

Bright Future

Newsletter of the Oklahoma Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped

Changes abound at the OLBPH

Since our last issue, the OLBPH has undergone some changes. Two staff members moved on to new positions outside the Library, and the physical DB collection has officially ended.

Our Summer Reading program ended on July 31. Joey Zeno won the iPad for the 6th through 12th grade division, and Logan Hedrick won for the PreK to 5th grade division. Congratulations to both our winners! The program for older teens and adults continues until August 31, so participants still have time to read another book or three.

We hosted a long-overdue Volunteer Appreciation luncheon recently to coincide with a visit from Chris Mundy. Longtime readers may recognize Chris's name from years past. Read more about that and our latest Jo Anna Peters Award recipient inside.

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Bright Future is also available in Braille, on Oklahoma Telephone Reader, on Oklahoma Recorded Magazines, and on our website.

Director's Column

In February, two issues ago I bragged about our two new employees. Well, now, six months later we have had two employees move on from the Library. This all good as we can roll with the changes. Speaking of changes, the OLBPH is now collection-less. 150,000 cartridges and mailers once stored on shelves are gone. Sounds radical; however, our service is so much better because of patron-centric cartridges. No more waiting on a book to be available from a limited quantity of a Talking Books. Now our entire collection is always available. What I love about this is digital downloading, which has been around 2-3 decades, is how available/accessible to those that do not have the wherewithal to download. We do this for them and send to them. This unique digital divide is now bridged.

I do need to mention that although we are not sending and receiving as many cartridges in the mail as with a collection, patrons do still need to get those multiple title cartridges back to us as soon as possible. Most patrons have two, sometimes three, cartridges checked out at a time. To keep the books flowing and to not lose any reading time, please be prompt about returning the cartridges to us. Many thanks!

--Kevin Treese, Library Director



OLBPH staff members who were involved in the project to pack up and send away single title talking book cartridges pose with some of the last ones to go. From left, Library Director Kevin Treese, Administrative Librarian Andrew Shockley, Librarian Marka Simms, Melanie Ullifers, and Collin Jenks. *Photo by Brett Jones.*

End of our single title cartridge era

Nearly all OLBPH patrons who get their talking books through the mail remember getting cartridges that contained just one book each. After all, that's the way it was done here for 89 years – from records and reel-to-reel tapes to cassettes, and now digital cartridges. But as the OLBPH celebrates 90 years of serving Oklahomans, that single title era is completely over because those cartridges and mailing containers are gone!

The last of the single title cartridges were packed up in late June and sent away to the National Library Service (NLS) multistate center in Utah for recycling. It was the completion of a removal project that began last August. Why 10 months, you may ask? Making nearly 150,000 audiobooks go away simply takes a long time and a lot of effort!

The old audiobooks were packed in cardboard boxes that held 44 cartridges and mailers each. We filled 3,401 of those boxes. That's 149,644 copies of Talking Books that had been sent to the OLBPH by NLS over the past 13 or so years. All had to be hand packed, sealed, and labeled before being carried away by the U.S. Postal Service.

All Talking Books from the OLBPH are now downloaded. Patrons who use BARD (Braille and Audio Reading Download) download books themselves. OLBPH staff members download all the other titles that go to patrons who get their books through the mail. Multiple books are now loaded on each cartridge, a grouping that is customized for each patron based on his or her reading preferences.

"Patrons no longer have to wait for a new release or other popular book to be returned by someone else before they can receive it," Library Director Kevin Treese explains. We now have infinite copies of all titles,



thanks to the newer process. Another advantage to having multi-title cartridges is that all the books in a series can be downloaded onto one cartridge, so patrons can enjoy all the books in a series in the order the author intended.

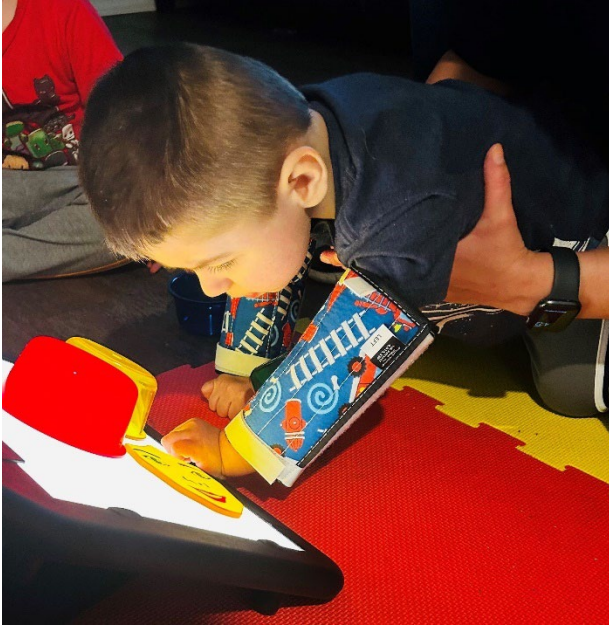
Librarian Marka Simms oversaw the huge project and got lots of help from circulation staffers Melanie Ullfers and Collin Jenks. Marka thanked Director Treese and Administrative Librarian Andrew Shockley for securing needed supplies.

AIM Center Updates

The first five years of a child's life are the most important for healthy development and long-term well-being. The experiences and relationships formed during this period of rapid brain development build a foundation for future learning and success. Yet many parents of blind, low vision, or Cortical Visually Impaired (CVI) children lack access to books, toys, and equipment that are accessible to their children. The impact of the "opportunity gap" are measurable as early as 9 months. The Accessible Instructional Materials (AIM) Center is working to bridge that gap.



The AIM Center began a program one year ago that puts us in direct contact with our Early Childhood (birth to 5 years) parents. We send emails to our parents with "Featured Products", information on new products and tips for working with visually impaired children. Our featured products focus on those skills that should be developed in early childhood such as eye-hand coordination, hand muscle development, early literacy development, listening skills, fine motor skills, communication skills, early math skills, attention span development, and creativity skills while focusing on the needs of various visual impairments.



The AIM Center currently has 208 Early Childhood children registered with 95 parents actively accessing AIM products and materials. We hope to increase these numbers as we head into year two.

The AIM Center receives funding both from a federal and state level, so all our products are free to parents and school districts. For more information about our services, please contact me at pwatson@okdrs.gov.

--Pepper Watson, AIM Center Director

Contact Information

Have you moved, changed your phone number, or email address? Don't forget to tell us! Without accurate and up-to-date contact and mailing information, we cannot provide you with great service. So, if you move, change your phone number, or change your email address, just remember to let us know.

Thanks!

--Andrew Shockley, Librarian

Volunteer Appreciation

Volunteers are a critical part of what keeps The Oklahoma Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped running. Without our volunteers, the OLBPH studio would not be able to produce all the wonderful magazines and books they have over the years, and the Oklahoma Telephone Reader service would not be able to carry all the weekly local news and information it does for our patrons.

That is why we recently hosted a volunteer appreciation



luncheon sponsored by The Oklahomans for Special Library Services (OSLS).

This event took place on Friday, August 4th, and featured a presentation by National Library Services contractor Chris Mundy. He

gave our volunteers an overview of the NLS program and talked about how our humble studio fits into the bigger picture of National Library Services.

Certificates and appreciation gifts were awarded to all our volunteers in attendance, as well as the presentation of the Jo Anna Peter Volunteer Achievement Award to our outstanding Volunteer of the Year, Kent Graham, who is featured in our volunteer spotlight. The Jo Anna Peter Volunteer Achievement

Award is an award in remembrance of longtime volunteer Jo Anna Peter and celebrates volunteers with an unwavering and longstanding commitment to providing high-quality audio material to the blind and print-disabled patrons we serve.



Following the presentations, all our volunteers, their guests, library staff, and OSLS board members in attendance enjoyed a delicious barbeque lunch. This event was extra special because it was one of the first get-togethers we have been able to have like this in a few years. It was wonderful to get to see everyone together again, and everyone had a good time. We are so thankful for all the support the Library receives from such a dedicated group of volunteers. We are truly fortunate to have such an amazing and dedicated group of people volunteering their time with us.

--Kat Jensen, Studio Director

Catch Us Out and About

We haven't stopped our outreach efforts despite the summer heat. You can see us or our displays in different places around the OKC metro. Currently, we have a joint display with Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired at the El Reno Public Library. If you're heading the OCB convention in September, drop by our table and say hi!

Volunteer Spotlight



For this issue, we would like to introduce, or possibly reintroduce, you to the man we call our extra team member here in the OLBPH studio, Kent Graham. Kent has been a long-time volunteer since 2012, not only for the Oklahoma Telephone Reader but also for the OLBPH studio. Kent does a little of everything around here from reading for the

OTR, to editing everything from novels, non-fiction, magazine articles, poetry books, and more, to reviewing, researching, and helping to narrate the *Oklahoma Today* magazine. When we need extra help, he is always willing to pitch in and contribute to whatever needs to get done. This makes Kent one of our most valuable volunteers and is the reason he is the most recent recipient of the Jo Anna Peter Volunteer Achievement Award.

For a little background information, Kent and his wife Lyn recently celebrated 53 years of marriage. They have three grown sons and four grandchildren. Kent spent 28 years in the Air Force, retiring in 1998. Then he decided to go back to school after retirement and collect another BA from Gaylord College in professional writing, then started working toward his master's while also serving as an adjunct professor at the Journalism school teaching a writing lab class. Kent also serves on the City of

Moore Planning Commission and sings with the Canterbury Voices.

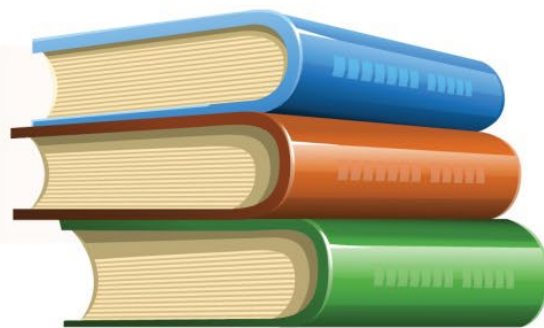
Kent's skills make him a great asset to the library. Kent says of the many jobs he has done over the years, "One of the most interesting was a vending machine contract for Mike Monroney Aeronautical Center. The entire contract had to be prepared in standard written form, in braille, and in voice recording formats."

When asked why he spends so much time and effort with the studio and OTR, he talks of his mother who became blind in her later years from macular degeneration. "We connected her with Books on Tape, which helped her continue to read. I wanted to find a way to help others like her." To do that he connected with his brother-in-law, who was reading for a studio down in Texas. He was able to get Kent in contact with our studio, and the rest is history.

Helping others like his mother is exactly what Kent has done over the years. Kent started in 2012 with Jay Doudna with the Oklahoma Talking Information Service. Jay teamed him up with Lloyd Musselman, having them read the *Enid News Eagle*, *Oklahoma Gazette*, *Oklahoma Today*, and other news and information publications. He currently still works on the *Enid News Eagle* every week, but it has moved over to the Oklahoma Telephone Reader system. He also is our wonderful introduction voice and closing voice for the studio's recording of *Oklahoma Today* magazine. When asked what he likes most about volunteering in the library he stated, "The people - the staff and the volunteers. And it is fulfilling to know I'm providing a service to folks like my mother and my sister, who without recorded books would be cut off from the world of reading."

--Kat Jensen, Studio Director

Book Corner



Here are a few summer-themed reads to wrap up the sunny season. Enjoy!

DB 52724 – *Summer Island* by Kristin Hannah

Well-known talk show host Nora Bridge has been estranged from daughter Ruby for years. When the ugly truth about her past is uncovered, Nora retreats to Summer Island. There she and Ruby finally come to terms with each other.

DB 96702 – *From Hell to Breakfast* by Dusty Richards

After a summer working on the Salt River near Phoenix, H. B. Bentley was looking forward to the fall roundup on the north cut. Then he finds out that he will have to deal with cattle rustlers and three snooty cowboys who actually turn out to be the daughters of grouchy rancher Ewell Rice.

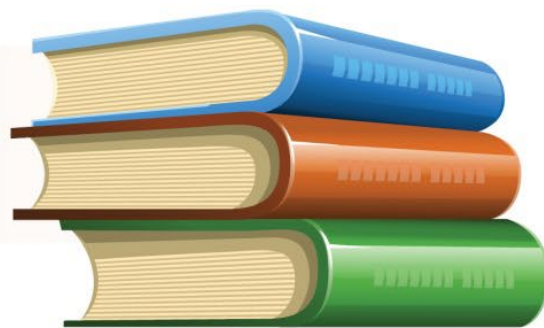
DB 99851 – *28 Summers* by Elin Hilderbrand

When Mallory Blessing is dying, she tells her son to contact Jake McCloud. Jake and Mallory have been keeping a secret for twenty-eight years: since they were both in their twenties, Jake has spent every Labor Day weekend with Mallory at her Nantucket home.

DB 99157 – *Dark Summer* by Jon Cleary

In the heat of an Australian summer, Inspector Scobie Malone of the New South Wales police finds the body of a promising informer floating face down in his family's backyard swimming pool. Scobie is

Book Corner



investigating Sydney's major drug-dealing operation, and this murder is a clear warning.

DB 99719 – *Hello, Summer* by Mary Kay Andrews

Conley Hawkins left her family's small-town newspaper in the rearview mirror years ago. Now a star reporter for a big-city paper, Conley is about to take a fancy new position in Washington, D. C., when the job disappears and she lands right back in Silver Bay, Florida.

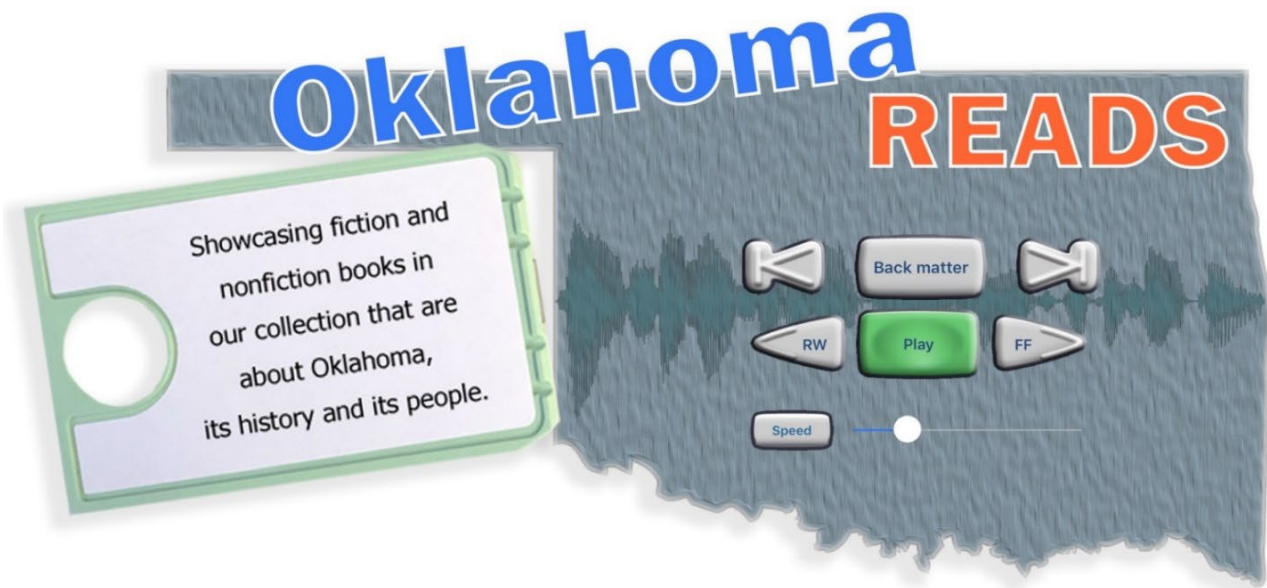
DB 46882 – *The Poisonwood Bible* by Barbara Kingsolver

In this bestseller, an American missionary family lands in the Congo in 1959, and the cultural confrontation begins immediately. The mother and four daughters react to their new environment, the villagers respond to their new preacher, and the family dynamics change.

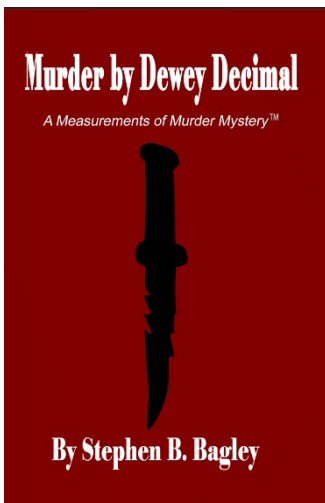
DB 16418 – *Summer of '42* by Herman Raucher

A middle-aged man returns to Packett Island off the New England coast and summons up memories of the summer of 1942 when he and his two buddies were fifteen. Preoccupied with sex, the three boys brooded, talked, read about it, and tried to turn theory into practice.

--Andrew Shockley, Administrative Librarian



DBC 18951 – Murder by Dewey Decimal: A Measurements of Murder Mystery by Stephen B. Bagley



If the title or author's name sounds familiar you may be remembering "Murder by the Acre," also written by Stephen B. Bagley and reviewed by Troy Small in the Spring 2023 edition of *Bright Future*. Both books stand alone but together make up "A Measurements of Murder Mystery" series. Written for young adults to older folks who enjoy fictional mystery/suspense genres, this book and "Murder by the Acre" were narrated

by Nancy Cheper.

"Murder by Dewey Decimal" is the 1st of this 2-book series and introduces a few key characters for both books. Lisa Trent is a struggling reporter, and Bernard Worthington is an assistant librarian in the small town of Ryton, Oklahoma, where Charles Donaldson is the police chief. Lisa and Bernard use the skills of their trade to assist Chief Donaldson in solving mysteries along the way to finding the murderer. Lisa and Bernard develop a

friendship and more along the way. The author has injected plenty of dramatic storytelling, including Lisa and Bernard nearly becoming murder victims.

From the book cover, in part “What was stolen from the library safe? What happened to the missing janitor? Why is Lisa a target? Who stole the Ryton family jewels? Why did old Eliah Ryton will his hideous mansion to the city? What secrets does it hold, and who is killing to hide them?

Entertaining characters, a clever plot, and chilling suspense make this first book a must-read if you enjoy mystery/suspense!

DBC 18968 – The Dreams of Ada by Robert Mayer

“The Dreams of Ada” is a non-fiction account of the 1984 disappearance of Denice Haraway, from her job at a convenience store on the outskirts of Ada, Oklahoma. The book is a true account of the actual crime, the investigation, trial, and punishment which followed.

From the book cover, in part, “The Dreams of Ada” a story of politics and morality, of fear and obsession. It is also a moving, compelling portrait of one small town living through a nightmare. “The Dreams of Ada” is recommended for mature audiences due to the description of violence.

This book was a digital conversion, originally released on cassette tape in 2006, but recently converted because of the demand created by John Grisham’s review of the book. Our former Studio Director, Paul Adams, narrated this book and graciously returned to the studio to record a new introduction for this new release.

--Scott See, Studio Technician



Are you travelling this summer? Estimates for the number of summer travelers this year run upwards of 108 million people. Of course, this includes travel by all modes. How do you prefer to travel? By bus, automobile, airlines, train?

When our daughters were growing up, we traveled mostly by automobile. Like a lot of other families, we had a station wagon where our kids could move around the back and stay occupied with reading, looking for landmarks, napping, and just general child's play.

But as so many others have experienced, the activities would get boring, and that's when we would start hearing "are we there yet?" This is what led me to an ingenious idea: in 1990 we were heading out on a long trip, driving to Orlando. I purchased a Rand McNally Road Atlas (remember, Google Maps hadn't yet been created) and appointed hourly navigators to guide us on our way.

As it turns out, my daughters made really good navigators, and we had a really great trip. So now, even though we do have Google Maps, Rand McNally still prints a road atlas, and it offers a much broader view than Google. I highly recommend this for travelers who travel with kids.

What activities have you used on trips? Do you have some favorite things you like to do wherever you may go? What is your favorite trip?

Whatever you may do and wherever you may go this summer, please be safe and enjoy yourself. We'll be right here.

--Jim Kettler – Contract Monitor & BEP Training Associate

How do you want to receive this newsletter?

Email users, are you okay with having *Bright Future* show up in your inbox four times a year? Or would you rather have a large-print copy delivered to your mailbox?

Perhaps you received this issue in the traditional mail but have a working email address and would prefer electronic delivery. Email is more affordable, faster, and much easier to distribute. You can help us improve efficiency by sharing your email address with us. It will not be used for any other purpose or shared with any other organization, so you don't have to worry about getting unwanted messages.

If you would like us to change how you receive *Bright Future*, please let us know by calling (405) 521-3514, (800) 523-0288, or emailing olbph@okdrs.gov.



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