

Oklahoma Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped



BRIGHT FUTURE

SHARE OUR VISION, THAT ALL MAY READ.

Vol. 41, No. 3, Fall 2026



OKLAHOMA
Rehabilitation Services
Oklahoma Library for the Blind and
Physically Handicapped

Route 66 Turns 100
Must-read Books set on the Mother Road
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Agency Update

The Commission for the Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) recently named Sterling Zearley the agency's new executive director.

He had been serving as the interim director since June 22.

Zearley has a decades-long career as a public servant. He spent more than 25 years at the Oklahoma Department of Tourism, and 16 years as executive director of the Oklahoma Public Employees Association.

"Over the past few weeks, I have seen up close the tremendous work we do at DRS," Zearley said. "I am grateful to the Commission for their faith and trust in me, and I look forward to leading the agency in a bold new direction. We remain committed to serving our clients and our students, giving them the training and education they need to become successful, taxpaying citizens."



As part of the executive director role, Zearley will work with several Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired (SBVI) programs including the Oklahoma Library for the Blind and the Accessible Instructional Materials (AIM) Center.

Zearley holds a Master of Education degree from the University of Arkansas, a Bachelor of Science degree from Northeastern State University and an Associate of Science degree from Eastern Oklahoma College.

Last year, DRS served 84,719 individuals with disabilities with career preparation, employment, residential and outreach education, independent living programs, and the determination of medical eligibility for disability benefits. The agency helps job seekers with disabilities overcome barriers to employment, such as inaccessible worksites, lack of transportation or the need for specialized equipment or training.

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Book Corner

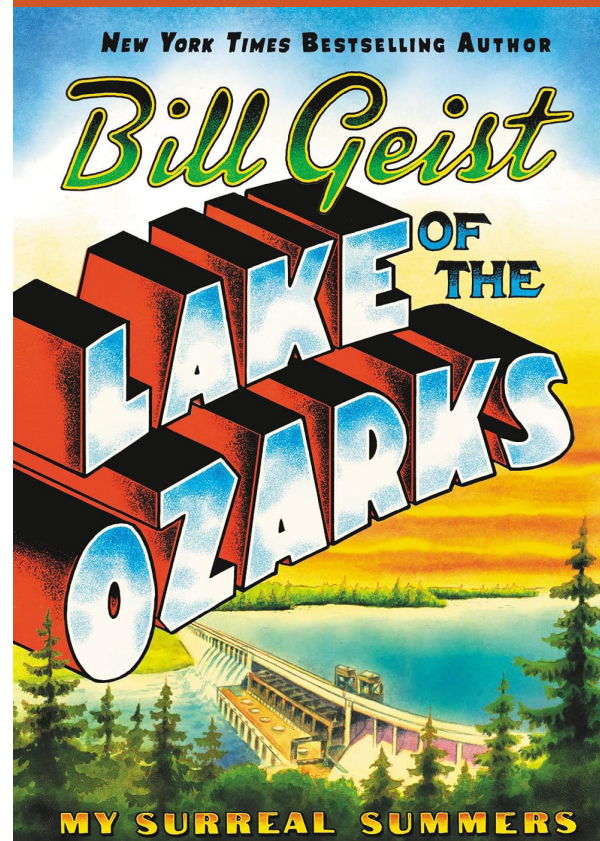
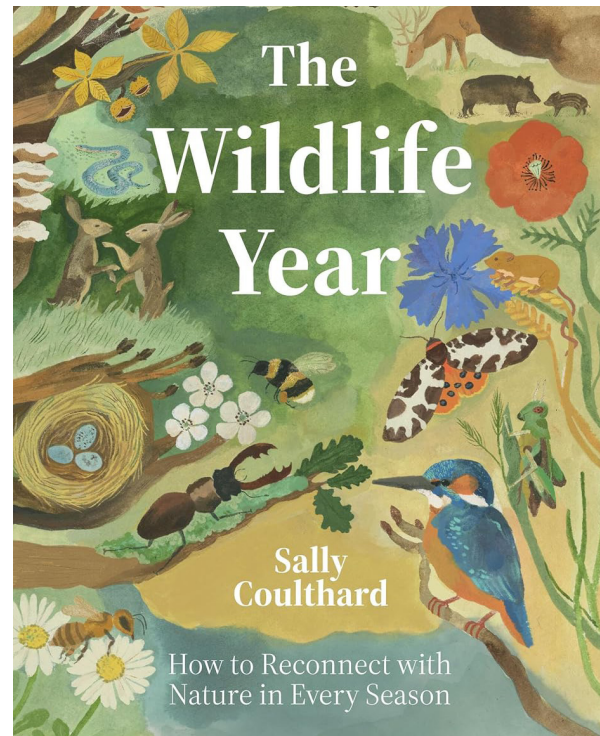
Changing Seasons

The Wildlife Year: How to Reconnect with Nature in Every Season by Sally Coulthard
DB122481

“The Wildlife Year will help you reconnect with nature and take a walk on the wild side, wherever you live. Nature is right on your doorstep. Whether you’re in the countryside, city or somewhere in between, there is wildlife everywhere if you know where to look. And while it’s trickier to find in some places than others, nature can thrive in the most surprising spaces. The Wildlife Year is a gentle introduction to the events that mark the natural cycle of the year. Best-selling author, Sally Coulthard, will inspire you to discover nature in all its glory and to seek out, observe, and enjoy the wildlife around you. Explore the unique properties of the seasons.

Lake of the Ozarks: My Surreal Summers in a Vanishing America by William Geist
DB095362

Emmy-award winning news correspondent and author of *Way off the Road* (DB66185) and *Good Talk, Dad* (DB79190) reminisces about working for his bombastic Uncle Ed as a teenager at a resort in Lake of the Ozarks. Geist describes the tourism industry and jobs he held. Unrated. Commercial audiobook. 2019.



True: The Four Seasons of Jackie Robinson
by Kostya Kennedy
DB108034

A biography of a baseball great, Robinson (1919-1972), focuses on four transformative years in Robinson's athletic and public life: 1946, his first year playing in the essentially all-white minor leagues for the Montreal Royals; 1949, when he won the Most Valuable Player Award as a Brooklyn Dodger; 1956, his final season in major league baseball; and 1972, the year of his untimely death. Some strong language. 2022

Autumn by Karl Ove Knausgård
DB089739

The author of My Struggle (DB79335) and its sequels describes the minutiae of his life and offers his observations of the natural world. Divided into three sections named for the months of autumn, each begins with a letter to his soon-to-be-born daughter. Translated from the original 2015 Norwegian edition. Violence and some strong language.

The Four Seasons by Mary Alice Monroe
DB073097

Three surviving Season sisters--Jillian, Beatrice, and Rose--reunite to bury their sister Meredith, who was left incapacitated by a childhood near-drowning. The siblings resolve to honor Meredith's last wish: to find Jillian's illegitimate daughter, who was put up for adoption. Commercial audiobook. 2001.



The Salt Stones: Seasons of a Shepherd's Life by Helen Whybrow

DB134266

In the heart of Vermont's Green Mountains, Helen Whybrow and her partner are presented with the opportunity to steward a 200-acre conserved farm. Whybrow knows that "belonging more than anything requires participation" and radically intertwines her life with the land...As life at Knoll Farm endures years both abundant and lean, she learns that true stewardship is about accepting change and adapting. She embraces a transcendent rhythm of blood and bone, milk and muck.

City of All Seasons by Oliver K. Langmead

DB129862

Welcome to Jamie Pike's Fairharbour--a city stuck in perpetual winter, its windows and doorways bricked shut to keep out the freezing cold, its residents striving to survive in the arctic conditions. Welcome to Esther Pike's Fairharbour--a city stuck in constant summer, its walls crumbling in the heat, its oppressive sunlight a relentless presence. Winter and Summer alike, have both fallen under the yoke of oppressive powers, that have taken control after the cataclysm. But both Fairharbours were once a single, united city. And in certain places, at certain times, one side can catch a glimpse of the other.

Until Leaves Fall in Paris by Sarah Sundin

DB109298

As the Nazis march toward Paris in 1940, American ballerina Lucie Girard buys her favorite English-language bookstore to allow the Jewish owners to escape. Lucie struggles to run Green Leaf Books due to oppressive German laws and harsh conditions, but she finds a way to aid the resistance by passing secret messages between the pages of her books... Master of WWII-era fiction, Sarah Sundin invites you onto the streets of occupied Paris to discover whether love or duty will prevail. -- Provided by publisher. -- Unrated. Commercial audiobook.

Thanks for the Memories

Oklahoma Today Magazine Update

It is with a heavy heart that I write to tell you that the November/December issue of “Oklahoma Today Magazine” will be our studio’s last audio recording of the publication. Due to rising printing costs, the magazine will cease production at the end of the year. I would like to personally thank Editor-in-Chief Nathan Gunter for all his kindness to our studio over the years and for always being willing to lend his voice to the magazine’s featured articles. We will miss producing Oklahoma Today for all of you; it has been a labor of love.

With that said, we still want to provide our readers like you with a quality magazine you will enjoy once Oklahoma Today is out of print. So, what is next? **We want to hear from you.** We have had a few suggestions, such as “Oklahoma Magazine” and bringing “Cowboys and Indians” back to our studio, but we want to know what kind of content our patrons would be interested in hearing next in our search for engaging content. Please email or call Kathleen.jensen@okdrs.gov or 405-521-3576 with suggestions.

-Kat Jensen, Recording Studio Director



Summer Reading Recap

2026 Wrap Party Highlights

The 2026 Summer Reading program ended on August 15 with a wrap-up party at the Sam Noble Museum of Natural History in Norman, OK. Party participants were treated to boxed lunches and museum admission.

This year, 27 readers registered, and 10 patrons completed their reading logs. Competition among children ages birth to 7 years old was fierce, with five of our youngest patrons competing for a sensory and manipulative grab bag. Adult participants were entered to win an Amazon gift card.

Everyone who registered for Summer Reading by the deadline received a special OLBPH T-shirt featuring the Buffy the Bison mascot.



Many thanks to The Oklahomans for Special Library Services (OSLS). Craft items for participants under 18, T-shirts, prizes, Sam Noble admission, and food at the wrap-up party were generously paid for by our library friends group, OSLS.

- Lacey Downs, Administrative Programs Officer

Note for library patrons: If you have ideas or suggestions on what you would like to see for incentives/prizes for our upcoming winter reading program, please send an email to: olbph@okdrs.gov.



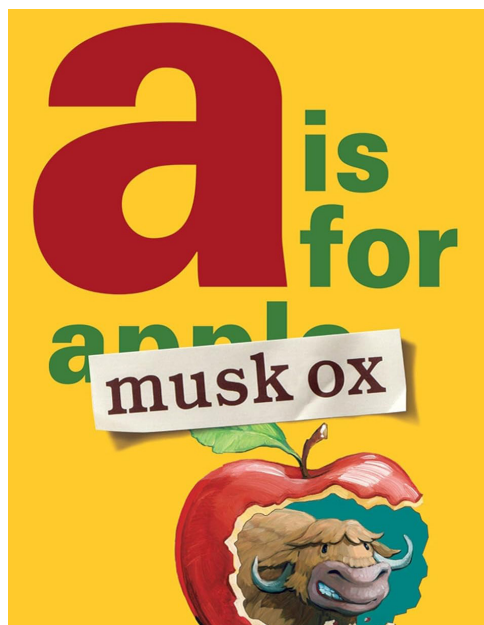
Special thanks to our families and patrons who participated in this year's Summer Reading Program.

We are grateful for YOU!



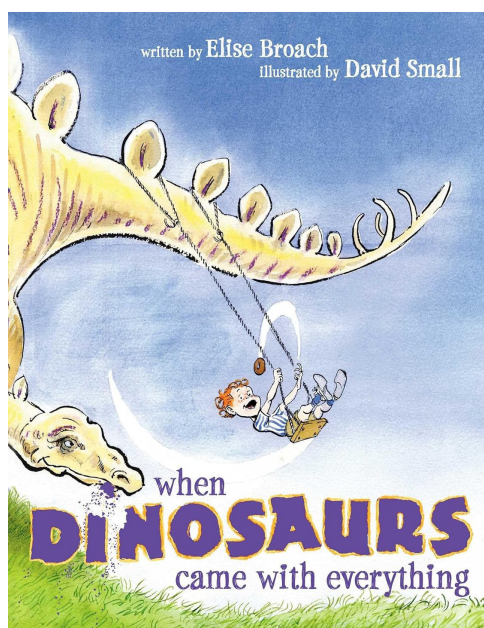
Oklahoma Reads

Showcasing New Children's Books



A is for Musk Ox by Erin Cabatingan, DBC18992

Musk Ox, our rambunctious anti-hero, literally chews through the cover of this anarchic alphabet book. Having eaten the apple that A was supposed to be for, he blithely inserts himself, claiming A is for Musk Ox—because musk oxen are Awesome and live in the Arctic, which includes Alaska! Zebra, his nemesis, is less than thrilled.



When Dinosaurs Came with Everything by Elise Broach, DBC18990

Just when a little boy thinks he's going to die of boredom from running errands with his mom, the most remarkable, the most stupendous thing happens. He discovers that on this day, and this day only, stores everywhere are giving away a very special treat with any purchase. No, not the usual lollipop or sticker. Something bigger. Much, MUCH bigger. It's a dream come true, except...what exactly do you do with these Jurassic treats? And how do you convince Mom to let you keep them?

Oklahoma Reads
features books
recently recorded
by the OLBPH
Recording Studio.

Give Bees a Chance by Bethany Barton, DBC18993

Not sure whether to high-five bees or run away from them? Well, maybe you shouldn't high-five them, but you definitely don't have to run away from them. Give Bees a

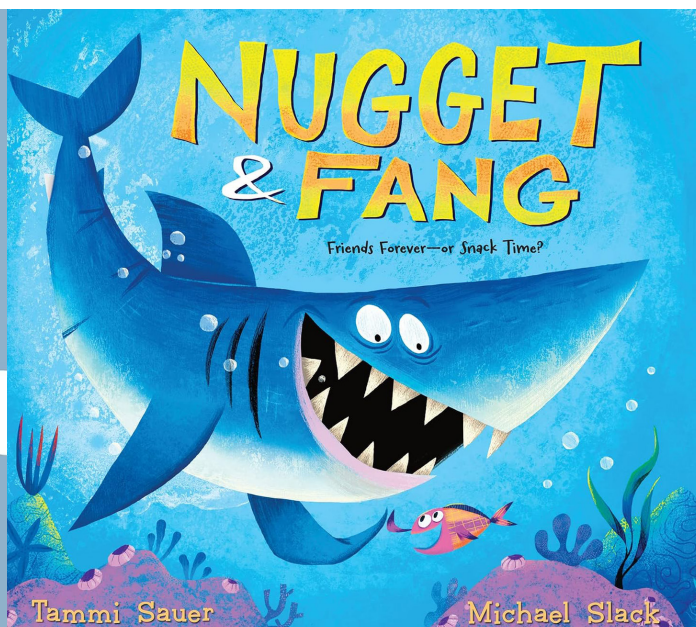
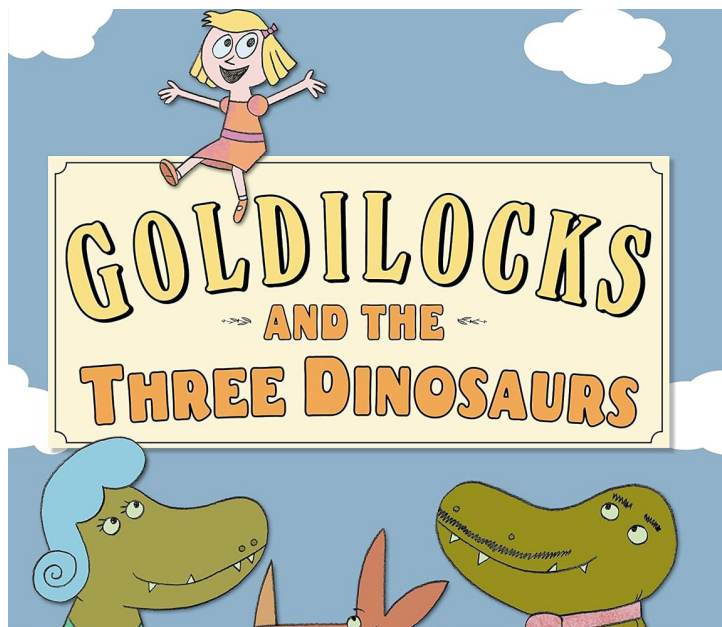
Chance is for anyone who doesn't quite appreciate how extra special and important bees are to the world, and even to humankind! Besides making yummy honey, they help plants grow fruits and vegetables. And most bees wouldn't hurt a fly (unless in self-defense!).

Goldilocks and the Three Dinosaurs: As Retold by Mo Willems **DBC18991**

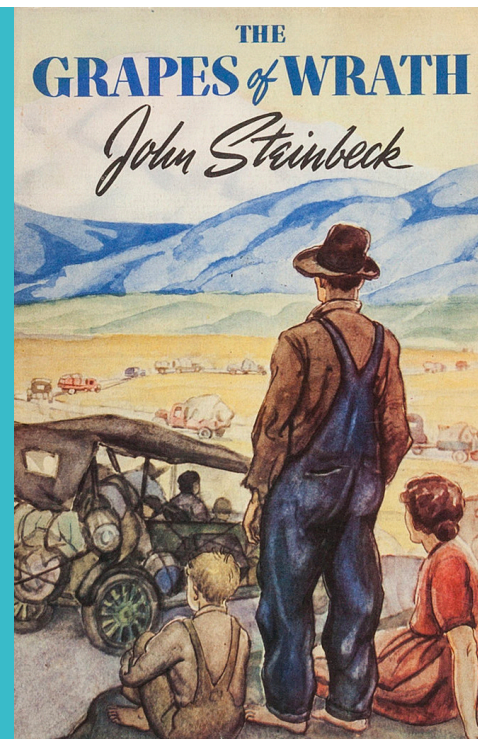
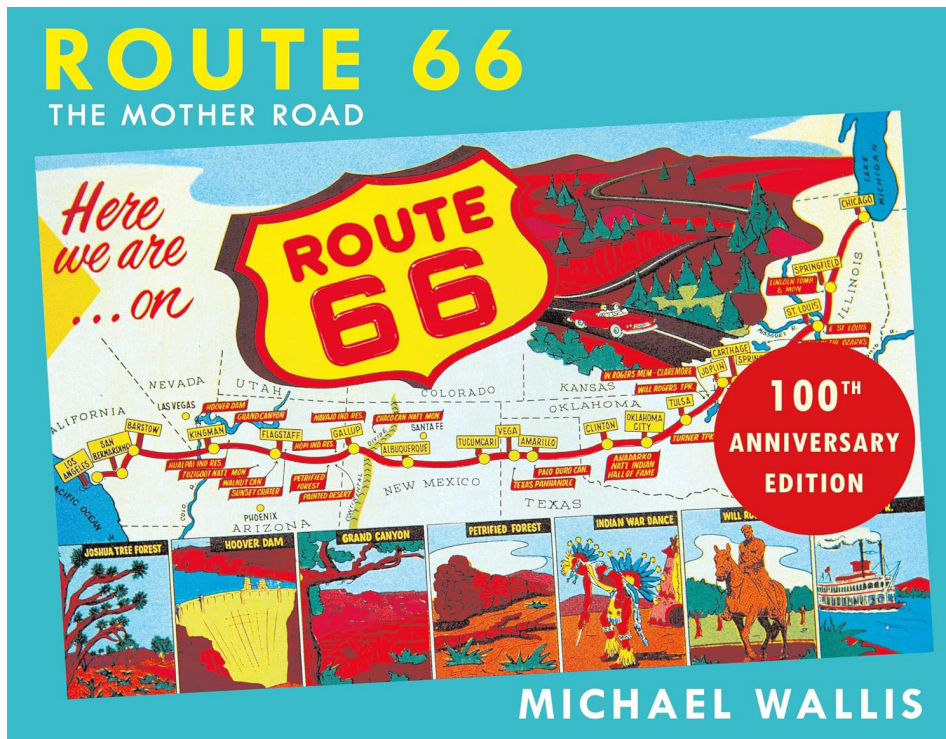
Once upon a time, there were three hungry Dinosaurs: Papa Dinosaur, Mama Dinosaur...and a Dinosaur who happened to be visiting from Norway. One day—for no particular reason—they decided to tidy up their house, make the beds, and prepare pudding of varying temperatures. And then—for no particular reason—they decided to go...someplace else. They were definitely not setting a trap for some succulent, unsupervised little girl. Definitely not!

Nugget & Fang, Friends Forever - or Snack Time? by Tammi Sauer **DBC18989**

In the deep ocean, tiny Nugget and big, toothy Fang get along swimmingly—until Nugget's first day of minnow school. There Nugget learns that minnows are supposed to be afraid of sharks! To regain Nugget's trust, Fang takes desperate (and hilarious) measures. But it's not until his big sharp teeth save the entire school that minnows learn this shark is no foe.



Route 66 Reads



Route 66, The Mother Road by Michael Wallis DB32610

Route 66 stretches from Chicago, through eight states, and three time zones, to end more than 2,400 miles away in Santa Monica. Wallis looks back on his travels along “The Mother Road” and conjures up images of John Steinbeck, Will Rogers, Woody Guthrie, Mickey Mantle, and Jack Kerouac, as well as thousands of waitresses, state cops, service station attendants, fry cooks, truckers, and station wagons full of kids.

The Grapes of Wrath by John Steinbeck, DB68308

Steinbeck’s classic tale of the Joads, who, like many other families during the Great Depression, are driven from their homestead by drought, economic hardship, and the encroachment of large agricultural interests. They leave Oklahoma in search of a better life in California, but are met with hardship and injustice. Chapters 1 through 11 are set in Oklahoma and the family begins its migration on Route 66 starting in Chapter 12. Pulitzer Prize. 1939.





READ FOR ADVENTURE!

...and get FREE **OKC ZOO** admission!

Check out at least one of the books below, and you will receive one voucher good for up to four (4) free general admissions to the OKC Zoo!

Limit 1 per family. While supplies last. Voucher Expires 6/30/2027

Author

Title

Ashman, Linda
 Barton, Bethany
 Bright, Michael
 Broach, Elise
 Cabatingan, Erin
 Cannon, Janell
 Heigle, Autumn
 Henkes, Kevin
 Rabinowitz, Alan
 Roy, Katherine
 Sauer, Tammi
 Stewart, Melissa
 Willems, Mo
 Willems, Mo
 Yolen, Jane and Teague, Mark

Champion Chompers, Super Stinkers (DB117893)
 Give Bees a Chance (DBC18993)
 Above, Below and Long Ago (DB134095)
 When Dinosaurs Came with Everything (DBC18990)
 A is for Musk Ox (DBC18992)
 Verdi (DB47072)
 Juniper's Butterfly Garden (DBC18974)
 Birds (DBC05416)
 A Boy and a Jaguar (DB82083)
 How to Be an Elephant (DB86983)
 Nugget and Fang: Friends Forever (DBC18989)
 Summertime Sleepers (DB103938)
 Edwina: the Dinosaur Who Didn't Know...(DBC04486)
 Goldilocks and the Three Dinosaurs (DBC18991)
 How Do Dinosaurs Say Goodnight? (DBC12513)

For more information about the Talking Book titles included in this year's Read for Adventure promotion, please contact at the Oklahoma Library for the Blind at 405-521-3514 or by email at olbph@okdrs.gov.

To discover other Oklahoma libraries participating in this promotion, visit: okczoo.org/readforadventure.

What We're Reading

OLBPH Staff Picks

Raising Hare by Chloe Dalton.
DB128243. Recommended by
Marka Simms, Librarian

This is an autobiography/memoir which takes a close look at caring for a very young hare as it grows, and how doing this affected the author's life. Anyone who loves animals or has had a pet rabbit or hare may especially enjoy this one.

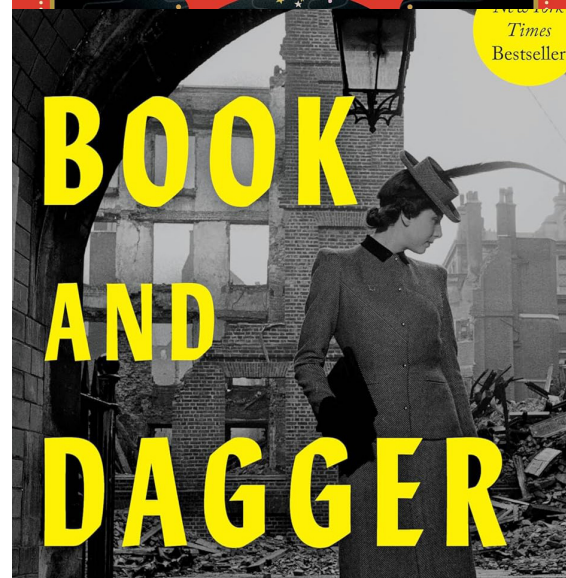
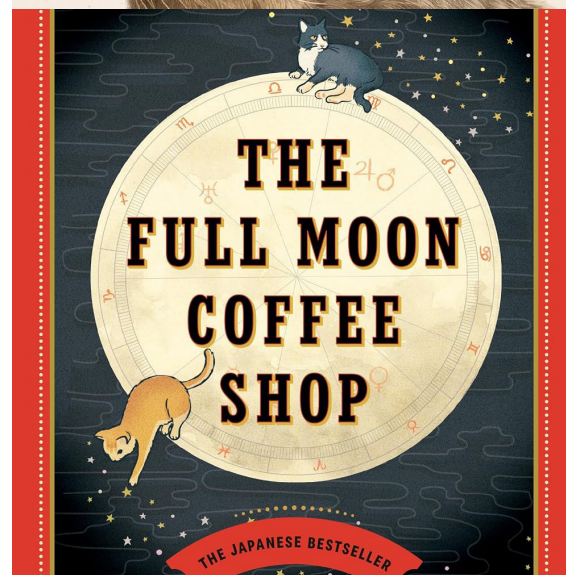
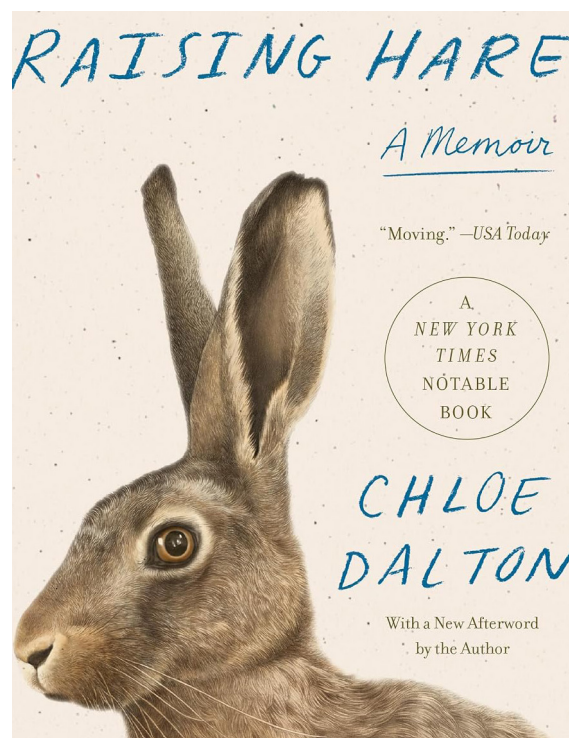
Full Moon Coffee Shop by Mai Mochizuki
DB127607. Recommended by
Lacey Downs, Building Manager

It's cats and coffee! Cats who run a coffee shop! They also read their customers' star charts. It's about fate and the connections between people. It's cute without being saccharine.

Book and Dagger: How Scholars and Librarians Became the Unlikely Spies of World War II by Elyse Graham.

DB126493. Recommended by Kat Jensen, Recording Studio Director

I have heard references in other books about WWII and how they used librarians, professors, and historians to form the OSS, which was the foundation for the modern CIA, but this book is actual accounts of what these recruits did for the war effort and how these unlikely agents helped us win the war. I am finding it fascinating how their



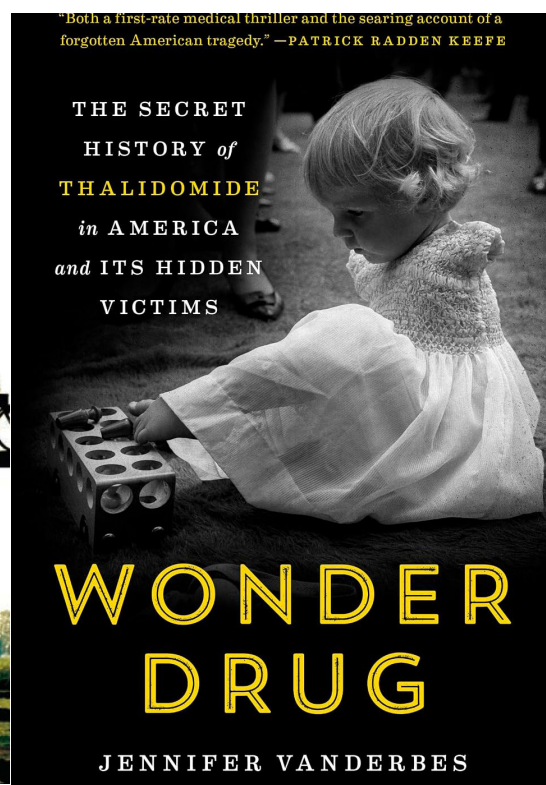
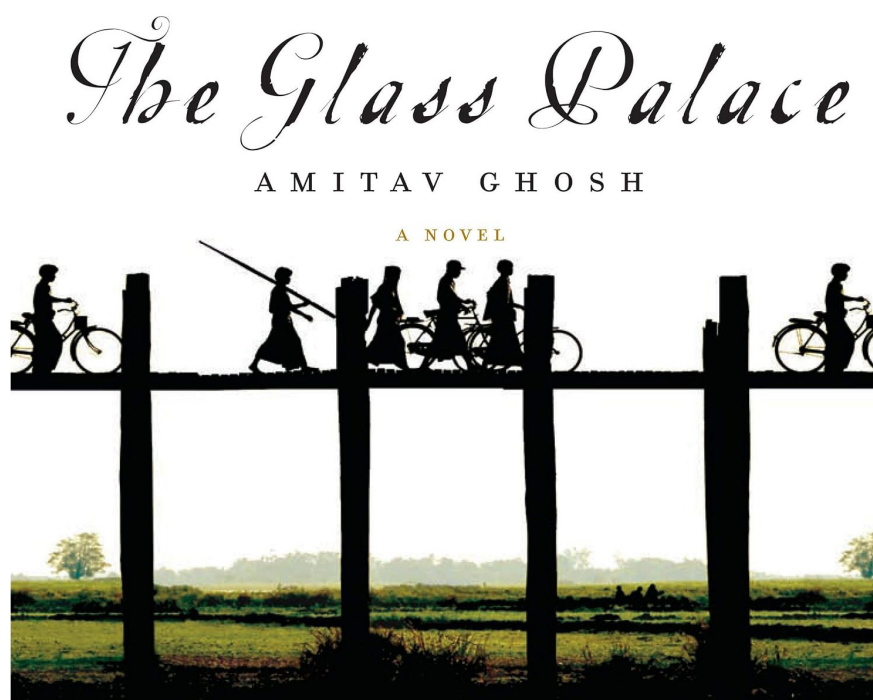
inconspicuousness and knowledge base allowed them to quietly pass war intelligence back to the United States to use against Hitler.

The Glass Palace by Amitav Ghosh. DB53272. Recommended by Andrew Shockley, Administrative Librarian

It's a sweeping multi-generational historical drama set in colonial India, Burma, and Malaya between the 1880s and the aftermath of World War II. Displacement from home, romance, war, this book has it all and never disappoints. The opening chapters of the British Army floating up the Irrawaddy River in 1885 in order to capture the King of Burma in Mandalay and the captive king's subsequent exile to India is unforgettable.

Wonder Drug: The Secret History of Thalidomide in America and Its Hidden Victims by Jennifer Vanderbes. DB117408. Recommended by Erin Byrne, Librarian

It's fascinating to learn about the origins of the drug Thalidomide after World War II, and how a woman working at the FDA in the 1960s, Frances Kelsey, fought the establishment to prevent the widespread sale of this drug in the United States. Despite Kelsey's efforts, drug companies continued to distribute the pills under the guise of clinical trials, reaching hundreds of pregnant women, even though the harmful effects of the drug were widely known.



Podcast Episode 3 Available Oct. 1



Check out the third episode of our Many a Page podcast to hear a discussion about Joy Fielding's book, *Jenny Cooper has a Secret* (DB131189). Visit OLBPH at <https://oklahoma.gov/olbph.html> for the podcast and an archive of past episodes.

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FOR THE BLIND**