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State Library of Oregon



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AGENCY NEWS

2022-23 Sees Record High Number of Book Titles Challenged



Every September, the [Oregon Intellectual Freedom Clearinghouse](#) (OIFC) releases a report that details the previous year's challenges to materials, services, and programs at libraries and schools across the state. Challenges can involve multiple titles and can include not just a request to remove a title from the library but also to move titles elsewhere, such as reshelving a children's book in the adult section.

The data supports the efforts of the [Intellectual Freedom Committee of the Oregon Library Association](#) (OLA) to increase awareness of and support the values of intellectual freedom as set forth in the [Library Bill of Rights](#). The report also comes just in time for national [Banned Books Week](#), occurring October 1-7 this year.

The [2022-23 annual report](#) includes details on the 46 challenges during this time period. While the total number of challenges was 46, a slight dip below last

year's 54, the number of individual items challenged was at an all-time high of 93. (Challenges can involve multiple titles.) Eighty-two percent of the challenge incidents were at public libraries, while only eighteen percent were school libraries. However, since challenges can include multiple titles, about half of the items were challenged in schools.

Challenges can also be filed against library services, such as the seven challenges against library Pride Month displays. Initiators' objections included "the exposure of children to LGBTQIA materials," "promoting anti-faith and pro homosexual activities and lifestyle," and "not represent[ing] all points of view," which aligned with the report's overall top two reasons listed for why a book, material, or service were challenged. Those were "Claimed to be sexually explicit" and "LGBTQIA2S+ content." Other reasons listed included "Unsuited to age group," "Viewpoint," "Profanity," and "Providing sexual education."

The OIFC also reports new causes for concern. More people are going around established complaint processes entirely. There is a designated procedure in place at most libraries to ensure that materials are considered in their entirety by library staff or committees, including an analysis of community need and professional reviews. The increase in people skirting this process has created an enormous amount of work for libraries, on top of an increase in harassment their librarians are facing. Library staff this past year reported being called "pedophiles" and "groomers," and a few even received death threats.

Libraries facing challenges can look to the OLA's Intellectual Freedom Committee (IFC) for support. The IFC is made up of librarians providing year-round support to fellow Oregon librarians, informing them of their rights and responsibilities when it comes to intellectual freedom. In helping libraries navigate challenges, IFC members have done everything from simply giving advice to attending city council or board meetings to discussing intellectual

freedom on the library's behalf. They've also contacted news sources or other organizations for libraries when requested.

As the number of challenges remains high, the volume of work for the IFC can be overwhelming at times. But the team is more than a match for this challenge – every member of the IFC is a highly dedicated and extremely experienced library staff member with a deep level of care for access in Oregon libraries. Not only are members of the IFC prepared for this fight, but libraries, as well, have put in hours and hours of efforts to uphold everyone's freedom to read. Because of the work of libraries across the state, most challenges have been unsuccessful.

Libraries and library staff in Oregon are fierce defenders of intellectual freedom. Strong libraries ensure that everyone in the community sees themselves and the experiences of others unlike themselves in library collections and services.

For any questions about the OIFC report, please contact Buzzy Nielsen, Program Manager for Library Support, at buzzy.nielsen@slo.oregon.gov or 971-375-3486.

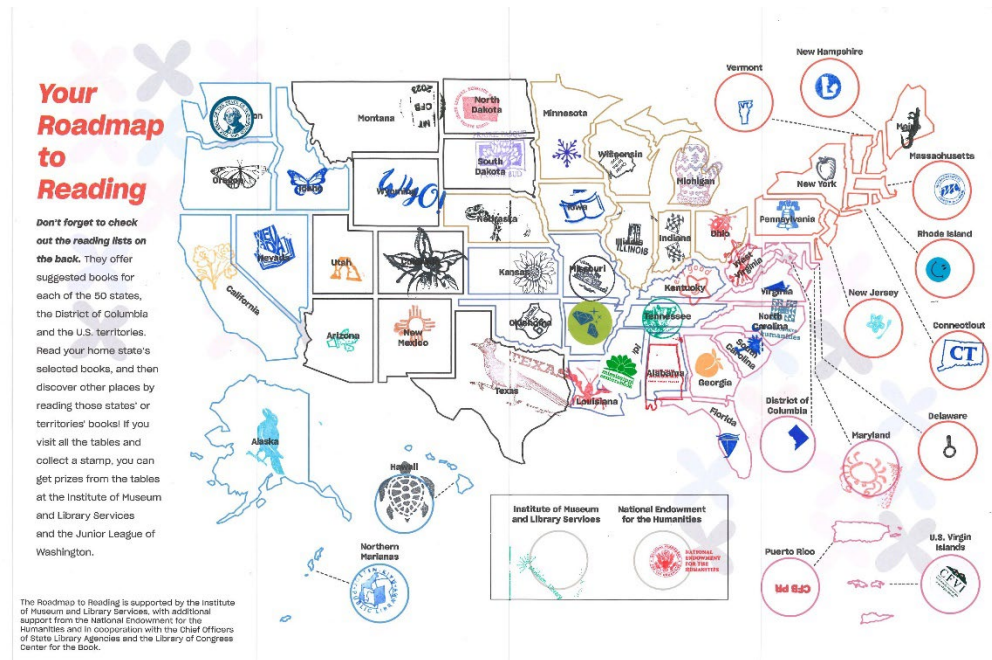
Talking Book Library Represents Oregon at the National Book Festival



In August, staff from the Talking Book and Braille Library attended the [National Book Festival](#) to represent Oregon on the Roadmap to Reading. With over 200,000 attendees, this festival is a fantastic opportunity to talk about Talking Book libraries across the country and the services they offer, promoting accessible reading everywhere.

The Roadmap to Reading is a collection of booths, one for each state and territory in the U.S., that is organized by each state's respective Center for the Book. Many Centers are based in state libraries, while some are humanities organizations, colleges, or other heritage groups. In spring of 2022, our Talking

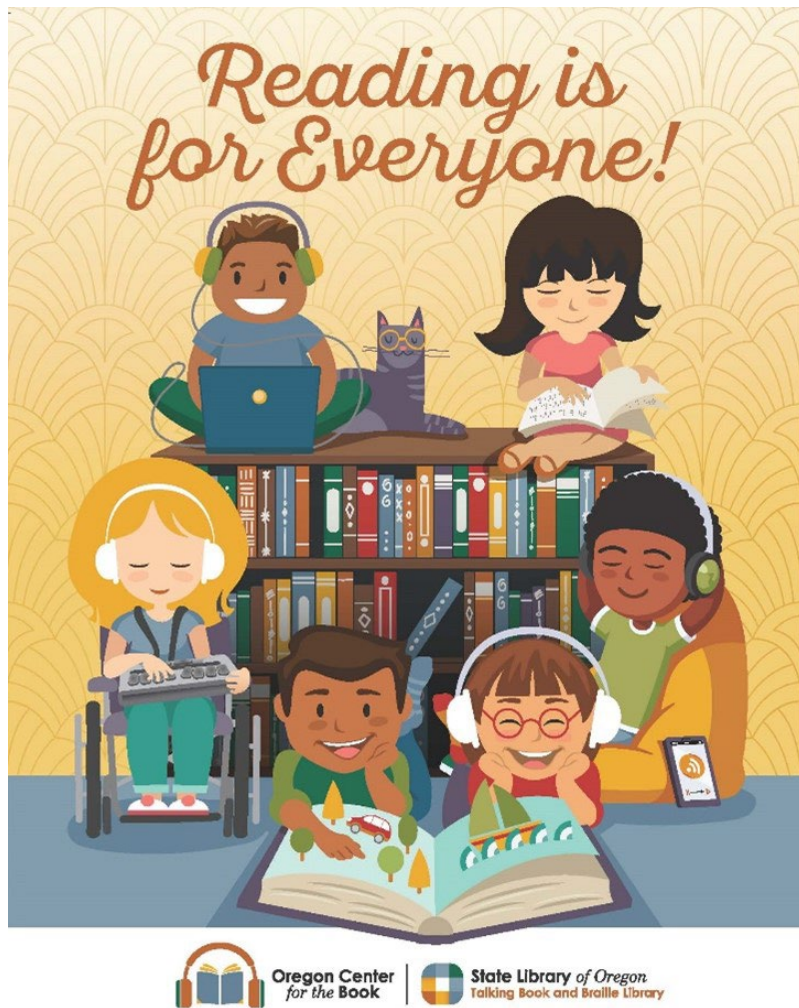
Book and Braille Library was designated as the [first ever accessible Center for the Book in the nation](#). To date, we are still the only Talking Book library with this designation, but several states approached staff at our booth to ask about how their Talking Book libraries could get involved.



The Roadmap to Reading is one of the most popular activities for festival attendees as they receive a map with the challenge of getting each state and territory's stamp throughout the day. Once they've collected all the stamps, they receive a prize. Sometimes the journey is just as fun as receiving the prize – every state's stamp was unique, many were colorful, and there are few things more satisfying than collecting them all.



Oregon's booth was nestled in between the Northern Mariana Islands and Washington and was decorated with gray cats and monarchs to celebrate the two youth selections represented at the conference. Items handed out included flyers with our [selected 2023 Center for the Book titles](#), maps of Oregon, travel guides, stickers, and temporary tattoos for kiddos (or anyone, really). The booth also featured our Center for the Book's new poster, which was designed with the National Library Service's motto in mind, "Reading is for everyone!" Many teachers and library staff appreciated the representation of different forms of reading on the posters and took them to hang up on walls in classrooms and offices around the country.



These posters also prompted many questions about the Talking Book Library, inviting conversations where staff were able to talk about accessible libraries and who they're for. Many were surprised to hear that every state has a Talking Book Library and that these libraries serve not only people with vision impairments but those with any kind of reading impairment, including learning disabilities. One attendee mentioned that she teaches special needs students and was always looking for resources. She was thrilled to learn that the Talking Book and Braille Library was available to students as well as adults.

We're thankful to have attended two years running now – here's to many more!
Thank you Library of Congress for hosting us!

Back to School with OBOB and Talking Books



What do you get when you combine March Madness, trivia, and a love of reading? [Oregon Battle of the Books \(OBOB\)](#)! Every year, thousands of students across the state of Oregon participate in OBOB, an annual tournament encouraging students to read a [list of selected titles](#) for their age group that spans all genres and subjects. Each school can have a team of readers, and those teams go head-to-head in the spring to test their knowledge on the OBOB books for that year.

Books are announced prior to summer break, giving librarians time to purchase the titles for their students for the upcoming school year. Team registration is

September 1 – October 31, with March Madness-style bracketed competitions taking place from February through March. A final statewide competition for regional winners takes place in April.

Any student can join a team, so the Talking Book and Braille Library makes it a priority to ensure that the selected titles are as accessible as possible. As soon as booklists for each age group are announced, we post the titles from our collection that are already available. Students simply select their age group from [the list on our website](#) to see what's ready for check-out. Audiobooks can all be loaded onto a cartridge or downloaded directly through Braille and Audio Reading Download (BARD). We also have some titles available in Braille.

If the titles aren't already recorded, we send a request to the National Library Service to have those ready for students in the fall when the challenge begins. This past year, they were able to get almost the full list of third through fifth grade books! As we're getting our recording booth and narration volunteers up to speed, our hope is that in the future we can also record some OBOB titles from these lists and eventually be able to provide every title announced.

Teachers can also check out audiobooks or Braille materials on behalf of their students through us if they have a Talking Book Library school account. [Signing up for an account is completely free.](#) These resources are available for all students who have a print impairment, which includes visual, physical, and reading impairments. Teachers can also sign up a student directly for a Talking Books account. Consider spreading the word – the more teachers and volunteers who know about us, the more we can get these resources into the hands of students that need them!

Outside of OBOB, we also provide many opportunities for students to get

involved with the Talking Book Library, including a [seasonal newsletter](#) with recommended books and movies for every age and a [summer reading program](#).

We look forward to supporting students this coming school year as they start reading for the tournament this spring. Best of luck!

Check Out Your Local School Library: Good Things Are Happening



With the start of the school year, you are invited to think back on your school library experience. What comes to mind? Take a minute to dig through some memories. Now quickly glance at the [Oregon School Library Standards](#) and the [Strong School Library Rubric](#), both developed by the Oregon Association of School Libraries. Besides the role in developing literacy and lifelong reading, each resource emphasizes the instructional aspect of the school library

program. Do your memories align with the focus and activities outlined in those documents? There's a decent chance that your answer may be no, especially if you went to school in our beautiful state.

There can be a disconnect between what students – including those who may have become teachers and school or district administrators – have experienced during school library time and the full potential of what they could have experienced. Why? Well, there are many reasons. A significant one is that the [number](#) of licensed school librarians on staff in Oregon's public schools has dropped precipitously over the last four decades, with a decrease of 80%. The combined full-time equivalent of licensed librarians and library assistants is less than one per Oregon public school, and that means some schools have minimal or zero library staffing. [Oregon ranks](#) in the bottom three to seven of all U.S. states for school library staffing and related criteria according to results of the [SLIDE project](#), a national ongoing study of school libraries. Additionally, many schools' library budgets are very low, even zero dollars, so collections can be too small, outdated, and/or irrelevant, leading to low circulation. These factors and more can lead to misconceptions about the value of and need for strong school library programs.

Can a school library program that is not led by a licensed school librarian be excellent? Yes, indeed. Many school library assistants/technicians are dedicated to learning about the library and strive to spark a lifelong love of reading in students. However, what is missing by requirement of licensure is the instructional component of the library program – teaching students a research model and the associated skills, providing lessons about not falling for mis- and disinformation, instructing about the influence of media, and so much more.

In spite of the long-term negative staffing and budget situation, good things are happening in many Oregon school libraries. Library staff are building relationships with classroom teachers to better support their needs, and licensed librarians are collaborating with classroom teachers on lessons for students. Some staff are registering for the [Oregon Battle of the Books](#) and forming teams of students to participate in the statewide “reading motivation and comprehension program” – which, as mentioned above, our Talking Book and Braille Library is helping to support. Late last school year, just under 100 districts – about half of the districts in the state – received a [library grant](#) from the Oregon Department of Education, and recipients are busy selecting books to help revitalize the collection and new furniture to modernize the space. Those are just a few examples.

Curious about what’s happening in your local school library? Once students and staff settle into the new school year, consider dropping by and asking questions. Who staffs the library, and what qualifications or training do they have? Does instruction take place through the library program? If not, why is that not a priority? How does the library support the school or district’s literacy initiatives? Is there a reasonable budget to support development of the library collection? What help do library staff need? While a library program’s potential is expanded or limited by its staffing, budget, and staff and decision makers’ expectations for it, it’s very likely that good things are happening in your local school library. Check it out!

Summer of Outreach with Library Support



Silver Lake Library Branch

Our Library Support staff have been busy! This summer, our team has visited everywhere from Lake County to Scio to Jefferson and even to Condon in order to talk with library staff, understand rural library needs, and celebrate the work that librarians everywhere are doing.

First, our Library Support manager, Buzzy Nielsen, visited Lake County Library District (LCLD) and stopped at all four branches: Silver Lake, Paisley, Christmas Valley, and Lakeview. He talked with staff about challenges they were facing as a rural library and how the State Library could support their

work. Lake County is the third largest county in the state, with 100 miles stretching between the two most distant branches.

These rural branches are a digital lifeline for their communities, with three of the branches being the only local source of free wi-fi and computer access. Not only are they essential to rural residents with limited internet access, they're essential during wildfires and other natural disasters. Just before Buzzy visited, the Golden Fire cut off internet access to almost the entire county, an experience that's becoming far too common for residents of Lake County. These recent disasters have prompted LCLD to look into more reliable internet options.



Children's area of the Lakeview branch of LCLD

The State Library provided a \$10,000 digital equity grant to the Christmas Valley branch to update their computers and other equipment to better serve their community. This is another great example of how libraries are an essential

piece of meeting rural communities' digital equity needs – very few organizations provide that level of free internet access.

Electronic Services Consultant, Arlene Weible, had a chance to see another library that continues to go above and beyond in serving their community when she toured the Corvallis-Benton County Public Library Corvallis branch. Arlene saw firsthand the ways space was reconfigured since the pandemic to better meet the needs not only of patrons but also of staff. Some of the additions include respite spaces for staff to go to when needing some quiet time away from the demands of public service.



Staff break room at Corvallis Library

Additionally, the library is still delivering materials to patrons' homes across the county. While this service started during the pandemic, they've decided to continue it because it significantly improves access to those who are unable to

make it into a library branch. Learning about accessible services went two ways – Arlene was able to talk to staff about our Talking Book and Braille Library and the services their print-impaired patrons could access through the State Library.



Arlene also attended the 75th anniversary celebration of Scio Public Library in early summer where she met the mayor and city manager and heard about plans for improvements and expansion for this small, rural library. Despite the current staffing and space limitations, library director Lavonne Murray is doing a wonderful job working with several dedicated volunteers who are keeping children's services going strong. It was a great display of strong community support that keeps this public library alive and well in a small, rural town.



Tamara Ottum attending Jefferson Public Library's 100th anniversary celebration

Tamara Ottum, Federal Programs and Grants Consultant, stopped by Jefferson Public Library's 100th anniversary celebration this past August, where she got to talk with the library director about their summer spike in registrations. Over the previous month, there were over 1,000 visits and 45 new library cards issued, which is a lot for a town of 3,300. Part of the draw might be the new community-wide scavenger hunt, a well-organized summer-long event with prizes for participants of all ages. Tamara also got to see the new public computer stations that were supported with American Rescue Plan Act funds granted by the State Library. The Jefferson Public Library recently received another grant from the State Library to expand their existing robotics programs and STEM days for children and teens.



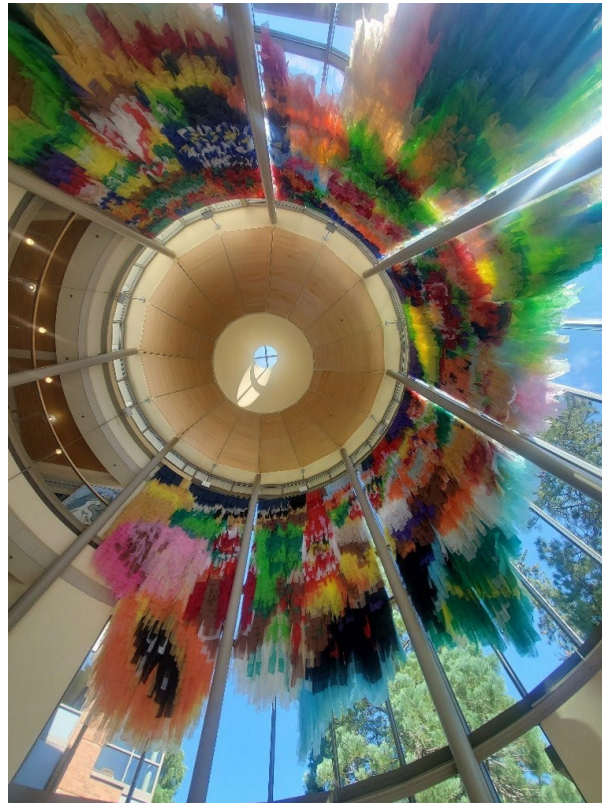
New public computers at Jefferson Public Library

Outside of events and tours, a couple staff got to make some deliveries to libraries that allowed them to connect with librarians and hear more about what's going on in their communities. Ross Fuqua, Data & Digital Projects Consultant, returned two historic scrapbooks to Gilliam County Public Library in Condon that were digitized and uploaded to [Northwest Digital Heritage](#).

Arlene Weible delivered some duplicate Oregon topographic maps from the State Water Resources Department to the Oregon State University Valley Library to fill in gaps in their collection. They're a partner library that helps manage the Oregon Federal Regional Depository collection with us, and they provide valuable support.

In anticipation of the coming school year, a summer of outreach wouldn't be complete without a visit to a couple academic libraries. Jennifer Cox, our

Answerland Coordinator and Chemeketa Community College's Interim Dean of Library and Learning Resources, visited Southern Oregon University (SOU) and Klamath Community College (KCC). Jennifer was already in Ashland for another event and stopped by SOU. She got to tour their gorgeous three-floor Hannon Library, which featured diverse works of art, cozy spaces, and thoughtful designs for their students.



¡Provecho!: An Art Beyond 2023 installation created by Justin Favela. Favela was an artist in residence at Southern Oregon University in 2020.

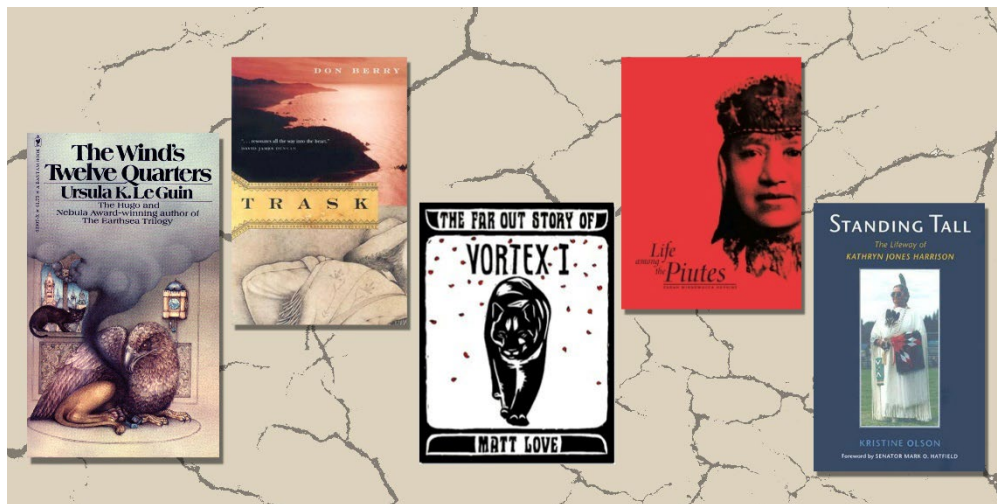
At KCC, Jennifer visited just after they wrapped up a campus-wide Comic Con event with posters and activities designed by their librarian. The library itself also hosted a portion of the event, showing off their resources for students and the thousand-plus crowd that came out from the community. Jennifer was grateful to see the library as staff worked hard to transform this fantasy land into one that was welcoming students for their return to campus in the fall with

thoughtfully designed workspaces.

All grants noted in this article were made possible in part by the Institute of Museum and Library Services through the Library Services and Technology Act, administered by the State Library of Oregon.

We're thankful to the library staff across Oregon who've let us visit and talk more about their work and how we can best support them. We're excited for the work they're all doing!

This Old Library: A Home for Books



The State Library Building was designed and built to house a large physical collection of materials. Times have changed, and many of our services are delivered virtually now, but the physical collection is still important.

State Library staff recently shared some of their favorite books from the physical collection.

Buzzy Nielsen, Program Manager in Library Support and Development, selected “The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas,” a short story in ***The Wind’s Twelve Quarters*** by Ursula LeGuin. Buzzy says the story “...asks if the deliberate abuse of a single child is worth the happiness of an entire society, and whether you yourself would walk away from that society upon receiving that knowledge.”

Arlene Weible, Electronic Services Consultant in Library Support and Development, sometimes uses the ***Literary Oregon, 100 Books, 1800 - 2000***, a bibliography compiled for the State Library’s centennial celebration, to fill in gaps in her Oregon fiction reading. “I picked out ***Trask*** by Don Berry and was blown away by the contemporary themes represented in this book published in 1960,” she says. “The depictions of Native American culture clashing with white culture in Oregon’s pioneer history ring truer than the history I was taught in school. This inspired me to read the next book in his trilogy, ***Moontrap***, which I appreciated even more for its depiction of culture clash and a more true telling of the Whitman Massacre.”

Joel Henderson, Donor Relations and Volunteer Coordinator in Operations, selected a book about a quirky event in Oregon history. “I really enjoyed ***The Far Out Story of Vortex I*** by Matt Love,” he says. “The story is wild. It’s a super memorable (albeit obscure) piece of Oregon’s more recent history.”

Jen Maurer, School Library Consultant in Library Support, chose a book about a sad era in Oregon’s history. “What comes to mind for me was the State Library book club several years ago when we read ***Stubborn Twig: Three Generations in the Life of a Japanese American Family***,” she says. “As

someone who moved to Oregon as an adult, I did not know about this troubling slice of Oregon history until I read the book.”

Heather Pitts, Cataloging Services and Digital Collections Librarian in Government Information and Library Services, read ***Standing Tall: The Lifeway of Kathryn Jones Harrison*** by Kristine Olson. Heather says, “It was notable because it’s the story of an elder from the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde Community who attended Chemawa [Indian School], lived through termination and was a key figure in re-recognition of Northwest tribal nations, raised a family, and served as the chairwoman of her tribe.”

Jey Wann, Oregon Documents Coordinator in Government Information and Library Services, selected a book that may be the first autobiography by a Native American woman: ***Life Among the Piutes: Their Wrongs and Claims*** by Sarah Winnemucca. “It is fascinating reading,” she says. “Sarah Winnemucca navigated such major cultural change and tragedy and was an outspoken advocate for her people.”

Natalie Brant, Reference Librarian in Government and Information Services, helped get ready for vacation with a book from the State Library collection. “I read ***Tierra Del Mar Tales*** in preparation for a long weekend in that town in Tillamook County,” she says. “It definitely got in me in the right mindset for this gorgeous part of the coast!”

We’re happy to deliver service virtually but grateful we still have the opportunity to curl up with a good (physical) book!

OrDocs of the Month: A Blog, and Dogs!



Many Oregonians subscribe to [eClips](#) to keep up to date on daily news coverage of Oregon state government. The [Oregon Documents Depository Program](#) maintains a companion blog, [eClips Extra](#), which highlights Oregon government publications that are in the news or relevant to current news topics. If you subscribe to eClips emails, you'll get an eClips Extra email on Friday afternoons, but content is added every day. If you're interested in reports mentioned in eClips or want more information on items in the news, be sure to visit eClips Extra!

In other news, to recognize the dog days of summer, we've curated a few Oregon government publications about dogs:

- It's important to protect our best friends from dangerous blue-green algae blooms, as the [Oregon Health Authority reminds us](#).
- In the mid-20th century, the State Library promoted its collection to libraries around the state and published lists of books on specific topics. [This 1957 publication](#) shows books for children about dogs. (We'd most like to read *Amos: The Beagle with a Plan*.)
- Dogs have many important roles in Oregon. This [2019 video highlights](#) puppies that are entering the service dog training program at the Oregon State Hospital.

Explore eClips Extra and the [Oregon Government Publications Collection](#) to see what you can dig up!

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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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