

Bright Future

Newsletter of the Oklahoma Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped

Please return unused players

Do you have a digital talking book player that is not being used anymore? Perhaps you're using BARD now instead, or you or a loved one has another reason why the player has been idle for a long time. If so, please return it to OLBPH so someone else can use it.

Our supply of players is limited, especially the advanced version of the player that has additional functions. We want to make sure everyone who is eligible for our services and wants a player can have one.

You don't have to pay anything to ship a player back to OLBPH through the U.S. Postal Service. Simply put it in the original box and send it to our address: 300 NE 18th St, Oklahoma City, OK 73105. Make sure the words "Free Matter for the Blind" are in the upper right corner, where postage would normally go. If you don't have the original box, let us know and we will send a replacement or make other arrangements.

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300 N.E. 18th St.
Oklahoma City, OK 73105
405-521-3514

Toll Free 1-800-523-0288
Fax 405-521-4582
TTY/TDD 405-521-4672

E-mail: olbph@okdrs.gov
Website: www.olbph.org

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

Director's Column

As I start to write my column, Punxsutawney (PA) Phil appeared from his tree stump to see his shadow and predict six more weeks of winter. Weather-wise, that could mean anything here in Oklahoma from day to day. It's an interesting bridge for me, though, as I was born and raised in Western PA, about 30 miles south of the famous groundhog in Indiana, PA. Given the frigid temps we've already felt here in OK, burrowing up with a talking book is a great way to pass the time.

Not much burrowing up here at your OLBPH as we keep the books circulating to our patrons and educational materials to our school kids. Also, since the previous edition of *Bright Future*, we have kept busy with the hiring process, welcoming two new employees, one in our recording studio and one in our AIM (Accessible Instructional Materials) Center. You will learn more about them in their introductions on Pages 6-7.

The supervisors at the library are learning new processes for hiring state employees – as are all state agencies – using an HR platform called "Workday." There is still a blend of conventional and contemporary hiring methods from start to finish, and we endeavor to move with the changes. This in the interest of streamlining and making the best use of technology, not only for hiring but for all manner of human resources management. I am extremely happy with the results of our recent hiring efforts.

Just as technology improves our library services, so can it with other facets in our world, enhancing our quality of life and work. I hope this newsletter finds our readers happy and healthy.

--Kevin Treese, Library Director

AIM Center encourages parents to 'Connect'

Parents,

Your child can dream big and achieve anything she sets her mind to. As accessibility awareness and technology continue to grow, so do opportunities for children with vision loss. From education and reading to games and sports, your child's future is full of possibility.

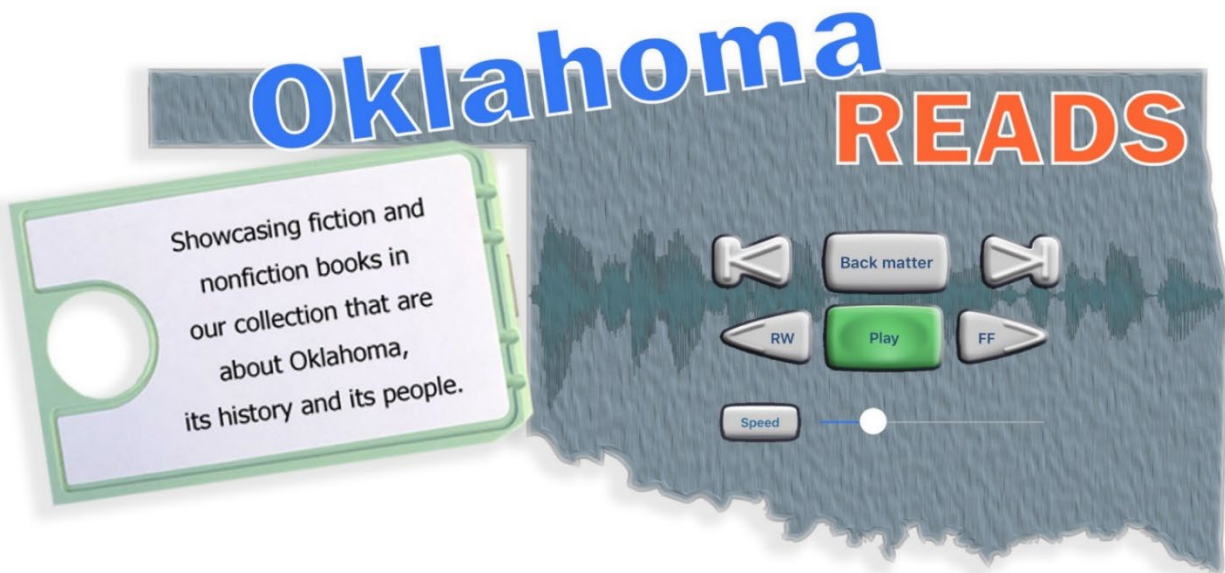
Connect with **FamilyConnect.org**, where you'll find vital information and support for parents who have children who are blind or visually impaired. While you are there, you'll find

success stories and support whether your child is an infant, preschooler, elementary or high schooler, or young adult.

The AIM Center carries many of the products available from American Printing House that are discussed on Family Connect. Please reach out to me at pwatson@okdrs.gov if you have questions about how to obtain products for your child and students. Our services are free to qualifying students, birth to 12th grade.

--Pepper Watson, AIM Center Director

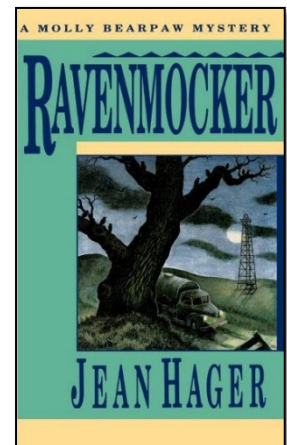




**DBC 12215 – Ravenmocker (A Molly Bearpaw Mystery #1),
by Jean Hager**

Ready for a good “whodunit” mystery? Then look no further.

A Ravenmocker is the most dreaded and deadly of Cherokee witches, and when Woodrow’s father dies in a nursing home, he thinks a Ravenmocker might be to blame. But when Molly Bearpaw, an investigator for the Native American Advocacy League, takes the case, she finds something a lot less mysterious is at play. Someone is targeting the nursing home residents but why?



Molly quickly realizes this is a race against time to find out who is doing this as the victims begin to multiply. This leads her throughout her small town of Tahlequah, Oklahoma, following any leads she can find as she dives headfirst into this investigation regardless of the risks involved.

Molly soon realizes a lot about not only the town but about herself. Needing some friends and maybe a little love along the way to figure out exactly what is happening here. Will she find the killer before it is too late? You will have to give it a listen to find out.

Have you missed **Oklahoma Today** magazine on BARD?

Well, we have good news for you because it is back. The 2023 January/February issue of *Oklahoma Today* is currently being edited and recorded in our sound studio. Due to logistics with Covid, we had to take a break. Our volunteers and studio are back up and running at full steam ahead and cannot wait to bring you this newest issue of *Oklahoma Today*.



This issue will be all about food! This issue will take you throughout Oklahoma exploring everything from a great place to get your fresh meat in Stillwater to a whodunit dinner theater in Oklahoma City.

Throughout this issue, you will find all the best places around Oklahoma for great atmosphere, culture, and of course food. This issue also does not forget the importance of nutrition and has a fascinating editorial on truly native cuisine.

The OLBPH Studio is happy to offer you this bimonthly content once again. This magazine will be directly accessible on BARD just as before. It is under the Audio Magazines category in your BARD app; just scroll down to *Oklahoma Today*. We hope you look forward to continuing issues throughout the coming year.

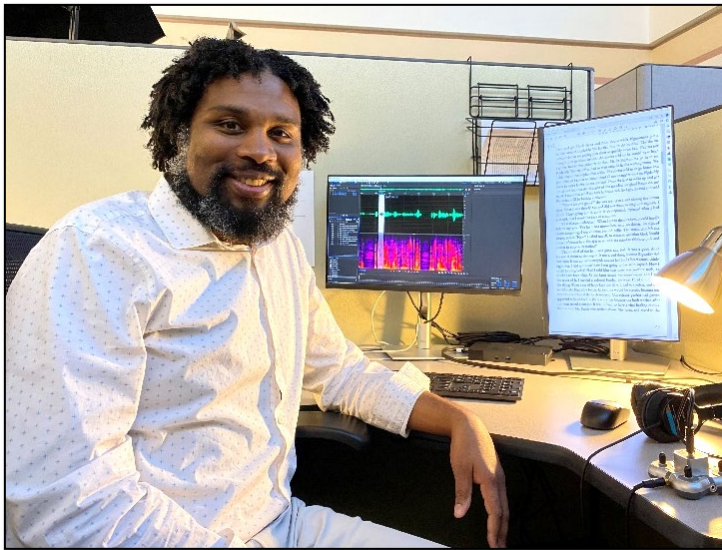
Also, for the current events covered in *Oklahoma Today*, you can always access those weekly through our Oklahoma Telephone Reader (OTR) service. We provide these and many more weekly news articles, magazine articles, and short stories every week through our OTR system. If you are a patron, but not signed up for OTR and would like to learn more, feel free to contact us and we will make sure you have access to this service.

--Kat Jensen, Studio Director

Meet the 2 new members of the OLBPH family

My name is Troy Small, and I'm excited to be the newest Library (Studio) Technician. I've been creating and editing sound recordings for nearly twenty years using programs such as Cubase, Pro Tools and Audacity. That said, I'm happy to be a part of the Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped's studio.

Before joining the team of this library, I worked for the University of Central Oklahoma's Max Chambers Library. From 2015-2019, I was their Library Technician I for the Multimedia



department, which later became the Innovation Studio.

I hold bachelor and master's degrees in Vocal Performance, both from the University of Central Oklahoma. As a performer, my background is in opera, art song, oratorio, sacred music, jazz, and pop. As an educator, I was the Vocal Music Teacher for F.D. Moon Middle School in Oklahoma City and have taught privately since 2007. I look forward to this new artistic endeavor.

* * * * *

Hello! My name is Jack Fox, and I am a new Library Technician at the AIM Center. I graduated in 2022 from Oklahoma State University where I studied history and political science.

I previously worked at a school district in Texas as part of the Information Technology team. I mainly worked on Chromebooks and staff devices, although I got some experience working with the network. I will be repairing Chromebooks and Perkins Braille here at the OLBPH. I am excited to be a part of this great team.



Speaking of teams, I really enjoy everything about baseball. I recently was a part of the Texas Rangers grounds crew for six years and the Oklahoma State baseball grounds crew for five years. I really enjoyed being able to be a part of the final year of both Allie P. Reynolds Stadium and the Ballpark in Arlington. It was a unique situation that both teams got new stadiums within a year of each other.

NLS enhances services for Spanish speakers

The National Library Service has launched a Spanish-language website to help connect Spanish speakers to a large and growing collection of Spanish books and magazines. Readers with low vision or blindness, or a disability that prevents them from using regular print materials can find information about NLS, apply for service, as well as find various resources and library materials in Spanish with ease. Take a look and share with your favorite Spanish-language readers. www.loc.gov/nls/es/

Volunteer Spotlight – Bethany Mobley

The volunteer in this season’s spotlight spends a lot of time on the phone. Many of us would think that’s unfortunate, but it’s a very good thing for Bethany Mobley. The phone is essential to her work and to enriching the lives of OLBPH patrons through our Oklahoma Telephone Reader program.

On OTR, Bethany reads various columns from the *Tulsa World* newspaper on Friday mornings. She says she looks forward to grabbing her cup of coffee and reading aloud through each section.

“My husband is an avid fútbol (soccer) fan,” Bethany said, “and we have an ongoing joke where he asks me who is playing this weekend since he knows that I read the sports schedule every Friday.”

On the professional side of her phone activity, Bethany helps people in other ways as a telephonic nurse case manager. She earned her bachelor’s degree in nursing from the University of Central Oklahoma and her background includes critical care and wound care. Now, she helps injured workers.

“My role involves assisting in the medical management of workers’ recoveries from injuries, including coordinating care, communicating with the medical team, and serving as an extra resource for questions as needed,” Bethany explained.



Bethany's father was in the Air Force in her early years, so she has lived in a variety of places, including Texas, North Dakota, California, Panama, and Oklahoma. Her dad retired while in Oklahoma when she was in middle school, and she has spent most of her life in the Sooner State. She met her husband, Devon, here and together they enjoy hiking, camping, and their three dogs that she says, "keep life more than interesting."

Bethany says her love of reading led to her connection with our library. She was visiting a local bookstore and saw a sign requesting volunteers to read for OLBPH.

"I have always enjoyed the power of storytelling as well as the power of knowledge," Bethany writes. "I enjoy knowing that the simple task of reading creates some kind of connection for the listener on the other end of that line."

OTR users and all of us here at OLBPH are very glad we have volunteers like Bethany who are so giving and willing to spend some extra time on the phone.

--Brian King, Editor

Let's Talk!

Do you want to know the latest OLBPH news? Follow us on Facebook and Twitter and learn all the news as it happens, get book recommendations, and have a little fun. We also love hearing from you so leave a comment, like a post, or share a post with your thoughts for all your friends to see.

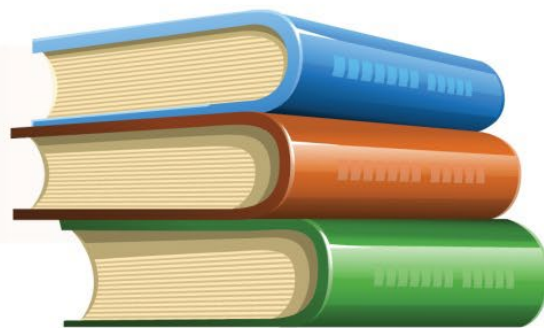


Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/OLBPH>

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



Book Corner



February is Black History Month. To celebrate we have included a small sampling of African-American fiction and one memoir you might like to try. Happy Reading!

DB 69074 – *Life Is Short but Wide* by J. California Cooper

The small town of Wideland, Oklahoma, is a place where ordinary Americans with big hearts make their way through life's ups and downs. Among them are newlyweds Irene and Val who graciously allow their neighbors to build a house on their land. The two couples and their children experience countless struggles, but they all strive to squeeze joy out of every possible moment.

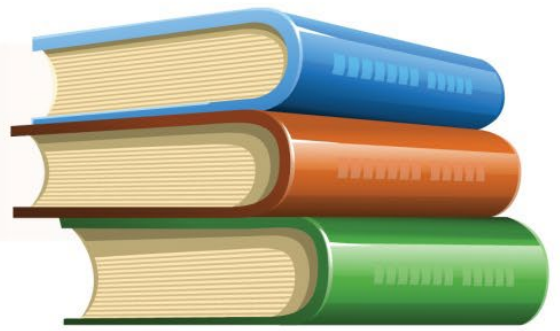
DB 93236 – *How Long 'Til Black Future Month?* by N.K. Jemisin

This is a collection of science fiction and fantasy stories by the Hugo Award-winning author. In one story, dragons and spirits haunt New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina. In another, a parallel universe observes reality's mistakes. In still another, a black mother in the Jim Crow South must save her daughter from a fairy.

DB 72177 – *Black Water Rising* by Attica Locke

This thrilling mystery is set in Texas, circa 1981. African-American lawyer Jay Porter rescues from the bayou a white woman he later suspects is involved in a murder. Despite his past and impending fatherhood, Jay investigates and finds links to Houston's political elite and big oil.

Book Corner



DB 40702 – *Quicksand and Passing* by Nella Larsen

This cartridge contains two novels written by Harlem Renaissance author Nella Larsen. *Quicksand* features Helga Crane, a sophisticated young woman, who moves between the white and black worlds and eventually entraps herself in marriage to a backwoods southern preacher. In *Passing*, Irene Redfield has a secret desire to banish her friend Clare Kendry, an African American passing for white, from her circle.

DB 50637 – *Cheaters* by Eric Jerome Dickey

Stephan, just like his promiscuous dad, sabotages relationships. Darnell, hurt by his wife's disapproval of his writing, contemplates an affair. Chantel, a Stephan castoff, becomes hardened. But these young, affluent African Americans in Los Angeles are all eventually helped through soul-searching and friends.

DB 33260 – *Notes of a Native Son* by James Baldwin

First published in 1955, this classic collection of autobiographical essays depicts the author's early life in Harlem and explores the black experience in America and abroad.

DB 69066 – *Sag Harbor* by Colson Whitehead

It's 1985 and upper-middle-class black teen Benji spends another summer on Long Island with his brother and his parents. Benji finds relief from prep school and a part-time job, but he will be tested by tribulations big and small.

--Andrew Shockley, Administrative Librarian

Library friends group OSLS invites you to Annual Meeting

Oklahomans for Special Library Services (OSLS), the OLBPH friends group, will hold its annual meeting on Thursday, May 18. The meeting will be held at the West Side Lions Club building, 4135 N.W. 10th Street in Oklahoma City. We will be gathering and registering guests between 11:30 and noon. There is no cost for this meeting, including our lunch, which will be served starting at noon. After the lunch and presentations, OSLS conducts its annual business meeting.

We hope you will plan to attend. You won't be disappointed. To sign up, call Jay Doudna at 405-942-3413 or send an email to jaydoudna@cox.net. We look forward to seeing you there.

NLS announces new and improved catalog

Finding your next great read is easier than ever with the new NLS

Catalog! The catalog is designed for easy use on both desktop computers and mobile devices. It has advanced search options and direct links to BARD from catalog listings for quick downloads. And for the first time, patrons can directly request books to add to our collection! Patrons will also find links to contact a librarian and other resources to get the most out of NLS. Start exploring the catalog at <https://nlscatalog.loc.gov>.

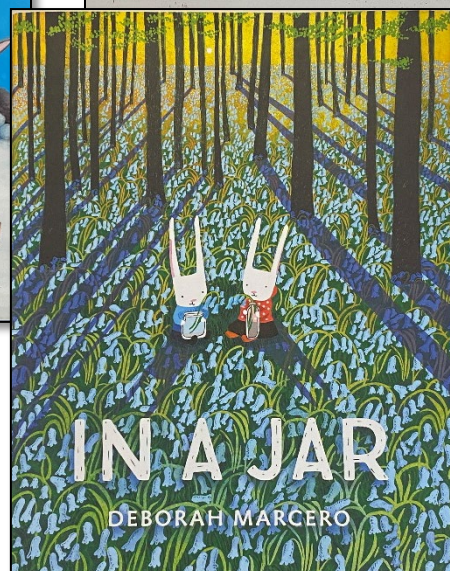
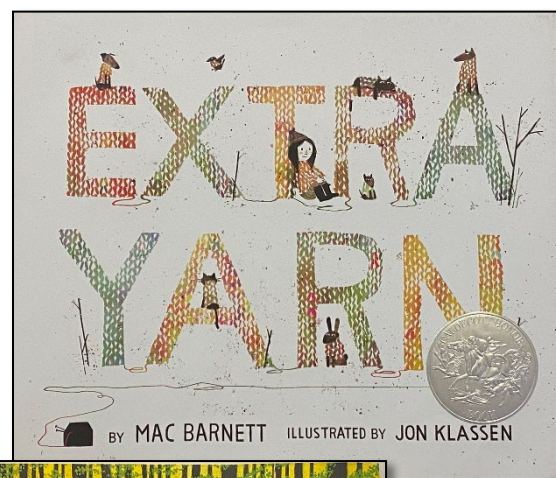
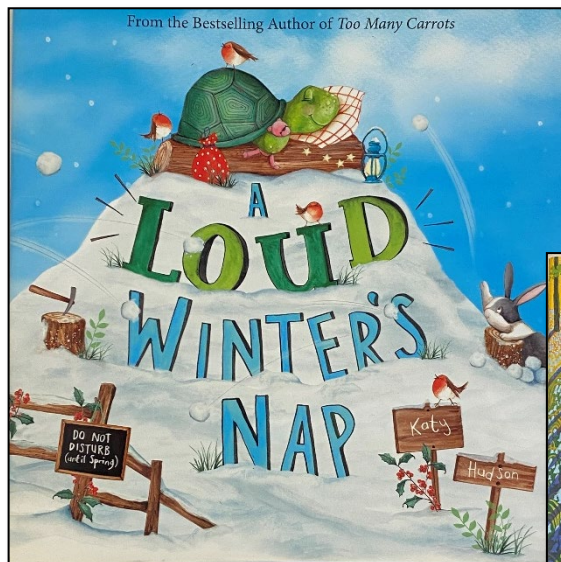


More braille transcriptions provided this season

We continued our partnership with the Bethany Library this quarter with transcriptions of three new StoryWalk® books. The December story was *Extra Yarn*, starring Annabelle and her magical box of never-ending colored yarn. January's story was *A Loud Winter's Nap* and featured a grumpy tortoise who just doesn't like winter and wants to sleep the season away. February's feature is *In a Jar*, about a rabbit who shares his treasured experiences with his faraway friend.

We also provided one of our fellow SBVI offices with braille copies of 22 different agency brochures to hand out at events.

--Lacey Downs, braille transcriber



The Back 40

By Jim Kettler

“Look for the helpers.” That was Fred Rogers’ (Mr. Rogers) advice for a generation of young children. The helpers are almost always present. “Look for the good in every situation.” That is the advice of another notable person, Brian Tracy, author. What do these quotes have in common that we can put to work in our lives to make our lives better?

Both quotes contain the element of hope. Hope that there are helpers, and that there is good to be found in every situation. I’ve said before that we generally find what we are looking for. If we are looking for something offensive, we’ll likely find it. If we are looking for a certain item of clothing in the department store, we are likely to find that. If, on the other hand, we are looking for beauty, joy, encouragement, or any number of other positive things to build ourselves up, we are very likely to find those things.

So what are you looking for in life? Peace? Adventure? Friendship? Success? First create a picture in your mind of what that might look like. Now you have the beginnings of a “road map” so that when you find what you seek, you will recognize it. You will also have a notion of where to look for the helpers and how to look for the good.

The OLBPH is one of the most positive organizations you will find. The staff is all about improving quality of life for Oklahomans of all ages who have print disabilities. And they definitely qualify as helpers by providing free access to audiobooks and other materials that feed people’s minds.

I'm so thankful for wisdom one can glean from reading good books and periodicals. It's my goal for 2023 to read more books. I know it takes more commitment to do that, but it is also more rewarding than reading short articles. The time and effort required is paid back richly.

I know this article is published well after the beginning of the year, but it's never too late to make a resolution to enjoy life more by reading more.

--Jim Kettler, Contract Monitor and Training Associate

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.

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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