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South Dakota Library Association  
Mountain Plains Library Association Report, March 2005  
Submitted by Colleen Smith, SDLA Representative to MPLA

Jim Oliver, Children's Librarian at Siouxland Libraries in Sioux Falls, SD, received a National Award for Excellence in Library Service from The New York Times. He was one of 27 winners from 14 states. Jim was recognized for his outstanding public service for the children, families, and caregivers of Sioux Falls and Minnehaha County. Oliver was nominated by Greg Borris whose children have been encouraged to enjoy reading and books by Jim Oliver at the Siouxland Libraries.

SDLA held its Library Legislative Day evening reception January 26 at the SD State Library. The Legislative Reception was very well attended -- 95 people were present -- 36 legislators plus family members, 16 special guests, and 31 librarians. Each year attendance increases. Librarian Caterers (SDLA members) provided delicious snacks and treats. During the day, Ann Smith, Sioux Falls School System Librarian, presented the voluntary School Library and Information Literacy Standards to the SD Board of Education. The Bd of Education gave their unanimous support for these Standards, which will become part of the Guidelines for SD schools.

SDLA has proposed two Legislative Bills for consideration during the 2005 Session. One Bill would provide additional funding for the SD State Library. This funding would allow the State Library to provide support and assistance for individual school librarians as they attempt to meet the voluntary School Library and Information Literacy Standards approved by the State Board of Education. Currently, this Bill has hit a stumbling block, but may receive a 2nd chance in a different venue. The 2nd Legislative Bill would provide for the retention of the 'Contract' South Dakota Library Network (SDLN) Computer Trainer as a full-time, permanent employee. Although, SDLN member libraries provide sole support for SDLN, the individual SDLN staff positions must be approved by the State Legislature. This matter has not reached the Legislative Floor yet.

The fifth annual JumpStart Summer Reading workshop series will be held in March at five sites around the State. SD Children's Librarians will receive an introduction to the 2005 Summer Reading Program Theme, "Dragons, Dreams, and Daring Deeds." Markie, Scholz of "Dragons Are Too Seldom," will make a guest appearance with her dragon puppets. She will also conduct a puppet-making workshop.

Several South Dakota Public Libraries are planning or have embarked on recent building projects -- including Hot Springs Public Library, Allen Community Library (which will serve the entire Pine Ridge Reservation), Woonsocket Community Library (a combined School/Public Library), and Sturgis City Library.

The Brookings Public Library received a grant to purchase 12 videos from the "Human Rights Video Project." 50 libraries were selected nationwide to participate in the program organized by

National Video Resources in partnership with ALA.. These video documentaries will allow patrons to use in-depth information to explore human rights issues.

A local history goldmine will become a valuable “Glimpse into the past” for Brookings, SD residents and scholars. Until recently, this Goldmine of materials has been stored in the basement of the SDSU library. SD State University Archivist, Stephen Van Buren, will lead the conservation, preservation, and organization of the “George and Evelyn Norby Historic Collection.” This collection was amassed over many years by this Brookings couple and consists of historical newspapers (including the 2nd issue printed by the Brookings Register), over 10,000 identifiable photographs, negatives, etc. As stated by Van Buren, these items will provide local history researchers with a “picture of how much we are like our ancestors, how life in many ways stays the same....It’s a clear indication of where we’ve come from. What did we do for our recreation and entertainment? What did we consider important enough to put in the newspaper to sell it? From there, we can tell, to a small degree, where we may be going. And without it, I don’t think we can tell at all.”

The Vermillion Public Library became the first and only American public library to offer support to a Cuban sister library, the Dulce Maria Loynaz Library in Havana, Cuba. The Dulce Maria Loynaz Library offers public access to books not present in Cuba’s censored “public” library system. The Vermillion Public Library will send books to its sister library in Cuba, paid by private donations. The first two books sent to this library were Spanish editions of the first 2 volumes in the “Harry Potter” series and a collection of works, in Spanish, by Mark Twain. This sister library alliance is in opposition to the actions by Fidel Castro who, in 2003, imprisoned 12 independent librarians in Cuba. Vermillion Public Library trustee, Mark Wetmore, said the “issue of freedom of access to information is a core concern.” Vermillion Board President, Jon Flanagin, adds, “We felt a moral obligation to offer our support.”

Recently, the Wolsey/Wessington School Board held a special meeting to discuss the recent debate concerning a series of videos that teach creation science. After complaints from the science teacher, these videos had been removed from the school library without the knowledge of the school librarian, Dianne Hemminger. The School Board did not consult Hemminger about policies concerning the proper procedure for submitting a complaint against library materials. After Board consideration, all but one of the videos has been returned to the library. The final resting place for the one remaining video still remains to be seen.

South Dakota Librarians have begun planning a project to digitize South Dakota newspapers and to make them available for research over the Internet. A DAR planning grant, received by the Friends of the Huron Public Library, will allow OCLC Digitization Representatives, Liz Bishoff and Tom Claerson, to convene and lead planning meetings in SD. SD Librarians Dorothy Liegl, Greta Chapman, LaVera Rose, Carol Yerigan, Colleen Smith, and Chelle Samson (Director of the SD Cultural Heritage Center) have met to establish discussion topics for a March 24 statewide meeting of librarians and other interested persons. The project will probably consist of two components – historical newspapers published before 1923 and the more current newspapers published after 1923.

Cozard Memorial Library, located in Chamberlain, SD, was recognized as WebJunction's "Library of the Month" for January 2005. Library Director, Carole Stricherz, said they were chosen because of their "outstanding customer service to their community and their exemplary outreach and communication strategies with community supporters."