

ShelfLife

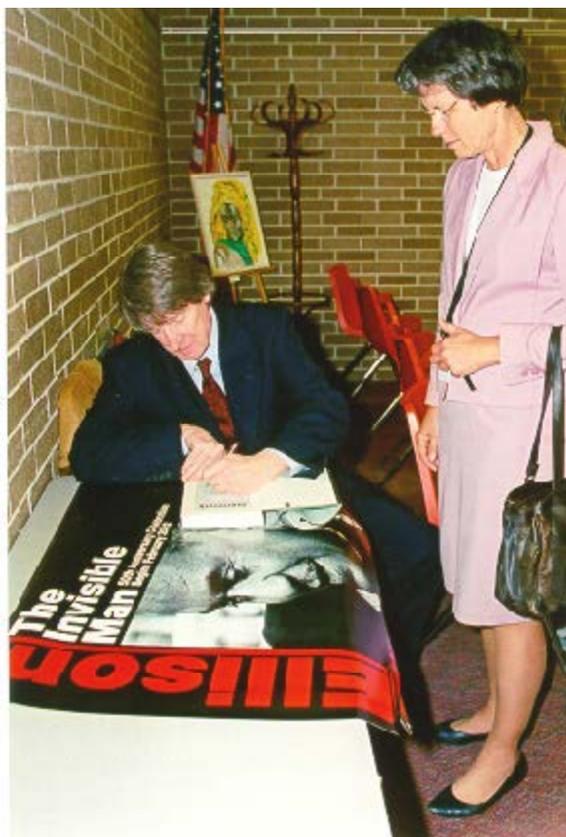
Newsletter of the Metropolitan Library System

MAY 2002

Arts Festival = Art for the Belle Isle Library



Thanks to a Friends of the Library grant, each year funds for a library to buy art at the Arts Festival. This year the lucky library was **Belle Isle**. Library manager Priscilla Doss and assistant manager Debbie Robertus chose four original pieces from three artists. Here Priscilla and Debbie pose with the artists. Past year's recipients were **Edmond, Capitol Hill, Wright and Nicoma Park, Warr Acres and Del City**. (Photos by Nancy Lytle.)



John Callahan Visits Ralph Ellison Library

A reception for John Callahan was held April 26 at Ralph Ellison Library.

Callahan, editor and literary executor of the late author Ralph Ellison, author of *Invisible Man* is seen here, signing the Downtown Library's copy of *Juneteenth* for MLS Deputy Director **Judy Walden**.

Staff Association

Views and Reviews



Darlene Browsers

"Encounters of the MLS Kind" will be found at the Annual Staff Association Business meeting. Everyone is invited to the June 7, meeting at 7 p.m.

We will gather at the Midwest City Library for a meeting full of information, entertainment and fun plus a great meal together. The program's keynote speaker will be **Norm Maas**, MLS Director.

Norm has been invited to share his vision of the future for MLS and how we as staff members are part of the ongoing growth of MLS.

There will be a time for questions from the staff. The business meeting will include information about what has happened this year through the Staff Association and what you would like to see in the coming year.

A special treat for everyone will be the entertainment by Banish Misfortune. This is a Celtic Band that includes our own **Dana Morrow**.

Dinner will be served at 7 p.m. The menu will be all the Indian Tacos you can eat, home made desserts and iced drinks. We ask that you send reservations and money for the meal to **Darrie Breathwit** at Southern Oaks.

Each staff person is encouraged to bring a guest, and if you need to bring your children, that is okau too.

The meal ticket will be \$4 for each adult and child 11 years or older. Children under three may eat free; children ages 4-10 will be \$3. You may call **Darrie** at 631-4468 or **Darlene Browsers** at 231-8657 if you have questions.

If you are lucky enough to have your name drawn, you could be the one to take home a "piece of art" created by one of your own staff members.

Each piece will be representative of the diverse and talented people we have on our MLS staff.

A Staff Association representative attends the Library Retirement Pension Board meetings on your behalf. We will be making periodic reports for your

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May Anniversaries

EVELYN K. DAVIS	5/27/1980
JESSIE C. BISHOP	5/13/1981
MARY A. ANDERSON	5/13/1983
FRANK C. RAY	5/21/1984
S. COLLETTE HANKINS	5/06/1985
MARILYN E. BACKUS	5/21/1987
KATHIE A. HULGAN	5/02/1988
REGINA M. WOLFINGER	5/29/1990
MARCIA J. EDGECOMB	5/18/1991
HELEN J. SHELTON	5/12/1992
HEIDI A. PORT	5/12/1997
SALLY C. EPP	5/19/1997
OLIVIA SAMMONS	5/22/1997
TINDLE J. ARNOLD	5/27/1997
GENE E. CHAPPELL	5/26/1998
LISA E. MYERS	5/05/2000
MEGAN E. SMITH	5/30/2000
TERESA GOGGINS	5/07/2001
VERONICA GREGORY	5/14/2001

Promotions

Nicole Maxwell	From Page to Circ Clerk, MC
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Welcome To

Samuel Scovill	Page, WA
Sarah Hleboski	Page, WA
Jean Engebritson	Asst. Mgr., MC
MaryGrace Berkowitz	Cataloger, CAT

Goodbye

Jacquelin Files	Library Asst., DN
Nina Truitt	Tech Asst., DN
Daniel Foote	Page, BI
Tyler Skelton	Page, SO
Mary Griffin	Outreach Tech, OUT
Reginald Walker	Tech Asst., BI
Veronica Gregory	Page, ED

Transfers

Doug Bentin	From Ext. Lib. Mgr, PSA to Communications Spec., PR
Kalyani Chekuri	Librarian from RE to CH
Sharon Maine	From Circ Clerk, MC to Out. Tech, OUT
Greg Bennett	Library Asst. from PSA to Dn

Deaths

Dorothy Klein	Page, BI
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May Birthdays

SUSAN E. RYAN	5/01
MICHAEL A. BAUGHMAN	5/02
LEAH RHEA ZACHARY	5/03
MARCIA J. EDGECOMB	5/05
DEBBIE E. ROBERTUS	5/06
ANN SIMPSON	5/07
M. SCOTT CARTER	5/08
ANNE G. FISCHER	5/09
MARY L. DAUGHERITY	5/11
CHERYL A. MANN	5/12
ROBERT BLANKENSHIP	5/12
LORI KANE	5/13
RICHARD E. REA	5/13
STEPHANIE D. GERLING	5/15
JEFF L. SMITH	5/16
SHARON G. BISH	5/16
DIANNE C. COX	5/18
LISA M. WOOD	5/18
MARILYN R. BARNETT	5/19
REGINA D. KIRKHAM	5/19
SHARLA K. LAWRENCE	5/19
JOSHUA N. SCHELL	5/21
TRACY C. STONE	5/21
AMANDA S. TERRY	5/22
FREDERICK R. WILSON	5/22
LORI H. WYLIE	5/27
WOODROW HOWARD JR.	5/28
RONALD L. KEYS	5/30

People

Our Congratulations To:

Crystal Giles, Cataloging, who gave birth to **Kara Denise**, April 15, weighing 8 pounds, 14 ounces.

Pauline Rodriguez, CAT

Ilana Davis, daughter of **Ronna Davis**, Edmond, and **Larry Davis** will be graduating as a valedictorian from Putnam City North High School. She will be attending Wesleyan University in the fall.

Max Davis, **Ronna's** son, and a sophomore at PC North, was inducted into the National Honor Society in April.

Karen Bays, Edmond Library

Our Sympathy To:

Sharon Maine, Outreach Books by Mail tech, whose mother died May 1.

Sympathy also to **Joyce McCauley Johnson**, DN, whose brother **Roosevelt Turner II** died from a house fire.

Still For Rent

Ground-level garage apartment with off-street parking in pleasant neighborhood near NW 36 and May Avenue.

Has CA&H, refrigerator and electric stove. Fully carpeted with ample closet space. Desire quiet tenant with no pets. \$275 per month; all utilities paid.

Contact **Evelyn K. Davis**, 942-2523 (H) or 231-8688 (B). Would love to have a library employee!



The Downtown Library/Learning Center continues to evolve into a finished building. (Photo by Evelyn Davis.)

Our Congratulations To:

To **Arvin Pourtorkan**, page at the Edmond Library, who won the Metro Conference #1 singles Tennis championship. The Metro Conference includes high schools from Yukon, Choctaw, Putnam City, Mustang and Edmond.

ShelfLife
Newsletter of the Metropolitan Library System

ShelfLife, the official newsletter of the Metropolitan Library System, is published electronically each month by the **Public Relations Division**.

Written and graphic contributions are welcomed. Please forward all comments to: Nancy Lytle, editor.

Nancy Lytle

Editor

Wanda Scott

Graphic Design

For more information contact: Public Information at **405.231.8618**.

Pot Bellied Pig Visits MLS Libraries

Daisy, the Pot Bellied Pig, and her friend, Farmer Minor, made a tour through various libraries, recently. Daisy is seen being kissed by **Mary Strasner**, (right) host of the Pot Bellied Pig program at the Downtown Library. Farmer Minor and Daisy (bottom left & right.)



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information. The following is the first. *The Library Retirement Pension Board met Wednesday, May 1, 2002, for the Quarterly Review of Investments for the 1st quarter, January 1, 2002 - March 31, 2002, presented by Andrew Junkin of Asset Services Company.*

The Library Retirement Pension has weathered the rough environment of the first quarter in good shape. Mr. Junkin reported that the Total Market Value of the Pension Plan on December 31, 2001, was \$12,535,304 and the Total Market Value on March 31, 2002, was \$13,417,251.

Mr. Junkin feels positive towards the stock market. Stocks respond to supply and demand, and stocks are expected to go up. He does not expect a banner but a good year for the Library.

--Submitted by Darlene Browsers, MLS Staff

Norm Maas On The MLS 'Vision Thing'

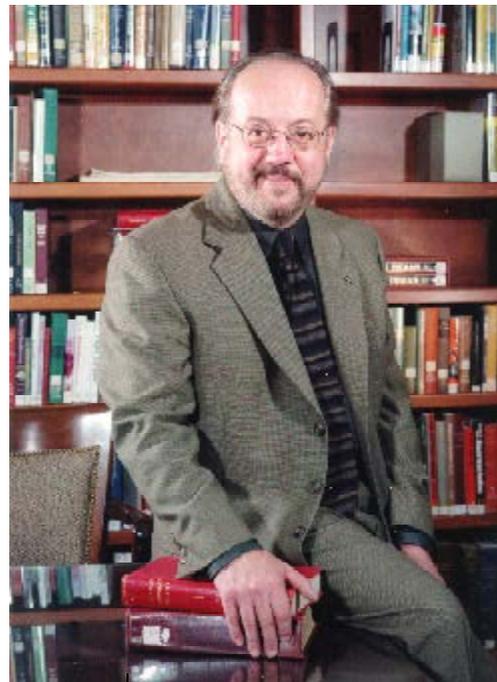
He's Not Your Grandparents' Library Director

If you met Norm Maas at a party and asked him what he does for a living, his answer might surprise you. He's not your typical executive director of a large library system. He downhill skis and rides dirt bikes. He's a big fan of the Red Wings pro hockey team (maybe not so surprising given his Detroit roots).

"I like to play as hard as I work," he admitted, "but I'm also an avid reader. I'm a big Stephen King fan. Right now I'm in the middle of re-reading *Dreamcatcher*."

Maas also owns a vast collection of record albums. "I have more than 2,000 albums now, with a solid collection of rock 'n' roll from the last 30 years, complimented by jazz and blues.

"The last CD I bought was a classic collection of Ray Charles. What a delight



Norm Maas

playing a really good bass in a band, being a great writer or editor, or scooping 'em out of the dirt at third base for the Detroit Tigers."

Married 15 years, Maas and his wife, Karen, have a 12 year-old son and a nine year-old daughter.

Charles is to listen to." This interest in a variety of musical styles, but especially rock, comes honestly to Maas who played bass guitar in a band for two years.

"When I was younger, my dream jobs included

"Man, this sounds so corny, but I'm just nuts about my family. I've had such great luck with them. My son is a blast, my daughter is a blast, and my wife is my very best friend. What more blessings could anyone ask for?"

He moved to Oklahoma City a year ago from Saginaw, Michigan, to become the new executive director of the Metropolitan Library System. The last director, Lee Brawner, had held the job for 27 years before retiring in 1998.

Maas knew his arrival would be like replacing a beloved patriarch. He arrived with 10 years of experience leading the Saginaw Library System and a record of accomplishment of which he is justifiably proud.

"In Saginaw, we created a team of people who had a lot of fun together building a great library system. We all worked hard to provide the best service

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we could and to create and maintain a strong base of financial support.

Because of that, we were able to repair or rebuild every library building we owned to accommodate personal computers for Internet access.

“And the public loved the restoration of the downtown main library, which was originally constructed in 1890.”

Along with memories of success achieved, Maas brought with him to Oklahoma City a vision of outstanding customer service, as the foundation for the future of public libraries.

“The library I thought I was getting involved with,” Maas said with a delighted smile, “is the library I got. This staff is highly competent, and their dedication to the ideals of librarianship and customer service is solid.”

Maas meets with the library system’s Staff Association quarterly, so face-to-face communication can take place with employees throughout the ranks. That each staff member knows what is expected of him or her—and be able to

articulate the system’s message—is important to Maas.

Recent polls have shown the public gives the Metro Library system a 92 percent approval rating, good news in any executive director’s book—but Maas knows his staff can deliver more.

“The public wants and deserves even more from us. Through increased training and an absolute dedication to encouraging customer service, we can do an even better job,” he said. “What’s good now can become excellent.

“The things I saw as positives when I arrived here,” Maas said, “are still positive. We pay close attention to how we interact with the public. Our customers have told us that they want good hours of operation, attractive and well-maintained buildings, and great service from a trained and welcoming staff.

“When I stress better customer service, I simply mean that these are the means we should use to deliver what the public deserves,” he explained. Perhaps the biggest, most visible change Maas has been credited for in his one-

year term is in the arena of services to children and families.

A dedicated family man himself, Maas says he’s determined to make the Metro Library system the premiere source of information for families.

“We’ve taken a close look at our community’s stated needs,” he said.

“We’ve studied not only our own polls, but needs studies from Oklahoma County, cities within the county, and the United Way, and one of the things that comes up over and over again is the need for reading preparedness, or reading readiness.

“Our civic leaders are most concerned about the fact that so many children are entering kindergarten totally unprepared to learn how to read,” he said. “Teachers do a great job, but their work is made easier if children begin school with pre-reading skills in place. And it’s not just a local problem.

Nationally, emergent literacy is a major concern, and people all over are asking if

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we, as parents, are taking the time to have our children ready to read by age five.”

Reading readiness is one of the major goals of Metro Library’s new strategic plan. To help accomplish this, the library is adopting and reshaping a family literacy program that was developed in Middle County, NY. The program provides a special area of the library where children and their parents or primary care givers can interact with each other without the typical distractions of television, telephones and daily home life.

Maas brought the philosophy to the Metro Library, but he knows the library can assist in reading readiness in more traditional ways as well.

“When you come into any of our libraries, we can help you find just the right book for the age of your child,” he said.

“Studies show if you take as little as 15 or 20 minutes a day to read to even the youngest children, it accomplishes a number of things, the most significant of which may be that it starts the children

learning new words and sounds, and it also shows them that reading is an intimate, warm, and enjoyable experience. This point is as important as the learning-how part, and it strengthens the bond between parent and child.”

“To make metro libraries more inviting to families,” Maas said, “we’re giving our librarians training in child development skills and getting parents involved in a variety of ways.”

Making public libraries even safer, more inviting environments for families is nothing new to him. Maas introduced the concept of Family Place libraries to Saginaw in 1997.

“Our customers and staff loved it,” he said. “Bringing entire families into libraries—and that includes little boys, who can sometimes be a hard sell—is one of the things of which I am most proud.”

People may point to Maas as the instrument of change in Metro Library’s approach to service for children and parents, but the executive director prefers to direct the compliments to staff for helping pull off such a project.

“Typically, it takes five years for big changes to settle in,” he said, “but our staff’s enthusiasm for Family Place has speeded up this process.

“Change can be hard,” he acknowledged, “but it’s always made easier when there are common goals and a willingness to work together to achieve them.

“People ask me frequently what has been my biggest surprise or delight since moving here, and I always tell them the same thing: It’s the people, and that Oklahoma spirit of hard work and welcoming exemplified by Metro’s staff. They are proud of what they do, and they believe in it.

“When I meet new people and they find out what I do for a living, they always say positive things about their library and the people who work there.”

Maas smiles as he thinks of what he is about to say.

“In fact, the public is so supportive of us, they often tell me that they wish we had better means of letting them know about

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the special programs we arrange, as well as the standard services. So we're taking steps to improve on that. We've already begun to strengthen our advertising to better inform the public.

"For instance, what used to be a calendar of library events is now a monthly magazine with book and music reviews, word puzzles, articles, and special feature stories. And the calendar is still there, too, of course," he added with an even broader smile.

But no one who enjoys his work as thoroughly as Norm Maas does could ever be content with just discussing past successes. Maas is looking down the road for Metro Library and thinking about where it needs to be in five to 10 years.

"Public libraries will undergo an incredible amount of change in the next decade," he said. "Just take a look at how much they've changed in the last 10 years. We have large video and CD collections available for checkout now.

We have free online computer access for customers. We've almost doubled our

collection of books and magazines, and through our Web site, metrolibrary.com, we provide 24-hour-per-day, seven-day-a-week library service.

"I think the biggest changes," Maas added, "will continue to be in the area of technology, in person and on our Web site. We expect everyone will become familiar with our Web site and will use it as a daily place for help with business, school and homework problems, as well as for recreational and personal purposes such as genealogy searches, tax forms, information on hobbies and local history, and other local information for county residents.

"I'm talking about practical information on community services, local events, genealogy, and community studies, including links to other reputable Web sites," Maas said.

"The Metro Library Web site will be the portal of information in this community," he promised, "but to accomplish that, will take a lot of work on our part."

The wall behind Norm Maas is covered with photographs of the Metro Library

buildings. Maas tips his head in their direction.

"We plan to follow up the library renovations that have been ongoing for the last several years with more. The Edmond Library looks almost like a new structure, and Warr Acres and Bethany libraries have also had work done.

"Thanks to the bond initiative that was passed last year," he added, "the Capitol Hill and Ralph Ellison libraries will be next to get face-lifts.

The good people of Choctaw have also worked hard to raise funds for a new, modern library for their city. And, of course, the new Downtown Library and Learning Center will be our flagship when it opens in April, 2003."

Maas says plans are already in the works for a new library for the far northwest side of the city on the Francis Tuttle Vo-Tech campus.

"Northwest Oklahoma City has needed a

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new library for a long time now,” he observed, “and we’re finally in a position to meet that need.”

Yet he concedes that the new Downtown Library and Learning Center is probably one of Oklahoma City’s most exciting construction projects to date. The Library building has taken shape, and visitors to the downtown corner of Park Ave. and Harvey can see this last of the MAPs projects rising from the prairie.

“I think the most exciting thing about the opening of the new Downtown Library is just the fact that it’s there,” said Maas. “It’s something Oklahoma County has needed for a long time.

“Individuals, families, students, small businesses, literally just everyone will be able to take advantage of what we’re going to offer. We’re partnering with the Downtown College Consortium to create something totally unique—a great source of local history and genealogy resources, dozens of public access computers. There’s even going to be a snack bar so you can get a decent cup of coffee

without leaving the building.” Maas believes the building’s dynamic look will be a draw for the Oklahoma City public to enjoy with their families.

Already Maas can imagine the people and events the new library will draw to town.

“We hope to have our Library Endowment Trust bring in a speaker of national reputation. Our operating budget comes to us through property taxes, but the Endowment Trust, because of its hard work on our behalf and the generosity of the public, is able to provide us with the kind of extras that make Metro Library so special.”

“In fact,” Maas added, “we wouldn’t be the outstanding library system we are without the unwavering support of The Friends of the Metropolitan Library System. The Friend’s big fund-raising event is the annual booksale in February, the largest library Friends sale in the nation.”

Norm Maas smiles again. He smiles a lot these days.

“The decision to move to Oklahoma City,” he said, “was one of the best ones I’ve ever made. I love the people here, the ones I work with and the ones I live with. There’s a lot to be proud of here. “And the weather is so much warmer than it is in Michigan. It’s windier here, but a lot warmer.”

And the possibilities are endless.



MS Walk volunteers walked through the rain. Even though the walk was cancelled, these mighty ducks walked anyway!