



AGENCY NEWS

Legacy Volunteers Hang Up Their Hats



For the last seventeen years, Marilyn Robinson has been a cornerstone of the State Library of Oregon's volunteer program. Through many staffing and service changes, she has been a steadfast source of help for our Talking Book & Braille Library program. Her dedication brought

along her partner, Eldon, to follow in her footsteps and contribute to the State Library's cause as well. Between Marilyn and Eldon, a mountainous total of 23 years and nearly 4,500 hours of service has been amassed.

The projects they have contributed to together are innumerable, but all have left a lasting impact on the Talking Book & Braille Library. In looking back, Andrea Clarkson, a Talking Books staff person who has worked with the Robinsons for many years, captured a list of their contributions, which include (but are certainly not limited to): repairing defective cassettes, cassette book

duplication, inventory preparation, annual collection weeding projects, and a massive multi-year Braille relocation project where Marilyn helped prepare thousands of Braille volumes for shipment to Utah. With their help, we were able to improve the experience of users both in efficiency and quality.

Following the pandemic and an extended hiatus on in-house volunteering at the library, Marilyn and Eldon have decided to retire from volunteering. While we are sad to lose such impactful members of our family, we are wholly supportive of them exploring their next chapter without us. Their legacy will remain in the work they contributed to and in the record bar that they set for other volunteers. In appreciation for the service they have donated to us, Eldon and Marilyn will both receive a gift from the State Library as well as two different awards. We wish the Robinsons well, and thank them for their service!

Paying Respects to Oregon Printmaker, Dennis Cunningham



A beautiful series of bronze medallions depicting state symbols of Oregon adorns the State Library's second-floor corridor just outside the State Librarian's office. The artist who created them, Oregon artist Dennis Cunningham, had a unique appreciation for Oregon's natural beauty and cultural history, and he chose these symbols as the preferred subjects for his print and linocut works.

In 2000, Cunningham was commissioned to craft artwork for the rededication of the State Library building as a part of the [Percent for Art](#) program. The medallions were the exceptional result. An avid fisherman and lover of the outdoors, Cunningham's passion shines through in these pieces. The subject



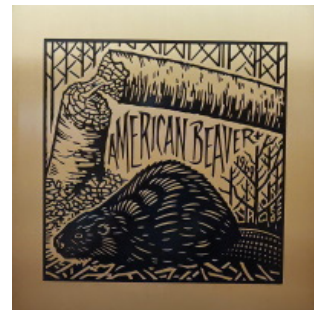
matter for this commission extended beyond natural subjects to include important cultural symbols and important figures in state history as well. A uniquely Oregonian perspective in every way, they are the archetype of Cunningham's personal viewpoint and artistic style.



His works typically display the black and white linework common in relief, etching, or linotype. However, according to [Oregon ArtsWatch](#), his style also displayed a depth not typically associated with two-dimensional printworks. Choosing to etch in linoleum rather than wood allowed Cunningham greater ease in displaying natural curvature lines found in his favorite subjects, and provided him with an opportunity to create depth of field with line size and shapes. He was heralded for his successes and skills in this medium, and as a professor at Marylhurst

University, he shared those skills with his students.

Along with his many other works, the medallions at the State Library will forever celebrate the legacy of Mr. Cunningham, who passed away in April of 2021. His passing reminds us to celebrate the beauty of the state which we call home and to enjoy what makes Oregon special. We invite you to appreciate and pay homage to Dennis Cunningham's artistic perspective with a visit to the State Library when we reopen to the public in the fall.



**GOVERNMENT INFORMATION &
LIBRARY SERVICES**

Fun Facts About Your Oregon State Legislature



As the 2021 legislative session winds down, here are some interesting observations about our Legislature and how it compares to other state legislative bodies.

- Session Dates -

Before the adoption of annual sessions beginning in 2012, legislative sessions were usually held every other year during odd-numbered years. However, from 1860 through 1882, sessions were conducted during even-numbered years. The big switch to odd-numbered years occurred with the 1885 session.

The 1885 session was also the first session to begin in January, with previous sessions gaveled in during the 2nd Monday in September. Fall sessions were found to be an inconvenience to farmer-legislators, and therefore sessions were started on the 2nd Monday in January to accommodate.

- Size -

You probably know the Oregon Legislature consists of 30 senators and 60 representatives for a total of 90 members.

How does Oregon measure up regarding the size of our Legislature to other states? New Hampshire has the largest legislature with 424 members (24 Senate, 400 House), and Nebraska has the smallest legislature with 49 members, all in their unicameral Senate.

With 90, Oregon is well under the mean of 148 legislators and the median of 141, while the mode, or most common number of legislators found in our sister states, is both 132 and 150.

- Compensation -

Oregon Legislators earn \$31,200/year with a \$151/day per diem. How does this measure up to the highest and lowest paid legislators in other states?

California pays the members of their assembly the most at \$114,877/year with a \$206/day per diem. On the low end, New Hampshire pays their legislators \$100/year with no per diem. However, New Mexico does not pay their legislators, but does offer a \$192/day per diem.

What these diverse numbers hint at are the very different philosophies and intents states have concerning their individual legislative bodies and the members that serve within them.

For more information, please visit the sources below as well as listen to a 6-part podcast, [Building Democracy: The Story of Legislatures](#) by the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL).

Sources: [Oregon Legislative & Historical Information](#), [National Conference for State Legislatures](#), and [Oregon State Archives](#).



TALKING BOOK & BRAILLE LIBRARY

Happy First Birthday, Customized Cartridges!

In last summer's [OLA Quarterly](#), we talked about how our plan for implementing customized cartridges needed a lot of revision to work around the COVID pandemic. Now, we're checking in one year later to see what's working, what has changed, what was awesome, and what maybe wasn't.



First up, we can confirm the customized cartridges system in general is, as we expected, awesome! Users love it. Staff love it. Everyone loves it. Circulation has improved 35% compared to the previous year. Users are getting what they want when they want it, and it keeps them coming back for more.

The customized cartridge system has held up very well even under COVID stresses. Isolation has been a big problem for a lot of our users over the past year, and many users place tremendous value on the cartridges they receive from our library because the books on those cartridges have been their connection to the world. Remote work mandates mean we only have two Talking Books staff in the building, including our lone circulation technician. If for some reason our circulation technician is out, someone without any circulation experience may have to fill in for a day or two. Thankfully, the customized cartridges system is so straightforward even inexperienced staff can pick it up easily so users keep getting their books.

For years, long wait lists for new or popular titles has been one of the most common complaints on our annual customer satisfaction survey. Now, however, with customized cartridges eliminating wait lists, users are providing us with great feedback to help identify what other parts of our program need the most attention. And because the customized cartridges system is so fast and efficient, we have the time and resources to address their feedback.

Customized cartridges have also given us some opportunities to have fun! To explain the new system, we had a great time making a [parody infomercial](#). And of course we had to give the whole system a nickname, and of course that name is Alexandria "Alex" Gutenberg, inspired by the ancient library in Alexandria and the inventor of the printing press.

So, with year one behind us, what are our plans for year two and on into the

future? That's simple: keep delivering a free, personalized connection to the world for the print-impaired! That is what we've been about since 1932, and it's what we'll still be about long after customized cartridges are a thing of the past.

LIBRARY SUPPORT & DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Getting to Know the Library Support and Development Services Division



Featured Staff: Darci Hanning (she/her)

Darci joined the State Library nearly 18 years ago as the Technology Development Consultant, where her primary project was PLINKIT – a free webhosting platform for small and rural libraries, back when there weren't any easy or free website options.

As PLINKIT phased out of necessity, Darci continued working with public libraries throughout the state and transitioned to more general consulting services, including strategic planning facilitation. She currently wears two hats: Public Library Consultant and Continuing Education Coordinator. As Public Library Consultant, she fields general questions from public library directors and staff, oversees the state-mandated minimum conditions for libraries, and uses her expertise to guide libraries through programs such as the Edge Initiative, which helps public libraries evaluate and improve their technology services and programs. Additionally, she assists communities in establishing new public libraries. Most recently she supported Yoncalla, Oakland, and Drain in their local efforts to establish officially recognized public libraries.

As the Continuing Education Coordinator, Darci gathers up, organizes, and promotes various learning opportunities for library staff throughout the state. One new offering includes prepaid attendance to Infopeople online courses. Participants have shared, “Thank you so much for making this possible for me... I look forward to using some of what I've learned to evaluate this year's summer reading program, and to set goals for fall programming,” and “I especially found the final assignment (evaluating partnerships) really valuable. It will make a difference as we (fingers crossed) get back to making new community connections and considering how to work effectively together.”

Away from the office, Darci loves to express her more creative side through art journaling and cooking vegan meals with her husband.

Topic Talks from the State Library Return in July

Learn more about [Northwest Digital Heritage](#), the State Library's new cross-state, interagency partnership. Presented by Katie Henry (Oregon Heritage Commission), Evan Robb (Washington State Library), and Ross Fuqua (State Library of Oregon), come hear about this new program which seeks to help public libraries and heritage organizations in Oregon build and share their historic and cultural collections broadly through a newly established, regional service hub of the Digital Public Library of America (DPLA). There will be time for Q & A after the presentation. If you're not able to attend, no worries, this session will be recorded and hosted in [Niche Academy](#) and on our [YouTube channel](#).

No need to register, just join in via computer or phone on **July 20, 10:00 – 11:00am**.

Zoom link <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86214903165> or phone numbers 669 900 6833 (San Jose) or 253 215 8782 (Tacoma)

with Meeting ID: 862 1490 316 and passcode: 621573

Missed a previous Topic Talk? You can find recordings [here](#), listed under **PREVIOUS TOPIC TALKS**.

CONTACTS

Library Support & Development Services Program Manager

[Buzzy Nielsen](#), 971-375-3486

Talking Book & Braille Library Manager

[Elke Bruton](#), 971-375-3509

Government Information & Library Services Manager

[Caren Agata](#), 971-375-3483

Chief Operating Officer

[Susan Westin](#), 503-378-5435

Acting State Librarian

[Nancy Hoover](#), 503-378-4367

Connections is published monthly by the State Library of Oregon, and was formerly known as *Letters to Libraries Online*.

Mission

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



Our mailing address is:

State Library of Oregon, 250 Winter St. NE, Salem, OR 97301

Copyright ©2021, All rights reserved.