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Opinionhomepage1

# Julie DelCour: Tulsa: 'L' is for literate

Story Comments (15) Image (2)

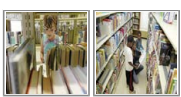
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Cassie Garrett, 3, reads in an aisle of the Central Library, on the last day before the library's closure to remodeling, on Thursday, Aug. 29, 2013. CORY YOUNG/Tulsa World



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Posted: Sunday, June 8, 2014 12:00 am  
By Julie DelCour | 15 comments

Here's a statistic that might leave you at a loss for words: One-third of high school students won't read a book after high school — ever.

College graduates are bound to do better, right? No, they do worse. Only 42 percent ever will read a book after receiving their diploma.

It's hard to wrap the mind around those oft-cited, and immensely disappointing, statistics gathered by verified sources.

Here's what is not disappointing: local library use.

Last fiscal year, the circulation of all materials exceeded six million at the Tulsa City-County Library. That includes regular books — the library has 1.5 million — as well as 9,000 audio books and 18,000 e-books. Collections once were even larger but ongoing renovations prompted the library to weed out many less-used materials.

Recently, in the first week of the library's popular Summer Reading Program, more than 10,000 participants signed up. Last year, 43,464 children and teens participated during the 11-week program, reading 376,252 books.

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Larry Bartley, library communications director, said coordinators are expecting comparable numbers this summer.

But do those kids keep reading after high school and college?

One measurement indicates that they might. The America's Most Literate Cities report, released annually by Central Connecticut State University, ranked Tulsa as No. 24 among the best-read cities with populations of 250,000 or more.

Actually, Tulsa has remained in the top 25 since the study, conducted by Dr. John W. Miller, began a decade ago and, in 2007, climbed to No. 16. Bartley, who's familiar with the study, isn't surprised.

"We have a very active system and consistently rank high for use and services."

Size/use of libraries is one of several factors CCSU considers for its rankings. Other considerations are educational levels, number of bookstores, Internet use and circulation of newspapers and other publications.

One study by itself, of course, isn't conclusive. But after so many poor quality-of-life rankings and so many questions about student reading readiness and failing schools, here and across Oklahoma, it's nice to read something positive.

Cities often ranking at the top in the well-read category by CCSU are Minneapolis, Seattle, Washington, D.C., St. Paul, Minn., San Francisco, Atlanta, Denver, Boston., St Louis and Cincinnati.

Here are some other statistics to mull:

- 80 percent of U.S. families did not buy or read a book last year.
- 70 percent of U.S. adults have not been in a bookstore in the past five years.(It's difficult even to find one, especially in midtown.)
- Most readers do not get past page 18 in books they purchase.
- Customers 55 and older account for more than one-third of all books purchased.

If correct, these findings support something author Gore Vidal said years ago: "Half the American public has never read a newspaper and half has never voted for a president. We can only hope it's the same half."

Election turnouts indicate that Tulsa-area residents have their problems with registering and actually showing up to vote. But they seem less shy about library use. Last year, a half-million people locally borrowed library materials, up 9 percent from 2012.

And here are some other encouraging signs:

- More than 31,000 new library cards were issued last year, an increase of 5 percent over the previous year.
- There were 8,000 students using the library's online Homework HelpNow service and 3,316 job seekers using the JobNow service.

Several years ago, the National Endowment for the Arts released a study showing fewer

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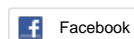
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Americans were reading for pleasure, that people on average spent two hours a day watching television and only seven minutes reading. Only one-third of 13-year-olds reportedly read daily.

The continued local demand for library services shows hope for reading as a lifetime habit.

Julie DelCour, 918-581-8379

julie.delcour@tulsaworld.com

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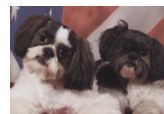
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48 HOURS

posted: June 09

CENTER OF YOUR

Ann McWhortor posted at 11:39 pm on Sun, Jun 8, 2014.

Posts: 1613

I utilize the e-books and audio books from Tulsa Library. We also go to the library at least every other week, most the time once a week.

The kids here had asked, about 2 weeks before school was out, when the summer reading program was going to start. They usually have their 20 books read in just a couple of weeks.

People will say when do you find time. Well, you have to make time. When school is in session I go up to the school early so I can sit and read for a while before they get out. When the kids are here for summer months we have quiet time at least 4 or 5 times a week. They are too old for naps so we have quiet time. It is time to relax and have all noise turned off. We all read the books we have checked out at the library.

I usually lean towards mystery books for fiction. Just finished reading the Alex Cross series by James Patterson about a month before school was out. Started with book 1 and there was 19. Now waiting for book 20 which won't be out until Nov. "Hush To Die"

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[read more \(about 12 more lines\)](#)

Cindy Keith posted at 9:41 pm on Sun, Jun 8, 2014.

Posts: 2317

Tulsa City-County Library online is where I go to browse magazines! Yes, magazines. Check it out! No pun intended....

⚠ | [Link](#) [Reply](#)

Cindy Keith posted at 9:32 pm on Sun, Jun 8, 2014.

Posts: 2317

So far this year I've read, "The Book Thief", "An American Tragedy", "The Alchemist", "The Art of Fielding", "Anna Karenina" and "The Burgess Boys". Until today I was a little embarrassed I hadn't managed to read more..... but then I remembered a couple of them had about 900 pages each. 😊

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Ron Denton posted at 7:38 pm on Sun, Jun 8, 2014.

Posts: 292

We are very fortunate to have an incredible library system here. They go above and beyond in collections, acquisitions and in finding new ways to get both young people and sometimes even adults to realize what is right here under their nose, and paid for by their taxes. I read a great deal, both paper and audio and am constantly impressed with what we have and how easy it is to search for it, and when found have it sent to the nearest branch. There is also a huge collection of both ebooks and audiobooks that can be downloaded to your computer.

I really don't visit our bookstores often as the few we have all have the same things. Their organization is bizarre, if there is one. It may be fine for browsing, but horrible if you go in looking for something specific. We really need more independent booksellers, like Lewis Meyer.

Reading has always meant never being bored and always being able to



## UNIVERSE CONTEST (SCENE)

🕒 posted: June 09



## C13 BOGO 1X1

🕒 posted: June 09

CERTIFICATE RATES		
	RATE	ADV
3-MONTHS	5.00%	5.00%
12-MONTHS	6.00%	6.00%
24-MONTHS	7.00%	7.00%
36-MONTHS	1.000%	1.000%
48-MONTHS	1.54%	1.53%
60-MONTHS	1.84%	1.83%

## RATES

🕒 posted: June 09

## CARRIERS NEEDED

🕒 Updated: Yesterday

learn about pretty much anything.

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Ron Hill posted at 3:24 pm on Sun, Jun 8, 2014.

Posts: 6027

Is this the first article by Julie where she didn't point out an ill of society and demand more government funding to solve the problem?

#refreshing

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Bernie Cremin posted at 12:28 pm on Sun, Jun 8, 2014.

Posts: 3889

I grew up in a family with books, books and more books. And now, my wife, son and daughter I have a house filled with books and bookcases overflowing.

We're getting ready to head to Gardner's in a few moments.

I was a Lit major before I was a History major and now I teach so I am reading all the time.

My wife reads a book a day or at least one every other day.

My son is a Lit major and reads all the time.

My daughter just reads and reads and it isn't even what her major is, but she loves books.

On the other hand, I have students who fall into that never bought or read a book last year category. But I have them reading in class. I give away books every year to my students.

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Ann McWhortor posted at 11:46 pm on Sun, Jun 8, 2014.

Posts: 1613

Bernie

I do a lot reading also. Can't imagine not having books to read. I don't buy as many books as i used to, but I do use the Library almost every week. I also download a lot of e-books and audio books.

I have been nursing a back injury so I have had a lot of time to read these last 3 weeks.

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John Elwell posted at 11:45 am on Sun, Jun 8, 2014.

Posts: 6301

Julie, The half who have never newspaper voted in great numbers the last two elections.

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What is your opinion of TV stations' coverage of the weather during severe storms?

They've got it just right.

They do too much.

They don't do enough.

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Daniel Creel posted at 10:30 am on Sun, Jun 8, 2014.

Posts: 1849

Incredible, Julie! I never imagined conservatives would shut their minds down so soon after formal education! But then again, I had an inkling from reading their post-graduate remarks on this forum every day. 😊

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rob morrison posted at 9:07 am on Sun, Jun 8, 2014.

Posts: 3071

This will upset the Tulsa loathing liberals on this site... 😊

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Louis Young posted at 11:44 am on Sun, Jun 8, 2014.

Posts: 984

Then you must be a lib Robo,you are always upset and loathing every thing on Earth. 😊 😊 😊

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rob morrison posted at 8:06 am on Sun, Jun 8, 2014.

Posts: 3071

What a crock...

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Louis Young posted at 11:42 am on Sun, Jun 8, 2014.

Posts: 984

Yes you are,monkey boy. 😊

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Don Michaels posted at 7:01 am on Sun, Jun 8, 2014.

Posts: 1025

I thought "L" stood for lesbian?

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John Smallwood posted at 6:37 am on Sun, Jun 8, 2014.

Posts: 541

Julie, facts, good and bad, that are concerning. Wow, only 42% read a book after college graduation. There was a saying years ago about hiring college graduates, "Hire them now why they think they know everything!". If only 42% read a book after graduation, they seem to believe that years later.

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SPORTS: Heat bounces back, evens series. **B1**    SCENE: Be sure to get children's eyes checked. **D1**

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Of course technology has impacted this. The internet search allows one to find many comments from books, etc. without reading the entire book. And we cannot ignore this as a valuable tool for continued learning.

Likewise, the stats cannot include one book purchased that is shared. Hopefully that would increase the stats positively.

Books sometime become movies. Yeah, that works well! Why read the Bible, when all you need to know can be learned from the "Ten Commandments", or some program on the History Channel/National Geographic/Discovery Channels? I am fully prepared to fish in the North Pacific because all I need to know I can watch on TV. And last but not least I will never marry a woman from New Jersey because of the TV



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