

Bright Future

Newsletter of the Oklahoma Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped

Summer Reading is back at OLBPH!

Students, are you making summer plans? How about reading some books and earning prizes? The OLBPH is conducting a Summer Reading Program from June 1 to July 31. The program will be conducted 100% remotely, so there's no pressure to attend an in-person event.

The child and teen who read the most books will win a new iPad! Oklahoma students up to the 12th grade who have visual, physical, or other disabilities that prevent them from using standard print materials are welcome to participate. A list of recommended books that relate to the "All Together Now" theme will be provided, but you don't have to stick to that list. Read what you want, as long as it is appropriate for your reading level.

Call 800-523-0288 or email olbph@okdrs.gov to sign up. And if you have summer plans, keep them! Just take a book or two along as you enjoy your time away.

A publication of the Oklahoma Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired division, Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services

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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

Spring has sprung, and you will notice in the succeeding pages there is quite a lot of activity throughout the OLBPH. On Wednesday, April 26, we celebrated National Administrative Professionals Day. Five of 18 library employees have the word "administrative" in their job title. They all do marvelous work, both in their unique functions and contributing to the library's team efforts. All library employees have administrative tasks to perform. So, everyone can say "job well done."

Two national library-centric recognition weeks were also in April. The National Volunteer Week was April 16-22, and the National Library Week was April 23-29. How fitting for all this recognition to line up in the same month.

Certain library programs in ours and other public libraries depend highly on volunteers. For us specifically, our audio recording studio volunteers narrate books and magazines. They also help edit the post-narration digital audio, making ready the recorded works for patrons nation-wide. We also have volunteers that read and record local newspaper content over the phone. So, while library employees run the programs, most of the recorded works are the result of volunteers donating their time and talents. Oklahoma patrons can enjoy OK-centric recorded materials because of the volunteer cadre's dedication. Our narrators will receive special attention in the first week of August. Chris Mundy, the Library of Congress' NLS Quality Assurance specialist, is scheduled to visit us and provide one-on-one tips and tricks sessions.

To close I will say, regarding National Library week, libraries and librarians provide citizens with a knowledgeable and

personable resource to seek published materials for business, study, and pleasure. They also are well-known meeting places and a highlight of many small Oklahoma towns. The OLBPH is set apart in its own right because of the specialized nature of how our librarians cater to our clientele. Our patrons are very active readers, largely because of the relationships they have with our librarians.

Happy Library Everything!

--Kevin Treese, Library Director

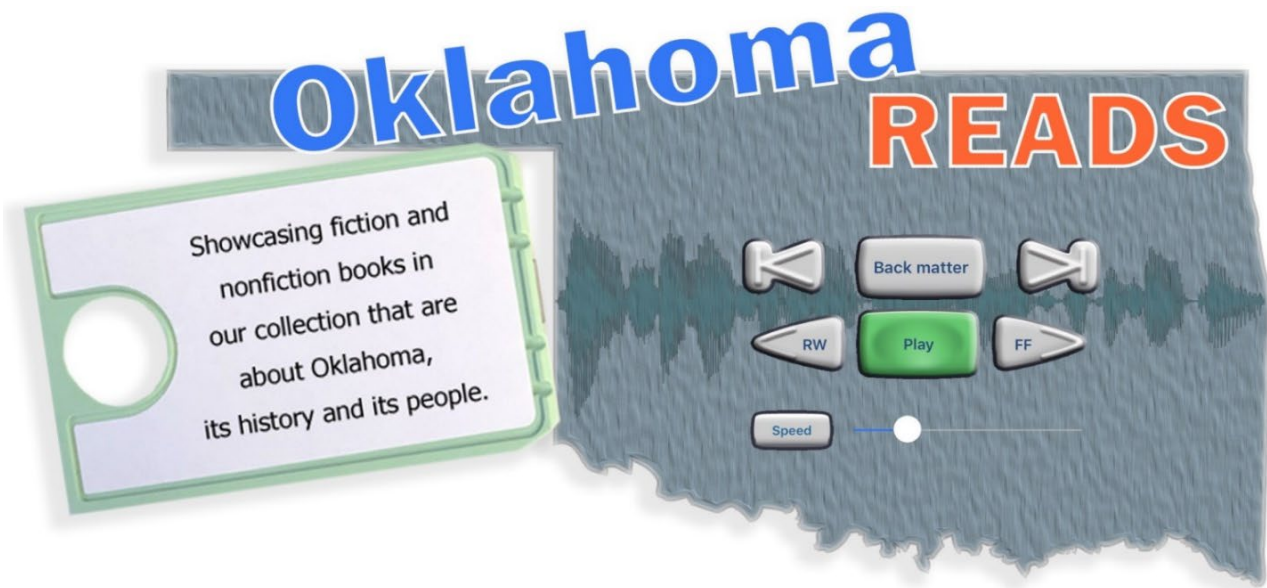
Metropolitan library branch featuring OLBPH items

The Warr Acres Library, part of the Metropolitan Library System in Oklahoma County, is showcasing

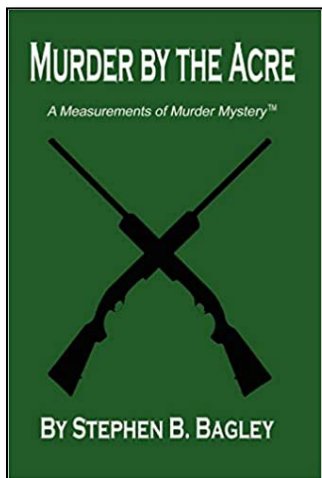


some OLBPH materials this month. The library invited us to occupy its entryway display case throughout May.

Along with a Digital Talking Book player and cartridges, the display also includes AIM Center materials and other tools used by DRS's Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired.



DBC 18952 – *Murder by the Acre: A Measurements of Murder Mystery* by Stephen B. Bagley



Trouble returns to Ryton, Oklahoma, when a murderer is on the loose.

Reporter Lisa Trent, her librarian boyfriend Bernard Worthington, and police chief Charles Donaldson return in *Murder by the Acre*, the second book of the “Measurements of Murder Mystery” series. The follow-up to *Murder by Dewey Decimal*, Lisa and Bernard stumble on the body of Danny Nelson—a local jeweler who is also a lecherous adulterer—while browsing through a house for sale.

Lisa, Bernard, and Chief Donaldson each utilize their own resources and skills to catch the murderer: Lisa investigates as only a reporter can, Bernard uses his access to library databases, and Chief Donaldson questions a slew of possible suspects including Danny’s widow, the town mayor, the former boyfriend of one of Danny’s mistresses, and several of Danny’s business

partners. When Bernard discovers a shady business deal between the victim and the possible suspects, the countdown begins.

Not only must Lisa, Bernard, and Chief Donaldson catch the murderer, but they must do so while each deal with stressful personal matters as well. Chief Donaldson and his wife battle a lawsuit, Bernard must defend Lisa and himself against his disapproving mother and a flirty ex-girlfriend, while Lisa confronts insecurities about her upbringing, her career, and marrying Bernard.

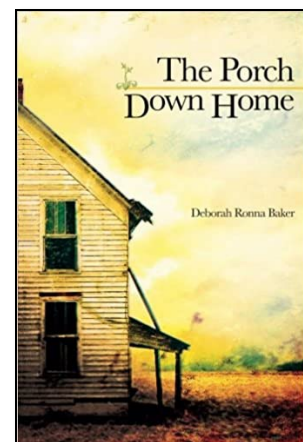
With a slew of possible suspects in the small fictional town of Ryton, Oklahoma, Lisa, Bernard, and Chief Donaldson battle the clock as the murderer attempts to raise the body count. The bevy of characters, their motives and opportunities will have readers at the edge of their seats wondering "Whodunit."

Note: This book is read by one of OLBPH's favorite narrators, Nancy Cheper. Read more about Nancy in our Volunteer Spotlight, starting on Page 8!

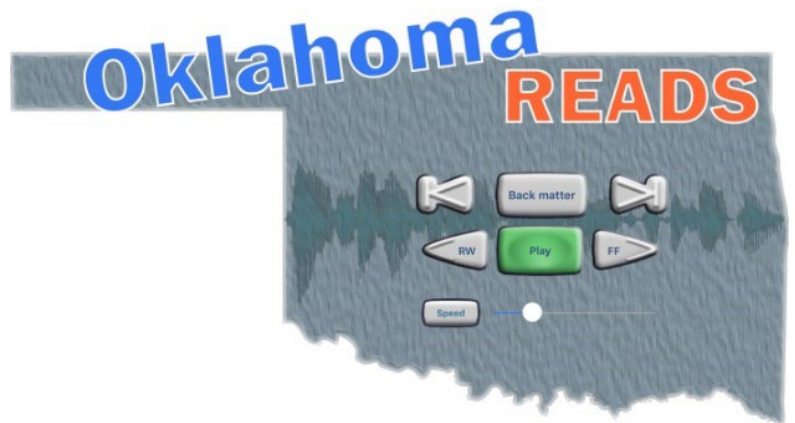
DBC 18959 – *The Porch Down Home* by Deborah Ronna Baker

A beautiful portrait of an African American family in a small town of Oklahoma

Deborah Ronna Baker's *The Porch Down Home* tells the story of seventeen-year-old Avie and her fifteen-year-old sister Cassie. When their parents are killed in a tragic accident, the sisters are taken in by their loving grandparents, Emmanuel and Fronia Wallace (or as the girls affectionately and respectively



call them, Bigdaddy and Bigmamma). Based on—and named after—the author’s own grandparents, the story paints Bigdaddy and Bigmamma as “the epitome of a marital example.”



Set in the historically African American town of I.X.L., Oklahoma, the book follows Avie and her family in several settings through the town including its church, the school which the sisters attend, and the Wallace homestead. The family’s home is an active and vibrant place where they raise their own livestock and grow their own crops, including an herb with mystical healing properties. Though much of the town is aware of the existence of Bigdaddy’s miracle herb, he is very protective of it. He doesn’t realize trouble may be closer to home than suspected.

When Avie—a generally excellent student—forgets she is tasked with choosing a topic for her group’s science project, she decides the only way to maintain her good grades is to use a sample of the herb, unbeknownst to Bigdaddy. Filled with guilt, Avie tries to tell Bigdaddy but can’t find the right time. When he does find out, he wonders if he’ll ever be able to trust Avie again.

Featuring an amazing ensemble of supporting characters, *The Porch Down Home* is a sweet depiction of family life and the trials we may experience.

--Troy Small, Studio Technician

Adults and older teens can also do Summer Reading!

You hear a lot about summer reading programs for kids, but we don't outgrow the benefits of reading! If you read a lot, why not participate in the upcoming Reading Challenge Program for a chance to win some neat prizes? The program is available for 10th grade students through senior adults. It begins June 1st, but you need to sign up by May 19. The program will end August 31 and is sponsored by Oklahomans for Special Library Services (OSLS).

All you need to do is read books from our library or on BARD, then log them on either the Beanstack app or website or call Kayla at the library with title of the book, the author, and the DB number of what you have read. Prizes will be awarded to those reading the most titles from our library (Audible, Kindle Unlimited, and Libby titles will not count – they must be titles from OLBPH).

Prizes to be awarded:

- iPad
- Amazon Gift Cards
- Bluetooth Speaker

If you need assistance using the Beanstack app, we will be happy to put together an instructional demonstration via Zoom. Beanstack is a popular app used by many libraries including the Oklahoma City Metropolitan Libraries and Missouri's Wolfner Library for the Blind.

--Debbie Sanders, MLV Foundation and OSLS

Volunteer Spotlight

"I'm just a little old lady from Ada who happened to be in the right place at the right time." – Nancy Cheper



Nancy Cheper in 2016.
*Photo by Brett Jones, DRS
Communications*

Nancy's humility is one of the things we like most about her. Other qualities we love: her rare talent as an OLBPH narrator, her wonderful attitude, dedication, versatility, immensely likeable voice, and we could go on and on. She also played a large part in one of OLBPH's most remarkable achievements. Nancy is one of the studio's elite narrators, and to be honest, we were surprised she hasn't been the focus of our Volunteer Spotlight until now. The choice would have been too easy, I suppose.

When she says she "happened to be in the right place at the right time," Nancy is talking about 2007, when she started as an OLBPH volunteer narrator. The timing was fortunate because the studio needed just the right voice for a children's book, *When Turtle Grew Feathers: A Folktale from the Choctaw Nation* by Tim Tingle. That recording became the first book digitally recorded by a regional library studio to be accepted into the National Library Service collection. A plaque commemorating the achievement hangs on a wall outside the OLBPH Studio.

When Turtle Grew Feathers is a Choctaw variant of Aesop's fable "The Tortoise and the Hare." Nancy was a perfect choice as narrator because of her experience acting in community theatre and reading to local elementary students. She says she was often praised by the kids, teachers, and parents for her animated and enthusiastic reading style.

"I got to do all the parts!" Nancy explains. "Eventually, story times had to be cut from the school schedules because of increased instructional requirements. I missed so badly reading to the kids."

Nancy and her husband Nick have lived in Ada for 50 years. She retired in 2017 from a medical career that mostly took place at what was then called Valley View Hospital (now Mercy). She served as a respiratory therapist and later as a physical therapy aide. Nick was a college professor and retired from East Central University as chair of the Biology department. They have a daughter and son-in-law who live in nearby Byng as well as two granddaughters and a grandson.

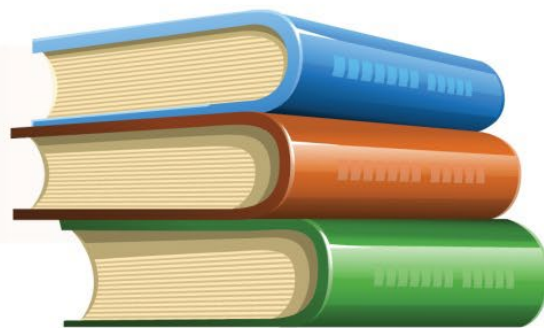
Nancy has narrated numerous books and magazine articles at OLBPH. One of the books, *Murder by the Acre* by fellow Ada resident Stephen B. Bagley, is featured in this issue's Oklahoma Reads on Page 4.

Despite living about 85 miles from the OLBPH Studio in Oklahoma City, Nancy says she enjoys the drive she makes two or three times each month, listening to audiobooks both ways and learning from other narrators' styles and techniques.

"I like to go often because I have so much fun when I'm there."

--Brian King, Editor

Book Corner



Check out these titles and find out if any grab your attention. Enjoy!

DB 112017 – *Spare* by Prince Harry

In this much-anticipated autobiography, Prince Harry tells his own story, chronicling his life, especially since his mother, Princess Diana, died in 1997. *Spare* is full of insight, revelation, and self-examination.

DB 49573 – *The Colony of Unrequited Dreams* by Wayne Johnston

This historical fiction centers on a charismatic politician from Newfoundland named Joseph Smallwood, who was a very real person in the early and mid-1900s. Smallwood's life is recounted, as is his rise to political power at great personal cost.

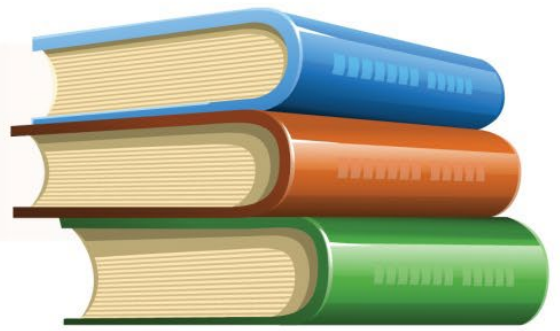
DBC 10296 – *To Hell on a Fast Horse* by Mark Gardner

This narrative history of the Old West might grab your attention. In this title, a historian delivers the true tale of Sheriff Pat Garrett's thrilling pursuit of outlaw Billy the Kid. The author provides background on where the Kid came from and how he became a notorious outlaw, at least as far as is reliably known. He also tells us about Pat Garrett's life, his post-civil war migration from Alabama to New Mexico, where he settled and found work as a bartender, customs agent, and sheriff.

DB 74280 – *Bayou Trilogy* by Daniel Woodrell

From the author of *Winter's Bone*, this omnibus of three mystery and suspense novels (*Under the Bright Lights*, *Muscle for the Wing*, *The*

Book Corner



Ones You Do) features Cajun boxer-turned-detective Rene Shade. Shade's brothers and long-absent father make appearances while a loser on the make is lured into murdering a local purveyor of sleaze.

DB 110613 – *The Mosquito Bowl* by Buzz Bissinger

This narrative history is brought to us by a Pulitzer Prize-winning author. When the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, college football was at the height of its popularity. One branch of the service dominated the aspirations of college football stars: the US Marine Corps. By 1944, two Marine regiments found themselves in the middle of the Pacific Ocean training for what would be the bloodiest battle of the war, Okinawa. When the trash-talking between the two regiments over who had the better football team reached a fever pitch, it was decided: The two would play each other. The bruising and bloody game that followed became known as "The Mosquito Bowl." This book tells that story, as well as what happened to the individuals involved during and after the war.

DB 110786 – *Demon Copperhead* by Barbara Kingsolver

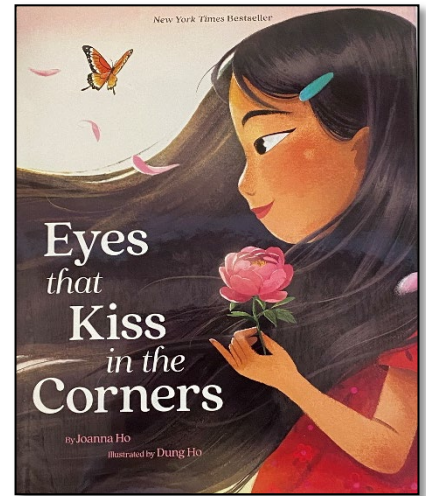
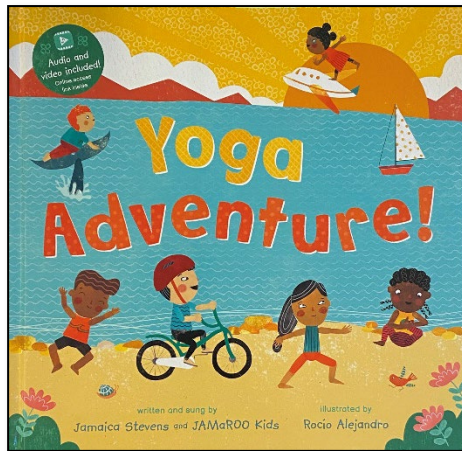
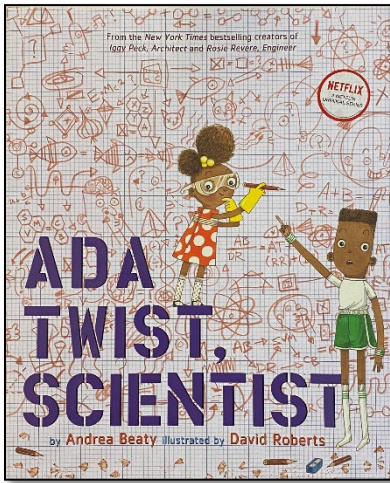
Set in the mountains of Appalachia, this novel is the story of a boy born into rural poverty, with no assets beyond his dead father's good looks, copper-colored hair, and a fierce talent for survival. He braves the modern perils of foster care, child labor, derelict schools, athletic success, addiction, loves, and losses.

--Andrew Shockley, Administrative Librarian

Braille transcriptions update

The Library continues its partnership with the Bethany Library. We transcribed three more books for their StoryWalk®. *Ada Twist, Scientist* is about a young girl exploring her world and asking “Why” about everything around her. *Yoga Adventure* follows several kids as they travel across the globe doing yoga. In *Eyes that Kiss in the Corners*, a Chinese girl explains how her eyes aren’t shaped like those of her friends.

--Lacey Downs, braille transcriber



Print/braille calendars on the way

NLS will be providing print/braille calendars to patrons starting this summer. Yes, in the middle of the year. The first calendars will cover a half year plus the first month of 2024. Starting at the end of 2023, subscribers will receive 2024 calendars for the full year.

To obtain a calendar, you must be a patron and contact OLBPH to subscribe. This is similar to subscribing to a magazine. You can request either wall-type calendars, pocket-sized, or both.

New Postal Service pickup policy may affect you

Since the Pandemic, the United States Postal Service (USPS) has instituted new policies for pickup of packages such as braille and digital books due to staff shortages, turnover, and seasonal workers.

Patrons can now use the online form at <https://tools.usps.com/schedule-pickup-steps.htm> to schedule pickup of library materials. The National Library Service (NLS) for the Blind and Print Disabled encourages you to request assistance from family and friends to initiate this step, if needed. Network libraries, including OLBPH, may be able to assist patrons who are elderly, ill, or without a computer and internet access, in order to submit the pickup form.

Customers wanting to request a pickup can also call 800-ASK-USPS (800-275-8777). Customer service representatives answer that phone line from 7 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, and from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturdays.

Of course, if patrons prefer to communicate directly with their mail carrier in a positive and cordial manner, this process may be streamlined. In the past, this procedure was a more informal agreement. If patrons have concerns or run into problems, OLBPH staff members can connect them to the NLS Postal Liaison.





As I was growing up in a lower-middle-class neighborhood in Oklahoma City, in retrospect, I enjoyed a great experience of living “on the edge of town,” going to a smaller elementary school, attending a neighborhood church, and knowing most of the people within a 6-square-block area. It was the kind of childhood that Boomers like me describe when we have the opportunity.

Part of that time was filled with stories from older relatives – grandmothers, aunts and uncles, neighbors, and people at church. I was always fascinated by the stories; stories of earlier times, traveling by rail, whether ticketed or by hopping a freight, hitchhiking, farming, riding horses, making cowboy movies with a friend’s camera, going to war during WWII, waiting at home during that same war, and so many other scenarios.

Since that time, I’ve experienced life! Remembering the tales from childhood, my own stories provide a continuum which keeps the tapestry growing. My daughters have encouraged me to write down my own stories, which I am working on now. I still have a long way to go, but, whereas I started the project for my daughters, I’m really enjoying re-living those stories.

Do you find that to be true in your life? If you have never tried writing down some of your life experiences and family stories, I highly recommend it. You may, as I have done, find that once you start, the fog of the past begins clearing and you will be warmed by those memories.

Reading your stories some day in the future, your family and friends will very likely join in with your enjoyment of those experiences. It’s a gift

to the future. Take a shot at it, OK? You may start a family tradition that many will benefit from for many years. In fact, you might even share some of those memories with us at OLBPH. See my email address below should you be willing to share your stories.

--Jim Kettler, Contract Monitor & BEP Training Associate –
realjimbo48@gmail.com

Do you know someone who could use OLBPH?

Think for a moment about the people you know – relatives, friends, neighbors, people in church and civic groups, and so on. There's a good chance one or more of them needs a different way to enjoy books, magazines, and newspapers. They may have worsening low vision, eye diseases, or could be dealing with conditions that make holding traditional books difficult or even impossible.

Tens of thousands of Oklahomans are eligible for OLBPH's free statewide audio books service, but they don't know about us. That's where you can help. Even with all our outreach efforts, a word-of-mouth referral from a satisfied patron or supporter is still one of the most powerful ways of raising awareness. Please encourage the person you thought of to contact OLBPH so he or she can enjoy reading again.

Don't forget to follow OLBPH on Facebook and Twitter



Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/OLBPH>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/OLBPH>



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 more 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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