

# Bright Future

Newsletter of the Oklahoma Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped

## NLS Regional Library of the Year!

What a tremendous honor! The National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled (NLS) at the Library of Congress recently chose Oklahoma as its Regional Library of the Year for 2019! OLBPH is one of 56 regional libraries in the NLS system.

In its announcement, the selection committee praised OLBPH for our commitment to our patrons, innovative programs, and outreach efforts. We share this accolade with our thousands of patrons and supporters, as well as staff members past and present. Thank you!

### ***INSIDE: More award coverage!***

**Page 2** – Director on award patience

**Page 4** – Division leader's reaction

**Page 9** – Highlights of NLS  
announcement

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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](mailto:olbph@okdrs.gov)

Website: [www.olbph.org](http://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

Having recently completed seven years as your library director, I write to you expressing much gratification, especially given the last five months of our COVID-19 era library operations. There are none like "Team Library" and the patrons we serve. What a joy it was to receive the call from NLS Director Karen Keninger, informing me that OLBPH had been selected the NLS Network Library of the Year for 2019!

It was a little strange to get this wonderful news from a home work setting. What was even stranger, though, was having to keep it quiet – what journalists call an "embargoed release." With so much collaboration required among state and national entities, not all totally operational during pandemic, this has taken some months to be officially announced. The cookie jar lid, so to speak, had to remain sealed and in the freezer. Not easy to squelch good news when it can be really good medicine for so many. Patience prevailed, however, and what a great way to make a splash for Oklahoma's Rehabilitation Services, Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired and Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped.

We share credit for this honor with many great people from years past who built our library program. The OLBPH has a rich history since 1933 of being *the* NLS network library for Oklahoma serving print disabled patrons. This was the second year in a row we were nominated for the award. The short-term build up to this award involved all the superstar library staff masterfully creating the "what have you done for us lately" piece of this accomplishment.

Worth noting is that it certainly helps to have a Library Public Information Officer with a journalism background writing and editing in a way that makes us all shine. With that, I'm letting Brian describe the glorious details about our awesome accomplishment. To end my piece I'll simply say, "I can't make this up." I'm blessed from above to have come to Oklahoma via Pennsylvania and an Air Force career to be a part of this fine institution for the last ten years.

--Kevin Treese, Library Director



OLBPH Director Kevin Treese (left) is interviewed by a KOCO-5 photojournalist as Studio Director Jill Streck watches on Aug. 20, 2020.  
*Photo by Jody Harlan*

## **Division Administrator's reaction to NLS award**

*Note: The following message was emailed to all DRS employees by Tracy Brigham, Division Administrator of Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired (SBVI), on the day of the formal announcement, August 19, 2020.*

### **Please help me in congratulating our Oklahoma Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped for receiving the great honor of Regional Library of the Year!**

This prestigious award has been given to our library and staff by the National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled (NLS) through the Library of Congress. Our library staff work tirelessly in the continuous efforts "That All May Read." They take this personally and seriously as evidenced by their passion and quality products.

I want to say Thank You to each one of them for their dedication to Oklahomans with print disabilities. During this often scary and uncertain time they have persevered to be sure individuals will receive the library materials they rely on and enjoy. I've been told by library patrons that the library is their "lifeline." Our library employees provide many valuable services to the public so it's no surprise to hear the word lifeline. This is a wonderful compliment and well deserved!

I appreciate each one of you and we're very fortunate as an Agency and a Division to have you representing the Oklahoma Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped on the national scene!

Congratulations and I'm proud of you and grateful you are a part of the SBVI team!

--Tracy Brigham, SBVI Division Administrator

### **Your OLBPH Staff**

Kevin Treese, Director

Heather Bateman, Library (Studio) Tech

Becky Bates, Special Services and Business Manager

Erin Byrne, Librarian

Steve Dowdy, Library (OTR) Tech

Lacey Downs, Administrative Assistant

Collin Jenks, Library (Circulation) Tech

James Jenks, Talking Book Players

Kay Johnson, Library (AIM) Tech

Brian King, Public Information Officer

Sheldon Moglia, Library (AIM) Tech

Kayla Peele, Librarian

Scott See, Library (Studio) Tech

Andrew Shockley, Administrative Librarian

Marka Simms, Circulation Librarian

Cynthia Stokes, Library (AIM) Tech

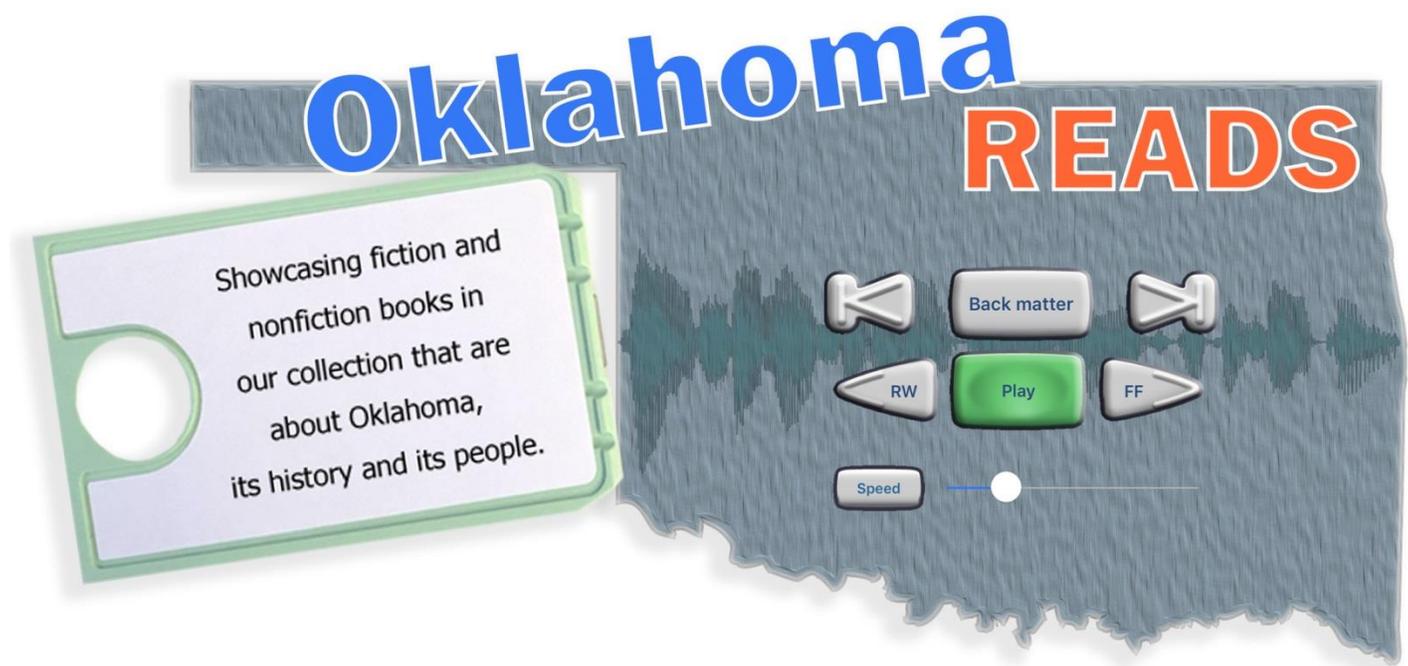
Jill Streck, Recording Studio Director

Mable Stripling, Library Technician

Melanie Ullfers, Library (Circulation) Tech

Pepper Watson, AIM Center Director

Sammie Willis, Librarian



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 56346 – *The Invisible Man* by Ralph Ellison**

As our struggle with racial justice and equality continues, one of our biggest challenges is to be able to see and understand the lives of people that are different from our own. One way to begin this process is to read good books that help us understand the experience of being Black in America.

There are many excellent African American writers and poets, including a few of my favorites, Toni Morrison, Langston Hughes and Zora Neale Hurston. But I believe that the most important and influential novel which gives the reader insight into being Black in our country is *The Invisible Man* by Ralph Ellison. And it was written by a native Oklahoman.

Ralph Waldo Ellison was born in Oklahoma City in 1913. He was named after Ralph Waldo Emerson because his father loved literature and doted on his children, hoping Ralph would become a poet. Ralph was just a child when his father died, and he grew up

doing various odd jobs to help the family. He attended Douglass High School where he played football and played in the band. After graduation he worked for a year and saved the money to buy a trumpet, using it to play with local musicians and take music lessons.

He was admitted to Tuskegee Institute, an all-Black college in Alabama founded by Booker T. Washington. He was accepted because the band needed a trumpet player. Ellison hopped freight trains to get from Oklahoma to Alabama; but he was soon disappointed when he learned that the institution was no less class conscious than white institutions generally were. Eventually he moved to New York City to study sculpture where he met Richard Wright, a prominent Black author who encouraged him to write. At the close of World War II he began to create his masterpiece.

*The Invisible Man* was published in 1953 and became one of the most important and influential novels of the twentieth century. A classic from the moment it was published, it remained on the best seller list for sixteen weeks and won The National Book Award for Fiction. In 1994, more than forty years after its debut, a group of American writers, scholars and critics named it the most influential novel published after World War II.

The book describes the travels of its narrator, a young nameless Black man as he moves through the world of American intolerance and cultural blindness. It is a search for the truth of who he is and what his place in society should be in a world where he feels that no one really "sees" him. He looks for answers in organizations and individuals, only to be disappointed when they offer him only their version of the truth. His hard won knowledge and answers to his questions finally come after many years. And it proves to be the same journey of self-discovery that all thinking

*(Continued on next page)*

people take, no matter the color of their skin.

This novel is as relevant today as it was in the 1950s. I know of no other book that gives the reader such a powerful insight into another person's experience. It is a challenging but unforgettable read, full of wit and passion. Readers of this American classic will be rewarded.

--Sammie Willis, Librarian

**\* DBC 12208 – *The Sound of Honor* by Jim Stovall**

In this mystery, Jake Dyer, a blind man, and his associates have only three rules in the lost and found business: always get paid, never get emotionally involved, and avoid dangerous people. But then there was the time they successfully shattered all three – sometimes you just gotta do the right thing!

**\* DBC 12219 – *Someday Is Now* by Olugbemisola Rhuday-Perkovich**

As a child, Clara Luper believed that someday all Americans, no matter the color of their skin, should be equal. As an educator, she prepared her students for that someday. This book tells the amazing story of one of the first lunch counter sit-ins in America, which happened in 1958 at Katz Drug Store in Oklahoma City, and of the incredible woman who believed that someday is now.

*Editor's Note: Someday is Now is OLBPH's most recent contribution to the national collection of books on BARD. It was completed this summer during the coronavirus restrictions. The book was narrated and edited by Leann Hanna and reviewed by Karl Williams.*

--Andrew Shockley, Librarian

## NLS award announcement highlights

The National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled (NLS) announced its most recent awards in a lengthy media release on Aug. 19, 2020. Here are some highlights.

The Oklahoma Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (OLBPH) received the Regional Library of the Year Award. The Talking Books and Braille Center at the San Francisco Public Library in San Francisco, California, received the Sub-regional Library/Advisory and Outreach Center of the Year Award.

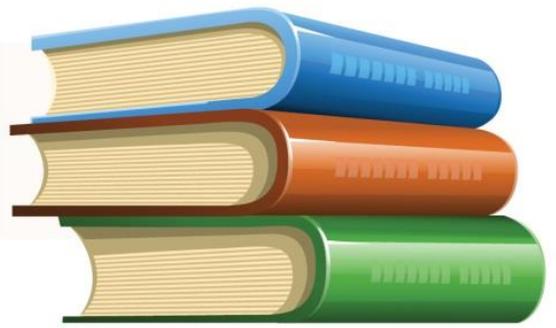
“Each year the Library of Congress recognizes the work of state and local libraries that provide braille and talking-book services to people who cannot use print materials,” NLS Director Karen Keninger said. “The programs and services these two libraries offer are outstanding examples of innovation and outreach and demonstrate their commitment to ensuring that all may read.”



OLBPH served 5,402 patrons last year, a 7 percent increase from 2018. It circulated more than 150,000 braille and audio books, magazines and other collection items. NLS also highlighted Oklahoma’s AIM Center, the contributions of its digital recording studio, and the Oklahoma Telephone Reader program.

In nominating the Oklahoma library, Melinda Fruendt, executive director of the Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services, called it “a treasure.” NLS also included a comment from an OLBPH patron: “I live by myself, and over the years I have spent hundreds of hours listening to your books. Please don’t ever stop.”

# Book Corner



## **DB 72062 – *The Bounty Trilogy* by Charles Nordhoff and James Norman Hall**

If escapist adventure fiction is to your liking, this classic trilogy is for you. In *Mutiny on the Bounty* Captain Bligh and eighteen loyal men are set adrift in a twenty-three-foot open launch. *Men Against the Sea* and *Pitcairn's Island* depict Bligh's harrowing thirty-six-hundred-mile voyage and the fates of Fletcher Christian and his fellow mutineers. All three titles are included on this cartridge, and they will be sure to sweep you away to the wild South Pacific in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century.

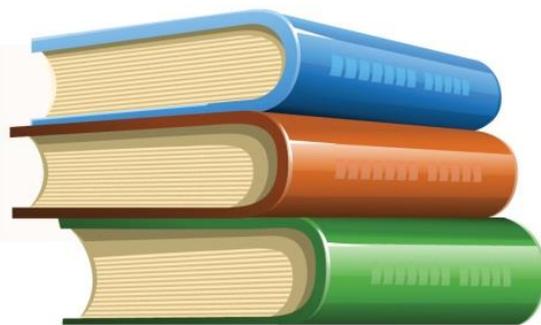
## **DB 44594 – *Cow Country* by Will James**

This collection of eight short stories capture the hardships, adventures, and spirit of the American cowboy. The selections tell of wild mustangs, ornery steers, lonesome drifters, and fancy dudes of the American West in the early 1900s.

## **DB 68497 – *Battleship Oklahoma, BB-37* by Jeff Phister**

This ship is often associated with America's entry into World War II, but it was completed during World War I as the most modern and powerful "dreadnought" battleship of its time. The author describes the ship's history from beginning to end and includes personal experiences of the crew. The *Oklahoma* is the first and, so far, last ship to be named after the state of Oklahoma. In December 2019, the U.S. Navy announced the second ship to be named after our state, a Virginia-class submarine to be built in Connecticut.

# Book Corner



## **DB 91054 – *Galway Bay* by Mary Pat Kelly**

It is 1839. Soon after Honora Keeley is accepted to the convent, she meets Michael Kelly, and they fall in love. As the Great Starvation sweeps across Ireland, they struggle to feed their growing family. Then, an opportunity to immigrate to America is offered to them, but conflict follows the family to their new home.

## **DB 82810 – *Nathan Heller, Books 1-3* by Max Allan Collins**

This cartridge contains the first three novels in the series about ex-cop-turned-private-eye Nate Heller, which are set in 1930s mob-run Chicago. Includes *True Detective*, *True Crime*, and *The Million-Dollar Wound*, in which an injured Heller returns from duty in the Guadalcanal foxholes.

## **DB 91860 – *White Fragility* by Robin DiAngelo**

An antiracism educator explores counterproductive reactions white people have when discussing racism. Topics include the intertwining of racism and white supremacy, racism after the civil rights movement, the impact of race on the lives of white people, defining the term "white fragility," and more.

## **DB 53512 – *Every Little Thing About You* by Lori Wick**

In 1881 Texas, Slater Rawlings, in need of a religious environment, resigns from the Texas Rangers and heads for Shotgun. Ironically he finds himself on the wrong side of the law. He is arrested by Deputy Liberty Drake, a fascinating young woman.

--Andrew Shockley, Administrative Librarian

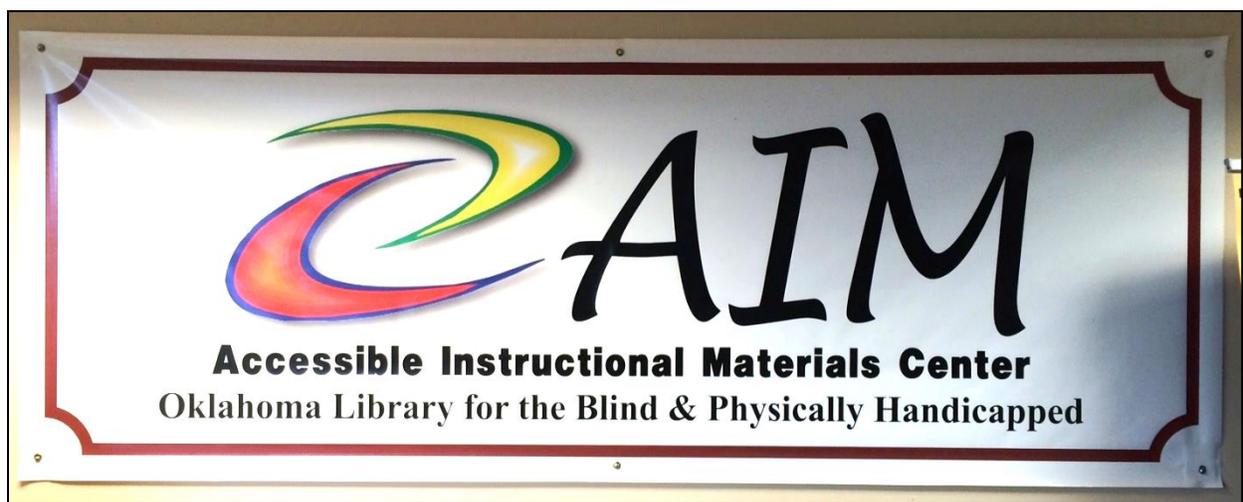
## **AIM Center keeps going in unusual back to school season**

Although the extreme heat suggests otherwise, fall is rapidly approaching. This means school is back in session. How will that go this year? I have no idea even as I write this. The good news is that the AIM (Accessible Instructional Materials) Center is fully functioning and has been throughout the nation's battle with COVID-19. We will continue to take textbook and educational product orders, so continue to send those to us!

As the COVID situation fluctuates, we realize shipping may need to change. We will continue to ship to your school districts but can also ship directly to the student's or teacher's home when or if needed. We will remain flexible and work to provide you the best service possible under difficult circumstances.

Please watch for updates, including new products we have added, from the AIM Center via email. If you are not currently on my mailing list, please contact me at [pwatson@okdrs.gov](mailto:pwatson@okdrs.gov) to add your name. The AIM Center serves children birth to 12<sup>th</sup> grade.

--Pepper Watson, AIM Center Director



## **Find Bright Future on Oklahoma Telephone Reader**

An audio version of this newsletter is available to OLBPH patrons who use our Oklahoma Telephone Reader (OTR) service. Finding it is easy!

After dialing the OTR phone number and entering your user I.D. and security code, choose option **5**, which is titled "Announcements." After that, enter the number **11** to get to Bright Future.

You must be an OLBPH patron to use OTR.

## **Braille books**

Don't forget we circulate braille in addition to digital talking books! Our braille patrons receive their books through the mail; or, they can download braille files from BARD, to be read via a refreshable braille display. Are you interested in receiving braille books? Give us a call at (405) 521-3514 and ask for a librarian or email [olbph@okdrs.gov](mailto:olbph@okdrs.gov). We will be happy to set you up for this service!

## **Contact information**

Have you moved, 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!

# The Back 40

By Jim Kettler

*Note: Authored by guest columnist and former OLBPH Director Paul Adams*



It was sometime in March or April of 1990 when I heard about a job opening for an Electronics Technician at the Oklahoma Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped. I had no idea that there was such a place. At that time I was a self-employed electronics technician and had previously worked for a couple of electronics companies so I knew I was qualified. I was looking for a job that had the possibility of a retirement program so I decided to check into it. The rest is history, so to speak.

If my memory serves me well, I believe my first day on the job was May 20, 1990. I'll never forget that first day at work... I had been self-employed for twelve years so I wasn't even sure I could work for someone else. I was pretty nervous to say the least, but when I walked through the door that first day I was put at ease immediately when I was met by a man who had already been a valued library employee for years, Karl Williams. Karl showed me around and made me feel right at home, what a relief, and to this day he remains one of my very best friends.

I spent 21 very pleasurable years working at OLBPH before I was transferred to the Department of Rehabilitation Services administrative offices across town, where I continued working closely with the library staff, until retiring in 2017. Looking back on those library years I recognize how blessed I was to work in a place that had a positive effect

on so many lives. It was my privilege to work in every department in the library in several different roles including the repair of the talking book machines which covered the transition from vinyl record players and cassette players to the current digital cartridge machines. It was during those years that I formed a close relationship with many library patrons. They taught me what was important to them with respect to quality library service. Those interactions with the people that depended on us to provide their reading needs transformed my job into my passion.

As my journey continued I was also honored to work in the circulation area and then eventually into the production studio area. Back around 2001, we were challenged with upping the quality of our locally produced books and magazines. This took a team effort and I'll admit that for a while we didn't really know what we were doing because recording technology was changing rapidly. With the help of Karl Williams, who took the lead in researching audio production software, a bunch of college students who came and narrated and edited those first digitally produced books, and some very patient volunteers, the transition from not so great tape-based locally recorded books to first rate digital recordings was a great success.

One of those very underpaid and dedicated college students came back a few years later looking for a job because the library service had made such an impression; she's now your studio director, Jill Streck. If you're one of the folks that enjoy reading material provided by the OLBPH I can honestly say that you are why the staff now and the staff in the past worked so hard to provide quality service every single day. Committed librarians, the other library staff, volunteers, and those pioneering college students back in 2001-2002 have made it all possible. And I got to help – what a blessing it has been to me.

--Paul Adams, Retired Former OLBPH Director

## 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.



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300 N.E. 18th St.  
Oklahoma City, OK 73105

FREE MATTER  
FOR THE  
BLIND

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