

## Director's Report

**On the Road.** Since we last met, I have had the opportunity to represent ODL at several events. The first was the grand opening of the Newkirk Public Library. It was a special pleasure to attend this event and see the beautiful building because Newkirk was a recipient of one of the ODL Construction seed grants. The new facility is light years ahead of the former building. The community turned out in force to mark the event. ODL Board member Ann Geurkink and husband Jack were former residents of Newkirk so several neighbors asked after her and we were able to assure them that Ann continues her strong support of libraries in Duncan and on the state level. If you are in the area, I encourage you to visit the Newkirk Library. Other ODL staff attending the event were Vicki Mohr, head of Library Development, and Gary Phillips, former ODL Building Consultant, who helped in preliminary planning for the facility.

Another important event was the National Library Legislative Day held in Washington, D.C. The Oklahoma delegation consisted of Pat Acebo, Board member of the Eastern Oklahoma District Library System (EODLS), and Marilyn Hinshaw, Executive Director of EODLS, Jeanie Johnson, current president of the Oklahoma Library Association, Donna Morris, Executive Director of the Metropolitan Library System, Richard Parker, Assistant Director of the Tulsa City-County Library, and his wife Charlotte, and myself. We visited all seven of the Oklahoma Congressional delegation's offices. We met with a warm welcome in each office and had positive responses to our visit. Relationship building is important so that when we need help, we know whom to call and they know us. This year one of our concerns was a potential threat to funding for Environmental Protection Agency library funding. There is an EPA laboratory in Ada which provides unique resources to researchers in Oklahoma that would be difficult or impossible to replace. Senator Inhofe who came to greet us during our visit to his office is chair of the committee which provides oversight to the EPA and he was very interested in our concerns. The weather was beautiful during our trip and it was a pleasure to be in Washington.

The Western Council of State Libraries met in Cerritos, California for its spring meeting. This community is in Southern California near Long Beach. It is the site of the "first experience library." The Cerritos library is unique in its approach to services as well as having a breathtaking facility. We were provided with a DVD on the library and I plan to share part of it with you at the next Board meeting.

**Advisory Committee.** I have been invited to serve on a newly formed Advisory Committee at the University of Oklahoma School of Library and Information Studies (SLIS). Dr. Kathy Latrobe, Interim Director of SLIS, is seeking input from stakeholders in the state as they assess needs and plan for the future of the school. I have certainly benefited from the opportunity to meet students at the recent Beta Phi Mu event as well as from a focus group meeting of the Advisory Committee. I look forward to the work of the committee.

**Grant Update.** The national tribal library/museum/archival conference is proceeding through the review process at the Institute of Museum and Library Services. We were contacted about our application and requested to make certain changes to proceed to Round 2 of consideration. We made the changes and expect to hear next month as to whether we will be funded. As a part of the ground work leading up to that conference, ODL and the Historical Society hosted a meeting on May 19<sup>th</sup> at the new History Center. All tribes were invited to attend and over 90 individuals registered. My part of the program was to provide an overview of the programs ODL makes available to libraries and to encourage those with tribal libraries to participate. We distributed copies of the Oklahoma Almanac, a publication by Steve Beleu in our U.S. government information division on federal documents concerning American Indians in

Oklahoma federal depository libraries, summer reading program materials, computer lab brochures, and other items. It is our hope that we can recruit input and program ideas from attendees at this meeting for the conference as well as help in promoting the conference.

**Legislative Update.** The only remaining bills affecting libraries are appropriations measures. The Oklahoma constitution mandates that the legislature must adjourn on the last Friday in May. The end of the session is tomorrow as I write this and, at this moment, it is still impossible to tell if the legislature will manage to pass a budget before it is required to adjourn on Friday, May 26<sup>th</sup>. If the legislature does not pass a budget by sine die, there will likely be a special session in June. Some legislative leaders have said that they may pass a budget with the same funding levels as the current fiscal year so that state services will continue uninterrupted while the decisions about how to appropriate additional funds are decided. If there is no budget in place by July 1<sup>st</sup>, state agencies may shut down. Stay tuned!

**Hail and farewell.** Two long-time ODL staff has left to start a new phase of their lives. Ginny Dietrich has accepted a position as the director of the National Weather Center library in Norman. Ginny was a regional public library consultant and the first continuing education specialist at ODL. Ginny will be the first librarian at the Weather Center and will be taking over as the new building opens. We will miss Ginny but this is a once in a lifetime opportunity to be in on the ground floor of an exciting new facility and organization.

Mary Hardin, whom we recognized at the last ODL Board meeting for her forty years of service to the state, has retired. Mary plans to travel, spend time with grandchildren, work on her genealogy, and cultivate the vineyard she and her husband Neal began several years ago. Mary's career was celebrated at a party on May 16<sup>th</sup>. The theme, decorations, refreshments, and event were all demonstrations of the creative gifts of the ODL staff.

Both Ginny and Mary live in Norman so I'm not sure how long it will take them to get used to starting their mornings without the surge of adrenaline that commuting up I-35 provided them for many years. We wish Ginny and Mary well in their new endeavors.

In addition to bidding staff farewell, this is the last meeting for ODL Board member, Sherry Roberts. Sherry has had some family conflicts this year that have prevented her from making some of the Board meetings. Four children will do that to your best laid plans. I have valued Sherry's involvement on the Board because of her perspectives on the needs of families with young children. Thank you, Sherry for your strong support of ODL and service on the ODL Board.

The good news is that Sherry will be succeeded by another special person, Tom Terry. Tom is a resident of Shawnee and is the immediate past president of the Friends of Libraries in Oklahoma (FOLIO). Tom is university archivist at Oklahoma Baptist University. Tom's appointment to the ODL Board was confirmed by the State Senate on May 15<sup>th</sup>. Although Tom's term will begin on July 1st, Tom will be joining us at our June Board meeting to observe so you will get the opportunity to meet him and welcome him to the group at our next meeting.