



**“The Honk and Holler Opening Soon”
in Your Library**

“Honk and Holler” Program Ideas

Oklahoma Reads Oklahoma is an exciting statewide activity that invites Oklahomans to examine our state’s unique history, experience its diverse heritage and explore its promising future by reading and discussing notable and important works about the Sooner State. Some communities may wish to turn this celebration into a larger event. Several organizations offer prepackaged programs that allow communities to further explore our state’s many-faceted history. For your convenience, we have listed these and other programming ideas for the 2004 Oklahoma Reads Oklahoma book: *The Honk & Holler Opening Soon* by Billie Letts.

The Honk & Holler Opening Soon

“**Vietnam.**” A *Let’s Talk About It, Oklahoma* reading and discussion program offered by the Oklahoma Humanities Council. The phrase “post-Vietnam syndrome” tries to capture a complex set of continuing reactions to the Vietnam War. It was America’s longest war, and it was the one we lost. We continue to talk about the costs of the war, both fiscal and human, and about the lessons we might learn from it. Each book in this series makes a valuable contribution to our understanding of what happened in Vietnam and what the lessons of that experience were. Books for this series include:

- *America’s Longest War: The United States and Vietnam, 1950-1975* by George C. Herring
- *Dispatches* by Michael Herr
- *Out of the Night: The Spiritual Journey of Vietnam Vets* by William P. Mahedy
- *In Country* by Bobbie Ann Mason
- *Close Quarters* by Larry Heinemann

“**Still the Golden Door: Oklahomans from Latin America, Asia and the Middle East.**” A TRACKS traveling humanities exhibit. Like our nation at large, Oklahoma is a mix of peoples from many cultures and nations. The “newest” Oklahomans come from Latin American, Asian, and Middle Eastern nations. This exhibit examines the interplay between the continuation of traditions and adapting to a new culture. Featured are several families and individuals who live and work in Oklahoma today.

“**Land of Promise: Europeans and African Americans in Oklahoma.**” A TRACKS traveling humanities exhibit. The territorial and early statehood eras mark the beginning of European immigration and African American migration to Oklahoma. How and why these groups came to Oklahoma are points of interest, as well as cultural differences and similarities in the ways that Blacks and various European groups adapted to their new circumstances and contributed to Oklahoma’s development.

“**Greetings from Oklahoma: How We Say ‘Howdy’ and What It Really Means.**” A *Territory Speakers* program presented by Alice Anderton. A tour of greetings that begins with a look at the ones English speakers use, followed by a quick spin around the world for some global greetings. For all of our linguistic differences, there are universal patterns that make a “howdy” a “howdy.”

Other ideas:

- Local Veterans sharing their experiences
- A veterans’ appreciation day
- Basically Bostick Projects, Inc. with the Oklahoma Arts Council
- “Recollections of a Vietnam Veteran”
- One of the Vietnam War Movies

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- Vietnamese in the community share their stories
- Someone from the county mental health to talk on coping skills, interpersonal skills
- National Issues Forums: “Racial and Ethnic Tensions”, “The Troubled American Family”, “By the People: America’s Role in the World”, “The Battle Over Abortion”.
- Create the Honk and Holler and do the discussions in the “diner”
- Do a cutting from the book or get the drama teacher or little theater to do a cutting for a dramatic presentation
- National Public Issues Forums: “Admission Decisions”, “The New Challenges of American Immigration”

PACKAGED PROGRAM AND CONTACT INFORMATION

Let’s Talk About It, Oklahoma, a cooperative project of the Oklahoma Library Association and the Oklahoma Humanities Council, has brought an improved version of the book club to communities all over Oklahoma since 1985. At each program in a series, a humanities scholar presents views on a variety of topics — the author’s life, the historical significance or content of a book, its literary aspects, and its relation to the theme under discussion — and answers participants’ questions about the book. Each program also includes small group discussions to provide participants with an opportunity to share ideas and opinions with each other.

To apply for a *Let’s Talk About It, Oklahoma* series, or for more information, contact:

Dr. Jennifer Kidney, Director
 c/o Norman Public Library
 Let’s Talk About It, Oklahoma
 225 N. Webster
 Norman, OK 73069
 (405) 329-3395
 jenlkidney@hotmail.com

TRACKS, a project of the Oklahoma Humanities Council, is a traveling exhibits service providing museum-quality exhibits that travel throughout the state, giving people of all ages the opportunity to experience our heritage and culture in their own communities. Costs to host organizations are minimal and can be further defrayed with an OHC Quick-Grant (up to \$350) if a humanities lecture is scheduled during the exhibit.

Territory Speakers, another program of the Oklahoma Humanities Council, connects humanities scholars and the general public by providing lectures and discussion programs on diverse subjects to community organizations.

For more information on TRACKS and *Territory Speakers*, contact:

Oklahoma Humanities Council
 428 W. California, Ste. 270
 Oklahoma City, OK 73102
 (405) 235-0280
 ohc@okhumanitiescouncil.org
 www.okhumanitiescouncil.org

The Oklahoma Arts Council was created to encourage and stimulate all forms of artistic endeavors in Oklahoma and considers the whole state of the arts, cultural activities and cultural heritage of Oklahoma. It offers a variety of public programs to achieve this goal. For more information, contact:

Oklahoma Arts Council
 P.O. Box 52001-2001
 Oklahoma City, OK 73152-2001
 (405) 521-2931
 www.arts.state.ok.us

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The National Issues Forums (NIF) is a network of organizations joined together by a common desire to discuss critical issues. Organizations who participate in NIF include educational institutions, leadership groups, civic groups, churches, libraries, senior centers, community groups, and youth groups. Some are independent, local forums sponsored by energetic citizens. Others are part of educational programs at colleges, schools, and extension services. For more information, contact:

National Issues Forum
(800) 433-7834
www.nifi.org

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“Honk and Holler” Program Brainstorming

- Have a discussion at a local diner or have a “Diner Discussion” at the library and serve beans and cornbread or something similar
- Have a “Design a Book Cover” contest and award prizes
- Have an art display of area artists sketching, painting, etc. their favorite character or scene
- Do cuttings from the book as dramatic readings, reader’s theater, vignettes of scenes
- Have a “Diner Theater” with the dramatizations
- Have a program on rodeoing – especially bareback bronc riding
- Do a program on the Crow Indians
- A facilitated discussion on “bullying”, abortion, spouse abuse, parenting, discrimination, any of the issues covered in the book
- National Issues Forums: “The Troubled American Family”, “Racial and Ethnic Tensions”, “The Battle Over Abortion”, “Admission Decisions, The New Challenges of American Immigration”
- Have Basically Bostick (Oklahoma Arts Council touring artist) – “Reflections of a Vietnam Veteran”
- Have a program honoring Vietnam Veterans
- Have Vietnam Veterans do a program
- Have a mental health professional do a program on coping skills or a presentation on any of the issues in the book
- A comparison on the Vietnam Conflict and the current situation militarily
- Discussion of or a program about dealing, on the personal level, with people of whatever national descent was involved i.e. Japanese, Vietnamese, etc. — and today dealing with people of Middle Eastern descent
- Show one or more movies on the Vietnam War
- Reading and discussion of Billie Letts’ previous novel, Where the Heart Is
- Show the movie “Where the Heart Is”
- Work with local museum to build a complimentary display



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Brainstorm Addendum

- Have a slide program on Vietnam if someone in your community has been to Vietnam
- Have a program on Vietnam: history, culture, the war, Vietnam today
- Have a program on the Vietnamese “Boat People”
- Have a program on understanding and dealing with disabilities
- State a “Honk and Holler Christmas” during the holidays (this could include book discussions in the holiday setting)
- Have patrons write reviews of the book, and post them in the library or online
- Have a creative writing contest to tell one of the character’s stories after the book ends (for example Pax’s story, or Bui and Nguyet’s story)
- Have an essay contest on one of the issues or themes in the book
- Have a “Honk and Holler” celebration party and have people be their favorite character (dress could be optional)
- Start an Oklahoma Reads Oklahoma Book Club and use *Honk and Holler* for the first book
- Do a “Honk and Holler” scavenger hunt using photographs (similar to what has been done with Flat Stanley) and make a display with the entries
- Have a Honk and Holler Trivia Contest (see attached)

Exhibit Ideas

- Diners and/or small cafes in your local area, if pictures or other memorabilia are available
- Small towns in Oklahoma, if pictures or other memorabilia are available
- Your Town in the late 70s or early 80s
- Local Vietnam war veterans display (especially around Veterans Day)
- Life in the 70s and 80s
- “Preserving U.S. Military History for the Future” – Vietnam military display by Keith Meyers, Tulsa, OK 918-523-0932



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“Honk and Holler” Trivia Quiz

1. Caney had competed in which rodeo event?
2. What did Bui name the dog?
3. What was Molly O’s husband’s name?
4. Where did Vena live when she first arrived in Sequoyah?
5. What kind of horse did Veno “borrow” from Brim that Caney then bought?
6. How long was Caney in Vietnam?
7. When Duncan Renfro would come to the Honk and Holler, what did he do?
8. When Bui Khanh first came to the Honk and Holler, he told Caney he was a _____.
9. Name one of Molly O’s Christmas decorations.
10. What was the name of the song Brenda wrote that had Moly O’s name in it?



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How to Do a Book Talk

By Jennifer Kidney, Director, *Let's Talk About It, Oklahoma*

A training presented to Pioneer Library System Staff Members in April, 1995

Traditionally, book talks are more what I would consider to be “talking books”. The presenter memorizes an entire book and gives the audience a detailed plot summary (excepting the end, of course) interspersed with juicy quotes from the text. The effect is more for entertainment’s sake than for purposes of education, and I believe that such book talks do a disservice to library patrons, potential readers, and libraries themselves. Such book talks, obviously, also work better with novels than with works of nonfiction. I have always felt that book talks should provide the audience with information about the author, the critical response to the book, the genre in general, and related books that might also interest readers. Book talks should make the audience want to read a book for themselves; they shouldn’t eliminate the need to read anything but the last chapter!

While most often requests for book talks are for reviews of best sellers, I recommend that “book talkers” pursue their own interests and areas of expertise. For example, I have “specialized” in fiction by and about American Indians, hard-boiled detective fiction, southern women writers and Oklahoma authors, so I always know of a new book of interest in any of these categories as well as many related books. I read and collect book reviews and keep up-to-date on authors’ biographies through sources such as [Contemporary Authors](#) (a great reference available at most public libraries) and [The New York Times Book Review](#).

A possible format for a book talk would consist of presenting selected vignettes or topics from the book (for example, a discussion of the heroine’s

characteristics and possible literary antecedents or an author’s theory about the historical sources of gangs in contemporary urban areas), presenting (and reading from) differing reviews of a book (the American Library Association, for example, often praises books that The New York Times pans), a discussion of the author’s background and other publications, and a “show and tell” of the author’s other books as well as related books by other authors. Such book talks can also be interactive; I encourage participants to ask questions and make comments of their own.

Generally, when I give a book talk, I speak from an outline and have copies of reviews and other quotes in outline order. Occasionally I will write up a book talk, but usually after I have given it. If you read a presentation, you’ll lose the opportunity for interaction, be less expressive, and likely put your audience to sleep. It’s also important to make eye contact with the audience, and this is difficult when you’re reading your presentation.

I believe that approaching book talks in the manner suggested above can increase library patronage and circulation. Suggesting related titles to an audience, particularly when the book under discussion has a long waiting list, provides them with interesting alternatives to read in the meantime. Providing background on the author and reading reviews gives the audience information they can use to make choices about what they will read. And, finally, this kind of book is much less onerous for the presenter than having to memorize an entire book!



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Read More About It

How to Host a Book Discussion

(Including *How to Select a Discussion Facilitator* and *How to Facilitate a Book Discussion without Giving Away the Plot!*)

by Dr. Jennifer Kidney
Director

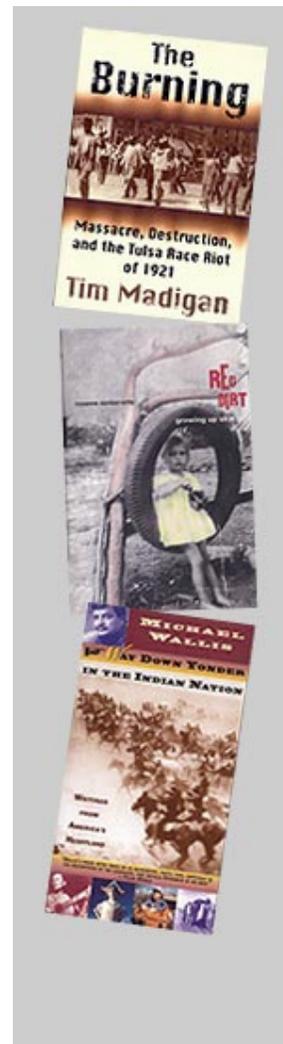
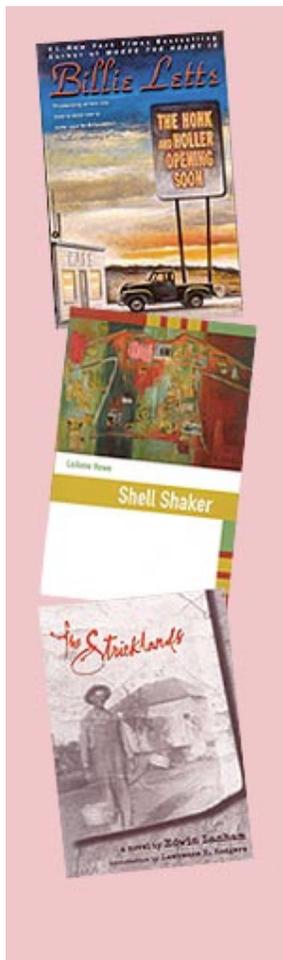
[Let's Talk About It, Oklahoma](#)

Reading and discussion programs are a great way to build "community" and may take on a variety of formats. Appropriate venues include bookstores, museums, churches, the Chamber of Commerce, or your own livingroom. If your public library is the sponsor, having the book discussion at the library is a great way to attract new patrons and introduce them to library resources. You may choose to take the discussion program to your audience—for example, to a retirement home or school. The possibilities are endless!

The number of people needed for an effective discussion can range from two or three friends meeting over lunch to thirty community residents attending a library reading and discussion program. All you need to host a book discussion are enough books for everyone who participates, discussion guides (which will be available on the Oklahoma Reads Oklahoma website), a presenter and/or discussion facilitator(s), and a place to meet.

As a sponsor for a book discussion, you should ask participants to sign up in advance. Obtain addresses and phone numbers for everyone, especially if you are lending the books to participants. Sign-up for the discussion should occur at least two weeks before the program so that everyone has time to read the book. This will also help you judge the size of meeting space and quantity of refreshments necessary to accommodate your group. To select a day and time for your book discussion, consider the schedules and needs of your audience and try to avoid conflicts with other regularly scheduled meetings or special events, such as high school basketball games, community festivals or major fundraisers.

If you anticipate a large group, you may begin the program with an introduction or overview of the book for the whole group, but plan time for small group discussion. Limiting discussion groups to



a maximum of eight or ten people gives everyone a chance to share their insights. Use color-coded or numbered name tags to easily divide participants into smaller groups.

You may decide you want an “expert” to facilitate your group. If so, investigate [funding opportunities and grant assistance from the Oklahoma Humanities Council](#). Book discussions including a presentation by a scholar or other speaker should last about two hours. A typical format would include an introduction of the program, a 30- to 40-minute presentation by the speaker, a 10- to 15-minute break for refreshments, an hour of small group discussion, and a reconvening of the large group for final questions and a summary of the discussion.

These are just a few guidelines to get you started, but remember: the point of Oklahoma Reads Oklahoma is to cultivate the Oklahoma spirit by reading and talking about our great state!

How to Select A Discussion Facilitator

Civic clubs, book clubs, senior citizens’ groups, church groups, and other community organizations are often sources for good discussion facilitators. It’s best if you have an opportunity to observe the potential discussion facilitator actually leading or participating in a discussion. However, your own personal knowledge of people in your community and the recommendations of people you trust can guide you in the selection of appropriate discussion facilitators.

A good discussion facilitator is, first, a good listener—not opinionated or overly talkative. Facilitators should be tactful, poised, alert, and have a sense of responsibility. The facilitator need not be an “expert” on the program subject matter, but should be able to think and take action quickly to keep the discussion on track.

Psychologists, counselors, human resources personnel, nurses and people who are trained to listen, observe, and answer questions tend to be very good discussion facilitators. People who are trained to lecture, persuade, or control an audience may not be the best choices for this role.

How to Facilitate a Book Discussion without Giving Away the Plot

Reading and discussion programs (RDPs) and book reviews are not synonymous. Book reviews focus on critiquing a book’s content or the author’s style. Reading and discussion programs encompass much more and are ultimately more fun.

Participants may share their own “reviews” of a book during an RDP, but the emphasis here is on generating audience participation, to discuss ideas that are stimulated by reading a common text. The role of discussion facilitator can be compared to a traffic cop. Your job is to get the discussion started, to keep it moving, and see that it stays on track—all while being attentive to each member of the group.

Following are some helpful hints to get your audience talking:

Do. . .

- Present a brief biographical sketch of the author, including their other works.
- Discuss how the book fits in the context of Oklahoma.
- Choose several topics from the Oklahoma Reads Oklahoma discussion guide (which will be available on this site) and ask the audience to offer comments on them.
- Compare the book to similar works by other authors.
- Present published reviews of the book. Differing opinions of books can be amusing and offer insight to the author's intent and effectiveness.
- Make eye contact with the audience and try not to read your presentation. You'll lose the opportunity for interaction and likely put your audience to sleep!

Don't. . .

- Open the discussion with your own opinions, especially if they are negative.
- Talk too much. You're not expected to be an expert on the book.
- Insist on everyone's participation. Encourage discussion by calling participants by name and asking for alternate points of view, but know when to move on!
- Indulge a dominator. Divert the discussion by interrupting, if necessary, and directing a question to someone else.

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