## OLAQ

Volume 22, Number 2 *Re-Envisioning with the Aspen Institute: Oregon Libraries Answer the Challenge* | Pages 1 - 30

10-10-2016

## Re-Envisioning with the Aspen Institute: Oregon Libraries Answer the Challenge (Full Issue)

(2016). Re-Envisioning with the Aspen Institute: Oregon Libraries Answer the Challenge (Full Issue). *OLA Quarterly*, 22(2), 1-30. http://dx.doi.org/10.7710/1093-7374.22.02

© 2016 by the author(s). OLA Quarterly is an official publication of the Oregon Library Association | ISSN 1093-7374

# OLA Quarterly

Re-Envisioning with the Aspen Institute: Oregon Libraries Answer the Challenge

## THE ASPEN) INSTITUTE

Summer 2016

Vol 22 • No 2

#### OLA Quarterly Summer 2016 Vol 22 • No 2

#### Oregon Library Association http://www.olaweb.org ISSN 1093-7374

The *OLA Quarterly* is an official publication of the Oregon Library Association. Please refer questions and input regarding the *Quarterly* to:

Charles Wood Volunteer Librarian, Aloha Community Library wuchakewu@gmail.com

Graphic Production: Tobias Weiss Design 7345 SW Deerhaven Drive Corvallis, OR 97333 phone 541-231-4721 julie@tobiasweissdesign.com www.tobiasweissdesign.com

Upcoming Issue

Fall 2016

UX in Oregon Libraries

Re-Envisioning with the Aspen Institute: Challenge



## Introduction

Challenge. We, in public libraries, are familiar with that word. Books and policies are frequently "challenged", and we continue to face the challenge of offering more with less. The Aspen Institute's "Dialogue on Public Libraries" was created to help advance the work that public libraries are doing to address community challenges and to support the transformation of public libraries in the digital age. This groundbreaking initiative seeks to change the public's perception of libraries and concludes that the longterm health of libraries is essential to the long-term health of the communities they serve. Four strategic opportunities for action are identified to guide the continuing transformation:

- Aligning library services in support of community goals
- Providing access to content in all formats
- · Ensuring the long-term sustainability of public libraries
- Cultivating leadership

Oregon libraries have risen to the challenge and addressed these opportunities. This issue of the OLA Quarterly showcases libraries and library workers applying the four Aspen Institute "Strategies for Success."

In Multnomah County, Ross Betzer shares a unique project which is representative of interests in the local area. By strengthening community connections in unexpected ways, The Portland Brew Stories project is an example of all four "Strategies" being put into play, albeit unexpectedly.

Catherine Jasper from the Deschutes Public Library illustrates vision and innovation in her article which beautifully articulates "providing access to content in all formats."

Kate Lasky from the Josephine Community Libraries and Douglas County Library System's Harold Hayes speak passionately about securing and protecting the future of their libraries, and Erica Findley describes how EveryLibrary has supported their goals of long-term sustainability by empowering their efforts.

Nan Heim and Jane Corry illustrate how engaging the community through new services supports community goals in a new and surprising way.

We live in challenging times ... the Aspen Institute's work helps us meet those challenges by aspiring us to embrace the boldness that helps create leadership both inside and outside the library community.

We hope you find this issue as enjoyable as we did in helping to create it — and as inspiring. 🕵



#### OREGON LIBRARY ASSOCIATION



#### ANN ROSEBERRY OLAQ Guest Editor

Ann knew in second grade that her world would be libraries. Her career goals included working in public, academic, and special libraries and earning a doctorate. Her current mission is recruiting the best and brightest to live library lives and to provide support to library administrators.

#### PAM NORTH OLAQ Guest Editor

Pam North has been involved in libraries since the second grade when she was selected as student assistant to the school librarian. She has over 20 years of experience working in public, academic and school libraries. As the former director of the Sherwood Public Library, Pam was instrumental in planning and designing a new 14,000 square foot library building. Her expertise also encompasses management of rural, small and medium-sized public libraries, library leadership, continuing education, and writing and editing for professional library publications.





## Beer and Libraries? Challenging the Community's View of the Public Library

by Ross Betzer

Information Services Librarian Multnomah County Library rossbk@multcolib.org



Ross Betzer

Ross is an information services librarian at Multnomah County Library and co-chair of the Oregon Library Association's Intellectual Freedom Committee. His work includes staff training, copyright and digitization planning, and providing reference and readers' advisory services both online and at the Central Library. His favorite beer (at the moment) is the Helles Belles lager from Ninkasi Brewing. When you think about beer, you might not think about your local library. You almost certainly are not going to think about the Aspen Institute's 2014 report, *Rising to the Challenge: Re-Envisioning Public Libraries*. Nevertheless, these three things—beer, libraries, *Rising to the Challenge*—all came together in a digital collection created by Multnomah County Library called Portland Brew Stories.

The Portland Brew Stories project was a community-focused effort to gather and share images and other primary documents that celebrate beer culture in Portland and Multnomah County. Planning began in 2014, the bulk of the project work took place in 2015, and the collection went live to the public in February 2016. This article provides a broad description of how the Portland Brew Stories collection was conceived and created, based on conversations with library staff who were involved and my own experiences with the project. Successes are identified and advice is presented for libraries who want to embark on a similar digital project within their community. Finally, the article reflects briefly on how this project embodies the ideas and strategies in Rising to the Challenge.

#### A New Idea for a Digital Project

The initial seed for Portland Brew Stories came about in late 2013 or early 2014, during discussion about directions for the library's next digital project. As best as staff can recall, personal interests in craft beer led to a suggestion to do something which would involve local breweries. When viewed more objectively in terms of the library's goals for a digital project, this idea had merit beyond personal interest. It aligned with the library's mission statement about providing "library resources that anticipate and respond to community interests and needs," and it also met the library's priority to "help the community flourish."





Multnomah County Library's previous digital projects had focused on the history of the library. With this new one, director of collections and technical services and project sponsor Javier Gutierrez said that the library "wanted it to be fun, we wanted it to be interesting, and we didn't want to do ... what libraries typically do." Erica Findley, cataloging and metadata librarian and later Portland Brew Stories project manager, saw it as an opportunity to "connect with the community ... in a way that they weren't expecting." She thought it would be exciting to patrons because craft brewing is something that this region is known for.

Portland Brew Stories, www.multcolib.org/beer

According to the Oregon Craft Beer website (2016), there are 246 brewing facilities in Oregon, 39 percent of which are located in the Portland metro area. At the time of the project, Multnomah County Library already had connections in place with two local breweries. Laurelwood Brewing had hosted a yearly event with the Friends of the Library where people who donated a book to the Friends received a free beer or root beer at the Laurelwood brewpub. Hopworks Urban Brewery had produced a special "Library Lager" in celebration of the library's 150th anniversary, with a portion of sales going to benefit the library. Javier and Erica both pointed out that many of the area's breweries are active in their community, both in the sense of the brewing community and the larger public community. For example, Ex Novo Brewing Company is a nonprofit, Hopworks puts on an annual bicycle and beer festival, and Laurelwood was founded with the idea of being a meeting place where everyone can feel welcome.

The Portland brewing community is constantly producing material of current and future interest, including photographs, artwork, and stories told by workers and owners. Multnomah County Library recognized that this information is not widely accessible, and the library saw an opportunity to help gather and share these resources with the community while also contributing to their preservation for future researchers.

#### **Planning and Building Partnerships**

Erica Findley was selected as project manager, and one of her first steps was to look for other organizations who had done similar projects. The Oregon Hops and Brewing Archive at Oregon State University was identified, according to Erica, as an institution which "had done a similar project, might have suggestions for us, and might even have some content for us." Multnomah County Library did not have a previous relationship with the archive, but an initial phone call soon led to an in-person meeting. Tiah Edmunson-Morton, curator of the Oregon Hops and Brewing Archive, recalls her initial thought about Portland Brew Stories as being: "Cool!" One of her goals with the Oregon Hops and Brewing Archive is to "connect with colleagues throughout the state and support their work to save brewing history": Multnomah County Library's new project fit right in with that. Tiah took an active role in attending meetings and supporting the project throughout its duration.





Materials in the Oregon Hops and Brewing Archives, Oregon State University Special Collections and Archives Research Center. Used by permission.

This digital project was different from those that Multnomah County Library had done in the past, due both to the collaboration with the Oregon Hops and Brewing Archive and also to the fact that the library was going to be reaching out to the community to gather items for digitization and sharing, as opposed to looking within its own collections for material. Erica spent a lot of time planning who should be involved and composing a project team, something which was "tremendously helpful" and a "huge step in advancing the project systemwide." The team ultimately included: managers from technical services, programming and community outreach, and marketing and online engagement; librarians who would coordinate programming, outreach, and copyright planning for the collection; and front-line library staff who would reach out to local breweries and collect material for the collection. The team held monthly meetings where members discussed issues related to the project and helped shape the direction of the collection.

#### **Creating the Collection**

An initial goal was set for 500 items from 10 different breweries. A project sub-team focused on reaching out to local breweries; they identified possible brewery partners and organized the list by brewery size and geographic location so that the collection would represent a variety of businesses. Surprisingly, every brewery approached about the project agreed to participate. Additional breweries were chosen for inclusion in the collection based on relationships already in place with the Oregon Hops and Brewing Archive. The collection ended up containing 489 items from 14 breweries. Additional breweries and items will be added going forward.

Before making contact with breweries, the outreach sub-team prepared checklists for what to talk about when meeting with brewery representatives, including at initial meetings



and later when picking up items. My role on the project was to make a plan for addressing copyright, and I created (with review from the county attorney's office) a form that brewery representatives could sign to assert copyright ownership and give permission for the library to copy and share donated items.

Initial contacts with selected breweries began in May 2015, followed shortly thereafter by in-person visits. The collection of donated items and gathering of paperwork took place over the summer. When library staff met with breweries, they asked for any items which would help tell the brewery's story, focusing on visually interesting items rather than business records. Not surprisingly, there were sometimes difficulties in connecting with very busy staff at the breweries, but overall the experience was rewarding for staff involved (all of whom happened to be lovers of local



1985 photograph of Bridgeport brewmaster Karl Ockert, surrounded by notables from the Portland brewing community. Used by permission.

beer). Library assistant Larry Randall reported that the experience was "fun and interesting" and "very rewarding to connect the library with a community that so epitomizes Portland."

Much of the material received was already digital, in the format of images saved on flash drives. Erica Findley photographed all three-dimensional items, and library volunteers helped with flat-bed scanning of two-dimensional documents. After being digitized, donated physical items were given to the Oregon Hops and Brewing Archive for possible inclusion in their archival collections.

The project team decided that, in addition to images and documents, videos would be "a good way to bring people into the collection" and "get some of the 'stories' into Portland Brew Stories and provide a narrative that went beyond ... the individual items," according to Erica.



Screenshot from the video teaser for Portland Brew Stories. Used under license from Hopstories.



Local video production company Hopstories was recommended by the Oregon Hops and Brewing Archive, and the library worked with them to figure out a plan for the videos that would be created. Hopstories produced four videos for the collection: three featuring the stories of particular breweries, and a shorter video that would serve as a teaser for the collection.

A team of library staff helped research and write metadata describing each item in the collection. The Oregon Hops and Brewing Archive contributed descriptions that appear on the landing page for each brewery within the larger collection.

#### **Portland Brew Stories Makes its Debut**

Programming Librarian Anne Tran recruited presenters from the community to put on various programs related to beer, brewing, and hops that could be offered at library branches in the months following the launch of the new collection. A total of 20 events were eventually held at 11 library locations (for example, "Beer Balms and Beauty," a program about mak-



ing your own cosmetic products with beer). In general, handson classes were found to be more popular than lecture-style programs.

The Portland Brew Stories collection went live on the library website in early February 2016, and a kick-off event attended by 63 library patrons was held at the Central Library on February 11. Staff from five breweries were on hand to distribute tasters of their beer (beer drinking is not typical at library events, and required more-than-usual planning and

Branded tote bag and bottle opener from the Portland Brew Stories kick-off event.

approval), and gift bags with Portland Brew Stories-branded items like a bottle opener and a coaster were given out. Beer historian Bill Schneller presented a talk about the history of brewing in Portland, and computers were available for attendees to tour the new collection. According to project sponsor Javier Gutierrez, library staff at the event felt like it was "such a different feel and a different community coming in for a program [compared to other library events]... there was a lot of excitement."

In the month after the collection's launch, 2,639 online visitors viewed Portland Brew Stories. The top source of referrals to the collection was the mobile version of Facebook, with 577 users finding their way to the collection via links from that source. The second highest referrer was Google, implying that many patrons were finding the digital collection via Web searches. Videos were the most popular item type in the collection during the first month.

Traffic to the collection has gone down since the first month that it was live, but there is potential to do further promotion and outreach in the future. On March 17, 2016, Erica Findley talked about the collection on a local news radio station. In July 2016, the library hosted a table at the Oregon Craft Beer Festival in Portland. The beer festival outreach was



successful in reaching many community members who had not used the library recently (in some cases not since they were children): 40 new library cards were created for patrons at the event. One of the library staff members, Steve Roskoski, reported that the experience was wonderful and that "people were perplexed to see [the library] at a beer event, so we had fun explaining."



Beer! At the library! Just some of the beer being served at the Portland Brew Stories kick-off event.

#### **Project Successes**

Portland Brew Stories was successful in that it met the original project goals: secure participation of local breweries, create a visually-appealing online collection that tells the story of brewing in the Portland area, provide programming at library locations to complement the online collection, and connect with the community in a way they were not expecting. But the project also succeeded beyond those initial goals.

When asked why they most felt the project was successful, project sponsor Javier Gutierrez and project manager Erica Findley both brought up the words engagement and commitment. Javier talked about the experience of involving staff and letting them direct the project, and "seeing how engaged ... and committed they were." Erica mentioned the surprise of discovering the breweries' "level of excitement ... and the level of commitment that they brought" to this project, and seeing the "level of engagement that already exists in our community with the library." Tiah Edmunson-Morton of the Oregon Hops and Brewing Archive commented that the project was a positive example of "building new relationships with regional library colleagues, new and existing patrons, and the business community" and engaging "patrons as content creators."

#### **Lessons Learned and Advice for Other Libraries**

The Portland Brew Stories project was a learning opportunity for Multnomah County Library. When asked what they would tell other libraries who are planning a similar community-based digital project, staff identified the following suggestions.

• Have a vision and a plan before you get started. In this project, the work of creating a vision for the collection happened at the same time as kicking off the meetings of the project team. In hindsight, project manager Erica Findley felt that it would be better to have had a stronger vision and direction for the project in place before the project team's work began, so that team members could have a clearer idea of their role and be more able to focus on their areas of expertise.



- Create partnerships, internally and externally. Project sponsor Javier Gutierrez emphasized partnerships as being key, both external partnerships such as the one with the Oregon Hops and Brewing Archive, and also partnerships internally among library departments so that there is investment from across the institution. Partnerships can let you share the workload, introduce you to people, and help you learn. Recruit team members who are genuinely excited about the work (in this project's case, it wasn't hard to find staff who are passionate about beer!) and then let those staff be the face of the project.
- When working with community organizations: plan ahead, be enthusiastic, and be firm and clear in your communication. The Portland Brew Stories brewery outreach sub-team gave the following suggestions for reaching out to community organizations. Start with easy ones first, those where you already have a connection or an in. Do research ahead of time about organizations you will be contacting so that you already know something about them before your first meeting. Give firm deadlines for participation; you can always be forgiving and extend those deadlines later. Be enthusiastic, and demonstrate how visible and popular the end product will be. Remember to be effusive in your thanks.
- The first digital project is the hardest. Planning and managing a digitization project can be difficult, especially when it is new for your library. With Portland Brew Stories, Erica created a lot of documentation around the work that was done, including "how much of a time commitment people actually had to give," and "how much money we ended up actually having to spend between all the different departments ... now we can use that in the planning for the next project." The planning for digital projects gets easier when you have some sort of baseline, even if every new project will have its own unique (and challenging and exciting) aspects.

## *Rising to the Challenge* and **Challenging the Perception of the Library**

Portland Brew Stories was already underway when the Aspen Institute's *Rising to the Challenge* report began being widely discussed at Multnomah County Library. In hindsight, however, the project is a good example of a library leveraging the key assets identified in the report (people, place, and platform) and pursuing the strategies for success that it lays out (aligning library services in support of community goals, providing access to content in all formats, ensuring the long-term sustainability of public libraries, and cultivating leadership) (Garner, 2014). With this project, Multnomah County Library identified a subject of interest to the community and took a leadership role in gathering and sharing the community's historical and cultural content relevant to that subject.

Will this project, and the Aspen Institute's strategies, help lead to future success and long-term sustainability for the library? It is too soon to say. Already, however, Portland Brew Stories was a valuable opportunity to create a digital collection which pursued these aspirations. More importantly, the project provided a chance to engage with the community in new ways, and it challenged and expanded the community's idea of what a library can be.



#### References

(All quotes from individuals are the result of personal communications which took place between June 6 and July 13, 2016.)

Garmer, Amy K. (2014, October). *Rising to the challenge: Re-envisioning public libraries: A report of the Aspen Institute Dialogue on Public Libraries.* Retrieved from: http://csreports.aspeninstitute.org/documents/AspenLibrariesReport.pdf

Multnomah County Library. (n.d.). *Portland brew stories*. Retrieved from: https://gallery.multcolib.org/exhibit/portland-brew-stories

Oregon Craft Beer. (2016, June 29). Another good year for Oregon beer: Oregon craft beer by the numbers. *Facts*. Retrieved from: http://oregoncraftbeer.org/facts/

#### Additional Resources

If you would like more details about any aspect of the Portland Brew Stories project, contact Erica Findley (ericaf@multcolib.org) and Ross Betzer (rossbk@multcolib.org). Erica recommends the following online resources for libraries new to digitization projects:

Association for Library Collections and Technical Services, Preservation and Reformatting Section. (2013, June). *Minimum digitization capture recommendations*. Retrieved from: http://www.ala.org/alcts/resources/preserv/minimum-digitization-capture-recommendations *These are a really great set of guidelines for digitization compiled from many sources*.

Digital Public Library of America. (n.d.). *Public library partnerships project*. Retrieved from: https://dp.la/info/about/projects/public-library-partnerships/ The curriculum on this website is designed for public libraries. It includes tutorials that are good primers on each stage of a digitization project including planning, selection, and metadata.

OCLC, Inc. (2013, June 20). Best Practices for CONTENTdm and other OAI-PMH compliant repositories: Creating sharable metadata. Retrieved from:

https://www.oclc.org/content/dam/support/wcdigitalcollectiongateway/MetadataBestPractices.pdf This is an easy to follow guide on creating a metadata schema. It will allow an institution to easily share their collections across other repositories.

#### Acknowledgements

To all the Multnomah County Staff who graciously responded to my questions about their roles and experiences with this project, thank you. Thanks especially to Javier Gutierrez and Erica Findley for sitting down in person to talk about the project, and to Emily-Jane Dawson and Shawn Cunningham for their editorial suggestions and guidance.



## Putting our Money Where Our Customers Will Be:

Investing In Digital Collections Today to Ensure a Customer Base Tomorrow

by Catherine Jasper Collection Development Librarian Deschutes Public Library catherinej@dpls.lib.or.us



CATHERINE JASPER Catherine moved from sunny Florida to sunny Bend in 2001 and has worked at Deschutes Public Library for 11 years. For the last eight of them, she has ridden the digital download rollercoaster in her role as the Adult Services Collection Development Librarian.

Reading habits have experienced a tidal wave of change in recent years. Ten years ago, iPhones, iPads, Nooks and Kindles did not exist, and virtually no libraries offered down-loadable audiobooks and e-books. Starting in 2007 a rapid succession of new devices—the Sony eReader, the Kobo, the Kindle, the Nook, the iPad—were released, but adoption of this new technology was slow. As of 2010, only four percent of the population owned an eReader and three percent owned a tablet (Zickuhr & Raine). Around 2010, e-books began catching on, and libraries jumped into the game. Unfortunately, money was short and the offerings were slim. That year 73 percent of public libraries were offering e-books, but the median collection contained only 813 items. Momentum built, and by 2014, 28 percent of Americans had read an e-book in the previous year. Ninety-five percent of libraries offered e-books and the median collection size was above 10,000 (Romano, Girmscheid & Genco). Despite struggles with publishers, licensing agreements, and budgets, in a relatively short span of time e-books have become a standard offering of public libraries and a significant portion of books read and purchased.

Library staff and budgets have struggled to support this new collection. Often, digital collections are not given the same priority as physical collections. Budgets are not proportional to demand, and holds ratios are kept higher to keep costs down. Marginalizing this collection compromises libraries' ability to take full advantage of this new technology. Harnessing the momentum of this new wave of reading habits requires much of libraries: knowing the landscape of the publishing industry and local communities, making a significant initial investment in anticipation of demand, selecting the vendors and platforms that have the most potential, and staying on top of changes in vendors, formats and trends. But staying ahead of demand is crucial to positioning libraries to be the community reading hub into the future.

The Aspen Institute's report *Rising to the Challenge: Re-Envisioning Public Libraries* recognizes this importance. The report identifies four key strategies for success for public libraries in the digital age. The second of these is "Provide Access to Content in All Formats." The report elaborates that an immediate and major challenge is "being able to procure and share e-books and other digital content on the same basis as physical versions" (Garner, 2014, p. 36). Some obstacles to accomplishing this are out of libraries' control. For example, integrat-



ing e-book circulation and holdings information into a library's ILS or OPAC is limited by the capabilities of current technology and software. Library's digital collections are currently almost always tied to a vendor platform—limiting libraries' purchasing choices and complicating the reader's experience. However, there are ways that libraries can already be working toward the Aspen Institute's directive to develop digital collections "on the same basis as physical versions." The development and management of digital collections should be given equal priority and should not be treated as secondary or supplemental collections. Building excellent digital collections today positions libraries to be an attractive reading resource for today and tomorrow's communities.

Deschutes Public Library has been aggressive in budgeting for digital collections. As reported by Library Journal's 2015 Annual Materials Survey, libraries on average spend 10 percent of their materials budget on downloadable audiobooks and e-books. Libraries our size (DPL serves 170,000 people) spent an average of 17 percent of their materials budget on these formats. During the last fiscal year, DPL spent 31 percent of its materials budget on these two formats. With that money, DPL has built a digital collection three times as big as the median size of these collections—55,000 books versus a median of 14,397. Accounting for library service population, DPL's collection significantly outsizes both libraries serving populations of 100,000–459,000 (with a median collection size 30,000) (Hoffert).

In addition to building a large collection, DPL uses this money to maintain a low holds ratio—3:1 for both downloadable audio and e-books. The average holds ratio for all libraries is 7:1. For libraries the same size and bigger, the average holds ratio is 6:1. According to the Library Journal Materials Survey, the three biggest barriers to customers reading e-books are "user prefers print or other format" (61 percent reporting this as a barrier), "unaware of ebook availability" (60 percent), and "long wait time/not enough copies of popular titles" (59 percent) (Romano, Girmscheid & Genco). Libraries may not be able to influence preference (although I would argue building excellent digital collections does sway preferences). Making customers aware of library services is a constant goal for all libraries. But an immediate and direct way to remove the third barrier is to invest money to bring down holds ratios. This accomplishes two goals: 1) increasing circulation and 2) attracting and retaining potential e-book users.

Building a quality collection and keeping holds ratios low has impacted our digital circulation. The median circulation for digital downloads for libraries in our size category in 2015 was 50,392. The average circulation for these libraries was 109,539 (Romano, Girms-cheid & Genco, p. 26). DPL's digital circulation was 389,449. Digital download checkouts represent almost 20 percent of DPL's total circulation and surpass circulation at five of our six physical locations. While there have been reports of demand for e-books waning (Milliot) and declining eReader sales (Alter), DPL's digital checkouts grew by 31.4 percent last fiscal year. Also significant, DPL added almost 10 percent more new digital users in 2015 than it did in 2014. These new customers are happy enough with the collection to stay active. As a snapshot, during June 2016 there were 15 percent more unique users than in June 2015. DPL enjoys a high percentage of e-book users. Twenty-five percent of active library users (customers who have used their library card for any reason in the last year) use downloadable audiobooks or e-books. Looking at our total service population—those with or without a library card—almost nine percent of our community checked out a digital download last year.



The addition of new users is not as exponential as it was a few years ago, but there is still more growth potential. Younger readers are more likely to read e-books, and this is an important trend to recognize. According to a 2014 Pew Report, almost half of American readers (people who had read at least one book in the previous year) under the age of 30 had read an e-book in the previous year. "Among readers in the 18–29 age group, 47 percent said they'd read at least one e-book, versus 35 percent of 50- to 64-year-olds and just 17 percent of people ages 65 and over" (DeSilver, 2014). The rising price of e-books is often cited as a possible factor pushing readers away from e-books. If this is the case, now is the perfect time for libraries to appeal to e-book readers who are looking to save money. As we look ahead, we must attract these readers today so that they will still be with us tomorrow.

The obvious question this issue raises is "Where do libraries find the money to robustly support this 'new' collection?" Deschutes Public Library has carved out this money in two significant ways. First, every collection and budget line was scrutinized and adjusted to reflect current reading habits and information needs. From fiscal year 2008/2009 (pre-e-book) to fiscal year 2015/2016, DPL's budget for Reference material has been reduced by 90 percent. Print magazines have been reduced by 30 percent, standing order plans (primarily reference) by 77 percent, teen nonfiction by 46 percent, juvenile fiction by 25 percent, and juvenile nonfiction by almost 75 percent. These reductions have not resulted in unmet information needs or empty shelves. Adults and children are turning to print reference or non-fiction books for research or reference questions significantly less often than just a few years ago. A substantial portion of magazine reading has migrated online. In a world that is changing so quickly, a close and honest look at use and circulation statistics must happen each budget cycle to see where old habits are resulting in excess spending.

The second effort that streamlined money into digital collections involved our Friends of the Library groups. For a few years, each group was asked to devote a significant portion of its donations into a fund for e-books. Their focused efforts maximized the impact of their funds. During that time, these Friends of the Library groups were thanked on our webpage and at DPL Board meetings to raise the profile of this generous and impactful donation strategy.

Prioritizing digital collections involves more than just a materials budget. Initially, staff-training, formal classes and creating help sheets enabled our staff to help customers navigate the cumbersome process of downloading books. Ease of use and customer savviness has increased, so these strategies have shifted to open labs for troubleshooting and referring customers to online help pages. In the early days, a mobile kiosk served as a device petting zoo—drawing attention to the collection and helping to answer the regular question, "What device should I get?" Librarians have set up camp at local bars and coffee shops to promote and support digital download services. Prominent positioning on the website and radio and print advertising made our communities more aware of this service. All digital titles have records in the catalog, and when a discovery layer was chosen, an important consideration was the ability to integrate digital and traditional account information. Strategies for making a digital collection visible and discoverable have evolved over the years, and doing so will be a constant goal.

All this outreach and promotion will be wasted if customers find a mediocre selection and months-long wait lists. Every customer who is turned off by an unsatisfying digital experience is a customer who will find somewhere else to go for his or her digital reading hab-



it. Budgeting is about balance and compromise, and no budget is ever perfect. But a wave of change has come over library materials budgets these last few years, and this requires a shift in mindset. Digital collections are not less important than other collections. Their development and management should be a priority equal to the physical collections that have been a mainstay of libraries for decades. As the Aspen Institute's Report has charged, rising to the challenge of the new information society requires libraries to provide access to content in all formats—procuring and sharing e-books on the same basis as physical versions. We must do this for today's customers because the demand is current and real. But we also must do it for tomorrow's customers. Investment in high-quality digital collections today will attract and retain customers well into the future.

#### References

Alter, A. (September 22, 2015) The Plot Twists: E-Book Sales Slip and Print is Far From Dead. *New York Times.* Retrieved from: http://tinyurl.com/no3w599

DeSilver, D. (January 21, 2014) Overall Book Readership Stable, But E-Books Becoming More Popular; Pew Research Center. Retrieved from: http://tinyurl.com/mmjhh3m

Garner, A.K. (2014) Rising to the Challenge: Re-Envisioning Public Libraries by Amy K. Garner. Retrieved from: http://csreports.aspeninstitute.org/documents/AspenLibrariesReport.pdf

Hoffert, B. (February 15, 2016) Trend Turnaround. *Library Journal*. Retrieved from: http://reviews.libraryjournal.com/2016/03/books/trend-turnaround-materials-survey-2016/

Millot, J. (June 20, 2016) Survey Sees Further Erosion of E-Book Sales. *Publisher's Weekly*, p 2–3.

Romano, R., Girmscheid, L. & Genco, B. (September 2015). Sixth Annual Survey of E-Book Usage in U.S. Public Libraries, *Library Journal*. Retrieved from: http://lj.libraryjournal.com/downloads/2015publiceBooksurvey/

Zickuhr, K., & Rainie, L. (January 16, 2014) *E-Reading Rises as Device Ownership Jumps;* Pew Research Center. Retrieved from: http://www.pewinternet.org/2014/01/16/e-reading-rises-as-device-ownership-jumps/



## From the Campaign Trail to Your Library: Put Your Library Staff in the Spotlight and Win Library Support

by Erica Findley

Board Member EveryLibrary erica.findley@everylibrary.org

and

#### Kate Lasky Executive Director

Josephine Community Libraries klasky@josephinelibrary.org



ERICA FINDLEY

Erica is a passionate library supporter and is influential in the broader library advocacy ecosystem. Ms. Findley is the Cataloging/Metadata Librarian at Multnomah County Library (OR) and is a 2008 MLS graduate from Emporia State University. She is an OLA member and an active member of the American Library Association where she is an at-large councilor and serves on the ALCTS Leadership Development Committee. Ms. Findley is a co-convener of the ALA Think Tank and regularly hosts "pop-up libraries" when traveling by train or plane. Ms. Findley can be found online at www.ericafindley.com.



KATE LASKY Kate Lasky has been the executive director of Josephine Community Libraries, Inc. since 2010. She holds a master's in education and serves on the Oregon Library Association Public Library Division Board of Directors and the Legislative and Development Committee. She is also a board member for Oregon Humanities. In 2015, she was honored by the Oregon Library Association with the Olé award which annually recognizes an Oregon public library employee who has displayed exceptional effort and excellence.

#### Introduction

When there is a funding measure on the ballot for a library, a local independent group is formed to run the campaign for the measure. This political group, sometimes called a local ballot committee or political action committee, educates voters on why they need to vote 'yes' on the measure to fund the library. This group can include library workers who volunteer their own time to help with the campaign.

In addition to and separate from this, library staff also have an important role during election time to provide voters with information on the measure and what will happen if the measure does or does not pass. These 'information only campaigns' are within the role of librarians as the professionals that are trusted by the public to provide the facts on issues



that impact their communities. Library staff in any position have a responsibility to share this factual information with the public.

Through June 2016 EveryLibrary has worked with library staff and ballot committees on 37 campaigns across the nation. We have assisted with 28 wins and won over \$100 million in stable tax funding for libraries. Four of those campaigns have been in Oregon. Our expertise is based on our experience with library campaigns and is informed by voter polling and survey data. The principles we apply to library campaigns are further informed by best practices from the political sciences and the campaign consulting trade. This article will focus on how libraries can apply one of these principles at any time whether you are planning for a funding measure or do not anticipate one for many years.

#### What We Know About Voters

In 2008, De Rosa and Johnson studied why voters and elected officials supported libraries at the ballot box in an OCLC report titled "From Awareness to Funding." These surveys and interviews provided many insights as to what motivates voters to renew or approve new funding for library operations and facilities. Most remarkable was that the perception of the librarian as one of the main motivators for library support. "Voters who rate the librarian highly on the traits that comprise the 'passionate librarian' are more likely to say they would definitely vote yes for a library referendum, ballot initiative or bond measure" (De Rosa & Johnson, 2008, p. 4–9). The term "Librarian," in this study, does not mean library staff of a certain classification, but any library staff or representative including volunteers, friends, and trustees. To a voter who is unaware of the various classifications and degrees in our profession, any and all of these can be a librarian.

The study also revealed that nationwide, of all voters: 37 percent will definitely vote yes for the library, 37 percent will probably vote yes for the library, and 26 percent will probably or definitely vote no or may vote either way (De Rosa & Johnson, 2008, p. 2–4). Because 37 percent is not enough to win any election, the campaign must find a way to reach the other 37 percent of possible supporters. The ballot committee will need to do some work to reach this group and the library's information only campaign will need to reach these possible supporters as well.

De Rosa and Johnson also found:

... an important distinction between the public library user and the public library funder. Not every library user is a library funder; not every library funder is a library user. A voter's willingness to support increased library funding is not driven, or limited, by library use. In fact, the advocacy research found that there is little correlation between frequency of library visits and willingness to increase funding for libraries. (p. 7–2)

Therefore, it is crucial to get library staff outside of the library to meet with groups in the community who have not used the library and may not understand the value of the library services that staff can provide.

Voters will need to be aware that there is a funding measure on the ballot and library staff can assist with that awareness by being ready to provide the facts on what will happen if the funding measure passes or fails. However, there is something else that the library's information only campaign needs to address. While a yes vote may improve the library services or building, the library staff are the agents and will add value to how the money is be-

18

ing spent. Like other municipal groups, the library's staff must let the voters know who will be spending tax dollars after the election, making them the candidate in a library election.

#### Librarian as a Candidate in Practice

#### by Kate Lasky, executive director of Josephine Community Libraries

The libraries in Josephine County closed in May 2007. This left almost 82,000 residents with no access to any form of public library whatsoever. Our community mobilized in an unprecedented effort to reopen the libraries under an interim nonprofit called Josephine Community Libraries. By December 2009, we had reopened all four shuttered locations on a shoestring budget with minimal hours. We knew in order to keep the libraries open we would need a stable source of public funding; so, in November 2014, the board of directors, staff, and volunteers petitioned 11,000 signatures to place a tax measure on the ballot. Unfortunately, the measure didn't pass. However, through our work with EveryLibrary and learning about how to see ourselves as librarian candidates, we learned new skills to connect with our community and demonstrate our passion for public libraries.

My role during the campaign as the library's executive director was to speak with community leaders and influencers. EveryLibrary counseled and trained us on how to best present our key messages and reach beyond the walls of the library. Library staff and volunteers became the voice of the library as well, and we organized a program called Library Ambassadors to offer a series of presentations, workshops, and training sessions out in the community. We also produced commercials, billboards, and newspaper ads that highlighted our existing brand. Our strategy was to flood the community with positive messages about the library and answer factual questions about the ballot measure.

We equipped our staff and volunteers with FAQs, handouts, and PowerPoint printouts to inform and facilitate real-world conversations they'd be having about the library. We developed a webpage for easy access



An information-only advertisement helped build value for libraries during the campaign for a library district effort.



to these tools, and created a tracking tool to make sure we were connecting with as many community organizations as possible. EveryLibrary helped us target our Facebook messages more specifically to reach new audiences. Our communications department worked hard to include all library supporters in the process of outreach.

A local radio station offered us a weekly five-minute spot to talk about the library and the ballot measure, as long as we didn't advise people how to vote. This opportunity fell nicely into our information only campaign. If questions came up about the ballot measure that we couldn't answer, we referred people to the political action committee.

The work we did to organize outreach efforts for the information only campaign and create new communications systems that engaged the community lasted beyond the ballot measure itself. Most immediately, the day after the election, people started dropping off donations of what they would have paid in taxes. In response, we formed the concept of creating an easy vehicle for people to make contributions countywide. We created a donation envelope with clear instructions and key messages about the need for funds. As a way to be distinctive, we made the envelope yellow and called it the Yellow Envelope Drive. Because we had been working on outreach for months, we were able to quickly mobilize our 300 volunteers and communications team to support the fundraising drive, get our messages out, and raise the \$180,000 needed to keep our libraries open through the end of the calendar year.

Although the Yellow Envelope Drive was a success, the problem of long-term stable funding still existed. We knew we needed to keep the idea of going back to the ballot in the minds of voters. So, we continued to post a web blog that reflected on taxes and the need for public funding. We also sent a direct mail fundraising appeal to all the individuals and families who signed



Photographs of residents donating through the Yellow Envelope Drive were featured in social media in an effort to raise awareness about library funding.



the petition for the 2014 ballot measure. We included key messages about the importance of libraries and library funding, and asked for donations. While this appeal didn't result in a high return, it did work to keep communication lines open with potential library supporters. Every-Library kept in touch with us over the past year, strategizing about the next opportunity for a ballot measure. With their help, we planned to put another measure on the ballot in May 2017.

For us, the most important takeaway from the campaign was the idea of reaching outside of our library bubble. By raising awareness through an information only campaign, we learned new techniques to reach people who never visited the library and had no understanding of its role in our community. EveryLibrary's breadth of experience and practical advice helped us navigate new pathways of communication in our community. The campaign not only helped us create good communications systems and raise funds, but it also helped us build value for libraries in Josephine County.

#### Librarian as a Candidate Anytime

As part of their daily work, library staff interact with many members of the community. Whether it is with educators doing outreach to schools, or parents when providing early literacy services, or children during storytime, the work that library staff does every day has an impact on the community. These services and others are probably already documented as part of your strategic plan, and that plan should be the foundation for telling others about what the library does for them.

Think of a specific group that uses your library. You may immediately think 'everyone', but concentrate on a unique group. Now think of what the library provides that group and how library staff carry out that work. A story may come to mind like that time when an early reader came in to thank a librarian for improving their reading skills which led to their high school graduation. Or perhaps an older member of the community that was able to get pictures of their grandchild with the computer skills that they learned in a library course.

What other groups in your community have not used the library in a while or may not be aware of the services you can provide? If you had more funding/support/volunteers, would there be an opportunity to serve some of these other groups in your community? These are questions to consider when trying to determine or prioritize the groups that library staff should visit. Visiting these groups will help you create an awareness of what the library needs, as well as cultivate a positive perception of library staff ahead of an ask.

#### How You Can Win Library Support Every Time

The experience of Kate Lasky at Josephine Community Libraries tells us that if you can get out into the community and convey the value of the passionate librarian through telling the story of your impact, then people will show up to support the library. By using these same campaign techniques you can win library support in other times of need such as fundraising as a result of budget cuts, asking the city council for continued funding, and to recruit volunteers in your community to support improved services.

Often presidential candidates write books at the start or sometimes prior to their presidential campaign as a way of surfacing themselves and their values to voters. Library staff can also use this technique as the first step in surfacing their work and its meaningful impact



on the community. You have probably written this book before without thinking of it in this way. This is your strategic plan. It should go beyond sharing numbers, facts, and figures to tell the story of what you do. It should highlight the library's services and the individuals that make these services happen.

Have more meetings with people. Get coffee with your elected officials, find out what their plans are for the city and how the library can support them. Target your story of impact to the person you are meeting. Consider summer literacy programs for your meeting with the PTA or how the library prepares job seekers and helps people start businesses for your meeting with the chamber of commerce or how the library is a place where teens can become involved in their community for your meeting with the public schools. If you are not the staff person providing the service you plan to highlight at the meeting, consider letting those staff members have the meetings and deliver the messages of impact.

You may already have print or electronic newsletters or social media channels for sharing library related news. Applying what we know about the strong influence of a positive perception of librarians during a campaign, use these to feature your staff members and the work they do. Make sure to feature staff with different perspectives and from different levels of the organization. You can also share testimonials from members of the community about how librarians and library services have impacted their lives. Sharing stories can be done at no cost, but if you have the budget, spend it on targeted Facebook ads. This can be a great way to reach people in your zip codes that may not self-identify as a fan of the library, but will respond to a nudge to become one.

There is no magic bullet or checklist for getting library support, but one recommendation for any and every library is to get out and build engagement with door to door visits. Library card sign up month is every September. This is the perfect event for any type of library to get staff, volunteers, friends, and board members out into your community. Public libraries can target underserved areas, school libraries can advocate for parents to contact their board for school library funding, and academic libraries can reach out to new students in a more personalized way than their first-day library tour. If you are worried about a public that is not used to seeing you outside of the library, then couch your reason for doing this into a strategic plan. Did you recently do a survey that did not have a big enough sample? Did you want to open up your strategic/building/budget plan for public comment?

#### Conclusion

Kate Lasky's application of librarian as a candidate for Josephine Community Libraries shows practical ways to take your story out into the community and to shift the perception of the librarian from a defensive "everyone needs the library" into one that is based on real impact and is deserving of support. When creating your own plans, remember that the perception of the librarian is co-equal to the perception of the library. You are the candidate. Thanks for running!

#### References

De Rosa C. & Johnson, J. (2008). From awareness to funding: a study of library support in America. Retrieved from: https://www.oclc.org/content/dam/oclc/reports/funding/fullreport.pdf



## Douglas County's 'Long and Winding Road'

by Harold A. Hayes Library Director Douglas County Library System hahayes@co.douglas.or.us



HAROLD A. HAYES

How does a reluctant reader become a library director one might ask? Well, start with a mother who read to her children extensively—including that reluctant reader— as well as frequent trips to the public library. Add to the mix a teacher who made his students read and do book reports. Then down the line marry off that reluctant reader to a librarian and later still find the first career path eliminated by technology. To this add a return to school and the acquiring of an MLIS. Pile on 17 years of professional and management experience and an application and voila, you have a library director!

My professional career has taken me from the award of that MLIS at the University of Washington to Wyoming and back to Washington, where I worked for two different library districts, always working with small rural branches. I have had the privilege of working as the director of the Douglas County Library System since the beginning of 2013, which has also afforded me the opportunity to live in Oregon again since leaving to attend college back in 1979. Roseburg, with a population of 22,000, is the county seat and the location of our main library. It's as big as it gets here. Our 10 branches are located in rural communities throughout the county.

For an impoverished child whose family could not afford to buy books, the library was the open door to wonder and achievement, and I can never be sufficiently grateful that I had the wit to charge through that door and make the most of it. Now, when I read constantly about the way in which library funds are being cut and cut, I can only think that the door is closing and that American society has found one more way to destroy itself. —IsaAc Asimov

Public Libraries have a long history in Douglas County. Myrtle Creek established a library in 1912. Roseburg's library roots began with the Roseburg Woman's Club in 1920; Reedsport service began that same year. Glendale's library dates back to 1930, and Oakland started their library in 1932. Also in 1932, a books-by-mail service was started in Drain, with the



books coming from the OSU library. The Yoncalla Study Club started a library in 1933. In 1935 Sutherlin started their library, housed in the city hall. Canyonville was a late bloomer with their public library opening in 1951.

The Douglas County Library System (DCLS) formed in 1953 with the main library located in the courthouse in Roseburg, eight branches located in the several small communities, and a bookmobile. The benefits included the economy of scale, access to a wider collection, and shared functions with greater internal support. Today the DCLS includes the main library in Roseburg, completed in 1994, and 10 branches located throughout the county. Winston and Riddle got their libraries after the system was formed, in 1964 and 1966 respectively.

In a county that has historically relied on timber sale taxes, budget reductions began as early as 1982. This became a frequent if not an annual occurrence over the years since. Next year will be our capstone. Our budget direction given to the library system for the fiscal year 2016/17 was to cut \$495,000 dollars from last year's budget, a 42 percent reduction. This decades long and winding road has led us to a fork in the road with the future of the library up in the air. Rest assured, we have not been sitting around waiting and hoping!

As is typical for libraries throughout the state and nation, we actively pursue a variety of grant opportunities at the DCLS. Last November the DCLS was awarded grants of \$300,000 from The Ford Family Foundation and several individual grants under the umbrella of the Oregon Community Foundation totaling \$200,000 to support operating costs for the library system for calendar year 2016. In a real world where grants are typically geared towards specific projects, narrowly defined, these grants were aimed at keeping the library system's staff and services at current levels until voters go to the polls to weigh in on a library taxing district in November 2016; a "bridge to the ballot." In conversations with MaryKay Dahlgreen, State Librarian, she was convinced that these grants, supporting operations, were unprecedented. Certainly they were an incredible demonstration of support for the library system specifically, but also a demonstration of support for the residents of Douglas County.

A Political Action Committee (PAC) was formed to support a county initiative in the form of a ballot measure, which would establish a library taxing district to replace the declining funds from the county's budget. This is the mechanism by which the political process is accomplished. We have a fabulous group of people who came together in support of the library and the citizens of the county. It is a huge undertaking which has required hundreds of hours of donated time to date, with another five months still to go. Their website is: http://www.saveourlibraries.org

These folks at the PAC work directly with a group called EveryLibrary which supports library campaigns nationwide. They have helped with education and support as well as a small donation. The following statement is from their website (http://everylibrary.org):

EveryLibrary is the first and only national organization dedicated exclusively to political action at a local level to create, renew, and protect public funding for libraries of all types. We are a nonprofit Political Action Committee chartered to work exclusively on local library ballot initiatives.

Legally and according to Oregon State Statutes, the DCLS and library staff can play no direct part in advocating for the passage of a library district. This does not mean that there is no role for our library staff and volunteers in this process. We will continue to promote the library's role in the community; highlight our programs and services; and extol the benefits



#### Proposal to Create a "Douglas County Library District" Frequently Asked Questions

#### Why do we need a new "Library District"?

The amount of money that Douglas County gets every year from property taxes is not enough to pay for the Sheriff's Department, let alone the parks, the fairgrounds, the museum, and our libraries. The County used to receive significantly more money from federal timber harvests, but those harvests have been reduced over the last few decades. Currently, the County Board of Commissioners is unable to continue to fund the Douglas County Library System (DCLS) into the future. Creating a special taxing district dedicated exclusively to libraries would make the library system independent, give us a sustainable source of funding, and keep our libraries open

#### How much will it cost?

Forty-four cents per thousand dollars of assessed property value: \$0.44/\$1,000. That means the owner of a Douglas County home assessed at \$150,000 would pay \$66 a year... around \$5.50 per month.

#### How much do Douglas County residents pay in taxes for the library?

Nothing... and we never have.

#### What happens if we don't create a new Library District?

DCLS will shut down in July of 2017 because Douglas County will no longer be able to fund our library operations.

#### How many libraries are we talking about?

Ten: Roseburg, Canyonville, Drain, Glendale, Myrtle Creek, Oakland, Reedsport, Riddle, Winston, Yoncalla

#### Why can't we run our libraries with volunteers?

DCLS already relies heavily on volunteers; currently, 150 volunteers provide 20% of the work. Volunteers are unable to provide the same level of service that our professional staff is able to provide. The feasibility of managing 750 volunteers at 10 locations would not be reasonable.

#### Why don't we just charge for library cards?

In Oregon, public libraries are not permitted to charge a fee for library services. Charging for library cards and library services goes against the very meaning of a "public library." We don't charge people to go to "public schools" either.

#### Do people even use libraries anymore?

YES! In 2015, we checked out more than half a million items. In addition to books, our libraries provided programming for all ages including preschool storytime for early literacy development, summer reading programs, and book clubs. We also offer public computer access, internet access, streaming eBooks and audiobooks, DVDs and CDs, magazines, meeting spaces for our citizens and their activities, as well as professional staff to help people access the information they need.

#### Why a County-wide library system?

DCLS partners with cities throughout Douglas County to provide library service. By operating together, we provide shared savings while increasing services to our patrons. For instance, residents in each branch have access to all 350,000 books and additional materials in our library system, and not just the limited items available at their nearest location.



the DCLS brings to the county, each community, and to every individual who resides in Douglas County. Ultimately it's a grass roots movement. There is a role for everyone; PAC member, library staff, library volunteer, and concerned citizen.

So, there is a challenge before our citizens and a decision to make. The choice of direction for the library system in Douglas County will ultimately be decided by the voters. Here are a few facets of that challenge: there are those who will vote against any new tax or tax increase, there are those who think that in this age of electronic devices a public library is not needed, there are those who say that in a poor county taxing for a library makes our citizens poorer, and there are those who will say that funding libraries will take money away from our law enforcement, fire districts, roads, etc. The answer to the dilemma of educating our voters and correcting the public's misconceptions relating to library service is two-pronged — the PAC will address those issues (and many others) relating to promoting the library taxing district from the political side, including the effort to get out the vote and vote 'YES' — the DCLS staff and volunteers will continue and increase efforts to promote and explain the benefits of a public library.

So, the lessons learned so far:

- Expect the unexpected
- Don't assume anything
- Question everything and everyone
- Leave no stone unturned
- Network—talk to everyone
- Don't be afraid to ask

And a guess:

• Pace yourself so there is something left for the final sprint to the finish line

We at the DCLS are not alone in Oregon. Libraries throughout the state have literally faced decades of funding and other related challenges. We have tried to learn from and incorporate the lessons from other libraries in the state that have faced budget crises. Unsolicited help will not be turned down! So, our long and winding road leads to the door of every citizen of Douglas County. There is lots of work ahead as we check off each day and as we approach that fateful day of November 8. (A new President to elect, you say? Well, yes, there is that too.)





Douglas County Library in Roseburg Oregon.

## See to Read!

by Jane Corry OLA Past President janec@multcolib.org

and

Nan Heim OLA Lobbyist



JANE CORRY I have been a youth services librarian at Multnomah County Library since 1997 when I graduated from Emporia State University. As Past President of OLA, I have been thrilled to work with the See to Read folks.



NAN HEIM Nan has been OLA's lobbyist in Salem for over twenty years. Her lobbying firm, Nan Heim/Associates, also represents the state association for ophthalmologists in Oregon. The ophthalmologists strongly supported the Children's Vision Screening Act in the State Legislature and Nan lobbied for its passage. She is excited that two of her long-time clients are actively helping Oregon's children see to read.



27

#### What is See to Read?

- A series of free vision screenings for children at public libraries throughout Oregon.
- A campaign based on the belief that no child should begin learning to read with an undetected vision problem.
- A community service project that helps children be ready to read and that links families, schools, local service clubs, and legislators to public libraries.

#### How Did See to Read begin?

In 2013, the Oregon Legislature passed House Bill 3000, the Children's Vision Screening Act, requiring all children entering public school kindergarten to have a vision screening. As the lobbyist for the Oregon Academy of Ophthalmology, Nan worked in support of

As the lobbyist for the Oregon Academy of Ophthalmology, Nan worked in support of this legislation. Joannah Vaughn, director of children's vision screening at Oregon Health and Science University's Elks Children's Eye Clinic, also supported the legislation. She and her staff were already screening several thousand children at Head Start programs every year. One day at the Capitol, she and Nan were discussing how to get thousands of more children screened each year. Joannah had an idea.

"Don't you represent the Oregon Library Association?" she asked. "Public libraries would be a great place to have children's vision screenings. If libraries provide the space, we'll provide the staff to do free children's vision screenings!"

Since then, the OLA Board has endorsed free children's vision screenings as a project for public library participation. Pam North and Jane Corry have met with the Clinic staff at OHSU. And See to Read has become a reality.

#### **How Does See to Read work?**

A public library director or children's librarian schedules an event with the See to Read staff by going to www.seetoread.net and clicking on any one of three links: For Librarians, Calendar, or Contact.

There is no cost to the library, other than providing space for the screenings and publicizing the event. See to Read staff provide a press kit to help publicize the screenings.

On the scheduled day, trained screeners from the Elks Children's Eye Clinic and the Oregon Lions Foundation come to the library to administer the screenings.

Screenings are FREE, and parents receive the appropriate form to give to the school to prove their children have been screened, as required by state law.





Photo courtesy of the Casey Eye Institute at Oregon Health and Science University.

As OLA lobbyist, Nan keeps track of See to Read screening events and notifies local legislators, so they are aware of public library participation. "It's wonderful that public libraries are helping implement the vision screening law," one legislator emailed recently. "Tell them thank you!"

#### What if a Child's Screening Detects a Problem?

The trained screeners indicate that a follow-up exam is needed and provide a list of local health care providers who can do the exam.

#### Why is Vision Screening Important for Preschool Children?

Approximately 15 percent of preschool children have a vision problem that needs treatment. A vision problem that goes undetected and untreated can seriously impair a child's ability to learn to read.

Amblyopia, known as "lazy eye," is a particular concern for preschoolers. Amblyopia can cause permanent vision loss before a child turns seven, so school-aged vision screening may be too late.

\* \* \*

In 2015, 1,646 children were screened at 62 See to Read screening events in libraries throughout Oregon. We are making progress, but many more children need screenings. If your library has not scheduled a See to Read screening, please visit www.seetoread.net and sign up today. You'll truly be helping young children become readers!



Jane Corry, OLA Past President, and Cheryl Thornton, Elks Vision Screening Program, OHSU, presented a poster about See to Read at the OLA Conference 2016 in Bend, Oregon.



## **OLA Quarterly Publication Schedule 2016**

The OLA Quarterly (OLAQ) is the official publication of the Oregon Library Association. The OLAQ is indexed by Library Literature & Information Science and Library, Information Science & Technology Abstracts. To view PDFs of issues, visit the OLAQ Archive on the OLA website. Full text is also available through HW Wilson's Library Literature and Information Science Full Text and EBSCO Publishing's Library, Information Science and Technology Abstracts (LISTA) with Full Text.

Each issue is developed around a theme determined by the Communications Committee and Guest Editor(s). To suggest future topics for the *OLA Quarterly*, or to volunteer/nominate a Guest Editor, contact the OLAQ Coordinator.

Vol./No.	Theme	Deadline	Pub. Date	Guest Editor
Vol 22 • No. 3 Fall 2016	UX in Oregon Libraries	October 15, 2016	November 15, 2016	Joe Marquez



Oregon Library Association Inc. PO Box 3067, La Grande, OR 97850



#### The OLA Communications Committee

**OLA** Communications Committee Co-Chairs

Sara Thompson, OSU Cascades グ Charles Wood, Aloha Community Library

#### OLA Hotline Co-Editors

Berenice Creecy, Multnomah County Library ぐ Corinne Dichter

#### OLA Quarterly Coordinator Charles Wood, Aloha Community Library

OLA Quarterly Associate Editor Jenn Weston, Pioneer Pacific College

> Association Manager Shirley Roberts

*OLA Calendar Coordinator* Sara Bystrom, Pacific Northwest College of Art

