Salute to community libraries

Some of our best friends in communities across Oklahoma are in the local libraries. They know the people in town, their needs, likes and dislikes, and whether they might benefit from our free audio book services delivered by mail or via download.

Along with recommending OLBPH to potential patrons, community libraries can also help by letting us show off some of our equipment, information, and loanable materials. It is a terrific way for people to see the kinds of things we offer. For the past two years, the Mable C. Fry Library in Yukon has invited OLBPH to use one of its display cases and the response has been very positive. A photo of the Yukon display is now on the home page of olbph.org.

If your local library has some display space available for a great cause, please let us know so we can reach more readers and “Share our vision... that all may read.”
Director’s Column

Your library has been active on the government scene lately. On June 26, we hosted the DeafBlind Awareness and Helen Keller’s birthday celebration. Health and Human Services and DRS Cabinet Secretary Steve Buck read the DeafBlind Awareness Week Proclamation, and DRS Director Melinda Fruendt addressed the audience of around 100. As a finale, we were honored by a visit from Governor Kevin Stitt. He was very intrigued as he interacted with deafblind clients in attendance. DRS DeafBlind Specialist Jeri Cooper organized the event. Team Library along with DRS Visual Services leadership and field staff orchestrated this opportunity to shine into a very successful event.

A government agency services exhibit event spearheaded by U.S. Rep. Kendra Horn of Oklahoma’s 5th congressional district took place at the City-County Health Department campus in Oklahoma City on July 27. Along with citizens seeking services, I witnessed many network connections being made amongst over 20 service providers. Sharing resources potentially results in improved service delivery for Oklahomans in need.

Just recently I attended the Blinded Veterans Association (BVA) national conference in Tulsa. I augmented the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS) exhibit staff as the Regional Librarian serving Oklahoma. This was another great networking event promoting increased patronage in this national program, especially for our veterans. It was great to see NLS Director Karen Keninger speaking in Oklahoma again. Oklahoma City hosted the NLS biennial conference in 2014.

Another special treat, more on the home front for me, was Brian King and I providing an in-service training for the staff at
my hometown Moore Public Library. They are part of the Pioneer Library System, and we look forward to providing more presentations in the near future.

--Kevin Treese, Library Director

Upper left: DeafBlind Specialist Jeri Cooper.
Upper right: Gov. Kevin Stitt, Library Director Kevin Treese, DRS Commissioner Emily Cheng, Executive Assistant Janie Ball, and Executive Director Melinda Fruendt.
Lower left: Cabinet Secretary Steven Buck and DeafBlind spokesperson Beverly Bates.
Lower right: Gov. Stitt visits with deafblind attendees.
Books with an asterisk (*) next to the title were produced by our own digital recording studio. Other titles are books produced by The National Library Service, a branch of The Library of Congress.

**DB 56190 – Forgotten Eagle: Wiley Post, America’s Heroic Aviation Pioneer by Bryan B. Sterling**

Famed aviator Wiley Post (1898-1935) was raised by Oklahoma cotton farmers. The first time he saw an aircraft in flight was in 1913 at the county fair in Lawton. Before he attained international acquamation, Post lived a varied life, working in construction, in the oilfields, and even in armed robbery. This biography explores his childhood in Oklahoma, time in prison, and loss of an eye in an oil-rig accident, as well as his many accomplishments in the air. Finally, it recounts his ill-fated journey to Alaska with humorist Will Rogers that ended with both their deaths.

**DB 48438 – Juneteenth by Ralph Ellison**

Written by literary giant and Oklahoma native Ralph Ellison, *Juneteenth* was the follow up novel to his highly acclaimed *Invisible Man*. 

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Unfortunately it would be his last, as it was published five years after his death. At the time of his death in 1994, Ellison had written a lengthy unedited manuscript containing two thousand pages. His friend and biographer, John F. Callahan, edited and condensed the manuscript into a publishable form he thought Ellison intended. In it, the protagonist is Senator Adam Sunraider. He lies in the hospital struggling to survive a gunshot wound. The apparently white politician asks to see Reverend Hickman, the African American minister who raised him. In the course of their conversations, the senator recalls his childhood and begins to understand his own complex identity.

* **Cowboys & Indians**

*Cowboys & Indians* is a glossy magazine based in Dallas. Focusing on Western and Native American lifestyles, it provides its readers a bridge between the past and present of the American West through storytelling, art, antiques, ranching, fashion, real estate, and travel. *Cowboys & Indians* produces eight issues per year, and the library is lucky enough to have its recording studio record each issue. If you are interested in receiving it, be sure to call the library and ask for a librarian.

* **DBC 12205 – The Babbs Switch Story by Darleen Bailey Beard**

In 1924, twelve-year-old Ruthie finds her life in a small Oklahoma town complicated by the behavior of her older sister Daphne, who is an object of ridicule and dislike because of her limited mental abilities. This coming-of-age story is written for younger readers but appeals to all ages. It is partially based on an actual event that occurred in southwestern Oklahoma in 1924 known as the Babbs Switch Fire.

--Andrew Shockley, Administrative Librarian
**Teachers and parents: Remember the AIM Center**

A quick reminder that the Accessible Instructional Materials (AIM) Center may be your best asset for obtaining large print and braille textbooks and hundreds of specialized instructional materials for the classroom. We serve students birth to 12th grade with a myriad of tactile materials from early childhood developmental toys to tangible items for math and science. To obtain services, please contact Pepper Watson, Director, at pwatson@okdrs.gov, 405-522-0523 or 1-800-523-0288. You may also visit our website at www.olbph.org/AIM

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**Summer outreach highlights**

Aging Services of Cleveland County really came through for us in June and July as we were invited to speak with groups of seniors in two Norman locations, plus Moore, Noble, and South Oklahoma City.

It has been a busy summer in Tulsa as well, with events at Oklahoma Methodist Manor, Expo Square, and the new Gathering Place park. In between, we squeezed in exhibits and guest speaker opportunities in Stroud and Ponca City.

We would love to come back to your community too! If there’s a place or group you want us to visit, please call and let us know.

--Brian King, Public Information Officer
Meet our new librarian, Kayla

Hello, I’m Kayla Peele, and I am so glad to be your new Librarian at the Oklahoma Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped. It will be my pleasure getting to know each one of you and assisting you in your library needs. I am originally from North Carolina, southern at heart, and I’m a huge Tar Heel fan, so please, don’t hold that against me! I moved here with my husband of 8 years along with our two precious kiddos, a girl, age 7, and a little boy, age 3. We have been in Oklahoma for only a year, but are enjoying what this state has to offer.

I have a love for learning, so much that upon arriving here I enrolled into a program at the University of Oklahoma to pursue Indigenous peoples’ law. I am Native American, a member of the Lumbee tribe, and could think of no better way of getting to know the history of Oklahoma but by being introduced to the 39 tribes that are located here.

I have already learned a lot about OLBPH from my fellow librarians, Andrew, Erin, Sammie, and Marka. Like them, I am dedicated to providing the best service possible and can’t wait to hear from you!
Volunteer spotlight: Cecil Robinson

Our spotlight is shining on a valuable studio volunteer for this issue, one who gives extra effort in his service to the people of Oklahoma.

Cecil Robinson is one of our very skilled and reliable audio editors. His full-time job is only a few blocks from OLBPH in the Sequoyah Building just north of the State Capitol. He is a Communications Manager for the Department of Human Services who focuses on digital accessibility.

“My main job is making sure stuff that goes online such as PDFs are accessible, like for people who use screen readers,” Cecil explained. “It has to meet federal and state compliance levels for accessibility.”

Cecil has volunteered at OLBPH since 2013. His work history includes three years in Oklahoma City Public Schools at the Thelma Parks Elementary library. He first learned about our library while working at a call center at Shepherd Mall in Oklahoma City. That office complex is also home to a handful of DRS offices, including Visual Services #90 where Elaine Boykin is the Programs Manager. Cecil was looking for volunteer opportunities when he met Elaine, and she told him about the
library’s need for people with audio skills. Like many of our volunteers, Cecil started with Jay Doudna of OLBPH’s former internet radio service called Oklahoma Talking Information Service (OTIS).

Now, Cecil spends most of his OLBPH time editing audio files narrated by other volunteers, especially articles from our two regular magazines, *Oklahoma Today* and *Cowboys & Indians*. As well as scrutinizing the audio for any imperfections, he also picks up some useful information from the articles’ contents.

“In order to get the best quality out of them, you actually need to pay attention to what you’re editing,” Cecil said. “Sometimes after I finish doing edits, I’ll go through it again to hear how it flows.”

Audio-visual work is not only Cecil’s occupation and volunteer focus; it is also a hobby. He says he enjoys working on A/V projects in his spare time, often for friends. He is also into martial arts and attends weekly classes for judo and a Brazilian art form called capoeira.

Cecil says the gratification he gets from volunteering at OLBPH comes from knowing he is helping others, interacting with the studio staff and fellow volunteers, and having the opportunity to sharpen his abilities and learn new editing techniques. We definitely appreciate Cecil for his skills and his devotion in preparing high-quality audio for patrons across Oklahoma and nationwide.

--Brian King, Editor, with help from Jill Streck, Studio Director, and Scott See, Studio Assistant
Here are a few title suggestions, both fiction and non-fiction, for some late summer reading.

**DBC 4973 – *Brotherhood of the Gun* by William W. Johnstone**
This first title in the Blood Bond series features Matt Bodine and Sam Two Wolves. Still haunted by the Battle of the Little Bighorn, they ride into Arizona. They confront Apaches and outlaws who are engaged in the lucrative business of selling girls into slavery.

**DB 86953 – *Fairytale* by Danielle Steel**
In this Danielle Steel yarn, Camille was raised on a winery in the Napa Valley by two loving parents, but when her mother dies, her father marries a devious Frenchwoman. Camille's new stepmother schemes to take over the winery after her father's sudden death.

**DB 75690 – *The Cutting Season* by Attica Locke**
Single mom Caren has returned home to manage the Louisiana plantation where her ancestors toiled as slaves. When a migrant worker is found dead on the property, the investigation uncovers a link to the long-ago disappearance of a slave.

**DB 81419 – *Flight of the Sparrow: A Novel of Early America* by Amy Belding Brown**
Set in 17th century Massachusetts, Mary Rowlandson is captured and enslaved by a local tribe when they attack her village. Her time with them makes her question her faith and the Puritan way of life.
DB 92214 – The Good Neighbor: The Life and Work of Fred Rogers by Maxwell King
A biography of the creator and star of the children's television program Mister Rogers' Neighborhood, it traces the personal, professional, and artistic life of Rogers (1928-2003). The author draws on interviews, oral histories, and archival documents to show a man fiercely devoted to helping children.

DB 85652 – American Immigration: A Very Short Introduction by David A. Gerber
The social, economic, and political impact of immigration on the United States is explored in this title. Topics include the history of immigration law and the demographic changes spurred by a wave of non-European immigration since the 1960s.

DB 86246 – Filthy Rich by James Patterson
In a rare non-fiction title by the bestselling author of mysteries and thrillers, James Patterson examines a case that scandalized Palm Beach, Florida. Jeffrey Epstein lived in the rarefied heights of New York City's financial elite, but his taste for underage girls resulted in his downfall. Discusses the undue influence wealth brings to bear on the American justice system.

--Andrew Shockley, Administrative Librarian
DRS colleague with low vision shares travel challenges

(Note: the author, Alex Taussig, is a former OLBPH staff member who still works in our building for the Employment Support Services Unit [VR 09]).

I thought a lot about my disability on my recent trip to Edinburgh, Scotland, and Barcelona, Spain, with friends. I've lived as a self-professed "blind girl" for 30 years and kind of thought I knew everything there was to know.

Before I left, I knew I'd need to take someone's arm on uneven ground, I figured I wouldn't be as wowed as everyone else by the fantastic views and natural wonders - these are familiar issues for me. But on this trip I found myself "feeling the effects" of my disability in ways that daunted me, encouraged me, and made me think.

I'm used to asking for extra help, but it felt difficult to reconcile when I, an independent adult, couldn't get through the check in at the airport without someone practically holding my hand or enjoy a museum without a friend to walk and talk me through it. I found myself asking, "How much dependence is too much? How do I know where I can and should assert my own agency?" I'm still puzzling over those questions.

And I know that I talk a lot - if you're like me, not always super stimulated by your visual environment, conversations and

Alex at the Barcelona airport.
relationships are literally everything. It can be hard to know when the people you're with are full-up in their headspace and don't necessarily have room for more input, no matter how lovely it may be. That's an area of growth for me - how can I be fully present in my surroundings when I'm not experiencing the same thing as everyone else?

But on the brighter side of things, it felt incredible to get the help. Every time one of my friends pointed out a step I may not have seen, or asked the people on a castle spiral staircase to make room for me, or walked with me through intimidating airport check-ins, I felt wonderfully seen, accepted, and valued in a way that you maybe only feel when you receive help and grace.

I've learned a lot and I want to keep traveling so I can keep it up!! In the meantime, I'm grateful for my experiences and my incredible "travel family."

--Alex Taussig, Rehabilitation Technician II

Contact Information

Have you moved or changed your phone number or email address? Don’t forget to tell us! Without accurate and up-to-date contact and mailing information, it is difficult for us to keep providing you with great service. So if your physical address, phone number, or email address changes, just remember to let us know. Thanks!

--Andrew Shockley, Administrative Librarian
Since the Summer 2011 issue of “Bright Future,” you have been kind enough to tolerate my very casual style of writing in “The Back 40” column. This issue I thought you might like to know who is this Jim Kettler guy?

This past February I turned 71 years old. I’m an Oklahoma City boy, born and raised. I grew up near Britton (an extinct Oklahoma town on Britton Road), went to University Heights Elementary School and John Marshall Junior-Senior High School, graduating in 1966.

I attended Central State College right out of high school and soon began a career in the printing trade. I worked in print shops at the Oklahoma Baptist General Convention offices, the Oklahoma Press Association, and TG&Y Stores National Headquarters. TG&Y Stores Co. was sold in 1986 and I went into sales for the printing trade for a few years, then back into management for a couple of printing companies (I was a partner in one of them). Consulting for a few years at the end of my printing career, I looked for another field in which to work.

Lucky for me, I had some experience with Vocational Rehabilitation (one division of DRS) and knew I could get help with finding employment there. In just a couple of years (2010) I gained employment at the OLBPH (Oklahoma Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped) right toward the end of the cassette player era of talking books. That is a blessing I have come to see as a miracle. I discovered my “dream job”.

How many jobs can you think of where you know each day that you work, you are helping someone? I do that every day. I actually thought I would be “semi-retired” but that proved to be very wrong. Thanks to the good people in leadership at DRS, I have been given many opportunities to do something to lighten someone’s load and help them have a better day.
The many people I’ve had the privilege of working beside range from some really great servant leaders at the State Office for DRS to third-party housekeepers at OLBPH who are happy to be here and are proud of their excellent work. I can honestly say that the leaders of DRS are as humble as the housekeepers and that they all have the mission of DRS in front of them as they perform their duties each day.

Next issue it is my plan to get right back to telling you a story about OLBPH, not myself. With that in mind, maybe you would like to share YOUR story with us. That will be great! Please either email me at jkettler@okdrs.gov or mail via USPS to my attention at the:

Business Enterprise Program
3325 N. Lincoln Blvd
Oklahoma City, OK 73105

We’ll let you see what we plan to publish before it goes to print, for your approval. We would really very much appreciate your contribution to the Bright Future.

We would also appreciate your comments, positive or constructive, of how we may be doing something right or how we might do something better. This is your publication and you deserve reading materials that relate to you. Thank you in advance for your comments.

--Jim Kettler, Contract Monitor, Visual Services

Did you know…?

BARD (Braille and Audio Reading Download) contains more than 107,000 book titles, 70 digital audio magazine titles, and 53 ebraille magazine titles.
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.

Oklahoma Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped
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