

July 2, 2003

Oklahoma Library Association Representative ST-8
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It's been a tough year for libraries in Oklahoma, just as it has been most places. Hardest hit have been school libraries, along with academic and municipal public libraries, but no one has been immune. Fortunately, Oklahoma librarians have had some good news to go along with the bad, and there is a lot going on.

The Oklahoma Department of Libraries (ODL) experienced a series of cuts during the past year, but had their budget cut by less than three percent for the new fiscal year. Provided state revenues don't get worse, that should prevent further cuts in state aid to public libraries and allow continuation of the statewide database licenses, which help all libraries.

Other legislative successes this year were keeping the UCITA (Uniform Computer Information Transactions Act) bill bottled up in committee, despite a strong effort by lobbyists, and getting a bill to weaken the certification requirement for school librarians sent back to committee.

It's been a dinosaur summer in Oklahoma's public libraries, where the summer reading program theme has been "Dig It @ Your Library." Participation and circulation have been strong.

After nearly two years of work by Oklahoma's Public Library Directors Council, new guidelines for planning public library services have been approved by the ODL board. "Choices for a Dynamic Future: Models of Public Library Service for Oklahoma" provides people responsible for planning and funding public library services with a tool that can help them to envision at least three different models of service in a variety of areas that includes hours, buildings, technology, staffing (including pay), training, public relations, circulation, age and use of collections, programming, and funding.

Also approved were new "Youth Service Guidelines for Oklahoma." Like the models document, the guidelines are voluntary, but will be a big help by raising awareness of the many components of good youth services in libraries. Contact ODL for information about either of these new tools.

The Oklahoma Library Technology Network is working on a new strategic plan. RMG Consultants have surveyed and met with Oklahoma librarians to gather input for the new plan. A report is due in September.

Lots of excitement greeted the announcement of a new statewide literacy promotion campaign at the annual conference of the Oklahoma Library Association. A new public relations committee created by 2002-2003 OLA President Kathryn Lewis worked with ODL's Literacy Resource Office and Oklahoma City's Metropolitan Library System to plan the campaign, which was launched with the unveiling of a new poster featuring Governor Brad Henry and First Lady Kim Henry. The campaign has a decidedly Oklahoma theme, borrowed from the Metropolitan Library System: READ Y'ALL.

The One Book program is being tied in with plans for Oklahoma's approaching centennial

celebration in 2007. Oklahoma Reads Oklahoma will be a multi-year statewide reading and discussion program focusing each year from 2004 through 2007 on a different book by an Oklahoma author or about the Oklahoma experience. The first book will be chosen sometime this fall. Stay tuned.

Oklahoma Library Association leaders had a planning retreat June 5-6 at Oklahoma State University under their new President Anne Prestamo, with the theme "Telling Library Stories." Planners heard an encouraging report from the new Endowment Committee and began work on planning for the 2004 annual conference, which will be April 21 - 23, in Tulsa.

Several OLA workshops are coming up. On July 29, at Rose State College in Midwest City, the "Best of the Best SequoYAh" workshop will feature author Gary Paulsen and an effort to select the outstanding YA titles in the Sequoyah Young Adult program's history. On August 5, the Oklahoma Association of School Library Media Specialists is sponsoring 1-2-3 Energy! It will focus on ways to jump start the library program with new ideas, time-saving tips, and fresh activities, along with presentations on "No Librarian Left Behind" and on grant writing. The workshop will be at the Stillwater Public Library. On August 21, OLA's Support Staff Round Table and Career Recruitment & Retention Committees will present "Support Your Support Staff" at the Southern Oklahoma Technology Center and the Samuel Roberts Noble Foundation in Ardmore. Sessions will address managing when you're not the manager, negotiating pay equity, customer service, continuing education, building a professional portfolio, and feeling good.

The Oklahoma Librarian, OLA's newsletter, is going online. Any subscribers who still want to receive the print version need to promptly notify Kay Boies, Executive Director, Oklahoma Library Association, 300 Hardy Drive, Edmond, OK 73013, phone 405-348-0506 or fax 405-348-1629.

Congratulations to Oklahoma MPLA member (and former MPLA President) Marilyn Hinshaw on her election to the ALA Council, and to Lynn McIntosh, Executive Director of the Chickasaw Regional Library System, on her election as OLA Vice President/President-Elect.