OHA NEWSLETTER

November 2026

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PRESIDENT'S LETTER

By Mark Cave



OHA has been a part of my life for decades and I have always loved the annual conference; listening to the talks, presenting, going to receptions, and taking long walks in a place that I had never been before. But looking back on the past twenty years, the most important thing the conference has given me was an opportunity to connect and reconnect, building relationships over the years that have created a space in the world where someone like me belongs.

I have been able to deepen my experience since becoming part of OHA's leadership. I came to Portland a day early to "help" the executive office team prepare. Hailey Rowe had preparations well in hand and with Stephanie Barrett, Laura McNeice, and Linda Moldovan attended to hundreds of little details ranging from changes to the program, to signage and name badges. Stephen Sloan and Steven Sielaff created as always, a fun but productive vibe as they hurried around attending to larger issues with the hotel and AV staff.

Wednesday, as our wonderful slate of workshops were going on, I attended a day long council meeting organized by outgoing president Sarah Milligan. We discussed updates to our strategic plan that we had been working on throughout the year, the role of ombudsperson which Anne Valk has so capably filled, plans for the development of an AI policy for OHA, and the establishment of a task force to explore the future development of our Principals and Best Practices.

Later I reconnected with Molly Graham, Shanna Farrell, Teresa Bergen, Morgen Young, and Raina Croft; all of whom made significant contributions to putting on the Portland conference. At the Newcomers breakfast I met Ryan Mews from South Dakota who was attending his first OHA conference. I enjoyed our conversation very much and hope to get a chance to visit again. I also reconnected with Don Ritchie, David Dunaway, and Nancy MacKay who have been part of OHA far longer than I, and for whom the social ritual of our conference must hold great meaning.

Thursday and Friday were filled with hours of listening. Sean Holman's plenary on the victims of climate change was an inspiration as was Julian Brave NoiseCat's keynote. Our reception at the Oregon Historical Society was amazing and gave us the opportunity to recognize the accomplishments of so many of our colleagues. But perhaps more important were the many connections and reconnections made.

Saturday comes so fast. Friends disappear, flying back to far away places. This year I stayed to the end to facilitate the Q & A at the screening of Heidi Hutner's impactful film. As I was hauling my luggage to catch an Uber, I was excited to be with my wife and cats again, but also a little sad that it will be a year before I will be with this group again.

Maintaining this space of belonging requires a lot of work and attentiveness from people that care. It requires the support of institutions that value what we do. It requires contributions to our endowment fund by generous hearts that Play It Forward. But more than anything it depends on you as members who show up for each other. Looking forward to Chicago!

DIRECTORS' COLUMN

By Stephen Sloan



Playing It Forward: Investing in the Future of the Oral History Association

Over the past several years, OHA leadership has worked to strengthen the organizational infrastructure that will sustain the association for generations to come. As we have worked with successive Council leadership and our new Development Committee to build a stronger financial foundation, we have made meaningful progress. I'm excited to share another important milestone in that effort: the launch of the Play It Forward Circle, OHA's new legacy giving initiative.

If you've been following OHA Council business, my reports, and the OHA Newsletter over the last few years, you may have noticed some important developments. Our endowment is growing. During the tenure of the current executive office, the organization has been able to support a full-time paid employee in our Program Associate position. Our annual OHA Day of Giving, held in celebration of the anniversary of the organization's founding, continues to build momentum and engagement. We are also establishing a standing History Committee to help institutionalize the work of documenting, celebrating, and recognizing the people and collective efforts that have built OHA over the past six decades.

We have made real progress on both short-term fundraising and longer-term development strategies. But one important piece has been missing: a framework for planned and legacy giving that can help secure OHA's financial future well beyond any one annual campaign or leadership transition. The Play It Forward Circle is an important step toward filling that gap.

We are here because generations of oral historians have contributed their time, expertise, creativity, and commitment to building and sustaining this organization. Many of us have found professional community, intellectual inspiration, mentorship, opportunities, and a sense of belonging through OHA. We have benefited from the work of those who came before us, just as today's members are building opportunities for those who will follow.

Looking ahead, we need that same commitment. We need volunteers, committee members, mentors, and organizational ambassadors. We also need a stronger foundation of financial independence that reinforces the autonomy and stability of our executive office while enabling OHA to continue serving the profession amid evolving institutional, economic, and leadership landscapes.

For oral historians who have benefited from being part of OHA and are thinking about how they might support future generations of professionals, the Play It Forward Circle offers an opportunity to make that commitment lasting.

What is the Play It Forward Circle?

The Play It Forward Circle will include individuals who make a planned giving commitment of at least $10,000 to the Oral History Association. Through a bequest in a will or estate plan, a beneficiary designation, or another planned giving arrangement, members of the Circle help ensure that OHA will have the resources to nurture and support oral historians for generations to come.

Planned gifts and other contributions to OHA's long-term financial health can take many forms. Examples include:

- Bequests: Designating a specific amount or percentage of your estate to OHA through your will or estate plan.
- Retirement Assets: Naming OHA as a beneficiary of all or a portion of retirement account assets.
- Outright Gifts: Contributing money or personal property to support OHA's long-term mission.
- Charitable Gift Annuities and Trusts: Establishing arrangements that can support both your financial planning goals and OHA's future.
- Real Estate and Other Assets: Including property or other assets in your legacy giving plans.

There are many additional possibilities, and the right approach will depend on your individual circumstances and financial goals. A planned gift can be a meaningful way to support an organization that has mattered to you while retaining control of your assets during your lifetime.

More than a Gift: A Community Invested in the Future

The Play It Forward Circle is about more than recognizing financial commitments. We envision it as a community of colleagues who share an investment in the long-range health of OHA and the future of our profession.

Members of the Circle will receive specialized annual updates from OHA's executive team, opportunities for scheduled conversations about the organization's priorities and development, and dedicated opportunities to gather and connect at the annual meeting. We hope to create experiences that make membership in the Circle an ongoing relationship with the organization and with fellow oral historians who share a commitment to its future. These might include special local site visits, after-hours gatherings, and opportunities to meet guest speakers and organizational leaders.

We want the Circle to be a way for people who have helped shape OHA's past and present to remain connected to its future.

If you are interested in exploring a planned gift, I can help you learn more about giving options and how to document your intentions. Of course, you are not required to notify OHA if you include us in your estate planning but letting us know about your commitment allows us to welcome you into the Play It Forward Circle and recognize your investment in the organization.

As we celebrate 60 years of oral historians coming together to build something larger than any one of us, I hope you'll consider what it means to Play It Forward. The Oral History Association exists because people believed in the importance of this work and invested their time, knowledge, resources, and care in making it possible. Our responsibility now is to ensure that the next generations of oral historians inherit an organization with the stability, independence, and resources to help them thrive.

Thank you for all you have done and continue to do to make OHA what it is today. Together, we can build on this strong foundation and shape an even brighter future for OHA over the next 60 years.

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT
TERESA BERGEN



Q: Tell us a bit about your background with oral history and working with the Oral History Association.

A: I've been working in oral history since the 1990s. I worked in-house at the T. Harry Williams Center for Oral History during and after going to graduate school at LSU. Then I moved to Oregon and started my own business transcribing, editing and indexing oral history interviews. I started out with cassette tapes and now we have AI, so there have been lots of changes.

My first OHA meeting was in 2002 in San Diego. I decided to attend that one because San Diego is my hometown and I could save money by staying with my family and commuting by trolley to the meeting. I found the panels interesting and the connections professionally helpful. Since that first meeting, I've attended 16 times and have made many friends and professional acquaintances in the association. My book *Transcribing Oral History* (Routledge, 2019) came directly from meeting editor Nancy MacKay at OHA.
I served on the nominating committee several times, and on publications for six years. Most recently, I was local arrangements chair for the Portland meeting.

Q: What called you to plan the local arrangements for this year's annual meeting?

A: More like who. Stephen Sloan got in touch in April 2024 to start discussing host hotels. Later, I became chair of the local arrangements committee and got to recruit some of my favorite Portland-based oral historians to serve on the committee with me: Morgen Young, Laurie Mercier, Sarah Cantor, Devin Busby, Donna Sinclair and Pam Pierce. We all love Portland and wanted to show people a good time in our city. I especially liked arranging tours so we could take people to some of our favorite places.

Q: What have you gained, personally or professionally, from planning the local arrangements in Portland?
A: Working on the committee gave me a chance to interact more with fellow committee members, and with OHA leadership like incoming president Mark Cave. And Hailey, at OHA HQ, was a champ who took care of a million details.

I accompanied three of the tours—Keep Portland Queered, ghosts and Lone Fir Cemetery—so I got to learn more Portland history and hear some good ghost stories.

Q: What do you hope others gained from seeing what Portland has to offer?

A: We live in a beautiful, forested city with tons of creative people. I hope historians got out of the hotel and hugged a tree, saw some art, and walked along the Willamette River.

Q: For those who couldn't attend the annual meeting, what is one aspect of Portland and the oral history community in the Pacific Northwest you'd like fellow oral historians to know?

A: Bigfoot is real!

OHA NEWS UPDATES



We look forward to co-hosting the 2027 Annual Meeting alongside the American Folklore Society in Chicago, IL from November 3-6, 2027. **Click the image above for more information and call for proposals.**

RECAPPING THE ANNUAL MEETING

By Noah Price



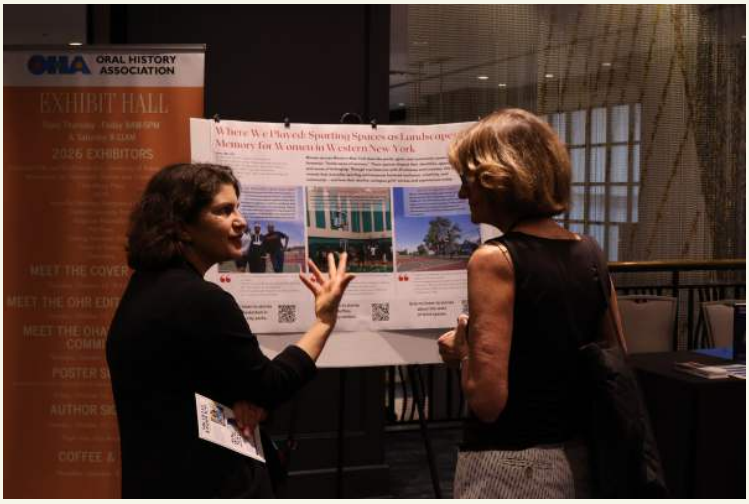
Audience watching Friday's Keynote Address

This year's Annual Meeting, held in Portland, Oregon, featured a wide array of panels, posters, and presentations enlightening us all on another year of incredible work from around our community. As this completes my first year as the Newsletter Editor for the Oral History Association, it was also my honor to attend the Annual Meeting for the first time. It was a delight to connect with so many of you while popping into as many of the sessions that I could to grab photos of the event. However, for the sake of brevity, I am only going to highlight a few of the sessions that I attended in this recap.

Sean Holman's plenary address on Thursday set the tone for much of the meeting. Noting the ways in which we often fail to connect the current impacts to humanity to the climate crisis, Sean's presentation demonstrated the necessity of our work as oral historians to combat the collapse of our environment. I was particularly moved with his depictions of how recent heatwaves in the Pacific Northwest have had devastating human tolls that can only be felt with such weight when listening the oral histories of the people surviving the crisis.



Sean Holman delivering their plenary address



Amy Moritz (left) speaking with another attendee about her poster.



Julian Brave NoiseCat giving his keynote address.



Left to right: Priscilla M. Martinez, Tammie Sinclair ,Stefani Evans, and Cary Rositas-Sheftel

I greatly enjoyed connecting with several of the poster presenters on Friday morning as well. Amy Moritz was also a first time attendee who was excited to share about her work documenting women's sports in western New York. "I love [the annual meeting]," Amy shared with me. "You never know what to expect from conferences, but this place is so welcoming and impactful."

Julian Brave NoiseCat provided this year's keynote, sharing with us a sample of his incredibly entertaining and immensely powerful book, *We Survived the Night*, a collection of stories both researched and passed to him through the oral tradition. His portrait of Indigenous life cannot be separated from the land itself and this year's theme, "Landscapes of Memory."

It was particularly important to me to attend the panel of my former colleague Stefani Evans and the other panelists of "Growing Archives of Trauma, Part II: Preservation, Stewardship, and the Public Life of Trauma-Based Oral Histories." As a Las Vegas resident, I have personal memory of the events of mass violence Stefani shared about UNLV's oral history recording of. It was powerful to hear from other projects as well that has had the burden of collectng these stories.

Thank you to everyone who made such a welcoming Annual Meeting for me. I cannot wait to connect with you all again next time along with the American Folklore Society in Chicago!

AWARD WINNERS

EMERGING CRISES ORAL HISTORY RESEARCH FUND

Olena Hyrn, Svitlana Scherbyna & Tamara Dorokhina, "'We Stayed': Civilian Choices and Everyday Survival in Frontline Communities of the Chernihiv Border Region"

Muira McCammon & Ruth Moon Mari, "Documenting a Media Vacuum: Understanding How Members of a Key Media Ecosystem Are Navigating the Loss of US Federal Support"

INDIGENOUS INITIATIVE RESEARCH FUND

Phillip White-Cree, "Akwesasne Community Oral History Project"

ARTICLE AWARD

Anna Robinson-Sweet & Michelle Caswell, "Paying it Forward: The Prefigurative Politics of Record Creation" (*KULA: Knowledge Creation, Dissemination and Preservation Studies*, 2025)

HONORABLE MENTION: Edward Brudney, "Individual Life Histories and Emblematic Memories: Conducting Oral Histories in PostConflict Argentina" (*Oral History Review*, 2025)

BOOK AWARD

Alistair Thomson, John Murphy, Kate Murphy and Johnny Bell, with Jill Barnard, *Fathering: An Australian History* (Melbourne University Press, 2025)

Marla A. Ramírez,
Banished Citizens: A History of the Mexican American Women Who Endured Repatriation (Harvard University Press, 2025)

CLIFF KUHN POSTSECONDARY TEACHING AWARD

Thuy Vo Dang, UCLA School of Education & Information Studies

ELIZABETH B. MASON MULTI-MEDIA AWARD

National Public Housing Museum, "National Public Housing Museum Historic Apartment Tours Exhibition"
Elspeth Brown, "Pussy Palace Oral History Project"
Tanya Latortue, "Of Black Wombhood"

HONORABLE MENTION: Todd Holmes, "Save Our Coast: Proposition 20 and the Creation of the California Coastal Commission"
Stacey Zembryzycki, Jennifer Woodley, & Tom Thompson, "Voices Revealed: 'Porter Talk'"

STETSON KENNEDY VOX POPULI ("VOICE OF THE PEOPLE") AWARD

Legal Defense Fund Oral History Project, Kimberly Barzola

ORAL HISTORY REVIEW UPDATES

By Holly Werner-Thomas

We are in a moment of transition at the *Oral History Review*. Molly Todd, who has served as Managing Editor for the past three years, is moving on. Molly has been responsible for much of the journal's recent successes. These include mostly behind-the-scenes tasks, not least working with our publisher and the other editors to streamline production. But Molly is also a stellar editor, diligently (and kindly) working with authors to perfect their submissions until they are ready for publication – the articles you all see that have helped make the *OHR* number eight of 553 academic history journals, or the top 1.5 percent. So, thank you, Molly! (Fortunately, Molly will continue as a guest co-editor for an upcoming special section on oral history and authoritarianism.)

And we welcome our new Managing Editor, Meghan Behnke, whom will serve the next three-year term starting this January. Meghan brings a combination that is rare for this role: hands-on experience running a scholarly journal's editorial operations, a Master's in Oral History, and a design background suited to a journal's visual and digital production needs. Welcome Meghan! (And by the time you read this, we will no doubt also have a new Copyeditor. More on that next time.)

And finally, the *Review* is also always seeking reviewers. If you are interested in peer reviewing for us – a vital way to contribute to the journal – please reach out to me at holly@hollythomasoralhistory.com or to our Managing Editor, Molly Todd, at managingeditorohr@gmail.com. For book and media review inquiries, please contact our Book Review Editor, Jacey Anderson, at ohrbookreviewеditor@gmail.com, and our Media Review Editor, Bud Kliment, at OHRMedia@outlook.com.

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