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## **AGENCY NEWS**

# **What's In a Barn Collection? Fallout Shelters, Of Course.**

*By Emily Johns, Digital Preservation and Special Collections Librarian, Government Information and Library Services*



The State Library of Oregon and the State Archives are teaming up to co-host an exhibit space at the 2024 Oregon State Fair. The exhibit will highlight the rich history of barns in Oregon, while also educating people on the difference between materials held by the State Library and the State Archives.

As the Special Collections Librarian, it was up to me to pull together materials that both highlight barns and showcase the types of materials we hold at the State Library. After doing a quick search in our catalog, I jotted down several call numbers and went into the stacks to pull barn-related items. As I was finishing up in the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) section, my hand brushed past a yellow single-paged flyer with vibrant red text. Curious, I pulled out the flyer and found a very peculiar document. It was a USDA publication advertising building plans for a “Bunker-type Fallout Shelter for Beef Cattle,” published in 1964. Right away my interest was piqued. I wanted to know if any of these barns had been built in Oregon, and if so, are there any still in existence today? While I couldn’t determine if there were any fallout shelter barns built in Oregon, I did learn a little bit more about these barns.

Doing a little digging, I found that in 1963, the Roberts Dairy Company of Elkhorn, Nebraska, along with the Office of Civil Defense and the USDA, set out to see if cows could still produce milk and survive in a bunker in the event of a nuclear attack.[1] This project was particularly of interest to the U.S. Government during the Cold War, as milk is very susceptible to radiation. Two students from the University of Nebraska were chosen to be locked away in a fallout shelter barn with thirty-five Guernsey cows and one Guernsey bull for two weeks. The students had separate living quarters, with their own ventilation system, as well as plenty of food and water. They emerged two

weeks later with their bovine roommates ready to eat cold food, as there was no refrigerated access in the bunker, but otherwise in good spirits. The cows weighed slightly less but were still producing milk despite being underground for so long. [2] The Roberts Dairy Company concluded that the fallout shelter barn provided a viable way of producing milk safely in the event of a nuclear attack. [3] Just one year later, the USDA published the flyer I found advertising plans for fallout shelter barns. Other flyers would follow, including another one held by the State Library that could hold 50 cows and had family quarters.

The Oregon State Fair will be held August 23 - September 2. If you plan to attend, be sure to stop by! And if you have any information about fallout shelter barns in Oregon, we would love to hear about it.



[1] McNichols, L. (n.d.). Roberts Dairy CompanyFallout Shelter Test Concluded. Civil Defense Museum.

<http://www.civildefensemuseum.com/coreng/elkhorn/RobertsDairyShelterTest08231963.pdf>

[2] Ibid

[3][3] Sheltering cattle.(n.d.-a).<https://www.nebraskastudies.org/en/1950-1974/civil-defense/sheltering-cattle/>

# Government Information and Library Services Migrates Its Digital Platform

By Jey Wann, Oregon Documents Coordinator, Government Information and Library Services

Part of the Government Information and Library Services division's role is to promote informed decision-making and government transparency by providing permanent public access to Oregon state government publications.

The State Library of Oregon has been collecting Oregon government publications for over 100 years and maintains an archival paper collection. In the early 2000s, we began collecting digital publications as well. That collection now includes both born-digital publications and digitized publications from our physical collection. The digital collection also includes federal government publications, particularly those related to the Pacific Northwest, non-governmental publications on Oregon history and culture, and the Oregon Index, a file of thousands of cards that index Oregon newspapers.

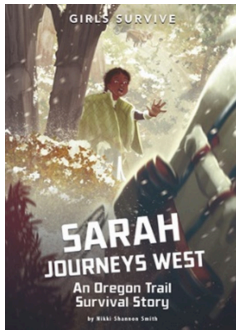
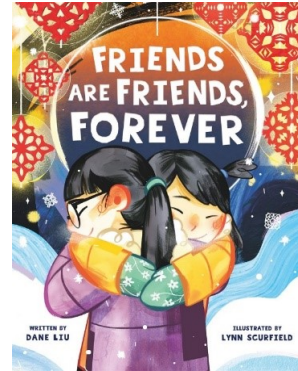
Like physical publications, digital publications need a place to live and a way to be accessed by users. Initially, we stored and provided access via a homegrown system. Maintaining the collection locally had its challenges, and in 2017 we migrated to the Islandora digital asset management system.

However, now Islandora's underlying software is nearing its end of life, so we are undertaking a migration to the Recollect collection management system. This involves transferring huge amounts of data (2.7 TB) and making decisions about user interfaces, metadata, design, and more. The new system will include an exhibition module and a digital preservation module. Because of the work involved in the migration, you'll need to contact us directly when you find an item in the catalog that you'd like. We will send over the digital copy right away!. Contact us at [LibraryHelp.SLO@slo.oregon.gov](mailto:LibraryHelp.SLO@slo.oregon.gov) or 503-378-8800 for assistance.

## **Two Newly-Recorded Kids Books Added to the Talking Books Catalog**

*By Max H. Robinson, Administrative Specialist and Recording Studio Coordinator, Oregon Talking  
Book and Braille Library*

The Oregon Talking Book and Braille Library's own recording studio is excited to announce the completion of two new children's titles! *Friends Are Friends, Forever*, by Dane Liu, is a picture book based on the author's own immigration story, the amazing power of friendship, and passing on love and kindness around the world. Complete with a snowflake-making activity, the book is sure to bring smiles and laughs to many of our youngest users and their families.



*Sarah Journeys West: An Oregon Trail Survival Story*, by Nikki Shannon Smith, is a fast-paced middle grade adventure story set amidst the California Gold Rush of 1851. On their journey West, Sarah's family faces many hardships, including racism, extreme weather, difficult terrain, and disease. Readers will have to reach the end to see if Sarah and her family are able to make a new life in California.

We couldn't bring these stories to life without the incredible work and talent of our two newest talking book narrators! With no previous narration experience, Claire Diehl and Theresa Lee brought their clear love of reading and an eagerness to learn. In individual training sessions, we explored the art of audio book narration, including an overview of the studio environment, voice acting, practice readings, and more.

Taking full advantage of our unique medium, we added rich enhancements to the narrated text, including studio-crafted sound effects and a short theme song composed and recorded by Studio Coordinator, Max H. Robinson to open and close each story. These books are in the final stages of review and will soon be available to users of the Oregon Talking Book and Braille Library and print-impaired people nationwide. We hope that our audience enjoy reading these books as much as we enjoyed producing them!

## **This Old Library: Is It Hot in Here, or Is It Just Me?**

*By Jey Wann, Oregon Documents Coordinator, Government Information and Library Services*

Oregon has been experiencing its share of heat waves this year. Many, if not most, library buildings across the state have central air conditioning (AC), including the State Library Building. That hasn't always been the case.

When the State Library Building was completed in 1939, it featured large casement windows in the Reference Room, offices, and stacks. Opening the windows could bring in cool air on summer mornings (possibly along with the occasional insect or bird). Since the windows opened outwards, they were secured by a pair of wingnuts, which sometimes expanded in the heat and were difficult, if not impossible, to loosen later in the day.

By the late 1970s, many of the offices, especially those on the third floor, had window-mounted air conditioners; these were fairly effective, if rather noisy. The building's wiring presented certain challenges and at least one office could only have the window AC on if they didn't turn on anything else that used electricity (Note: This was in the pre-computer days!).

Two main areas still had no AC: the Reference Room and the stacks. The Reference Room is a high-ceiled, majestic space. During hot weather it was very difficult to cool. Staff used large electric fans to keep the room habitable; these sometimes blew around any papers that weren't weighted down. Even with the fans, the temperature inside the Reference Room could be close to the outside temperature in very hot weather.

The stacks posed a different challenge: with narrow aisles of floor-to-ceiling shelves, there wasn't enough air circulation to allow for cooling. As in the Reference Room, staff used fans when they were working in the stacks, but the breeze sometimes blew items off of the shelves, especially in the periodicals collection.

The lack of AC wasn't just hard on the staff, it was also hard on the collection. Large variations in temperature can damage paper, as can ultra-violet light. The stacks have west-facing windows, and staff sometimes left the blinds open to let in cooler air. This caused book covers that were exposed to the sun to fade. There are even some items in the collection with the silhouette of a bookend on the cover.

In the late 1990s, the State Library Building had a major renovation. In addition to a seismic upgrade, the renovation included central air conditioning. Although there have been occasional temporary failures (most notably during the 2020 heat dome), the building is usually comfortable, even in the hottest weather, for both the staff and the collection.



## State Library Launches Online Library District Toolkit

*By Darci Hanning, Public Library Consultant and Continuing Education Coordinator, Library Support and Development*



### Oregon Library District Toolkit

Guide to library district formation



In Oregon, public libraries are required to receive a prescribed amount of their overall funding from public funds, also known as taxes. Most public libraries receive that tax funding through the city or county budget process. An alternative and more stable way to fund a public library is through a voter-approved special or county service district, which has its own tax rate and its own governing body to manage the library for a special district.

Any community in Oregon can create a library district – however, it takes a dedicated group of people, some specialized knowledge, and a great deal of effort and goodwill to create one. To that end, the State Library of Oregon contracted with two outside experts, Ruth Metz and Erin

McCusker, to create the Oregon Library District Toolkit. This toolkit consists of an online series of presentations, sample documents, and additional resources to help communities determine if it is feasible to create a district, to understand the district formation process, and to offer guidance on how to work with the community, elected officials, and other important interested parties.

The Oregon Library District Toolkit (<https://my.nicheacademy.com/orlibdistricttoolkit>) is an online, self-paced tutorial with three hours of content, example documents, and additional resources that can assist communities in generating stable funding for a local public library by creating a district.

## Staff Updates

### Welcome Gesse Stark-Smith – Virtual Reference Coordinator

Gesse joined the State Library of Oregon as our Virtual Reference Coordinator this June. In that position she coordinates our 24/7 online library chat reference program Answerland, which connects people with librarians from around Oregon and the country. Gesse works with partner libraries, volunteers, and others to ensure Answerland continues providing great service in both English and Spanish.



Before coming to the State Library, Gesse had a background as a school librarian and over ten years' experience in various roles at Multnomah County Library, including School Corps librarian, Spanish/English bilingual youth librarian, community outreach librarian, and supervisor and manager of various programs including adult learning and culturally-specific programming.



### Congratulations Jen Robinson – Talking Books Library Supervisor

Jen Robinson was appointed as the new Talking Books Library Supervisor in April, six months after being hired as the division's Outreach Librarian. She brings a wealth of experience and dedication to accessibility, making her the perfect fit for this vital role.

Jen started her library career as a Teen Services Librarian with Seattle Public Library in 2006, and has since worked in Children's Services, Technical Services, Digital Initiatives, and branch libraries in California and Oregon.

In her new position, Jen oversees the Talking Book and Braille Library program, ensuring that individuals with print disabilities have access to a diverse range of literature and information in accessible formats. Her commitment to inclusivity and her innovative approaches will undoubtedly enhance the quality and reach of our Talking Books service.

## CONTACTS

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### **Talking Book & Braille Library Supervisor**

Jen Robinson, 503-378-5391

### **Government Information & Library Services Manager**

Elke Bruton, 971-375-3509

### **Chief Operating Officer**

Susan Westin, 503-378-5435

### **State Librarian**

Wendy Cornelisen, 503-378-4367

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## Mission

The State Library of Oregon cultivates, preserves, and delivers library and information services to foster lifelong learning and community engagement.

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