly across the street, the Continental Towers, and two downtown churches. A bus system ran continuously between the hotels and the meeting places.

➢ People enjoyed preconferences: library tours (13), Sisters in Crime mystery authors (69), web page design (21), and distance education support (30).

➢ First timers orientation welcomed 29. Early table talks, lunchtime cracker barrels. Best new reference sources and author presentations all continued very popular. Also drawing big audiences were the IFC’s “Confronting the Comstockers;” the “Teens, Homework and the Internet;” the Sequoyah YA sampler; and the “De-Selection” session.

➢ ALA president Ann Symons gave the keynote address.

➢ Thursday night entertainment...Leonardo’s Discovery Warehouse, auction, food, laughter and play, and across the street, the giant play structure Adventure Quest, with a 16-inch (big!!) telescope.

➢ Awards and recognition of special people and service.

➢ First time for cable broadcast! Pegasys Community Access Television videotaped several author events, including both Sequoyah awards programs.

➢ "We can no longer stay in our library playing with puppets, can no longer just keep preaching to the choir. Libraries are political. We need to become active." —Sharon Saulmon, as she received her Special Meritorious Service Award.

(continued on p. 27)
13 ways to grow a library association

You—the OLA membership—gave me a terrific opportunity this year to serve as President. Thank you! I also want to thank all of the OLA leaders who’ve served the Association in the past year. You’ve seen their names in these pages; they’re the Chairs and members of the Committees, Divisions, and Roundtables, the Program Committee, the Local Arrangements Committee, and lots of “behind the scenes” folks who work on behalf of this Association.

It takes a village to raise a child. It takes every member of an association to grow a healthy, financially stable, and vital organization. YOU make that possible.

The 13 ways to grow a library association:
♦ Vote for terrific people to chair OLA Divisions and Roundtables;
♦ Appoint talented, creative people to chair and serve on committees;
♦ Recruit new OLA members; celebrate our largest OLA members; ship ever!;
♦ Organize relevant continuing education workshops and offer them in different regions of the state;
♦ Keep members informed through communication channels: Oklahoma Librarian, OLA Homepage (www.pioneer.lib.ok.us/ola), OLA, OASLMS, and UCD electronic discussion groups;
♦ Organize a wonderful annual conference and try out a new location;
♦ Continue to manage and balance the economic vitality of the association;
♦ Develop new coalitions with other Associations and explore new relationships;
♦ Develop legislative goals and communicate them through a winning brochure to the OLA membership, state legislators, federal Congressional delegation;
♦ Encourage a nine-member group to attend National Library Legislative Day, to talk with the Congressional delegation about the importance of libraries in Oklahoma: public, school, academic and special;
♦ Brainstorm new ways to serve members creatively through OLA Membership Committee; meetings in more than one location simultaneously (University and College Division);
♦ Have the best executive director, Kay Boies, who can manage multiple tasks, multiple personalities, multiple demands, with joy and graciousness, and makes every volunteer in the Association feel good about the job they do;
♦ Celebrate our OLA successes!

We’re trying some new ideas—some will work, some may not. We need to risk trying new ideas and learning from our mistakes. We have just added a new position: a volunteer Publicity Coordinator. We need to have regular press releases going out to the media outlets about the good things happening within the Library Association. We have also been contributing articles to other Association newsletters to highlight our library advocacy message.

This year I have worked on communication, coalitions, and celebrations. Recently the Mayor of Nashville, Phil Bredesen, talked to a gathering of urban librarians about why libraries should be a "bright blip" on the community radar screen. He emphasized that there is no safety in staying below the radar screen—libraries and librarians need to be visible to the communities they serve. Our communities need us and need the information resources and skilled staff that can help them navigate those resources.

The mission of the Oklahoma Library Association is to strengthen libraries, library services, and librarianship in Oklahoma. This Association belongs to you—the membership. Make your voice heard, find a way to connect, and build relationships - one person a time. Thanks for a terrific year!

Gratefully,
Debra Engel
Out of the City! (cont. from p. 25)

► Two ideas from “Libraries vs. Bookstores” table talk: we provide the teaching service. We need to market our services—educate people as to what we can or could do for them. Use a bulletin board to post questions with their answers—like an open suggestion box. It’s interesting and educational.

► On exhibits: “I went through the exhibit area at first just to support the exhibitors. I have a little bit of buying influence, but not a lot. But then serendipitously I discovered all kinds of other relevant things from vendors. Way in the back corner was a lady selling acid-free plastic stuff. I looked at things from mending to electronic stuff. Even if we don’t buy a certain product, looking and talking to vendors gives us a way to look at other products.”—Susan Gilley, ODL Cartwright Library

► “Exceptional experience.” “Wow! This was great.” Karen Hesse let 75 attendees see inside herself as she gave the CYPERT Mildred K. Laughlin lecture. Her books examine the darker side of life—trials and struggles but also tenderness, acts of kindness, community. To research the award winning Out of the Dust, she got the Boise City newspaper on microfilm and read every single thing in it for 1934-5. “I started life as a poet, and writing Out of the Dust (first person, narrative free verse) was like coming home to my roots. I did all that research and came to understand that that character wouldn’t waste a word—she was working so hard just to stay alive.” Karen said, “When crafting and refining a book, most elements are in there for more than one reason.” Music is in all her books, because “It is a way to get inside myself, without the writer’s filter which is with me all the time. She said, “We’re all on a journey. The result of that journey is why I’m here today. I had been getting hundreds of rejection letters, but after my hospice training, something changed in my writing.”

► Typical evaluations of conference sessions, these re: Marion’s Melodramas: Ethical Conundrums in the Library. “Very Good!”

“Very entertaining and informative. Made me look at issues in our library in a different light.”

► “Despite Cinderella’s age, writers are still obsessed by her!” At the latest figure, over 800 Cinderellas have been published. Luncheon speaker Shirley Climo said, “We all need a chance to slow down and take time out, especially as we’re approaching the millennium. We are moving so fast. Folklore gives us a thread to hold on to. Folklore is not just the stories, it’s everything from yesterday. It gives us insights into everyday things.”

► Three contributed paper sessions, plus a “Students Speak Out!” session of papers. Wonderful speakers all, and a great variety of topics, including among them behind the scenes writing of a reference work, designing library instruction, information seeking behavior, shelving and shelf reading, role of the reference librarian today, American Indian women stereotypes in children’s literature, using the digital atlas of Oklahoma, converting a set of Indian laws and treaties to digital format with enhanced access, and marketing a library skills class to undergraduates. “Marvelous program.”

► Where does she find her stories and her people? She steals them! Billie Letts, banquet speaker talked about life before being on the Oprah show. Before Oprah, there were Oklahoma independent booksellers, writers who mentioned her book Home is Where the Heart Is when they were speaking, local TV and radio stations. Oklahoma groups asked her to speak—libraries, Friends of Libraries, books groups, the Celebration of Books, Molly Griffis. “I want you to know I’m so grateful to the people in this state.”


► A huge thanks to the Local Arrangements Committee (Pat Weaver-Meyers, chair), and Glenda Lamb and her group, and to all the hard work and inspiration of conference organizers and presenters!

—Rachel Butler
October 18, 1960. The United States was in the midst of a presidential election. The previous week John F. Kennedy and Richard M. Nixon had completed their third historic televised debate. The Pittsburgh Pirates had beaten the New York Yankees in the World Series, and a teenage Irish immigrant named Oliver Delaney arrived at Ellis Island, waiting a few days before being permitted to enter the United States and commence his new life.

Current members of OLA will likely recognize Oliver by name and face for his role as the Association’s Legislative Liaison, a job he has done with considerable professionalism and energy each Legislative session since 1995.

Probably few OLA members, however, know of Oliver Delaney’s career as a librarian before 1985 or the story of how Oliver seemed destined to be an Oklahoman and choose librarianship as a career, one in which he engaged full time for many years.

Oliver’s employment in the United States was first in a brewery and then in banking in New York City. His third job was the U.S. Army. Drafted in 1966, he completed his basic training at Fort Dix, New Jersey and was assigned to Fort Sill, Oklahoma. Upon completion of his military service, the Army gave him $75 for travel. After party expenses were paid, Oliver says he decided Norman, Oklahoma was as far as he could go. Oliver enrolled in The University of Oklahoma using funds available to him through the G.I. Bill. His undergraduate degree was in the OU honors program with majors in philosophy and classical studies.

Toward the end of his undergraduate studies, when required to write his senior paper, he says he faced the reality that he really didn’t know how to do research in the library. Ruth David, a reference librarian, suggested he enroll in library science courses, where he learned research skills and developed an interest in graduate study. Oliver credits Ruth David with being his primary inspiration and mentor for the study of librarianship. He completed his Master’s degree in Library Science at OU in 1969.

Following his graduation from OU, Oliver returned to New York City to marry Claire, an Irish girl he met there. They returned to Ireland to meet family and then for a year and a half traveled and visited throughout Europe. Claire, a nurse, was offered the opportunity to pursue graduate study in nursing at the University of Maryland in Baltimore in 1971. Oliver worked as the Assistant Librarian at Coppin State College in Baltimore between 1971 and 1973.

Then once again Oklahoma called, as Claire Delaney was offered a faculty position in the OU College of Nursing. Oliver was soon employed at the downtown Oklahoma City Library in the Business and Science Information Center. From 1974 until 1977, Oliver also had his own arcane book business, located at 23rd and Classen—a business he still actively pursues as a locator service out of his home.

In 1977 Oliver went to work for the Oklahoma Department of Libraries in Legislative Reference and the Law Library. For eight years Oliver honed his legislative research skills. He was called on by the attorney general’s office for special research projects during those years and he also initiated a proactive service for the legislators, making his skills available to select materials for their issues.

During those years Oliver was an active member of OLA, including service as editor of the Oklahoma Librarian. By 1984, he had thoughts of seeking employment as director of a non-profit association. In 1985 he was approached by representatives of the Oklahoma Malt Beverage Assn. about being the director of that organization. Oliver says, looking back, that he didn’t fully anticipate the government relations responsibilities of this job until he was engaged. It seems clear that he found over the years that his skills and experiences as a librarian, as well as the network he developed during his years in the state library served him well in his work as director of the OMBA.

Members of OLA who have worked with Oliver Delaney on the Legislative Committee have benefited from his insights and understanding of Oklahoma politics and know something of his many talents and passions, as well as his ability to tell interesting stories from his heritage as well as political tales. It is nevertheless exciting to know something more of the story of this multi-talented man. The Association has been most fortunate to have had his counsel during this time, not to mention the contributions he has made to librarianship in the state.

--Gerald Hickman

Many attendees of the OLA annual conference treated themselves to the Sisters in Crime preconference, featuring three Oklahoma mystery authors: Carolyn Hart, Eve Sandstrom and Jean Hager. A few of the truths they told...

In the late 1980s, after writing kids’ mysteries and lots of romances, Jean Hager began writing what she always wanted to write, a traditional mystery with a Cherokee background—she’s 3/16th Cherokee. “I like to think that in a very, very small way I’m helping to preserve some of the Cherokee stories.”

“Either you know your subject inside and out, or do research.” Eve Sandstrom says, “I do research by calling people and asking. My son-in-law’s stepdad spent 2 weeks of commuting time thinking of a way to start an oil well fire and not get caught! Once I called the county clerk and asked what would happen if a county commissioner died.” Eve laughed, “I do use the library, at least to look in the encyclopedia so I can ask an intelligent question!”

Carolyn Hart hates asking questions. “I love mysteries. I also think they’re socially important. They reaffirm that goodness wins.” She published her first adult mystery Flee from the Past, in 1975 and for the next decade she continued to write suspense novels, yet grew discouraged. “Her then-agent told her, “Nobody is interested in mysteries by American women.” She gave the genre one last try with the first of her series “Death on Demand,” set in a mystery bookstore. The series became a big success. She has never set a book in Oklahoma, “because it’s not the least bit mysterious to me.”

Have you sought clues in the world of bibliomysteries—mysteries that have settings, plots, or substantial characters in them related to the world of books, archives, and libraries? The most frequently used (8 authors) title for a bibliomystery is Murder by the Book. And what about your library detectives, your bibliophilic detectives, and your sleuths whose occupation is librarian. Look at www.carol.net/dolphin/bibliomysteries/misc.htm Enjoy!
Demystifying De-selection

A packed audience came to hear Linda Pye, Southwestern State University; Kay Bauman, Metropolitan Library System; Linda Cowen, Norman Public Schools; and Kathe Dougherty, Stillwater Public Library discuss how different types of libraries weed collections including criteria for evaluation and disposal of materials.

Linda Pye noted that the word weeding has a negative connotation. We use the word de-selection instead. She cited three reasons for de-selection: to provide a more useful/relevant collection; to create more space in the library; to reflect changes in the library’s goals and degree programs. She discussed how weeding is an ongoing process at Southwestern that involves both library staff and university faculty. Pye quoted Ralph Waldo Emerson “Set boundaries for your garden, weed a little bit every day.”

Ideally in the public library setting, the collection is thoroughly weeded every year said Kay Bauman. She emphasized the importance of knowing the mission of the library and weeding in relation to the whole collection. Bauman said, “it takes professional skills to select materials, it takes those same skills to deselect.” Public libraries need an active, current and clean collection. She also noted that the public often misunderstands the term weed. The public can understand the concept that physically there is not enough space in the library to keep everything. Often what upsets the community is the method of disposal. In the Metropolitan Library System all withdrawals go to the Friends book sale.

Linda Cowen discussed how children must be provided with accurate materials. Schools have small budgets and disposing of a book, especially when it is in good physical condition, can be a difficult decision. However, outdated books cannot be kept. Cowen presented the example that books written before 1990 on the solar system are no longer accurate. Once you decide to remove a book, disposal then becomes the issue. Cowen suggested you use common sense when disposing of materials, follow state law and local policies, and consider if a taxpayer finds this what will he think. Cowen also cited Florida’s statewide “Weed of the Month Club” available on the Internet at www.sunlink.ucf.edu/weed/whatis.html

The Stillwater Public Library has three plans for weeding: a long range plan that addresses withdrawing items on an ongoing basis; a collection development plan which divides the collection into sections with a deadline assigned to each section; and a collection development policy with a chapter on weeding that explains the library’s philosophy of weeding. Kathe Dougherty also spoke about the team evaluation approach Stillwater Public Library uses for removing materials. Most books that have been removed from the collection go to the Friend’s annual book sale.

Following the four panelist presentations, the floor was opened for questions and/or comments from the audience. As the program ended a member of the audience commented “this was good, really useful.”

—Barbara Bradley

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OLA annual conference held

Basking in the flow of great conversation during Friday night's banquet: (1-r) Charlie and Mary Ward, friends of the Tulsa City-County Library, and Bill Coxsey relax before author Billie Letts takes the mike.

Above: (1-r) SIRS representative Sharon Lee Roth, ALA president Ann Symons, OLA/Sirs Intellectual Freedom Award winner Sharon Saulmon, and OLA president Debra Engel.

Right: Sharing professional advice or possibly just making up stories (1-r): Janice Lloyd, Susan Stringer and Gwen Witherspoon network in the hall of the Cherokee Strip Conference Center—without cabling or other computer hardware!

Right, below: Bird house in hand, Ann Miller gets rowdy as stellar auctioneer Maureen Goldsberry pauses while working the crowd. Their antics during the Thursday night entertainment at Leonardo's Discovery Warehouse raised money for OLA activities. In front of Ann, but not showing in this picture, was a very hot gorilla who occasionally bid on auction items and was helped to drink a cola from a straw by another auction attendee.

Above: One of our enthusiastic new members, amassing signatures from fellow OLA members on her way to winning the big prize, with Yvonne Hinchee, Shawnee Public Library.

Above: Time out! Chickasaw Library System staff rest up between programs in the Cherokee Strip Conference Center.

Right: Georgina Gentry (Lynne Murphy in regular life), author of hot romance novels, participates in the Oklahoma authors panel.

Right: Exhibitor Fred Stanley, award winner Jeanie Johnson, and Carol Fox in the exhibit area at the 1999 OLA annual conference in Enid.

Photos by Karen Bays, Rachel Butler, Gerald Hickman, and David Scott.
Above: Possibly the shortest and probably the most entertaining OLA business meeting ever! (l-r) Donna Morris, Bob Segal, Debra Engel, Marty Thompson and Patsy Stafford. The stellar moment was reached a brief time later when Bob burst into an electrifying rap poem/annual report on FOLIO's (Friends of Libraries in Oklahoma) 1998/99 activities.

Right: Buffy Edwards holding her Ola/Winnebago Progressive School Library Media Award.

Above: The annual conference involves serious business as well as fun. After the auction on Thursday night, OLA members pay into the association coffers before hauling off their loot. How many of these people do you know?
Who was recognized for outstanding contributions to libraries?

In keeping with its purpose of strengthening the quality of libraries and library service in Oklahoma, OLA annually gives awards to individuals and groups who've made outstanding contributions or played key roles in noteworthy library projects. At the OLA annual conference in Enid in March, we applauded:

Special Meritorious Service
- Lee Brawner, Executive Director of the Metropolitan Library System in Oklahoma City, received this award for his many years of devoted "growing" libraries, advocating intellectual freedom and First Amendment rights. Thanks to his leadership and energy, MLS has grown from 6 to 19 libraries. This award honors him for all his good works over the years—locally, statewide and nationally. Lee was flabbergasted to hear his name called, having served on the Awards Committee this year!
- Sharon Ann Saulmon, Head Librarian at Rose State College in Midwest City, received the Special Meritorious Service Award for years of dedication and hard work, notably with the ALA Trustee Association, but in particular for her service on the Metropolitan Library Commission. She served on the commission from 1983 to 1999 and was chair the last nine years. Her leadership proved invaluable during last year's censorship challenges. Confusing, though no surprise, Sharon also won the OLA/SIRS Intellectual Freedom Award of $500, plus $500 to her library, for her distinguished career as a librarian and defender of intellectual freedom and free access for the community, especially her excellence in leading the Library Commission in a fair and reasoned manner during The Tin Drum controversy.

Outstanding New Librarian
Anne Prestamo, Assistant Professor and Science & Engineering Librarian at Oklahoma State University, received the Outstanding New Librarian Award. Anne is an outstanding librarian and vigorous participant in OSU's extensive library instruction program, both teaching and developing tutorials for students. Among other things, including work on a PhD, she's active in OLA, serving on committees and making many presentations, and has also presented papers at both national and international meetings.

Progressive School Library Media Award
Bufty Edwards, Library Media Specialist at Lakeview Elementary School in Norman, won the award for her project "Lakeview Learners Lead the Way," a school-wide effort to heighten awareness of available technology, develop students' computer skills, cooperatively plan curriculum, and provide in-service training for teachers. The award is sponsored by OLA and Winnebago Software Company®.

Notes on Conference sessions...

- Effective Bibliographic Instruction
  Tom Thorisch of Tulsa Community College, explained how he does hands-on library instruction, starting with looking at class demographics, deciding what could be cut if necessary, and making student worksheets. Tom asks students to explain the assignment, then asks "What can you use for the assignment? What do you see when you walk into the library?" Anne Prestamo created the online Bio 1114 Library Research Survival Guide. Because it serves a course with over 1,000 students per semester, the investment of so much time and energy is reasonable. The process includes creating an outline, the ever-changing flowchart, storyboard of on-screen modules, and developing review questions. Look at the guide at http://www.library.okstate.edu/dept/ sed/ prestamo/biol1114/intromaterial/index.htm University of Tulsa's Charles Brooks reviewed how their Bi classes have evolved from "show & tell" to hands-on sessions aimed at getting students on the computers immediately. Bi classes as the gateway to college learning was the theme of OU's Laurie Scrivener. She stressed four skills for creating/presenting a Bi class: (1) knowledge of the reference works, how they are constructed, and when to use them; (2) teaching and communication, skills often learned by doing; (3) navigating the PC, word processors and Power Point software; and (4) flexibility and a sense of humor. OU's library home page is designed as a fall-back for students.

- Confronting the Comstockers:
  The serious subject of censorship was handled in a very humorous and informative manner by OU journalism professor Bill Loving. His advice for handling censorious people is to disarm (or rattle) them with humor. He presented information which countered some of that presented by OCAF (Oklahomans for Children and Families). Two of his gems librarians could use in a touchy situation: (1) we run a library, not a daycare; and (2) don't expect the librarian to do (monitor children's reading, etc.), what you don't do at home.

- Job Search 2000:
  Pioneer Library System's Gwen Witherspoon talked about changing expectations toward increasing customer service. She also highlighted the increasing need to train and re-train. Her handout listed several hints, and provided helpful Internet links for job searching. Richard Gertson, city manager of Bartlesville, talked about assessing the cultural climate of a potential job site, the need to be able to think "outside the box," and how to know what customer services to provide. Ellen Duecker, Library Coordinator for the Tulsa Public Schools, talked about all the tasks a school Library Media Specialist may be required to handle, some questions an applicant should ask, the three types of certification available, and online job market sites.

Ruth Brown Memorial Award
This award encourages and recognizes programming that addresses issues of social concern as they impact libraries and the communities they serve. The 1999 award was given to the Bartlesville Arts & Humanities Council and the Bartlesville Public Library for their 3 month series of public forums on the "First Amendment: Where Would American Culture Be Without It?"

OASLMS Technology in Education Award
Jeanie Johnson, Library Media Specialist at Norman North High School won this award, co-sponsored by OLA and Fred Stanley, representative for Demco/Turtle Back Books.

Citizens' Recognition Award
Beverly Dietzler of Broken Arrow was recognized at a special luncheon during Conference for her many years of dedicated and hard work with the Friends of the Tulsa Public Library, Friends of Libraries in Oklahoma, and Friends of Libraries U.S.A. Beverly has served in different capacities as an officer and/or board member in all the organizations.

Special Project Awards
- To Frances Schiller of Hartshorne—the driving force in turning a dream of a new library into a reality for the Hartshorne community.
- To John D. "Johnny" Ward, District 2 Commissioner, Coal County, and Jimmye Watson, Past President, Coal County Genealogical Society.
- To David Norris, President of the Friends of the Broken Arrow Public Library, Inc.; Bee Norris, board member of the Broken Bow Public Library, Inc., Mark Guthrie, City Manager, Broken Bow; and Doris Steven- son, Head Librarian at the Broken Bow Public Library. Their leadership turned the landmark former Broken Bow high school into an attractive, spacious and functional new public library for the community.
- To the Oklahoma Department of Libraries for awarding a grant to OLA for the presentation of meetings in communities around the state in which citizens discussed the important role of community libraries in providing access to information.
- To Kiwanis International of Shawnee members Elmo Pipps and Haylor Fisher, co-chairmen of the Kiwanis Book Delivery to Nursing Homes. Kiwanis International of Shawnee was also recognized for its continued support of the children's puppet theatre at the library. Ken McDowell, Art Jackman and Roy Sadler were recognized for their help in distributing books. The awards were made at the Kiwanis luncheon meeting on Mar. 24 in Shawnee.

Thanks to those who nominated these winners!
Miami Tribal Library: a little library with a big can-do attitude

Driving around Miami, a town in northeastern Oklahoma, with both a well-respected public library and a fine junior college library, one might question the need for another library. The people served by the Miami Tribal Library would disagree. Each library has a different target population, but all serve the public.

Begun in 1987 by a U.S. Department of Education Basic Library grant to the Miami and Ottawa Tribes, the Peoria Tribe later contributed financial support. The first major expansion was funded by a LSCA Special Projects Grant in 1989. An Archives component was added after a Housing and Urban Development grant and two National Historical Preservations and Records Commission grants from the National Archives provided the space and materials in 1995.

In addition to the Miami, Ottawa, and Peoria Tribes, five others are located within 20 miles. These include the Seneca-Cayuga, Quapaw, Wyandotte, Eastern Shawnee, and Modoc. These tribes have independently received U.S. Department of Education Title IV Basic Library grants, which resulted in separate collections. Five years ago, the Miamis spearheaded the formation of CHARLIE (Connecting Help and Resources Linking Indians Effectively) library network, to link these collections with an online catalog. All but the Wyandottes participated.

The Miami Library/Archives is approximately 2,794 sq. ft. and houses 13,000 books, with another 2,500 books available throughout the other tribes. The collection also includes 640+ videos and 170+ cassettes, plus magazines and newspapers. The Archives has borrowed a bound set of the Draper Manuscripts from the Kekionga Indian Alliance; received artifacts from a Michigamea village site in Illinois; and acquired 25 boxes of records from Edwin C. Rothschild, their lawyer from the time of the U.S. Claims Commission.

The Library/Archives has been 100% grant funded for the last 9 years, except for a six month period. That necessitates vigorous networking to develop and support programming and services. The Miami was the first tribe chosen to participate in the Oklahoma Library Technology Network. We are trying to get our library catalog upgraded to MARC format, so we can lend books, as well as borrow them. The Tribe first received two public access Internet terminals through a Southwestern Bell grant to the city of Miami. A very special relationship is shared with Miami University of Oxford, Ohio which offers on-site summer classes in anthropology, archaeology, and journalism for their students. New classes are added each year. The University has donated equipment and books to assist in library programs and services.

One of the most unique things the staff has worked on was a language project, funded by an Administration for Native Americans grant. The Tribe has no conversation speakers living today, but much language in written form. This grant allowed for two linguists to work together with the tribal staff to develop a handbook and student dictionary, which was distributed to tribal members. Teachers were trained through language camps, and now new speakers’ classes will be held. Though not a speaker, I was excited to write the grant and coordinate this two year project.

Beginning last October, funds decreased from $176,000 to $4,000. This cut the book and video budget by 4/5s, magazine budget by over 50%, newspaper budget by 1/2. Service hours were cut from 57 hours a week to 40. All three staff have masters degrees in library science. Two of those were cut to part-time. I’ve assumed the responsibility of running another grant program in order to stay on.

Ironically the cuts came at a time when library services were on a rise, and the Tribe had been recognized as a leader in the tribal library world. The Miami Tribal Library broke a new record, checking 501 books out in the month of September 1998. A picture of tribal patrons was included in an Oklahoma Library Association brochure. Last June, the Tribe was visited by the president-elect of the American Indian Tribal Libraries Association, Bonnie Biggs, who wrote very positive comments.

The Library/Archives has established a non-profit corporation, the Myaamia Institute, to raise support for the library/archives. A Friends of the Library has been organized. The Tribe has several economic development projects pending, but as with any new business, profits will not be immediate. This transition is tough, as we have been fortunate to receive grant money for many years. Tribal libraries in other states qualify to receive state funds, but we currently don't have that option. We've sent our more grant proposals than in the past, but sometimes you have lean times. I've told them that I will stand on the street corner with a tin cup to keep this place going, I'll be anybody’s favorite charity. Everyone is pulling together to make this work.

Karen Alexander
Library Director

May 3rd tornadoes uproot library staff; damage buildings and collections

“If my dog can’t go, then I’m not going!” said Jill Vessels, past Chair of Support Staff Roundtable, to her husband who tried to coax Jill into a neighbor’s already overcrowded storm shelter when the tornado was on its way. Jill, her husband, and their dog, Brutus, miraculously survived the storm with no injuries although they were outside, under a carport, when it hit. The back part of their house was badly damaged and had to be sealed off. Jill said she feels grateful that she and her family are unharmed and are able to live in the front part of their house while they rebuild.

Sharon Saulmon, past Program Committee Chair, was in Washington D.C. for Legislative Day when she got a call about the tornado. She returned to find her house almost completely devastated by the storm. Roof and walls of her house are missing, and she lost irreplaceable items that had been in the attic. Sharon expects that it will take a long time to rebuild. She reports that Rose State staff Jim Beavers and Jeanie Cavett also lost their homes.

Mulhall Elementary School near Guthrie was destroyed. OLA’s Social Responsibilities Roundtable plans to help their library rebuild its collection. “Best of Books” bookstore in Edmond is storing donations of children’s books, K-5th grade, over the summer until Mulhall can rebuild.

The Choctaw Library lost its roof and more than half its collection during the devastation. The morning after, water was several inches deep in the 2,798 square-foot storefront library, and library staff and volunteers were wading through it to cart off soaked books, videos and computer equipment. Wednesday, staff continued to inventory ruined items and move those things that could be salvaged. High school students volunteered to time to pack boxes. The library will remain closed until a temporary site can be located. Choctaw staff are temporarily working at the Midwest City Library. Manage Rosemary Czarski is helping out at the Edmond Library while coordinating off-site library programs for Choctaw customers. Choctaw’s collection of 30,000 books, videos, CDs, magazines, newspapers and other items was valued at approximately $300,000. Computer equipment included two terminals, five PCs, five printers and various communication equipment pieces. The amount of damage is not yet known.
Broken Arrow Schools and The Chocolate War

Many are familiar with The Chocolate War; others may have heard rumblings and wonder what’s the occasional uproar about this children’s book. Challenges to specific books happen regularly, particularly in school and public libraries. Happily, the Broken Arrow Schools had a collection policy in effect when last year this title was challenged.

The Chocolate War had been in the Broken Arrow schools for more than 20 years without incident before it was challenged. Nationally, this title was the fiction book most challenged in 1998, according to reports logged at ALA’s Office of Intellectual Freedom. Most of the book by Robert Cormier (1974) is set in a Catholic boys school and focuses on the annual chocolate sale. The student body is dominated by a cruel secret society ignored by teachers. Coercion and corruption are everywhere. The book forces readers to think about issues of freedom, of evil, of trying and failing. It is realistic, in parts disturbing.

On March 9, I asked Dan McDonald, assistant superintendent and chair of the district’s reconsideration committee, to recall how the events of the reconsideration process unfolded. The whole thing began with a challenge by parent Steve Wolfe on April 3, 1998.

In the Broken Arrow procedure a reconsideration request is submitted either through a school’s principal or directly to Dan McDonald. McDonald then forms a reconsideration committee made up of an elementary school media specialist and a teacher, a secondary media specialist and teacher, 2 parents and himself. Committee members read, discuss the book, and then make a recommendation.

Dan said, “The book was at the middle school level. The committee felt it contained some stuff we didn’t care for, but it has good reviews and has received awards. We felt that as a whole work of literature it has value, and the committee recommended it for 8th graders and up. The middle school (6-8 grades) media specialists felt they could handle that situation.”

The parent was notified by letter of the committee’s recommendation and the possibility of appealing the decision to the Board of Education. The parent chose to appeal. Before the Board of Education meeting the parent contacted several pastors and distributed excerpts from the book.

The Board meeting featured one of the largest audiences ever to attend a school board meeting, including about 30-40 people who came to support Wolfe.

As chair of the reconsideration committee, McDonald spoke to the Board first, presenting the policy of the school district, and explaining that the policy follows both ALA guidelines and 1st amendment rights. He then explained the committee’s decision to retain the book for 8th graders and above, and that the decision had been made based on the district’s policy. Then Wolfe gave his presentation, calling for complete removal of The Chocolate War from the Broken Arrow school district, calling it the “antithesis” of the district’s character development curriculum (Oklahoma Observer, Nov. 10, 1998). The Broken Arrow Board of Education then voted 3-2 for a recommendation to take the book from school media centers serving grades 6 to 10 and move it to the senior high level.

Since that meeting, things have died down. The parents’ group created a web page with a rating scale for titles listed on the Electronic Bookshelf reading lists. McDonald said, “For book report purposes in the schools, students have to select books [from more than 400] found on the Electronic Bookshelf list.” The Bookshelf, for grades K-12, includes book quiz questions used to ensure students have actually read the book.

Reading The Chocolate War was the child’s choice. “We are trying to publicize,” says McDonald, “that a parent can come before and after school—we don’t want them to take the child out of class—but can come and go with their child to the media center and together discuss and check out books. We want parents involved in their children’s education and concerned about what they read. But sometimes they don’t realize the right of everyone else to read it.”

He went on, “It boils down to sometimes having verbage in books that you can’t say in school, but you have to consider the value of the whole book. If you read this book in a teaching atmosphere with a thought-provoking discussion, the book has value.”

McDonald has been 2 years in his current position, and there have been 7-8 challenges each year. He laughed that his predecessor had said there would only be one or two a year. People have strong feelings about books and reading.

--Rachel Butler

School library media specialists send two to Philly

I was privileged to be one of two representatives from Oklahoma at the American Association of School Libraries (AASL) Affiliate Assembly Meetings held during Mid-Winter in Philadelphia this year.

AASL has undergone a recent restructuring and seems to be in good shape with strong leadership to move school libraries in the right direction with the New National Guidelines (Information Power). All regions were represented and regional discussions were held concerning the implementation of the standards. Some regions have “train the trainer” sessions, some have web sites that include the standards, and some are working on projects to provide their states with suggestions for implementing the guidelines. Carolyn Giambra, Chair of the Presidential Task Force for implementing standards gave a status report of implementation objectives. One of the objectives is to write articles on information literacy for non-library related journals.

A committee has been formed to develop survey forms to be used to evaluate the impact of Information Power on student achievement.

Pat Berger and Linda Williams presented information about “Tapped In,” which is a part of ICONnect, involving over 3000 K-16 teachers, staff, and researchers. Real-time discussions and classes are held. ICONnect contracted Tapped In to provide virtual office space for ICONnect and other AASL committees. Volunteers were solicited to participate in the question/answer service.

The AASL National Conference, a joint conference with the International Association of School Librarianship, will be held in Birmingham, Alabama, November 10-14.

--Carol Fox, OASLMS Chair
People and places

Libraries in the fast lane! SAMANTHA ROBB, Maysville Public Library, was instrumental this spring in spreading the word on useful information. The Business and Industries Council, a group of business leaders from Norman to Pauls Valley, have a monthly economic development meeting at Mid-America Vo-Tech. In January they hosted Lt. Gov. Mary Fallin and Sen. Trish Weeden. What Robb shared wowed all present and got her picture taken with the Lt. Gov. "Mary Fallin was leading a town hall discussion on what government can do to help small businesses in the state of Oklahoma," says Robb. "I was behind her writing the ideas on a tablet, and I jumped in to ask if she minded if I responded to a question on getting more information." She told the group about the article database SearchBank, and ODL's SoonersSearch website for locating state government information and statistics-information the state, through the Oklahoma Dept. of Libraries, already makes available free to users throughout Oklahoma. Everyone was really excited about these "new" resources, and the president of the BIC asked her to do a more complete presentation at the Feb. meeting. For the big presentation, Robb used her library consultant at ODL and distributed bookmarks and sample searches of useful business topics. The businessman whose printout had a smiley face on it was surprised to find he'd won a T-shirt. Many commented that they enjoyed the presentation, and others have since stopped by the library to find more information or stopped her around town and thanked her again. Sen. Weeden has made a donation to the Maysville Library's summer reading program. Robb says, "I have told lots of groups about our free, online resources. Some school systems, especially in the smaller towns, don't know it's here. I encourage all librarians to get out there and tell people."

Bea LeValley sent news of the Alva Friends of the Library group formed last summer which has already had tremendous success, raising around $2500 for the library. The latest endeavor was The Chocolate Fantasy, in March. At least 140 people packed the library's basement auditorium to taste homemade chocolate treats. Said one, "There were so many people you couldn't stir them with a stick!" Several dismayed individuals complained that the Fantasy should have been held earlier, because "I just gave up chocolate for Lent!" The chocolate evening raised about $1700—funds to be used for books and materials. They got great coverage in the Alva Review-Courier. For information contact Friends president Shelley Martin at 580-327-2553.

OSU's ROOP SANDHU retired this April after 26 years as a senior cataloger at Edmon Low Library. She joined the OSU library in 1973 as a cataloger and helped bring the library into the electronic age. "It is amazing how much technology has changed over the years, from typing catalog cards to cataloging electronic magazines for computer databases!" Over the years she's been responsible for many special cataloging projects. Longtime colleagues will miss the special dimension she brought to the Cataloging department. Roop began her professional career as an English teacher in Pujabi, India, later receiving her MLS at the University of Western Ontario, Canada.

From the editor

In one handful of junk mail a few weeks ago I held in my hand headlines:

- "First INNOPAC Millennium System Installed in Sweden"...in the 700,000 book Malmö library, with 12,000 CDs, plus videos, periodicals and lots of patrons; followed by...
- "Facsimile edition of Mercator's long-lost atlas available for first time in English"...for two hundred years the original lay in a Flanders monastery, known only to the monks...and now we could buy this "exquisite" atlas!
- "What fun!" says I. I love this profession.

And thanks for the opportunity to be newsletter editor for four years. This has really been fun! I've learned a lot and I've had so many great conversations with librarians all over the state. The networking opportunities of being involved are outstanding! On top of it, as one of the OLA officers, you get to be privy to the thoughtful and humorous ideas of some of your liveliest and most committed peers. Thanks to everyone for their commitment to Oklahomans and their libraries.

--Rachel Butler
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