

### Could Any of These Happen To You?

#### **Lawton Public Library**

*5<sup>th</sup> and B Streets (now called Town Hall)  
Lawton, OK*

*Amount of Carnegie Grant: \$ 20,000*

*Opening Date of Library: June, 1922*

*Additions to the Building: The building has been renovated.*

The Carnegie Corporation awarded \$20,000 in 1916 to Lawton to build the library. However, because several Oklahoma cities were delinquent in their support pledges, the Carnegie Corporation “blacklisted” Oklahoma, and so Lawton did not receive the funds until 1922. The city then added \$7,500 in local funds to the building fund. The library was erected in 1922, opening in June, and served as Lawton’s public library until 1973.

The Carnegie building, now known as Town Hall, is owned by the city and is used for conferences and meetings.



**Lawton Public Library**

- Your teenaged son has just remembered that he has a report due tomorrow on Afghanistan, and the teacher requires at least four magazine articles and two reference books as resources. Unfortunately, it’s 10 p.m., and your library closed hours ago.

- You’ve just come back from the doctor, and she’s told you that the reason you’re so tired is that you have a mild case of pleurisy. You have some medicine to take, but you’d really like to know more about exactly what pleurisy is and how the medicine will affect you. You’d go to the library but you’re tired and sore and really don’t want to do anything but rest.

- Checking out at the supermarket yesterday, you saw that *People* has an article on Michael Douglas. He’s always been one of your favorite actors, but you really don’t want to spend your money to buy the magazine. The baby’s taking a nap now, and you’d really like to take a few minutes to relax, have a drink and read about Michael Douglas and maybe a few other articles from *People*.

- It’s a beautiful Sunday afternoon, so you and your 7-year-old granddaughter go for a walk. Along the way you see three rabbits, an opossum and a white-tailed deer. Your granddaughter lives in Dallas so seeing all of these wild animals is really exciting. She’d like to learn more about them and maybe get pictures to show her classmates next week at school. You don’t have a children’s picture book of animals, and the library is closed on Sundays.

**(Continued on back page)**

# Carnegie Libraries no Longer used as Libraries

## ***Muskogee Public Library***

*401 E. Broadway, Muskogee, OK*

*Amount of Carnegie Grant: \$ 60,000*

*Opening Date of Library: May 1, 1914*

*Additions to the Building: Some renovations have been made.*

The first library board, appointed January 20, 1910, included Irvin Donovan, Carroll Butcher, Charles D. Smith, Mrs. DeRoos Bailey, Mrs. John Benedict and Miss Sarah Noble. At this time the books were housed in a business building, where they remained until the library was able to move them in 1914 into its new \$60,000 Carnegie building.

In November, 1909, application was made to the Carnegie Foundation, and a grant was made to Muskogee on October 24, 1911. The city of Muskogee then allocated money to purchase a lot and furnish the library. Henry D. Whitfield, brother-in-law of Andrew Carnegie, was the architect. Design features of the Carnegie library included an auditorium on the second floor, at least two fireplaces, glass floors in the mezzanine, and two murals on the second floor painted by Acee Blue Eagle.

The building served as Muskogee's public library until 1972 when a new library building was built. Now a non-profit corporation, The Ark of Faith, occupies the building.

## ***Wagoner City Public Library***

*102 S. State Street, Wagoner, OK*

*Amount of Carnegie Grant: \$ 10,000*

*Opening Date of Library: October, 1913*

*Additions to the Building: None*

After the progressive women of Wagoner had dreamed of a library for years, Mrs. S. S. Cobb, wife of the president of the Business Men's League, did something about it. She induced her husband to call a mass meeting and plant the idea of a Carnegie library in the public mind. On January 15, 1910, the meeting was held and a permanent organization of 24 members was formed.

By this time the city council was ready to join the movement and promised to assist in getting a Carnegie building. The city also agreed to rent a library room and pay a librarian. For these purposes, \$200 a year was deemed sufficient.

Thanksgiving in 1911 was doubly celebrated when an announcement was made that Mr. Carnegie had donated \$10,000 for a library. Due to various delays, the building was not finished for two years, but meantime the new librarian, Miss Leona Bateman, had assumed charge in October, 1912, and was cataloging and book-buying and popularizing the library. Just a year later, October, 1913, the library said goodbye to the city hall and moved into its own building.

The library moved to a new building in 2001.



***Muskogee Public Library***

### ***Shawnee Public Library***

*331 N. Broadway, Shawnee, OK*

*Amount of Carnegie Grant: \$ 15,500*

*Opening Date of Library: October 12, 1905*

*Additions to the Building: No – but the building has been renovated*

Shawnee has had a library since its “rag town” days. A group of women, not a club, organized a private circulating library in 1901. The same year another group founded the Shawnee Public Library, and the first group donated its 100 books to the second. The women supported the library for five years and initiated the movement which led eventually to a gift of \$15,500 from Andrew Carnegie for a building.

Adding \$2,500 to the Carnegie fund, the city erected an \$18,000 library, completed in 1905. The building was the second library in Oklahoma to have a dome; however, a fire in December, 1927, damaged the roof and interior.

When the library re-opened in November, 1930, the dome was not restored.

The library moved to a new building in 1989. Now the downstairs of the Carnegie building is the county law library, and upstairs is the district attorney’s office. The building was also refurbished with the addition of an elevator and general repairs and painting

### ***Woodward Public Library***

*1207 8<sup>th</sup> Street, Woodward, OK*

*Amount of Carnegie Grant: \$ 10,000*

*Opening Date of Library: May 1, 1917*

When the World War arrived to dwarf all other interests, Woodward was just ready to celebrate the opening of its new Carnegie Library. The Carnegie Corporation had given \$10,000 for a building, and the structure was opened on May 1, 1917. It had only 450 volumes but the librarian, Mrs. Harry B. Hall, asked people for donations of more books—not for her library, however, but for the soldiers’ camps.

In 1988 the library moved to its present location at 1500 West Main. The city continues to use the old Carnegie building.



***Shawnee Public Library***

# Carnegie Libraries that no longer exist

## ***Chickasha Public Library***

*527 Iowa Ave., Chickasha, OK*

*Amount of Carnegie Grant: \$ 10,000*

*Opening Date of Library: March 23, 1905*

Colors of the federated clubs of Chickasha decorated the rooms of the new Carnegie Library which was dedicated on March 23, 1905. There were only three clubs at that time—Sorosiss, New Century and Chautauqua,—but it was their efforts, begun in 1903 and ably seconded by the city government, which obtained from Andrew Carnegie the gift of \$10,000 with which to build this first free public library in Indian Territory. The site and first 330 volumes were purchased by the business men and club women. They and their friends donated more books to bring the collection up to 750 volumes, which had grown to over 17,000 volumes by 1937.

In 1963 the Carnegie building was torn down to build the current library building on the same site.



*Chickasha Public Library*

## ***Public Library of Enid & Garfield County***

*Elm and Independence, Enid, OK*

*Amount of Carnegie Grant: \$ 25,000*

*Opening Date of Library: August 1, 1910*

In September, 1905, the library became a city institution, and efforts to obtain a Carnegie building were commenced as soon as the city assumed responsibility for the library. But \$10,000, the first offer made by Mr. Carnegie, was rejected as too small, and presently the Scotch philanthropist consented to give \$25,000. The city bought a site for \$4,000 in 1908, and in August, 1910, dedicated its present building. A. A. Crowell was the architect.

The Carnegie building served the city until 1964 when the library moved to its present location. The Carnegie building was demolished in 1972.

### ***McAlester Public Library***

*325 E. Grand Avenue, McAlester, OK*

*Amount of Carnegie Grant: \$ 25,000*

*Opening Date of Library: 1914*

When the town, as a growing mining center, had doubled its population, it was decided that the time was ripe to ask the Carnegie Corporation for a library building. In 1913, the city received its gift, \$25,000. William Busby, a coal operator, had the most to do with obtaining the grant, and the city promised to support the library with at least \$2,500 a year. Money for the site was raised largely through the efforts of the Fortnightly Club, which gave its library to the city. The building was completed in 1914, and having, besides five rooms on the main floor, four others in the basement for the use of clubs and public gatherings, was constantly in use as a community center.

The McAlester Public Library moved to its new building in 1970, and the Carnegie building was used first as a museum, then for lawyers' offices, before being torn down in August, 1982. If you look closely, you can see the remnants of the stairs leading up to a vacant lot.

### ***Miami Public Library***

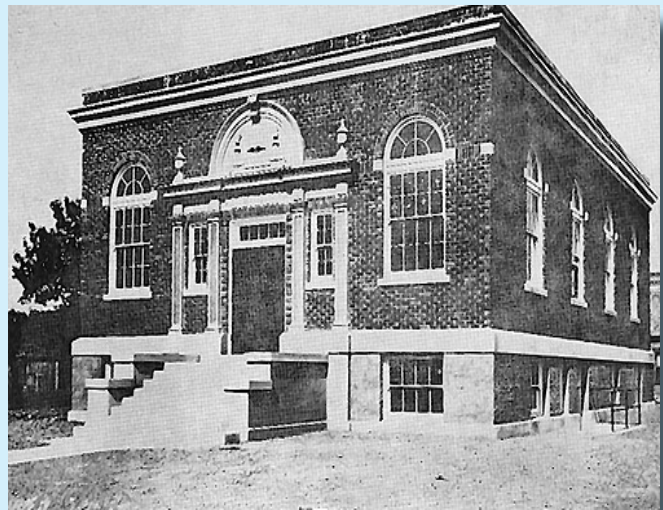
*200 N. Main, Miami, OK*

*Amount of Carnegie Grant: \$ 10,000*

*Opening Date of Library: November 28, 1921*

Two women's clubs, the Sorosis Club and the Twentieth Century Club, were instrumental in starting Miami's public library. Application was made to the Carnegie Corporation, which promised \$10,000 for a building, but this gift was withheld until the Oklahoma towns delinquent in their Carnegie maintenance pledges had made them good. In the meantime, the library was temporarily located in the Commerce Building, where perspiring patrons had to climb two flights of stairs to reach it, and later on the lower floor of the Kenroyer Hotel, for which quarters the city paid \$50 a month rent. On November 28, 1921, the town turned out to attend the dedication of the new Carnegie building. The city had added \$3,000 to the gift money, so that the total cost was \$13,000. This was the last grant for a Carnegie library building in Oklahoma.

In 1962 the Carnegie building was torn down, and a new library building was built on the same site.



***Miami Public Library***

# Carnegie Libraries that no longer exist

## ***Oklahoma City Carnegie Library***

*Northeast corner of N.W. Third & Robinson  
Oklahoma City, OK*

*Amount of Carnegie Grant: \$ 60,000*

*Opening Date of Library: August 29, 1901*

The Philomathean Club was instrumental in forming Oklahoma City's public library, which started first as a club library. Mrs. Julia Douglas took the next step by applying to Andrew Carnegie, and her appeal was enforced by Thomas P. Mellon, whose father, Andrew Mellon, was a personal friend of the philanthropist. The result was a gift of \$25,000, enough in those days to put up a really impressive building. The site at Third and Robinson was furnished by the city. The corner stone of the new building was laid on August 16, 1900. A whole year later the dedication ceremonies were held on August 29, 1901, and the first books were charged out by the librarian, Mrs. Marian Rock.

An odd fact is that, although the city now owned a Carnegie building, the library did not become officially a tax-supported institution until August 30, 1901, a few days after the first books were issued.

Recovering from the depression of 1898, the city grew so rapidly that by 1909 the library had already become too small. Andrew Carnegie was again approached and gave \$35,000 to build an addition. To this the city added \$4,800. The Carnegie gifts to Oklahoma City thus totaled \$60,000.

In 1952 the Carnegie building was torn down, and a new main library was built on the site. That library opened in 1954 and served the city until 2004. Oklahoma City's new downtown library opened on August 17, 2004.

## ***Ponca City Library***

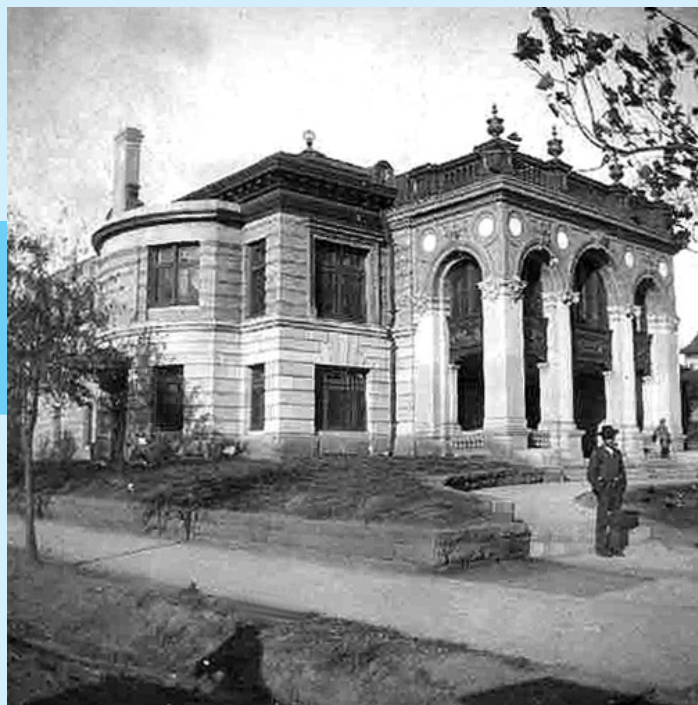
*Grand Avenue and Fifth Street, Ponca City, OK*

*Amount of Carnegie Grant: \$ 6,500*

*Opening Date of Library: 1910*

The Twentieth Century Club had been working for six years to create public interest in its little library, which it had opened in 1904 with 50 volumes housed in a room loaned by H. C. R. Broadboll, an insurance agent. The library had grown to 500 volumes when in 1909 Mrs. W. T. Oates, a club member, wrote a letter to Mr. Carnegie which brought his check for \$6,500 for a building. The Twentieth Century Club gave the city not only its own library but also the lots for the site. The library building was dedicated in 1910.

The Ponca City Library moved to its new building in 1935 and the Carnegie building was torn down in December, 1935.



***Oklahoma City Carnegie Library***

## **Tulsa Carnegie Library**

*3<sup>rd</sup> and Cheyenne*

*Amount of Carnegie Grant: \$ 55,000*

*Opening Date of Library: May, 1916*

In the cornerstone of the Tulsa Public Library rests a letter written in 1905 by Mrs. J. D. Seamon. It is addressed to Andrew Carnegie and is a plea for a Carnegie building. "Tulsa is a town of 6,000 people," Mrs. Seamon wrote, "and there is not a library in it".

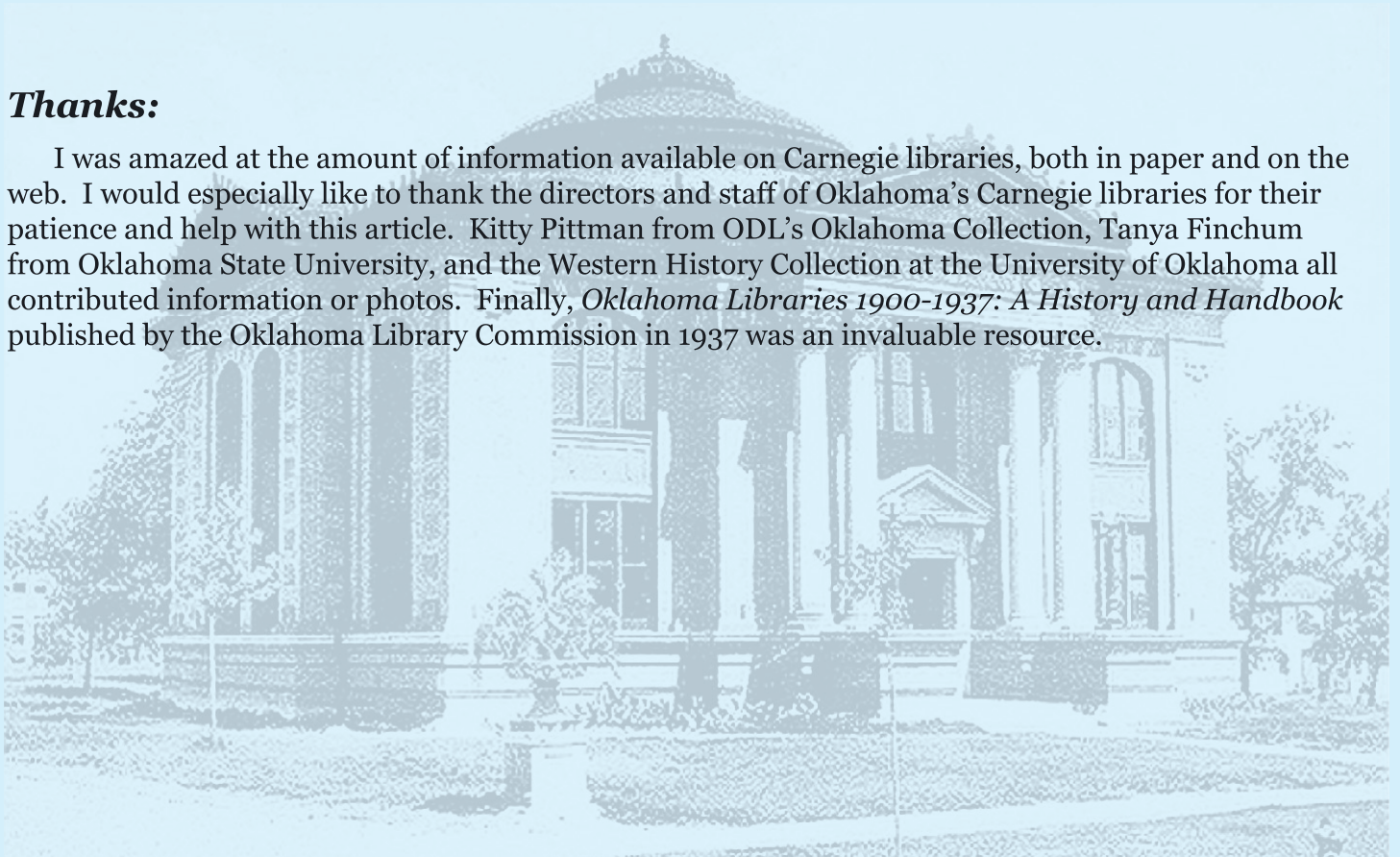
The plea was unsuccessful, but the men and women who wanted a library did not give up. By 1910 Tulsa was bursting with a population of 25,000 and was becoming one of the chief oil centers of the state, but it did not have a library. The Women's Club took up the matter and decided to try Mr. Carnegie again. Mrs. F. E. Shallenberger went east to interview him and induced him to offer \$35,000 for a library building. The club then circulated a petition which resulted in a special election to vote on buying a site for the library. The voters went to the polls early in 1911 and defeated the issue.

But the Women's Club and the loyal supporters of the library idea kept up the fight, and finally in 1912 the city commission promised an appropriation of \$100 a month for the maintenance of a library.

Meanwhile negotiations with the Carnegie Corporation were still going forward, and the Carnegie offer was raised from \$35,000 to \$42,000 and a year later to \$55,000, obtained through the efforts of Herbert D. Mason and Grant R. McCullough, president of the board. This final offer was gratefully accepted, and ground was broken for the building in August, 1915. The following May, Miss McGlenn and her assistants moved the library's still meager collection, 4,000 volumes, into the new 22 room building. The Carnegie building was torn down in 1965.

## **Thanks:**

I was amazed at the amount of information available on Carnegie libraries, both in paper and on the web. I would especially like to thank the directors and staff of Oklahoma's Carnegie libraries for their patience and help with this article. Kitty Pittman from ODL's Oklahoma Collection, Tanya Finchum from Oklahoma State University, and the Western History Collection at the University of Oklahoma all contributed information or photos. Finally, *Oklahoma Libraries 1900-1937: A History and Handbook* published by the Oklahoma Library Commission in 1937 was an invaluable resource.



# Grants Help Improve Oklahoma Libraries

Every year the Oklahoma Department of Libraries receives funds allocated by the United States Congress through the Library Services and Technology Act. These funds are intended to start new projects to improve library services, rather than to pay libraries' ongoing expenses.

ODL uses some of the LSTA money to offer grants to libraries each year to fund specific projects. Ideas for the projects come from various places. For the last few years the federal government has wanted state libraries to use LSTA funds to support library technology and services to disadvantaged and underserved people. All of Oklahoma's public libraries have received a variety of computer hardware, software and telecommunications equipment in the last ten years, and many have received grants like the Hispanic materials grant offered in 2003 aimed at serving specific groups of people.

ODL is also required to file a long range plan with the federal government, and file annual reports showing how the LSTA funds are spent to support the goals of the long range plan. You can read ODL's LSTA Plan by going to ODL's web site ([www.odl.state.ok.us](http://www.odl.state.ok.us)) and clicking first on [Library FYI] and then on [LSTA plan 2003 to 2007]. The federal government approves ODL's long range plan, and LSTA funds must be spent to support the goals of the plan.

Finally, ODL relies on input from library directors and staff to help identify needs and ideas for future grants. This year, ODL has used the *Models for Public Library Service in Oklahoma*, developed by the Public Library Directors Council, to offer grants to public libraries.

For example, Guideline 19 in the *Models* focuses on nurturing the next readers. Suggested early literacy activities include training library staff, improving library resources

available to children from birth to age six, and communicating the importance of early literacy to their communities. ODL is offering a grant to purchase library materials, especially board books appropriate for children from birth to age 2, to all Oklahoma public libraries. The grant includes training in early literacy and encourages libraries to partner with local groups to support and improve emergent literacy efforts in their communities.

Guideline 4 in the *Models* sets a dedicated T-1 line as the minimum for Internet access. To help libraries who are still at the lower 56K level, ODL offered LSTA grants to purchase the T-1 interface card, necessary hardware and a router capable of T-1 connectivity, and partnered with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, OneNet and the Chickasaw Telephone Company to install the equipment in all of the libraries. After the grant is completed, almost all of Oklahoma's public libraries will be at the Gateway level of T-1 access to the Internet.

A final example is Guideline 8 which stresses the importance of annual training for library staff. This year ODL awarded continuing education grants to four library systems and 23 public libraries to send their certified staff to various library conferences and training opportunities. Included in that group were 17 certified librarians who used the LSTA grants to attend the Public Library Association's National Conference in Seattle last February.





## Author Billie Letts Kicks Off Statewide Tour

Award-winning author Billie Letts is touring the state this fall to support the new statewide reading and discussion program, Oklahoma Reads Oklahoma. Letts is visiting sixteen communities to talk about her novel *The Honk and Holler Opening Soon*, the title selected by readers to be the Oklahoma Reads Oklahoma Book for 2004.

Letts' schedule will take her to towns as big as Oklahoma City and as small as Waynoka and Spiro.

ODL Director Susan McVey said it is especially appropriate that smaller towns are on the tour agenda. "Billie's novels take place in small town Oklahoma. They celebrate the positive values that come from a sense of community."

"Community" is what Oklahoma Reads Oklahoma is all about, according to McVey.

"The One Book programs that have become popular in cities and states throughout the country are all about sharing a common experience and enriching our sense of community," McVey said. "When different people come together to read and discuss the same book, it broadens their appreciation of the literature, and it gives them a safe place to discuss a variety of issues and controversies that may be addressed in the book."

Anita May, Executive Director of the Oklahoma Humanities Council (OHC) and ORO co-chair, noted the approaching state Centennial and the Oklahoma Reads Oklahoma project present an opportunity to focus on Oklahoma's cultural legacy. "It is fitting that we examine what Oklahoma has been and what it is becoming," May stated. "Through these books and writers, we discover the Oklahoma



experience, we begin to understand Oklahoma's rich history, its icons, culture, and its future promise."

For Billie Letts, the act of writing is a celebration of her Oklahoma heritage. "Whatever I write, my characters have the voice of Oklahoma, which lives inside my head," she said. "I was born and raised here, so the music of our language and our culture resonates, I hope, in my stories."

Letts started the tour on August 29 at the Goddard Center in Ardmore, where more than 225 people came to the presentation and book signing. On August 30, 72 people showed up at the Altus Public Library to visit with the author.

The tour continues through November. You can find more information on Billie's schedule at [[www.okreadsok.org/billie.html](http://www.okreadsok.org/billie.html)].

"It will be a good idea to watch local news and check ahead," McVey said. "We are already hearing that three of the sites may need to move their event from the library to larger facilities because Billie's upcoming visit is proving to be so popular."

Statewide sponsors for the tour are ODL, OHC, the Metropolitan Library System, and Warner Books. Letts' tour will also be an opportunity to promote the next step in the centennial reading and discussion program. Citizens are once again invited to select the next Oklahoma Reads Oklahoma title. An online voting booth is open from September 1 through November 1 at [[www.okreadsok.org](http://www.okreadsok.org)].

## Information Anytime

(Continued from page 11)

- You've finally convinced your husband to replace the carpeting – it's over twenty years old and all of your pets are now housebroken so it's the perfect time. But there are so many choices! When you go to the store or look on web sites, everything seems to be slanted to selling you their brand. You'd really like to find some unbiased information that would evaluate the different kinds of carpeting, and maybe even give you some ideas on decorating and color choices.

These are all very typical needs for information, and I'm sure that you can easily think of others. Public libraries have traditionally answered these kinds of requests, but in the past you had to come to the library to get the information you needed. If you have an Internet connection, that's no longer the case.

The Oklahoma Department of Libraries has purchased licenses to two databases for everyone in Oklahoma to use. The databases are EBSCO and SIRS. EBSCO has magazine and newspaper articles, reference books, pictures and other information on virtually any topic you can think of – including current events, medicine, business, science, health, parenting, etc. SIRS is designed especially for children and teens, and offers general information and also support for school assignments. One of the best features of the online databases is that all of the information in the databases is accurate and unbiased, unlike a lot of information that you find on the Internet.

You probably know that you can access these databases at your public library. What you may not be aware of is that these databases may also be accessed at home, at school or at work. All you need is an Internet connection and a password from your local library. Ask your library director for the password and directions on how to get to the databases. Your regional consultant at ODL will also have the password for your library. Then, next time you have a question, you'll have a fantastic resource available at your fingertips.

**Trustee Talk** is a publication of the Oklahoma Department of Libraries designed specifically for public library trustees. Because Oklahoma's public libraries serve diverse communities, Oklahoma's library boards can be either a governing or an advisory board and may serve a large system, a metropolitan area, or a rural community. Therefore, some information in Trustee Talk may not be useful to you and your library. However, we hope that everyone will find something useful in each issue.

If you have questions on anything you have read, please contact your regional consultant at the Oklahoma Department of Libraries. If you would like to suggest topics for future issues, please contact Ginny Dietrich, editor at ODL, 800-522-8116 or [gdietch@oltn.odl.state.ok.us](mailto:gdietch@oltn.odl.state.ok.us)

**Check out ODL's website at:**  
[www.odl.state.ok.us](http://www.odl.state.ok.us)

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