



# LETTERS

## College Town, U.S.A.

I am writing a book about the American college town that will focus on Norman for a chapter that examines the role of the campus in college town life.

In my experience in Norman and elsewhere, college campuses often function not only as environments for learning but also as public places. With their concert halls, theaters, museums, sports stadiums, landscaped grounds and busy calendars of events, campuses are the site of a wide range of formal and informal activities, and serve not just students and staff, but the larger population of a town and region. They are centers of culture. They act as parks. They have a symbolic importance. The role of the campus in American higher education clearly extends beyond the formal educational mission of the university.

To help me in my research, I would appreciate hearing from OU alumni, faculty, staff, students and others about their experiences with the OU campus. What has the campus meant to you? How have you used the campus, particularly for non-academic activities? I welcome reminiscences, stories, observations—anything that expresses the varied role college campuses play in people's lives.

Thank you for your consideration.

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## Finding a Niche for Mayfield

I read with great interest the "Finding Their Own Niches" article in the Spring 2002 *Sooner Magazine*. I am wondering about this program and whether my dad, J. C. Mayfield, might qualify for a future niche.

I am biased, admittedly, but over 30 years at OU, he made major contributions to OU life to include employing and counseling hundreds (probably thousands) of students (as well as providing at

least coffee table advice to presidents/faculty, on many subjects, perhaps most notably on how to catch fish). He was involved in many facets of University growth in addition to serving as Director of the Union Book Exchange, and, I think, was known as a genuine "character/fixture" on campus for most of his career.

I note that Emil Kraettli, George Wadsack, J. R. Morris, Paul Massad and Savoie Lottinville, all very deserving administrators, have been so honored, and it would be wonderful to add Dad's name to that list.

*Jim Mayfield, '63 ba  
Highland, Maryland*

## All About the Weather

The photo and article about the National Weather Center in Summer 2002 issue of *Sooner Magazine*, ("Under Construction") together with its mention in the magazine's "Prologue," brings to mind once again the very beginning of the first weather center in Norman. Hardly a month goes by without my hearing some weather person of a local TV station or the Weather Channel mentioning, "The National Severe Storms Center at Norman, Oklahoma" or words to that effect. My sisters Evalee, Ruth, Marie and I are four of a small number of living persons who were "in on" the establishment of the Weather Center, although our involvement was limited to discussion at our home's dinner table. I don't remember the exact year, but it was shortly before or shortly after my matriculation as a first grader at Norman's McKinley School, and that was fall 1937. Our father, Bennie Shultz Sr., (1896-1963), BSEE '18, was one of the "players." I don't know how much, if any, political activity included him, but after it was built, he had the keys.

At 12 noon every day including Sundays and holidays, someone had to "read the weather." Most days, it was done by one of the young men who were students/part-time employees of the university who were trained in weather reading by our father and administratively reported to

him. Often on holidays, none of them was in town, and our father would have to go "read the weather" himself, and he sometimes took me with him.

The center included two facilities, the Weather Station atop the flat roof of the two-story red brick Paint Shop building on Felgar Street, and the Evaporation Station in the middle of the huge grass lawn between the Field House (now Howard McCasland Field House) and Jenkins Avenue. The Weather Station was accessible only by a straight-up iron ladder on the outside of the paint shop, and it included instruments for recording wind direction and velocity, humidity, and rainfall rate. Also included were a rain gauge (for measuring total precipitation since previous reading); and two mercury thermometers, one to read highest temperature and one to read lowest temperature since last reading. After "reading the weather," the person had to pour out the rain gauge and shake down both thermometers.

The wind instrument was a weather vane free to rotate in a horizontal plane, having a fin on one end and arrowhead on the other, so the arrow was always pointing into the wind; plus an anemometer consisting of a horizontal three-spoke "wheel" with an open-shell metal half-sphere at the end of each spoke so that no matter what the wind direction was, wind would catch in at least one shell and make it rotate.

The rainfall rate was measured by funneling the rainfall into a small stream, which flowed down upon a metal box about the size of the open-top sliding part of a safety matches box, with a wall dividing the box into two equal-size compartments, with a horizontal axle through the lower edge of the dividing wall. Rotation about the axle was limited to a few degrees off horizontal in each direction, so that when one end of the box was down, the dividing wall would deflect all the rain water into the other end of the box, and after enough weight of water accumulated in the "up" end of the box, the tipping motion would dump the water from that end of the box and start filling

the opposite end. Number of “tips” per minute was recorded and converted into rainfall rate.

The Evaporation Station had no electricity, basically it was a steel tank about three feet in diameter and one foot deep, with the tank bottom slightly above ground level in the middle of a 30-foot-square enclosure bordered by a 6-foot high chain link fence. The tank assembly had a micrometer-type instrument to precisely measure the water level in the tank, by slowly turning the micrometer screw until the point of a fishhook would just begin to penetrate the surface of the water in a two-inch vertical pipe whose lower end was connected to the tank.

In the thirties and forties, long distance telephone rates were high, so the weather readings were transmitted to Oklahoma City via a one-cent postcard each day. A mimeograph machine printed address on the front side and a blank form for data on the back side of a large number of postcards in advance, so all the weather reader had to do was pencil in the numbers and get the card to the Santa Fe depot before the northbound passenger train departed at 12:25 p.m. each day. A few times our father and I would drive to the depot arriving just as the train was coming to a stop, and I would run the postcard straight to the train’s mail car and hand it to a postal worker at the car’s door. Always, it was comforting to listen to the evening news on the radio and hear the Norman weather statistics just as they had been written on the card in my hand earlier in the day.

May the technology of weather recording and forecasting continue to improve. So much is still unknown.

*Bennie Shultz Jr., '53bs, '56ms mech engr  
Huntsville, Alabama*

### When Robins Come Home

What a day brightener it was to receive the *Sooner Magazine* containing the article about our Round Robin (“Sharing Life’s Lessons, Summer 2002). Please convey my appreciation to Anne Barajas for “putting it all together” so well. We are very pleased with her telling of our

story. We just wish that all of our group could have been with us at OU. I hadn’t been back since graduation but had read in the *Sooner* of the many new buildings and gardens and all of the sculpture on campus and am so glad to have had that opportunity to see it. Very impressive! Visiting the museum of natural history was a special treat. Thank you for taking note of our visit in such a lovely way.

*Helen Wolk '42 ba jour  
Edina, Minnesota*

### Another Robin Heard From

Anne Barajas’ article in the summer *Sooner Magazine* on our Mortar Board reunion was superb. I especially enjoyed it as I could not attend because of my husband’s long stay in the hospital. (He is in fine shape now!)

Our Mortar Board group really is unique. We have had a most interesting sixty years of togetherness and are anticipating more good years of adventures.

*Katie Sponenberg, '42 bs bus  
New Braunfels, Texas*

### A Journal by Any Other Name

I am disappointed, perhaps even distressed, that your article in the Summer 2002 issue entitled “A New Attitude for a Grand Old Journal” did not acknowledge an earlier antecedent.

The article would have us believe that “the venerable *World Literature Today* . . . has been around for more than 76 years now.”

Not true. “Seventy-six years” dates *WLT* to 1926, only eight years before I matriculated at OU in the fall of 1934. At that time *Books Abroad* had been in existence eight years, but already it had established an international reputation as a venue for literary publication and criticism.

*BA* was edited by Professor Kenneth Kaufman, who was a member of the English faculty and also was the books editor of *The Daily Oklahoman*. I wrote reviews of domestic books for him and *The Oklahoman* before I was graduated in 1938 and for several years afterward. It may be of interest that I am scheduled to

receive the JayMac award as a distinguished alumni on November 8.

I remember well that Professor Kaufman’s home in Norman was swamped with publishers’ review copies, stacked against the walls and stacked dangerously high. In those days, reviews in *The Oklahoman* were shorter, and compensation to the reviewer was the book reviewed.

As a lay historian, I wish the true origins of *WLT* could have been credited with truth.

*Max S. Lale '38 ba jour  
Fort Worth, Texas*

*EDITOR’S NOTE: Books Abroad was founded in January 1927 by Roy Temple House and involved many of OU’s most illustrious men of letters and languages, including Kenneth Kaufman, who served as co-editor from 1932-39 then managing editor. House retired in 1949 to be followed by Ernst Erich Noth, Bernard Fleischmann, Robert Vlach, Bernice Duncan and, in 1967, Ivar Ivask, whose 24 years as editor included retitling the journal in 1976 as World Literature Today.*

### Subscription Information

I really enjoyed reading the article on *World Literature Today*. I had no idea the University was publishing such a magazine. The article mentions Mr. Davis’ desire to reach a broader audience and to increase subscriptions, however, no subscription information was provided in the article. Please forward subscription information to me.

*Kelli Mahanay, '86 ba comm  
Carrollton, TX*

*EDITOR’S NOTE: Subscriptions to the quarterly World Literature Today Magazine—\$20 per year for individuals, \$68 for institutions—may be ordered online at [www.ou.edu/worldlit](http://www.ou.edu/worldlit) or contact Terri Stubblefield at World Literature Today, 630 Parrington Oval, Suite 110, Norman OK 73019-4033; 405/325-7677; Fax 405/325-7495; email [tdstubb@ou.edu](mailto:tdstubb@ou.edu). Each issue of the magazine also may be viewed at the online address.*