

Oklahoma Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped

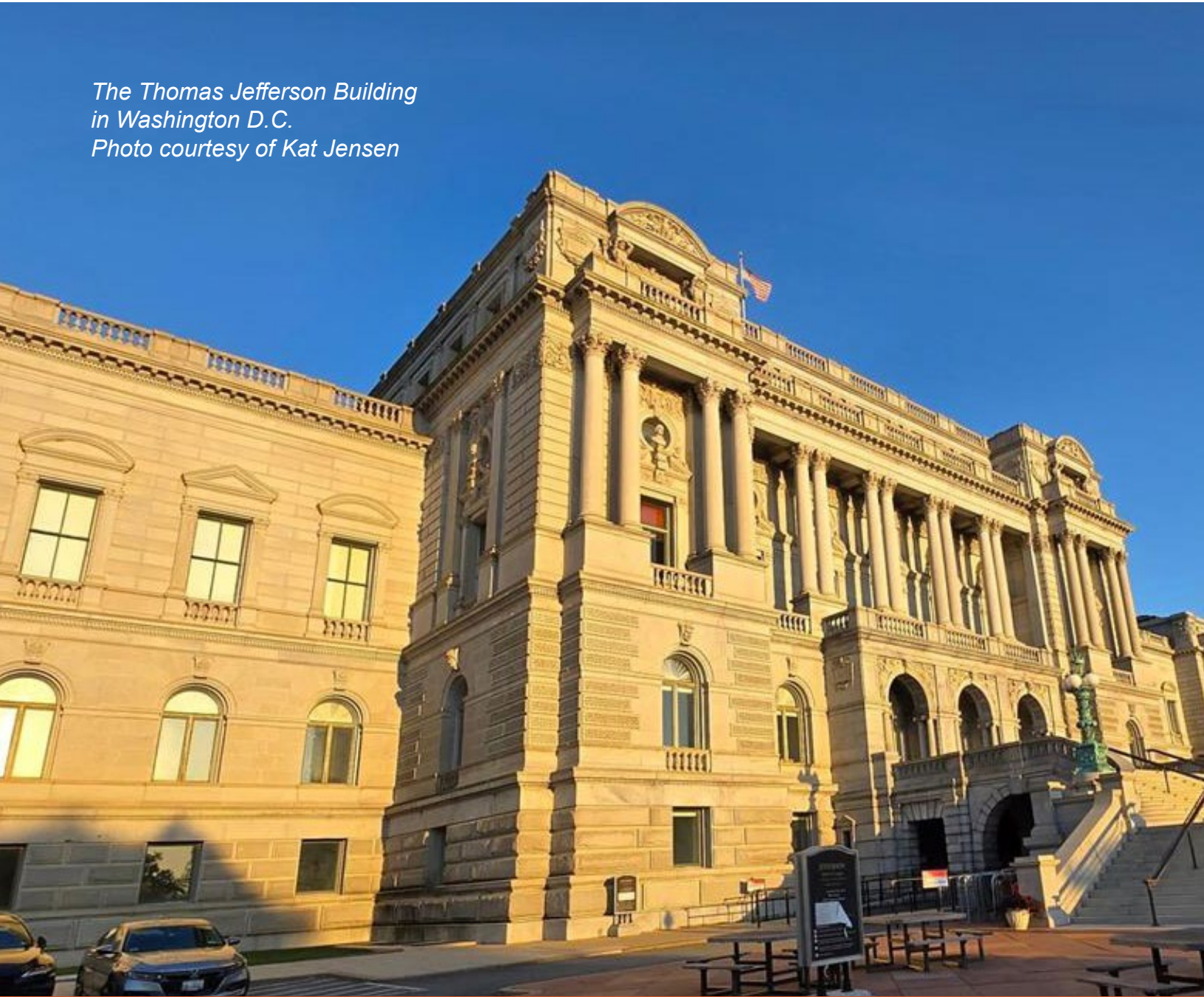


# BRIGHT FUTURE

SHARE OUR VISION, THAT ALL MAY READ.

Vol. 39, No. 3, Fall 2024

*The Thomas Jefferson Building  
in Washington D.C.  
Photo courtesy of Kat Jensen*



**OKLAHOMA**  
**Rehabilitation Services**  
Oklahoma Library for the Blind and  
Physically Handicapped

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# Letter from the Director

## *Thankful And Moving Forward*

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Dear Patrons and Readers,

Welcome to the fall issue of Bright Future! Summer has flown by, though it lingers with temperatures in the 90's this October. The high temperatures are at the front and center of our minds at the Oklahoma Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, as the library has been without air conditioning and ventilation for the last two months. This has led to unsafe working conditions in our building due to excessive heat. Not to worry! This has not affected our library services.

Your library staff continue to keep talking books circulating. Incoming phone calls are being routed to a work-from-home employee who takes messages. Calls are then returned by the appropriate librarian or other staff member who is working from home. This process is a little slower and we appreciate your patience as we all do our best to continue to provide wonderful library service. The library building remains open during regular business hours, but with minimum staff.

Our building's heating, ventilation, and air conditioning system has had many issues in recent years; therefore the entire system is being replaced. Replacement of the HVAC system is expected to continue into next year due to the large size of the building and extensiveness of the project. We are working as quickly as possible to resolve this situation.

Despite these hardships, we remain grateful for our patrons, our work and our staff. We recently had the unique opportunity to attend a national conference with other special library staff, where we enjoyed fellowship and invigorating ideas. We also look forward to when we can return to our building with a shiny new, reliable HVAC system. I hope this finds everyone enjoying the season we are in. Boomer Sooner and Go Pokes!

Cheers! Kevin Treese

## Want to receive Bright Future in a different format?

Bright Future is also available by email, in braille, on the Oklahoma Telephone Reader (405-522-1896 or 1-855-887-6397), as an audio file on our website and as an accessible PDF document on our website at [olbph.org](http://olbph.org).

To receive Bright Future by email or braille, update your subscription preferences by calling 405-521-3514 or emailing [olbph@okdrs.gov](mailto:olbph@okdrs.gov).

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# Cover Story

## *OLBPH Staff Visit Washington D.C.*

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Oklahoma Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped staff recently attended the 2024 National Conference of Librarians Serving Blind and Print Disabled Individuals in Washington D.C.. Over 200 special library staff from across the United States met at the conference to exchange ideas about how to better serve blind and print disabled individuals.

The conference was organized by the National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled and was the first in-person conference it has held in the last six years. This year's conference theme, "Advancing Library Services through Community Partnerships," focused on how NLS network libraries can use partnerships with public libraries, social service organizations and organizations for the blind in order to raise awareness of library services.

OLBPH Director Kevin Treese delivered a presentation at the conference highlighting the OLBPH's unique qualities, including its position as part of the Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services - Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired. Most NLS libraries are part of their states' Department of Libraries. The OLBPH's position in DRS and SBVI partners us with rehabilitation counselors who refer patrons to our services.

While the OLBPH offered an example to other network libraries at the conference, OLBPH staff also gained information and ideas from attending.

"The new technology NLS is developing and how it will make service to our patrons faster, easier, and more efficient was a major focus of the conference," said Kat Jensen, recording studio director and attendee.

OLBPH staff were thankful for the opportunity to meet with their peers and with NLS leadership in person at the conference.

"The opportunity to meet and hear from NLS's new director and other leaders resolidified the comraderie of NLS and the network libraries across the nation," said Treese. "I have a refreshed sense of connection."



*Kat visits the Main Library building.  
Photo courtesy of Kat Jensen*

“It is important to speak in-person with LBPH colleagues from other states to get an idea how they approach the issues we all face. In-person networking is something of a serendipitous process that cannot be replicated by email and zoom calls,” said Andrew Shockley, administrative librarian and conference attendee.

OLBPH staff recognized that many of the challenges the OLBPH faces are shared by other NLS network libraries across the nation.

“There’s comfort in knowing we’re all in the same boat,” said Treese.

Additionally, participation by network libraries like OLBPH in the conference will help guide future national operations.

“Open discussions and time for questions not only helped us all understand each other and our needs better but also helped NLS learn what the most important issues we are facing in the field are and where their focus needs to be,” said Jensen.

OLBPH staff returned from the conference with refreshed comraderie, new information about the direction of NLS in the digital age and exciting ideas for how to better serve OLBPH patrons.

## Book Corner

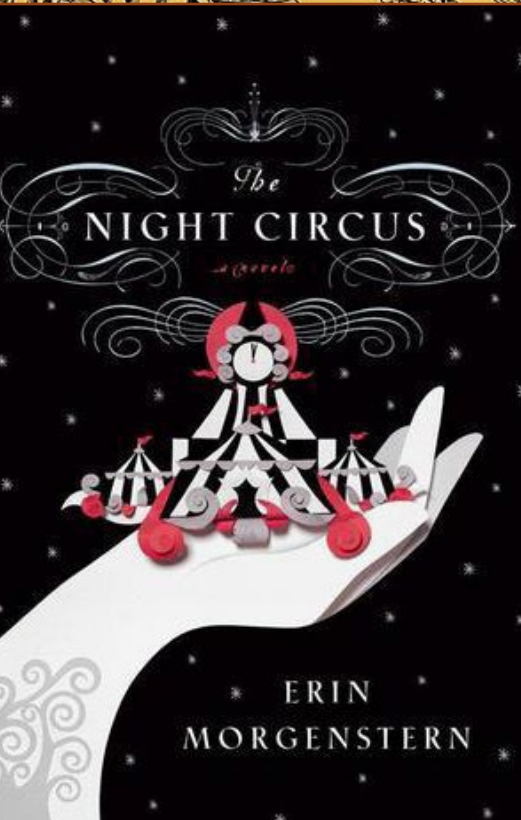
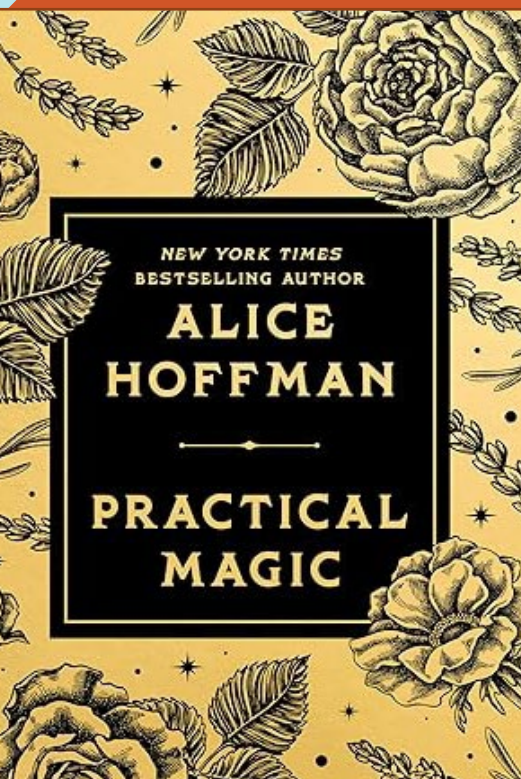
### *Thrills for a Chilly Night*

**Practical Magic by Alice Hoffman, DB040461**

For more than two hundred years, the Owens women have been blamed for everything that has gone wrong in their Massachusetts town. Gillian and Sally Owens have endured that fate: as children, the sisters were forever outsiders, taunted, talked about and pointed at. Their elderly aunts seemed to encourage the whispers of witchery, with their musty house and their exotic concoctions and their crowd of black cats. But all Gillian and Sally wanted was to escape to normalcy. One will do so by marrying, the other by running away. But the bonds they share will bring them back - almost as if by magic.

**The Night Circus by Erin Morgenstern, DB073783**

The circus arrives without warning. Within the striped canvas tents is an utterly unique experience. It is called Le Cirque des Rêves, and it is only open at night. But behind the scenes, a fierce competition is underway - a duel between two young magicians, Celia and Marco, who have been trained since childhood expressly for this purpose. Unbeknownst to them, this is a game in which only one can be left standing, and the circus is but the stage for a remarkable battle of imagination and will. Despite themselves, however, Celia and Marco tumble headfirst into love. True love or not, the game must play out, and the fates of everyone, from the cast of performers to the patrons, hang suspended as precariously as the daring acrobats overhead.



### Something Wicked this Way Comes by Ray Bradbury, DB050233

For those who still dream and remember, for those yet to experience the hypnotic power of its dark poetry, step inside. The show is about to begin. Cooger & Dark's Pandemonium Shadow Show has come to Green Town, Illinois, to destroy every life touched by its strange and sinister mystery. The carnival rolls in sometime after midnight, ushering in Halloween a week early. A calliope's shrill siren song beckons to all with a seductive promise of dreams and youth regained. Two boys will discover the secret of its smoke, mazes, and mirrors; two friends who will soon know all too well the heavy cost of wishes...and the stuff of nightmares.

### Rebecca by Daphne DuMaurier, DB048914

The novel begins in Monte Carlo, where our heroine is swept off her feet by the dashing widower Maxim de Winter and his sudden proposal of marriage. Orphaned and working as a lady's maid, she can barely believe her luck. It is only when they arrive at his massive country estate that she realizes how large a shadow his late wife will cast over their lives - presenting her with a lingering evil that threatens to destroy their marriage from beyond the grave.

### The Witches of Eastwick by John Updike, DB020906

Toward the end of the Vietnam era, in a snug little Rhode Island seacoast town, wonderful powers have descended upon Alexandra, Jane, and Sukie, bewitching divorcées with sudden access to all that is female, fecund, and mysterious. Their happy little coven takes on new, malignant life when a dark and moneyed stranger, Darryl Van Horne, refurbishes the long-derelict Lenox mansion and invites them in to play. Thenceforth scandal flits through the darkening, crooked streets of Eastwick.

### Floating Dragon by Peter Straub, DB019202

Two monstrous evils. This quiet suburban town of Hampstead is threatened by two horrors. One is natural. The hideous, unstoppable creation of man's power gone mad. The other is not natural at all. And it makes the first look like a child's play. Four stalwart residents attuned to the shocking events emerge as heroes battling against the 'Dragon' in this occult novel with an eerie mixture of demonic possessions, hauntings, telepathy, ghosts, plague, murders, and suicides.

# Technology News

## *NLS Opens Beta for Alexa Skill*

The National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled has opened beta registration for the new My Talking Books skill on Amazon Alexa-enabled smart speakers. Patrons who wish to register for the open beta should fill out the Patron Registration Form at [www.surveymonkey.com/r/mtb-open-beta](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/mtb-open-beta). Spots are limited.

### *Oklahoma Telephone Reader:*

#### *How to Use OTR with Alexa*

- 1: Make sure OTR is added as a phone contact: 405-522-1896
- 2: Say "Alexa call OTR"
- 3: When the OTR prompt comes up, say "Alexa (insert your unique ID number)"
- 4: When asked for your security code, say "Alexa (insert your unique security code)"
- 5: Once you are logged into OTR, say "Alexa (insert the number you want to dial for the category or article)." If it is a two-digit number you must say both digits. For example, instead of ten you must say one zero.

### *NFB Newsline*

Are you a National Federation of the Blind Newsline subscriber?

Did you know Newsline now has an app for iSO and Android phones? It also works with Alexa. Now there are even more ways to listen!

Not a subscriber and would like to sign up? Call 405-521-3514.

*My Talking Books, OTR and NFB Newsline now work with Alexa smart speakers.*





# Notice

## *Changes to Phone Call Procedure*

As many of you are aware, the entire heating and air system at the Oklahoma Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped is currently not operational. All of our staff are working from home, working in the office for short periods of time, or a combination of the two depending on job duties.

When you call the library, our administrative assistant, Sarah, will take a message and relay it to the appropriate person. Due to the nature of working from home, she is unable to transfer you to the person you need. Be aware that the person who returns your call will most likely be working from home, and your caller ID may display a number unfamiliar to you.

To help us help you, please:

- Answer your phone if you're expecting a return call.
- Ensure that your voicemail is set up and active.
- Ensure that your voicemail is not full.
- Check your voicemail. Librarians and other staff will leave you a message with their name and why they are calling if they do not reach you when they return your call.

The only number you should dial to contact the OLBPH is 405.521.3514 or our toll-free number at 800.523.0288. Do not call any other number, even if it shows up in your call history. Sarah knows who is available and will ensure that your message gets to the person you need, but only when you call the library's main line.

If you need to come to the library in-person, please call ahead so we know you are coming. Onsite staff work in various parts of the building and may not be near the reception area.

Please be assured that books and players are mailed daily.

- Lacey Downs, Administrative Programs Officer

# Volunteer Spotlight

## *In Loving Memory of Kent Graham*

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*By Kat Jensen, Recording Studio Director*

It is with a heavy heart that I write this issue of the volunteer spotlight. Instead of a spotlight, I write in memory of our library's volunteer and friend, Mr. Kent Graham. Unfortunately, we lost him at 77 years old to pancreatic cancer on September 14th, 2024. He passed peacefully and surrounded by family. Kent had volunteered with the library since 2012. His loss is felt greatly amongst the library staff and especially the Oklahoma Telephone Reader and Recording Studio team.

Kent and his wife Lyn were married for 54 years. Together, they had three grown sons, all of whom Kent spoke of proudly. He also had four grandchildren. Kent spent 28 years in the U.S. Air Force, retiring in 1998. He then returned to college, earning Bachelor's and Master's degrees in professional writing from the University of Oklahoma. He worked as an adjunct professor at OU, teaching writing classes. Kent also served on the City of Moore Planning Commission and sang with the Canterbury Voices.

Kent was a jack of all trades at our library. He contributed weekly to the OTR program by recording the Enid News Eagle with his friend Lloyd Musselman. Kent spent hours prepping and finding articles that he thought our listeners would enjoy, and then even more time deciding which articles would suit his voice and which would suit Lloyd's. His time and dedication to the OTR alone show how much he cared about our patrons and services. But Kent didn't stop there. He also worked to edit recordings for OTR and other publications each week. I can't even count the number of books, magazine articles, and brochures Kent has personally edited over the years. He was meticulous, making sure pronunciations were just right and everything sounded smooth to the listener.

Kent also narrated brochures and articles in Oklahoma Today. His dedication and willingness to help with anything we needed are why he was awarded the Jo Anna Peters Volunteer Achievement Award.

I asked Kent once why he spent so much time and effort with the studio and OTR, and he told me about 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,” Kent said.

This library and its cause were very personal for Kent. He understood that what we are doing is incredibly important work and he wanted our patrons to get the best quality of services available.

Kent was always on board for making improvements to the recording studio and the OTR, which is exactly what we will continue to do. We hope to update the OTR system from analog to digital very soon and Kent was certainly the driving force behind that change.

Kent was an excellent example of being the change you want to see in the world. His presence will be dearly missed by us all.

To volunteer, call 405-521-3514 or email [olbph@okdrs.gov](mailto:olbph@okdrs.gov). Apply online at [oklahoma.gov/olbph/resources](http://oklahoma.gov/olbph/resources)



*Kent receives the Jo Anna Peters Volunteer Award in 2023.  
Photo by Jody Harlan*



*Kent served in the U.S. Air Force for 28 years before retiring in 1998.  
Photo courtesy of the Oklahoman*

## Have you heard of board game accessibility kits?

Board game accessibility kits are packages of specialized products, such as braille dice, other tactile pieces and cards with QR codes for phones to read, that make board games accessible to the blind and visually impaired.

Accessibility kits are used together with an original retail game so that both blind and sighted players can play together with well known board games such as Candy Land and Settlers of Catan.

Board games are a great activity for families and friends to enjoy together and accessibility kits make it possible for visually impaired people to participate in previously inaccessible games.

One company offering accessibility kits for sale is 64 Oz. Games, a small business and online retailer based out of Oklahoma's neighboring state, Texas. You can find them at [64-ounce-games.myshopify.com](http://64-ounce-games.myshopify.com).

*Apples to Apples accessibility kit.  
Photo courtesy of 64 Oz. Games*



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**FREE MATTER  
FOR THE BLIND**