Highlights of the Building Library Communities Annual Conference—Don’t Miss It!

Wednesday, March 26

What more could you want? Wednesday’s preconferences will include something for every type of librarian. From Information Literacy to Legislative Advocacy to Sequoyah and Feng Shui. Plus there will be the 2nd annual Ruth Brown Memorial Golf Classic at the Cobblestone Creek Golf Course in Norman. New this year for Wednesday night is the Wednesday Nite Dine-Around. The Local Arrangements Committee will have drivers to take you to dinner. Just check the type of food you’d like to have on the registration form and we’ll all congregate at the Renaissance Hotel at 5:45 to go out to dinner. After dinner will be the annual Poetry Reading sponsored by the Social Responsibilities Roundtable. This year Charles Levendosky (our keynote speaker) will be reading some of his published works along with Carol Davis Koss and Carl Sennhenn (Poet Laureate of Oklahoma).

Thursday, March 27

After your free continental breakfast with the exhibitors, Levendosky, a recognized expert on First Amendment issues will address us on the topic of protecting your patrons right to privacy and reading. Along with Levendosky will be ALA President, Mitch Freedman, who will give us an informative presentation of ALA’s Better Salaries and Pay Equity Initiative. Thursday’s luncheons look to be good ones too. Come to the Sequoyah luncheon and hear the winning author who was honored on Wednesday. The Legislative luncheon looks to be equally informative and entertaining. Lobbyist Vicki White-Rankin will address how we can speak to legislators effectively. If you’d like you can join any of the four table talks happening at the lunch hour. You can even sign up for a box lunch and bring it with you. The afternoon is chock full of interesting sessions. There’s something for everyone. When all the sessions are over for the day, those of you that are participants in the Public Library Certification program are invited to the annual Certification Reception for some wonderful food, drink and conversation. Those of you that are OUSLIS alums will at your annual social. This year there will be a cash bar and snacks! But we’re not done with Thursday yet. The All Conference Event, “OLA Construction Zone” will begin at 7:00. The main entertainment will be Edgar Cruz, OKC’s premier acoustic guitarist. OASLMS will be sponsoring the silent auction of beautiful gift baskets again this year with proceeds going to the Scholarship Fund. You must be present to win the one basket that will be given away in a free drawing that night.

Friday, March 28

Friday starts off with a complementary continental breakfast and sessions ranging from plagiarism to pay equity to disappearing librarians. OUSLIS students will give presentations on a wide range of topics. The luncheons on Friday are sponsored by FOLIO and OASLMS. OASLMS will have Barbara Kerley speak about her experiences as a children’s author. FOLIO will have that perennial favorite, Frosty Troy. Join either one or come to another day of noontime table talks with your box lunch. Friday afternoon hear about the Oklahoma Read project for the centennial, graphic novels in your library, AASL certification, the new “models of library service” for public libraries and teen friends groups. Rounding out the last day is the membership meeting. It is really the most important session to attend. You will have the opportunity to make decisions concerning the future of OLA and have a chance at winning a door prize. That evening, Dr. John Lienhard of National Public Radio’s Engines of our Ingenuity fame is the banquet speaker. His topic will be “The Library as Communal Expression: A Uniquely American Idea.” It’ll be a great way to end three fabulous days.

SIGN UP NOW FOR CONFERENCE!
Libraries, librarianship—I am curious about your library roots. How did you make your decision to work in libraries? As I have traveled around the state the last two years to regional retention and recruitment meetings, one of the most interesting things is listening to librarians share their stories of how they chose this profession. Very few of you knew in first grade that you wanted to be librarians. Many of you came into the profession later after doing other things. Others of you knew in high school that your destiny was to be in a library.

I came to our profession in a very round about way—I believe it was always my first choice, but the vision got lost for a while. Growing up in the very hot summers of the Texas Panhandle and in a household where my parents read constantly, my mother taught us that there were two places to cool off in the summer—the local pool and the public library. I loved the public library of my childhood. My elementary school library was a small rolling wooden cart that “circulated” from room to room so that a student could check out a book a couple of times a month. By a staggering contrast, the public library was magnificent, to me it seemed like one huge room with high ceilings and floor to ceiling windows. After quietly treading up a narrow metal staircase, I could sit on the very cool frosted glass block floor and spend hours combing through the adult non-fiction section. Even as a little girl, I would pull huge volumes off the metal shelves and look at books about buildings, paintings, sculpture, pottery, archaeology, rocks, jewelry and so much more. The greatest thing was that no librarian ever stooped beside me and whispered the suggestion that I should return to the children’s section downstairs. So a decade and a half later, after a teaching career, my sister and I decided to apply for library school. During that application process, our mom reminded us that we had started putting cards and pockets and spine labels on our books many years before. My mom actually has those books.

But what were the beliefs that led me down the path to libraries? My mother read and still does for pleasure and also for need-to-know information. My father read only non-fiction for information about any conceivable subject relating to history and science. My parents had taught life-long learning and life-long reading by example. The public library librarians in the Texas Panhandle had taught me about the freedom to read, they had, after all, extended that freedom to me as a young child. So I believe that my first desire to spend my career in libraries came from hoping that everyone could have my experiences with libraries.

So as you read your Conference Preview and consider what programs you will attend, ponder your library roots and come build your library communities at the 96th Annual Oklahoma Library Association Conference, Building Library Communities, at the Cox Convention Center. See you March 26th-28th!  

Kathryn Lewis
By the time you get this issue Legislative Day (March 11, 2003), will have already passed. If you weren’t able to attend, it’s still not too late to let your wishes be known to your legislator. Contact them and share your “importance of libraries” stories. The following goals will give you some talking points. Write a letter. Invite your legislator to your library. Hearing what you have to say is important to your legislator.

2003 Legislative Goals

1) To protect the rights of Oklahoma citizens to access the information they need in all formats, print and electronic.
   Rationale: Citizens need access to information in order to make informed decisions. Informed decision-making insures the continued growth and development of the Oklahoma economy and the improvement of the quality of life in Oklahoma.

2) To preserve Oklahoma’s tradition of local library governance.
   Rationale: Local library boards best understand the wants and needs of their citizens.

3) To support the Oklahoma Department of Libraries budget priorities and essential services.
   a) Library building grants to rebuild rural communities.
      Rationale: New libraries result in community and economic development as well as library and literacy services.
   b) Literacy grants to support Oklahoma’s literacy programs.
      Rationale: Three hundred twelve thousand (312,000) Oklahomans cannot read. It is essential that we maintain current funding levels to combat illiteracy in Oklahoma.
   c) Online electronic access to magazines, reference sources and other library materials for every library and every resident of the state.
      Rationale: Every Oklahoman and every Oklahoma community regardless of size needs equitable access to quality electronic resources.
   d) State archives building expansion.
      Rationale: We must preserve our Oklahoma heritage through the maintenance of our legislative and executive record.
   e) Funds to match technology grants from the Gates Foundation.
      Rationale: Gates Foundation Grants will help communities with few local resources to upgrade or replace public access computers. Matching funds are needed from the state.

The Librarian is changing.

Oh, you’ll still be able to get your Oklahoma Librarian in hard copy if that is what you wish, but starting with the July/August 2003 issue the Librarian will be published online at OLA’s website (www.oklibs.org).

Your issue of the Librarian will no longer be sent to you by “snail” mail...unless you tell us differently. Over the past two years it has been the recommendation of the Long Range Planning Committee that the Librarian investigate and move to being published online. This will allow those nasty postage costs to be minimized and save the organization some much needed dollars. The executive board voted to go to this format at the November meeting.

The Executive Board realizes that a hard copy still needs to be produced for those institutions that subscribe and for those of the membership that do not have easy access to the Internet or who are not as comfortable with this new process. We just need to know who and where you are.

Therefore, if you prefer to get your copy of the Oklahoma Librarian starting with the July/August issue in paper format please let us know, otherwise you will no longer get it in the mail. We need your feedback by the end of June 2003.

Complete the form below and send return it by mail, fax or e-mail. This is a big step forward for the Oklahoma Librarian and for the organization. We hope you will like it. We’re also hoping this new format will allow for more graphics and better reproduction of pictures from all those great workshops and of course, conference.

Pat Williams, editor

_____ I still prefer to get my issue of the Oklahoma Librarian by regular mail.

(Please print)

Name: ________________________________

Institution/Library: __________________________

Address: ________________________________

Send to: Kay Boies
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Ghost Ranch, Leadership and Anna

The institute was intended to identify and nurture emerging leaders in libraries from the twelve MPLA member states. There were thirty participants and six mentors selected. Other selected participants for Oklahoma were David Oberhelman and Cokie Anderson, both from OSU. Unfortunately David was unable to attend.

The mentors were:
**Mary Bushing**, Resources Development, Librarian at Montana State University, retired
**Lesley Boughton**, Director, Wyoming State Library
**Mona Carmack**, County Librarian, Johnson County Library, KS
**Dorothy Liegl**, Deputy State Librarian, South Dakota State Library
**Randy Olsen**, Deputy University Librarian, Brigham Young University, UT
**Marilyn Hinshaw**, Committee Chair; Director, Eastern Oklahoma District Library - Mentor Coordinator

A note on the selection process from the MPLA newsletter: “The Committee received 60 applications. 53% were from academic libraries, 35% from public libraries, 9% from “special” libraries, 3% were from school libraries. The MPLA State Representatives and state association presidents made the first 24 selections. They had some tough decisions since there were so many highly qualified applicants. The Institute Committee selected another five from alternates submitted by the States. EBSCO sent one participant.”

Before we gathered we were sent a questionnaire that asked us various questions, some of which were very difficult to answer. I worked on this form while I was flying to Albuquerque. Example questions were “Describe your family dynamics?” “Who is a person who influenced you as you grew up?”, “Who has been a good supervisor and why?” I was ready to hand in my questionnaire when the facilitator announced that this was an exercise to get us thinking about leadership and that she wouldn’t be looking at them. While this surprised me, I saw the greater purpose and usefulness of this exercise, an experience that would be repeated many times during the institute.

I arrived on Sunday afternoon and gathered with others who were trickling into the airport to catch a shuttle. There were about 20 of us taking this ride to Ghost Ranch, which would take about 2 hours. Once we got there, we were taken to our cabins (yes cabins) and then we met for dinner. My cabin was very nice by cabin standards: a small room with wood floors, rustic wood furniture, and two beds. It was connected to another room by a living room, which had very nice rustic furniture. One of my “suitemates” was in the room before dinner and after I dressed my bed, the two of us headed to dinner. The dining hall was set up cafeteria style and besides warm entrees (with a vegetarian alternative) the menu included a salad bar and a beverage selection. I met my roommate and other suitemate after dinner and then we headed to our first official meeting. Our first session was a get to know you and logistics session. Additionally the facilitator, Maureen, asked us what we were hoping to get from the institute. During this brainstorming many catchwords came out like, delegation, group communication, empowerment.

Maureen Sullivan was chosen to facilitate the Institute. “Ms Sullivan provides consulting and training services to a number and variety of library and information service organizations, including library networks and professional associations. Her experience includes 12 years as the human resources administrator in the library at the University of Maryland (1977-1980) and at Yale University (1983-1991). She received her B.A. degree, magna cum laude, from the University of Maryland in 1974 and her M.A. degree in Library Science from the University of Maryland in 1976. She is widely considered a top notch library thinker, especially skilled in the arena of how libraries manage their human resources — the people who are a 60% share of most library budgets.”

So after crashing and sleeping through a pretty dry night (humidity in New Mexico is very low, in the mountains especially, and the heat was a radiator to top it off) we got up to go to breakfast at 7:30 in order to meet for our first all day session at 8:30. The rest of the days followed this same format; with a break at 10 or so, lunch at 12, afternoon break at 3, and ending around 5. Dinner was at 6 and then the evenings were open.
The content of every day centered on Management and being a leader in your organization. The good thing was that the theories we learned were put into practical settings in our group work. We learned how to get people who worked with us and for us, as well as those we worked for, to do what we thought needed to be done. It was how to manage all the people we interact with, including ourselves.

Throughout the week we did a lot of self-analysis as well, in the form of questionnaires, personality tests, and sharing with others. A feeling that came out of this process was that the theories and practice were within me if I had the confidence and knowledge to utilize them.

Our evenings were very pleasant. I took it easy, taking short walks in the beautiful scenery and spending time with my housemates and getting to know other participants. Monday evening a group of folks went to have a campfire and hangout, Tuesday we all met to listen to a speaker on the history of Ghost Ranch, and Wednesday the different library types met to share experiences.

There was a lot of opportunity for leadership to assert itself. For instance there was no alcohol served or sold at Ghost Ranch, but daily expeditions to the nearest town were organized to retrieve libations. Also the information meeting of library types on Wednesday was initiated by one participant and was facilitated in the public library discussion by this organizer. Hikes were organized and led by group members and a listserv was planned to discuss continuing issues.

Sharing of experiences was especially valuable. In the group settings we learned that others had gone through similar experiences, and we shared insight into solutions to problems. In smaller settings we shared ideas and applications. For instance my roommate was youth services coordinator for Las Vegas Public, and she gave me some publications I thought were really snazzy. I in turn told her about our teen read week and promised her more info when I returned.

At the public library meeting I heard two significant experiences. One was that other libraries really enjoyed and appreciated what they called a PMS (patron management system) for regulating usage of the Internet. They said that customers weren't all that miffed about being booted by the computers, and that staff anxiety about the process was significantly decreased. Also that the State Library of Wyoming was considering following Maryland and California with implementing statewide access to Tutor.com. I promised to give the State Librarian of Wyoming my insight into the effectiveness of Tutor.com.

Ghost ranch is situated in Northern New Mexico in a bowl like valley. This terrain and location impedes communication by cell phone and Internet. So I didn't get to call home much and I didn't get to call work or check my email at all. This isolation helped me focus on the learning that I was experiencing and kept me from being distracted.

Continued on p. 6
Ghost Ranch (cont. from p. 5)

I took my digital camera and put those pictures, along with others that were donated by other attendees up on a web page: http://www.pioneer.lib.ok.us/Anna

One significant part of the institute was the Learning Partner experience. After we took a personality test we were grouped according to type and encouraged to seek out an individual who would be our sounding board, sharing ears, and Learning Partner throughout the institute. I sought out someone opposite of me and this relationship helped to really personalize the experience for me. On the last day we both shared our thoughts for our respective futures and were able to give insight into how to achieve these goals. I know she will be a person I can rely on for advice, guidance and support for these and other goals.

Six mentors from MPLA states were also present. I think it was a good thing we weren't matched up with these individuals but they were part of the discussion process and were always open to one-on-one discussions. In the last session they shared their experiences on how they got to their spot in the profession. This was a really fascinating discussion of the evolution of library work and the lives of these individuals. I didn't hook up with any of these mentors during the institute, but I know I can call on any of them for advice and be rewarded with thoughtful opinions.

I have immediate plans for taking this experience and using it. First I am doing a poster session at OLA in March (baby permitting) with Cokie Anderson (the other participant for Oklahoma). Then in November I have been invited to present at Lake Tahoe, for the NLA/MPLA joint conference with my roommate and a mentor. I would be interested in presenting information on this leadership opportunity to PLS, but also to do presentations on group communication styles and generational communication. Finally I am using many things I learned during this experience to help OLA plan their own version of a leadership institute.

Anna Moore
Workshop Gives Participants the Courage to Lobby

Panels of legislators and lobbyists shared the secrets of effective communication with elected representatives at the OLA Legislative Committee’s workshop, “Off to See the Wizards: the Yellow Brick Road to a Positive Relationship with your Legislators,” on February 5. Senator Johnnie Crutchfield, Senator Penny Williams, Rep. Greg Platt, and Rep. Susan Winchester told participants what to do to get their attention and how to have an impact on the way they vote on issues. All emphasized the importance of getting to know your legislator, preferably in an informal setting where you’ll have a chance to introduce yourself and let them know what you do. If this is not possible, make an appointment to come by their office and introduce yourself. When you call or visit their office, get to know their assistant. This person is the “golden key” to access to your legislator. Invite them to an event at your library. If they are able to attend, it is nice to have a photographer on hand and send out a press release. Politicians always appreciate positive publicity.

When writing to your legislators, avoid form letters. Four or five handwritten sentences stating your position have far more impact than a mass-produced letter or petition. When writing or sending e-mail, be sure to include your name, address, and telephone number. They can’t contact you if you don’t give them adequate information. Communicate your ideas clearly, succinctly, and briefly. These are busy people, and they appreciate those who are considerate of their time.

Most importantly, all of the legislators made it clear that they are eager to hear from you. They take the responsibility of representing their constituents very seriously, and they need to know what the people they represent think. Don’t be afraid to contact your legislator. He or she will want to hear what you have to say.

Susan McVey, Director of the Oklahoma Department of Libraries, and M. Scott Carter, Director of Public Relations of the Metropolitan Library System, explained the legislative process and the role librarians can play as advocates for libraries. Carter, a former legislative staffer, offered some behind-the-scenes insights into the ways bills can be passed. Legislative staff can be an excellent source of information about bills. Mike Ray, Director of the Media Division of the House of Representatives and Tim Allen, Director of Communication, Legislation and Public Policy for the Oklahoma State Treasurer’s Office, told participants about the role staff plays in the legislative process and the ways they can assist you in keeping track of legislation.

The lobbyists’ perspective was presented by Oliver Delaney, the Legislative Liaison for OLA, and Ben Blackstock, former Executive Director of the Oklahoma Press Association. Blackstock, who has more than 40 years of experience lobbying the legislature, recommends a seven-point plan for successful advocacy:

1. Know what you want.
2. Know the arguments against your position. Bring them up yourself and answer them.
3. “Practice your hymn.” Be able to communicate your message clearly.
4. Visit your legislators in their home district, as well as in their capitol office.
5. When you go to see your legislator, there should be only one or two people in the party. Work out in advance who will be the “lead talker” who will state the position and do most of the talking, and the “support talker” who will fill in information that the lead talker leaves out. Limit your visit to 5-10 minutes.
6. Have a one or two page bulleted list of your main points to leave with the legislator.
7. Say “Thank you.” No matter what, never threaten the legislator.

Blackstock also suggested that we remind legislators that, “Money for libraries is an investment that never depreciates. It just grows and grows.”

Delaney stressed the importance of being prepared. You should be very clear on what you want to say before you meet. Articulate the position clearly, stay focused, and be tenacious. Be thick-skinned, and refuse to be baited. Even when speaking with someone hostile to your position, be polite and remain calm.

Comments from workshop participants indicated that the panelists had succeeded in pulling back the curtain to reveal the real people behind the wizard. Being a library advocate is not as difficult as you may think. As one participant remarked, “Now I have the courage!” We’ll all get a chance to be brave and to put all of these suggestions to good use on Legislative Day, March 11.

More from MPLA...
Nothing makes a library worker feel better than a heartfelt “thank you.” Awards are our way to say “thank you” to special staff members, volunteers and library supporters on a large scale. Please think about the people who make a difference in your library. It could be your creative and cheerful youth services staff or a helpful vendor who patiently explained how to operate the new microfilm reader/printers. What about the local legislator who took library issues to the state capitol or the local newspaper who always sent a reporter or photographer to the library for a story? These are the folks we’d like to see honored. Visit the following link for an MPLA Award nomination form and further information. Say thank you in a big way.

Kaite Mediatore-MPLA Awards Committee

MPLA Award Information: http://www.usd.edu/mpla/committees/awards/awardsindex.htm
Congratulations To OK's AASL New Certified Teachers!

Oklahoma now has 11 Library Media National Board Certified Teachers! Congratulations to these National Board Certified Teachers who are OLA/OASLMS members: Karen Collins, Fort Gibson; Buffy Edwards, Norman; Marianne Price, Geary; Mary Ann Robinson, Edmond; Connie Wise, Woodward.

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) began offering the Early Childhood through Young Adulthood/Library Media (ECYA/Library Media) certificate in 2001 after setting standards for what library media teachers should know and be able to do.

For teachers and school library media specialists alike, National Board Certification is the profession's top honor. Certification is achieved through a rigorous assessment that takes nearly a year to complete. The assessment is performance-based and designed to evaluate the complex knowledge and skills of teaching described in the NBPTS standards.

Library media specialists who achieved certification participated in a process that includes the development of a portfolio and a half-day of assessment center exercises. The portfolio consists of four entries; each designed to demonstrate the library media specialist's abilities in areas such as instructional collaboration, appreciation for literature, integration of instructional technologies and contributions to student learning. The half-day assessment center exercises examine the content knowledge specified in the NBPTS standards. Six written exercises are used to determine the school library media specialist's abilities in organizational management, ethical and legal tenets, technologies collection development, information literacy and knowledge of literature.

The 94 AASL members who are now National Board Certified library media specialists represent 22 states. Three hundred forty-one other school library media specialists also earned certificates. For a list of AASL National Board Certified library media specialists go to <www.ala.org/aasl/news/2002aaslnbcts.html>.

In the Fall 2002, the American Association of School Librarians hosted a forum to provide its members with a broad awareness of the NBPTS certification and support process. More than 90 affiliate members attended the two and a half day program and received valuable information from NBPTS representatives regarding standards and the assessment process. Attendees also received background on the development of support networks for candidates and had the opportunity to develop preliminary plans for the support and enhancement of leadership opportunities for school library media specialists who will become National Board Certified Teachers.

The American Association of School Librarians is the first national professional organization to work directly with the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards in support of its members and those in the profession desiring to become board certified. Several AASL leaders were involved in the development of the National Board Standards.

"The NBPTS certification process provides a means to recognize outstanding school library media specialists who are leaders in this profession and the field. We would like to congratulate those who have achieved national certification. AASL is looking forward to providing support to future candidates and providing leadership and networking opportunities for those school library media specialists who have achieved certification," said Nancy Zimmerman, president of the American Association of School Librarians.

Founded 15 years ago, the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards is an independent, nonprofit, nonpartisan and non-governmental organization dedicated to advancing the quality of teaching and learning. To learn more about NBPTS and National Board Certification visit <www.NBPTS.org>.

The American Association of School Librarians (AASL) <www.ala.org/aasl>, a division of the American Library Association (ALA), promotes the improvement and extension of library media services in elementary and secondary schools as a means of strengthening the total education program. Its mission is to advocate excellence, facilitate change, and develop leaders in the school library media field.

Buffy Edwards,
Affiliate Delegate