



Oaxaca Lending Library

Annual Report

February 2016

Introduction

The Oaxaca Lending Library is celebrating its 50th anniversary in 2016. This is a remarkable achievement for a non-governmental, non-profit, volunteer-run agency that operates in a foreign country and which must be self-sufficient to stay in operation!

What is the secret of the Library's success? In a word, the dedication and enthusiasm of hundreds of volunteers over these many years of service to the English-speaking community in Oaxaca. From the early founders through the present cadre of volunteers, the Library has been blessed with exceptional talent.

We are proud that the Oaxaca Lending Library is among the oldest continuously operating institution of its kind in Mexico. With the continued help of future volunteers and the enthusiastic support of members and friends, there will be a vigorous Library community in Oaxaca marking its 100th anniversary in 2066!

This annual report testifies to the hard work put in this past year and bears witness to the vision that will carry the Oaxaca Lending Library well into the future.

Message from the Board

Who We Are

The 2015 Oaxaca Lending Library Board is comprised of four officers and six directors. The Board's role is to conduct the ongoing management work of the library on behalf of its members. The Board members and their terminating years are:

- Rebecca Severeide, President (term expires 2016)
- Michelle Verduzco, Vice President (term expires 2018)
- Larry Ginzkey, Secretary (term expires 2016)
- Del Highfield, Treasurer (term expires 2017)
- Kazt Gonzalez Lumbreras, Director (term expires 2016)
- Stephanie Katz, Director (term expires 2016)
- Mary Randall, Director (term expires 2016)
- Tom Holloway, Director (term expires 2017)
- Mimi Haberfeld, Director (term expires 2017)
- John Burch, Director (term expires 2018)



What Guides Our Work

The Board uses the organization's vision, mission, and key values to inform and guide our work as we create and implement policies and management procedures on behalf of the Library's membership.

Vision of Organization

The Oaxaca Lending Library creates a vibrant community to encourage literacy, life-long learning, social interaction, and cultural exchange among our diverse members, visitors and Mexican host community.

Mission Statement

Our mission is to be a living library serving the English speaking community in Oaxaca while supporting and encouraging an interest in reading in the bilingual and Spanish speaking community of all ages. As a living library and cultural center, we assist patrons and visitors in their pursuit of information, education, entertainment and cultural understanding.

Key Values

- * Fostering respectful Interaction among ourselves, members and visitors
- * Being accountable and committed to members and visitors
- * Creating a life-long learning environment
- * Supporting community linkages

Key Accomplishments in 2015

Using the above guidance for our work on behalf of the membership, the Board and a mix of both long-time and newer members participated in a retreat to create an action plan. The plan is posted on the OLL website. Almost all elements of the plan were completed and provided a basis for a new work plan that will be created in February 2016. On behalf of the membership and our many visitors and Mexican hosts, your board worked more than 75 hours a week to implement the plan. Among the most important plan elements are:

- Changing to a more useful accounting system which facilitates creating a budget and finance-tracking procedures (*see details on the 2015 budget in the financial section of this report*)
- Creating and updating a procedural manual of volunteers' job descriptions, guidance for committees and formats for letters of agreement for contract employees and our community partners
- Gathering regular reports from various committees to maintain an overall picture of the OLL
- Monitoring our membership (*see details of who our members are in report below*)
- Overseeing renovations on the roof to create more meeting and event space
- Increasing our outreach efforts (*see details on outreach in the volunteer committee report, below*)
- Recommending updates of our bylaws to streamline and better track organization business



Treasurer's Report

Who He Is

Del Highfield, Treasurer (February 2015-2017)

What He Does

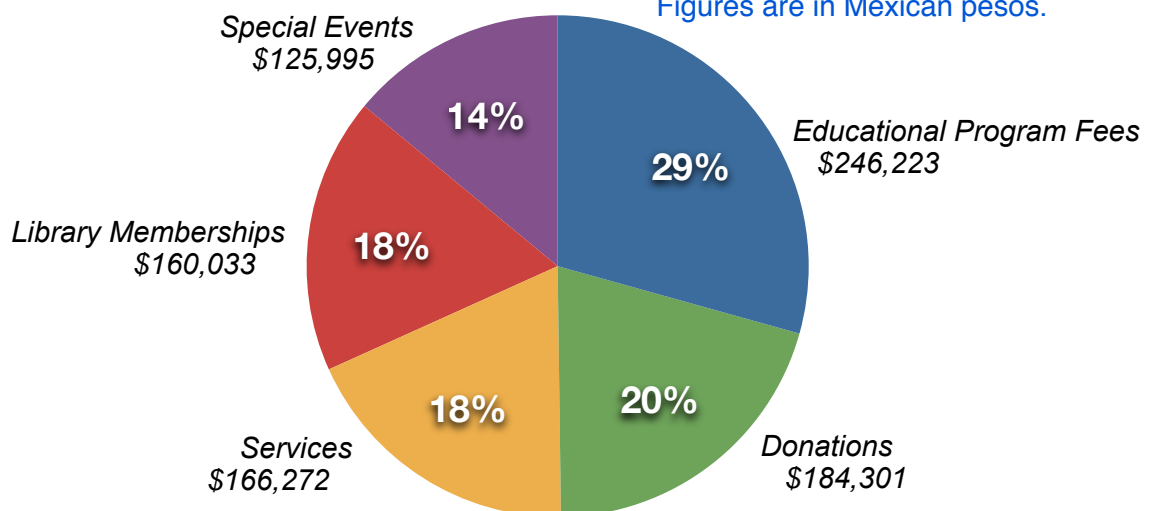
Monitors and guides all financial aspects of the OLL.

Key Accomplishments in 2015

- Completing a detailed internal audit of 2014. The Treasurer's Report at the 2015 Annual General Assembly Meeting (AGAM) was essentially correct and reasonably represented the financial position of the organization.
- Restructuring the accounting system
- Creating a Profit and Loss format that reflects OLL activities
- Simplifying Balance Sheet information
- Creating a simple internal cash control system
- Fulfilling Mexican legal Factura requirements
- Reporting monthly to the Board of Directors the OLL's financial position and Profit and Loss figures
- Verifying and attesting to the reconciliation of monthly bank statements
- Supervising the transfer of \$24,500 USD from the OLL Foundation accounts to the OLL*
- *The OLL has a 501(c) 3 Foundation in the U.S. which accepts tax-deductible donations.
- Activating a Finance Committee to create a quality budget for 2016
- Hiring a new accountant January 1, 2016 to improve services and supervise compliance with Mexican Employment Law
- Transferring check signing authority to proper OLL officials as per the vote at the 2015 AGAM
- Establishing an interest-bearing Rainy Day account
- Creating an Income and Expense reporting template for all events

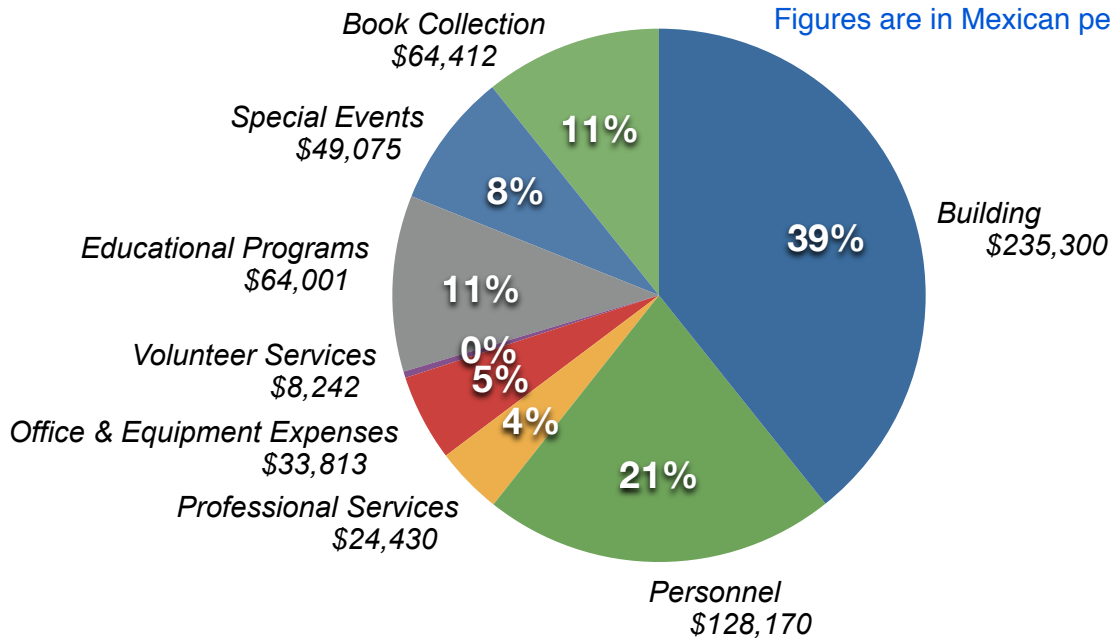
Where The Money Came From

Figures are in Mexican pesos.



Where The Money Went

Figures are in Mexican pesos.



Financial Summary

In a nutshell, the OLL had total income during 2015 of \$830,429 pesos, with expenses amounting to \$607,443 pesos, leaving a balance of \$222,986 pesos. This is a dramatic reversal of fortune from just a few years ago, when the Library consistently showed a loss at the end of each year. The Library is now on solid financial ground and is finally able to start building up cash reserves as a rainy day fund.

OLL Membership in 2015

Who We Are

The OLL members come from many places including Mexico, Canada, the United States and a smattering of European countries. In 2015, OLL enrolled 1327 different memberships at some point in the year. The number varied by time of year as part-time members came to and left Oaxaca.

Type	Number	% of Total
Child	410	31%
Individual	376	27%
Student	186	14%
1 month	131	10%
2 month	99	7%
Family	68	5%
3 months	40	4%
Lifetime	17	1%
	1327	100%

A Few Comments of Note About Memberships

There was a large increase in child members in 2015 as the direct result of providing all children under the age of 18 who use the OLL with a free membership. This policy change is a reflection of OLL's mission to promote life-long learning and honor the terms of a collaborative agreement with *Libros Para Pueblos*, one of OLL's community partners. Not only does a free membership tend to encourage children and youth to read and practice responsibility for checking out and returning books, it allows OLL to better track who uses the collection. In the past some family membership included children, which had the effect of masking how many children we serve.

OLL continues to serve short-term members (about 20% of our membership) as well as permanent residents (about

31% of our membership). The number of student memberships registered in 2015 is similar to that of recent years and is expected to grow as the Library engages in more outreach to local high schools and colleges.

Book Committee Report

Who We Are

The OLL Book Committee is comprised of 13 active members, many of whom have been on the committee for multiple years. They average over 5000 volunteer hours ever year to manage the collection. They are, in



Liz Renn has been a member of the Book Committee for a phenomenal 27 years!

alphabetical order: Tom Dunham, Siobhan Murphy Grogan, Maria Rosa Johnson, Peter McCallion, Arlene McCormick, Kevin McGrath, Linda Martin, David Myler, Beverly Newell, Liz Renn, Rebecca Severeide, Shannon Sheppard, and JoAnn Wexler. Deron Dilger has provided countless hours of technical assistance for database and internet support. In addition, Adriana Perez Maldonado, the OLL Library Manager, works on the collection database. During 2015 the committee chair rotated among the members.

What Guides Our Work

The library currently has almost 25,000 items in the collection. This is more than 6 running kilometers of books! Managing the collection is the major function of the committee. A collection development policy, which is posted on the OLL website, guides the committee decisions about what to add to and delete from the collection. Each committee role has a job description providing details of the major committee tasks.

Key Accomplishments in 2015

The committee has routine tasks as well as special projects they undertake. Among the routine tasks are:

- Documenting circulation, which was over 14,000 items in 2015, comparable to other recent years
- Adding donated and purchased items to the collection, which average 200 a month
- Maintaining a wish list for members and visitors to use
- Periodically weeding the collection of books no longer timely, worn out, or not checked out by members. Approximately 4000 items were deleted in 2015 to make room for new material.
- Managing sales of weeded or duplicate books, which provides the Library with additional revenue
- Maintaining the OLL website. Special thanks to Shannon Sheppard for handling this task!

Special Projects in 2015

- Evaluating the OLL data base and compiling a list of desired features for a possible change in 2016. Special thanks to Deron Dilger, who worked as a volunteer IT consultant to the committee!
- Cleaning up database errors to facilitate locating items in the collection
- Starting a Community Book Drop Project to advertise the library and promote reading among travelers and non-members
- Working with Saturday *Intercambio* Spanish speakers to select and purchase contemporary Spanish language novels of interest
- Selecting a Poet Laureate, Gil Colgate, whose charge is to create poems to share at special events
- Tracking social media usage -- i.e. visits to OLL web site

Building Committee Report

Who We Are

There are four key members of the Building Committee: Tom Holloway, Larry Ginzkey, Joan Harmon, and Rebecca Severeide. This committee plans and oversees renovations to improve the physical structure of the library and guides routine maintenance. Many other library members have helped extensively with painting and clean up.

Key Accomplishments in 2015

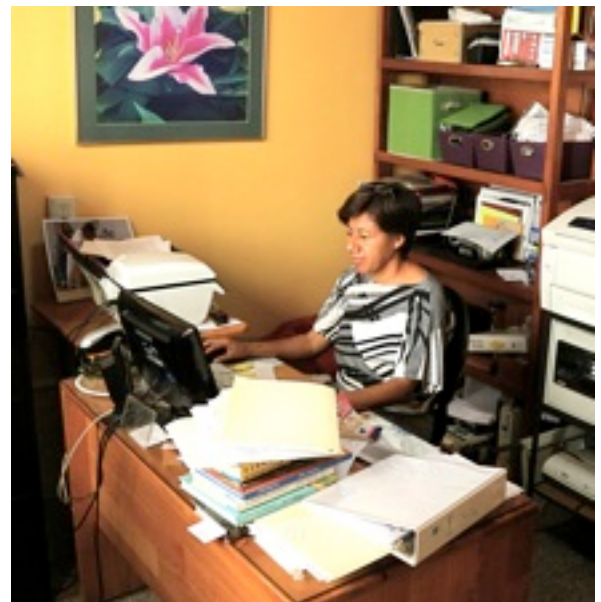
There were two key projects this year: the roof project and upgrades to the manger's office.

Raise the Roof Phase II

As part of the 2014 renovations, a new staircase opened up easier access to the roof. Given that meetings and many events can close off access to some of the downstairs rooms, going up to take advantage of unused space made sense. During the fall of 2015, a cover was put over half of the roof and a new tile floor was installed. A small amount of work remains, but the OLL now has a covered rooftop patio which is already being put to good use on a daily basis. Special thanks to Tom Holloway, who donated over 300 hours personally supervising the work, and to the many others who spent many hours painting and cleaning up.



The new rooftop patio sees daily use as Library patrons meet there for classes, discussions or -- as here -- mah-jong!



Adriana, our incredible Library Manager, hard at work in her remodeled office.

The Office Makeover

Our library manager, Adriana Perez Maldonado, has made do with a drab office and a hodgepodge of office furniture for many years. The Board and the Building Committee determined it was time to upgrade the office to make it more pleasant and efficient and to give her the office she deserves for her quality and dedicated work. Special thanks for Mimi Haberfeld, Ted Acres, and Steve Custer who carried out this project over a three-week period during the summer.

A Special Note on Financing the Remodeling

We want to stress that no money from the Library's operating funds were used for either of these projects. The work was possible because of a special fund-raising campaign led by Joan Harmon and a sizable donation from Kathryn Bertelli, made in memory of Jason Hackler, a long-time library member and Kathryn's close friend. In addition, a number of in-kind donations helped stretch the budget for these two projects. More renovations are planned for 2016 as finances permit.

Educational Events Committee Report

Who We Are

The Educational Events Committee was comprised of six people this past year: Joan Harmon (chairman), Jill Duttonhofer, Larry Ginzkey, Spencer Grogan, Peter McCallion, Michelle Verduzco and Bliss Wilson.

What Guides Our Work

By its nature the Oaxaca Lending Library is a repository of information and culture. There is a vast amount of knowledge contained in the books and DVD's that find a home in the Library. The OLL strives to be a dynamic, interactive source of knowledge, as well. To that end, we sponsor a wide range of lectures, films, discussions, classes and tours.

It should be noted that participant fees charged for educational events sponsored by the Library cover nearly one-third of the Library's annual operating expenses.



Gil Colgate, the Library's poet laureate, reads a poem he composed for this year's "Days of the Dead" events in early November.

Accomplishments in 2015

During the calendar year 2015 the Educational Events committee, with the help of many presenters and the assistance of a dedicated corps of volunteers, sponsored a total of seventy-three events. These were attended by 2167 people. The income to the Library generated by these events amounted to 246,223 pesos for the year.

While many dozens of people collaborated in the planning and execution of the Library's educational events, we want to single out Joan Harmon for special recognition. She not only chairs this committee, but serves as the Library's communications nerve center, keeping the master calendar of events and publishing the weekly eBlast which keeps the more than 1700 people who receive it up to date about what's happening at the Library.

Volunteer Committee Report

Who We Are

This committee consists of the following members: John Burch (chairman), Michelle Verduzco, Siobhan Grogan, Alan Goodin, Jill Duttonhofer and Rebecca Severeide. This is a new committee created in 2015 to support all other committees and manage the daily public face of the library.

What We Do

The committee supports and works with all other committees and the Library Manager to ensure their volunteer needs are met. The committee oversees filling volunteer schedules for the circulation desk, café, greeter, and bulletin board, in conjunction with the individual managers for each of these. In addition, the committee tracks and supports several community outreach efforts and compiles a log of volunteer hours across all programs. Volunteers are the heart of the Oaxaca Lending Library, and during 2015 over 10,000 hours of time were



Catron Booker does an outstanding job teaching English to the youngsters in the weekly Saturday Ninos Adelante program.

logged to keep the doors open and programs running -- the equivalent of five full-time employees!



A young man hones his chess skills in the Jovenes Adelante program, which consistently draws 15-20 participants each week.

Key Accomplishments in 2015

- Forming a reliable committee of committed members
- Sending out weekly updates and work schedules
- Working with UABJO to secure a student intern, Eladio Robles, and providing oversight for him.
- Rationalizing the cash register keys to match budget lines
- Providing two in-service orientation programs for volunteers to update them on recent changes
- Developing a series of handouts which describe the *Intercambio*, *Jovenes Adelante*, *Niños Adelante*, and *Hoofing It In Oaxaca* programs (in Spanish and English) to give out at the circulation desk
- Appointing managers for regular public-face jobs (e.g., Café, Circulation Desk, Greeters, Introduction to Oaxaca). Each team leader is responsible for recruitment, staffing and training
- Developing a New/Renewing Membership form to provide a paper trail for membership payments and data entry

Special Notes about Outreach to Our Mexican Hosts

In addition to our on-going weekly "Introduction to Oaxaca" series to orient English-speaking visitors and new members, OLL's volunteer committee directly supports three key outreach efforts with Spanish-speakers on Saturday: *Intercambio*, *Jovenes Adelante* and *Ninos Adelante*.

The *Intercambio* provides an opportunity for Spanish and English speakers to practice each language and informally learn about both cultures. A total of 1980 people took part in this program in 2015 (1257 Spanish speakers, and 723 English speakers), led by volunteer Flor Bautisa. *Jovenes Adelante* (ages 11-17) and *Niños Adelante* (ages 3-10) provide English language and craft activities and promote literacy development for local children. Over 1200 young people and their families participated during 2015. *Jovenes* is directed by Sonia Bautista Leon and the *Niños* program is led by Catron Booker.



Every Saturday morning the Library is abuzz as people of all ages join in the intercambio program.

Library patrons never fail to express surprise at how busy and lively the Library is on Saturdays! The Board cordially invites you to come see for yourself what goes on here!

Last, But Not Least: Special Events at OLL

The library is more than books and activities promoting life-long learning. As a community center for English speakers and our Mexican hosts, there are a number of social events held each year to celebrate non-Mexican holidays. In addition, fund-raising sales events help support our activities. Each special event taps additional volunteers who step up to help out. In 2015 the Library profited by \$125,995 pesos from these special events.



"The Donald" takes some lumps at the OLL 4th of July party.

Winter Upscale Boutique Sale

In February, under the leadership of Bliss Wilson, library and community members rent tables to sell higher-end artwork and collectables. Food is offered for sale while shoppers browse to find new treasures to take home.

4th of July Celebration

Each summer, members and visitors gather to celebrate American Independence Day. In 2015, the gathering was a no-host meal at a local buffet restaurant. A special feature was a *piñata* of an American political figure who recently made derogatory comments about Mexican immigrants to the United States. The *piñata* candy was distributed to Mexican families enjoying a meal at the restaurant, who cheered us on. The event was even featured in *Mexico News Daily*, an English-language digital newspaper.

Summer Fish Fry

Over the American Labor Day holiday at the end of May, Bliss Wilson and Cheri Bingham organized a dinner at a viewpoint restaurant just outside of the city. It was a time to enjoy the company of friends and fresh-caught mountain trout for dinner. Delicious!

Thanksgiving Dinner

Since the largest number of our members are from the United States, the Lending Library sets aside the last Thursday of November to pause and give thanks for our good fortune in selecting Oaxaca as a place to live or visit. All other countries' citizens are welcome to join, and many do. In 2015 over 70 people feasted on a traditional turkey dinner, superbly prepared and elegantly served by Chef Juan Carlos. The event was held at

the country home of Tony and Rebecca Raab in San Pablo Etla, where the fall weather was ideal for people to schmooze and dine on the outdoor patio.

Winter Holiday Party

To celebrate the opening of our new rooftop patio, a Christmas Day potluck and ribbon cutting celebration was held. Michelle Verduzco organized the event, with help from a large committee of volunteers, who baked the hams and turkeys, decorated tables and served the meal. All other food was prepared and donated by the 100+ participants. Tom Holloway, who supervised the construction of the new rooftop space, cut the ribbon to officially open the area for use.



Casa Raab was the place to be to enjoy a sumptuous feast at the Library's holiday dinner on Thanksgiving Day last November.

Annual Bazar

For many years the OLL has held an annual bazar in December. This event is on the calendars of many local families as well as Library members, who are looking for quality goods at inexpensive prices. Last year over 40 volunteers helped sort and price items for sale, set up tables, manned the sales desk, and sold snacks to shoppers. 2015 was the most successful year to date, netting the Library close to 70,000 pesos! Special and sincere thanks to Mickey Gardner and Bud Combs, who organized and managed the sale.

Saluting Our Volunteers

The multitude of volunteers who serve the Oaxaca Lending Library are the heart and soul of the organization. The Library simply could not exist without their enthusiasm and dedication. So we conclude this annual report with a photo tribute to our volunteers, apologizing for the fact we do not have sufficient space for everyone's picture.



Nora van Woudenberg is one of many volunteers who staff the OLL snack bar, providing fresh coffee and cold drinks, as well as toasted bagels and other treats.



Bliss Wilson (at head of the table) leads one of the ever-popular Monday morning "Introduction To Oaxaca" discussions.



Suzanne Lyons (right) is one of the OLL's friendly greeters.



Jill Duttenhofer arranges flowers for the "Day of the Dead" altar. She is also on two OLL committees.

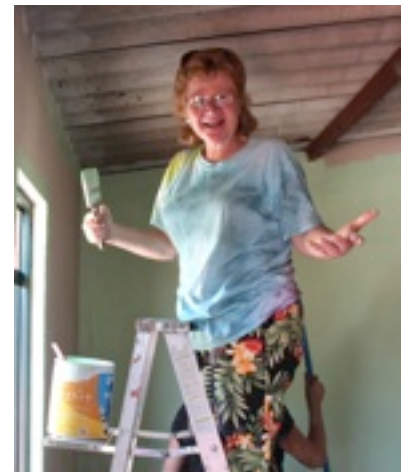


David Myler, former OLL president, is now our legal representative.



Board members Larry Ginzkey & Tom Holloway relocate a tinoco.

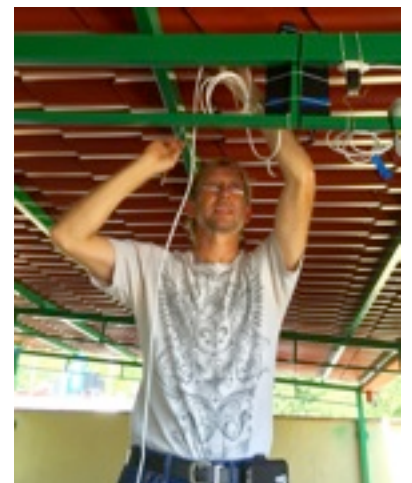
The ongoing remodeling of the Library has provided an opportunity for many OLL members to show off their particular skills. We are grateful to all those who have given hundreds of hours of labor to save the Library money and make the project a resounding success!



Siobhan Grogan is on the Book Committee, but she also wields a paint brush.



Andrés Cruz (left) and Rafa & Omar Rito - all university students at The Oaxaca Learning Center - scrape and paint an air shaft during their Christmas holiday.



Deron Dilger installs a Wi-Fi transmitter on the new rooftop patio so Library patrons can access the internet from their mobile devices.



Steve Custer is our go-to painter in residence.