Members of the Ozarka College Paul Weaver Library Advisory Committee gathered at 10:30 a.m. in the Administration building’s small dining room for their Fall 2006 meeting. Members present included Melissia Cooper, Walter Green, Mary Ellen Hawkins, Madeliene Coffey, and Dan Lindsey. Special guests included Dr. Dusty Johnson, Dr. Michael DeLong, and guest speaker Joan Stirling.

Mary Ellen distributed packets containing: the Agenda, Minutes from the last meeting, the Function of the Library Advisory Committee, the Advisory Committee Guidelines, and list of members. She introduced President Dusty Johnston and Vice President for Academic Affairs Michael DeLong, both of whom praised the committee members for helping make the Paul Weaver Library a smoothly running, vital part of the college.

Mary Ellen introduced Joan Stirling, who detailed Ozarka College’s participation in the nationwide Big Read Program. One of only 72 organizations receiving grants for the project, Ozarka plans to host readings of “The Grapes of Wrath” in local high schools, libraries and other locations, distributing copies of the book to those readers. Ozarka will show the video in area nursing homes, compiling residents’ comments about the Dust Bowl era into a book which will be given to the Melbourne Museum. Other activities are planned as well, including asking readers to fill out a questionnaire about the story and their experience with it. Joan asked the committee’s input on questions which could be on the survey. Melissia Cooper suggested asking readers to compare the story to other books about the Great Depression or Dust Bowl. Joan also thanked the members for helping provide the college with “community feedback” on its activities and programs.

In other discussion, Mary Ellen recalled that Jonathan Baker had expressed interest in displaying some of his students’ art projects in the library, and she described an especially popular display of deep-sea fishing memorabilia which had been enjoyed not only by Ozarka’s students but also by an area fourth-grade class which had found in it objects they had studied about in class. “You never know what impact a display may have on someone,” she added.

Mary Ellen asked the attendees their opinion of e-books, which the Paul Weaver Library has yet to acquire but has considered purchasing as reference works. The group consensus appeared to be that e-books have yet to gain wide acceptance. The library should “stay open to the idea,” Michael DeLong said, but he noted one particular library in which the investment had been made but patrons had yet to prefer e-books over the print versions, the librarian had told him. It was agreed upon also that reference works seemed the logical first choice should the Paul Weaver Library decide to purchase some e-book titles.

Mary Ellen concluded the meeting by asking members to be thinking of ideas for the next National Library Week, and by inviting the guests to stay for the grilled-chicken salad lunch which had been prepared by the Ozarka kitchen staff.