

Oklahoma Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped



BRIGHT FUTURE

SHARE OUR VISION, THAT ALL MAY READ.

Vol. 39, No. 1, Spring 2024



Photo by Kaitlyn Evans



OKLAHOMA
Rehabilitation Services
Oklahoma Library for the Blind and
Physically Handicapped

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Letter from the Director

A New Year, Growth and Changes

Dear Patrons and Readers,

Spring is upon on us. There is new growth both in nature and at the Oklahoma Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped. We have two new team members. Sarah Knight is the OLBPH's new administrative assistant and Kait Evans is the new public information officer. With all this newness, we welcome fresh perspectives and positive changes.

Sarah comes to the OLBPH from Disability Determination Services in Colorado, where she was a Disability Determination Examiner. She brings her experience working with people with disabilities to the administrative assistant position, as well as skills in file management and her friendly personality. Sarah will help keep the OLBPH running smoothly by answering phone calls and processing OLBPH services applications.

Kait started with the OLBPH in January. Her most recent experience is in social media management for small businesses. Kait aims to help grow the OLBPH's social media presence. This will raise awareness of the OLBPH's services and help us reach new and current patrons. She will also serve as the editor of Bright Future, and you may notice changes in this issue.

The OLBPH is also exploring a new program in partnership with the Oklahoma Department of Corrections. Oklahoma State Reformatory inmates are learning to translate children's books to braille. If successful, the program will provide children's books to the OLBPH's Accessible Instructional Materials Center. Look out for more on this in the next issue.

We look forward to seeing how this new growth will allow the OLBPH to continue and further our mission of providing library services that enrich the lives of people with disabilities.

Sincerely, Kevin Treese

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Cover Story

Recording Studio Receives New Equipment

Kat Jensen, recording studio director at the Oklahoma Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, and Scott See, a recording studio technician, stare through the window of a sound isolation recording booth and motion frantically. They are trying to get the narrator's attention. Without an intercom, they cannot tell him how to correctly pronounce the name of a small Oklahoma town in the book he is reading from. In response to this need, the Recording Studio recently received some much-needed new equipment, including a soundboard with intercom capabilities.

In addition to the new soundboard, the Recording Studio also received a power conditioner and an audio interface. The soundboard controls mics, speakers and the sound fed into the computer for recording. The power conditioner reduces the amount of noise produced by a power source, reducing the amount of noise recorded. The audio interface connects the soundboard and computer and converts signals from the soundboard into a computer readable format. All of this and more is needed in the audiobook recording process.

The new equipment was used to upgrade Studio B, the Recording Studio's second recording space. Studio B has been largely unused for several years due to the lack of intercom system in the studio, as well as other difficulties with equipment.

"Upgrading Studio B will allow us to use it to record and allow more flexibility when scheduling narrators," said Kat. "This will be especially helpful when recording Oklahoma Today, when we have to get a lot of narrators in, in a short time span, so that we can get the magazine to patrons in a timely manner." Having two recording booths will also improve efficiency when recording books with more than one narrator, said Scott.

The Recording Studio's new equipment was largely donated by Oklahomans for Special Library Services after a request for funds was presented at the OSL's board meeting in October 2023.



*Kat uses a soundboard to monitor audio input.
Photo by Kaitlyn Evans*

“OSLS has been so wonderful and supportive,” said Kat. “It was really happy to contribute to updates to help us meet modern standards.”

It is important the Recording Studio keep equipment up to date to continue producing quality materials. The Recording Studio at the OLBPH is one of few audiobook recording studios in the National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled’s nation-wide library network that records material labeled as NLS publications.

“There is a more extensive review process for NLS labeled publications,” said Kat. “The OLBPH has a reputation for the outstanding quality of our productions,” said Scott.

Upgrading Studio B to be fully functional was the last piece of major studio upgrades that began in 2022. The Recording Studio team is excited by the studio’s new capabilities. Moving forward, the team would like to increase the number of books recorded and the number of contributions made to the NLS catalog.

“The dream would be to have a bigger team so we could produce even more books,” said Kat. “OSLS, our volunteers and my amazing team have made our studio a force to be reckoned with.”

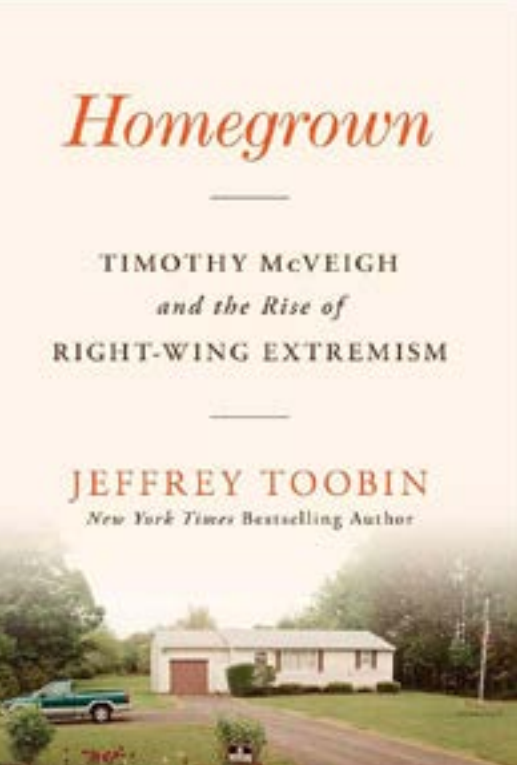
Book Corner *True Crime Edition*

Homegrown: Timothy McVeigh and the Rise of Right-Wing Extremism by Jeffrey Toobin, DB 116891

An exploration of the history and legacy of Timothy McVeigh, who killed 168 people in the Oklahoma City bombing. Homegrown details how McVeigh's principles and tactics have flourished since his death in 2001, and how they influenced the events of January 6, when hundreds of rioters stormed the Capitol. Based on nearly a million previously unreleased documents, including communications between McVeigh and his lawyers, and interviews with figures such as Bill Clinton, Homegrown is both a retelling of one of the great tragedies of our time, and a warning for our future.

Blood & Ink: The Scandalous Jazz Age Double Murder that Hooked America on True Crime by Joe Pompeo, DB 114157

In 1922, the bodies of Reverend Edward Hall and Eleanor Mills were found outside of New Brunswick, New Jersey. The bodies were arranged to convey intimacy. Hall was a prominent clergyman whose wife, Frances Hall, was an heiress. When Mills was identified as a choir singer from Hall's church, the story shocked locals and was picked up by national tabloids. Authorities failed to prosecute, and it took a crusade by the editor of a circulation-hungry tabloid to bring the case to trial. Blood & Ink chronicles an electrifying murder mystery and the birth of American tabloid journalism.



Hell's Half-Acre: The Untold Story of the Benders, a Serial Killer Family on the American Frontier by Susan Jonusas, DB 107236

In 1873, the people of Labette County, Kansas made a grisly discovery. Buried by a trailside cabin beneath an orchard of young apple trees were the remains of countless bodies. Below the cabin itself was a cellar stained with blood. The Benders, the family of four who once resided on the property, were nowhere to be found. The discovery sent the local community and national newspapers into a frenzy, sparking an epic manhunt for the Benders.

People Who Eat Darkness: The True Story of a Young Woman Who Vanished from the Streets of Tokyo - and the Evil That Swallowed Her Up by Richard Lloyd Parry, DB 76031

In the summer of 2000, 21-year-old Lucie Blackman stepped out into the vastness of Tokyo and disappeared. The following winter, her dismembered remains were found in a seaside cave. The months between were filled with a massive search, involving Japanese policemen; British private detectives; Australian dowzers; and Lucie's desperate, but bitterly divided, parents. The case drew attention from prime ministers and sado-masochists, ambassadors, con-men and reporters worldwide. Had Lucie been abducted by a religious cult, or snatched by human traffickers? Who was the mysterious man she had gone to meet? And what did her work, as a "hostess" in a notorious district of Tokyo, really involve?

Ghosts of the Orphanage: A Story of Mysterious Deaths, a Conspiracy of Silence, and a Search for Justice by Christine Kenneally, DB 113303

During the twentieth century, abuse, and even deaths, took place inside orphanages. Survivors have tried to speak out, but disbelief, secrecy and trauma have kept them silenced. For ten years, Christine Kenneally has been on a quest to uncover the truth. Focusing on St. Joseph's, an orphanage in Vermont, Kenneally offers a stunning account of crimes and abuses. Following clues that take her into the dark corners of institutions across the globe, she finds a trail of terrifying stories and a group of survivors who are seeking justice. Ghosts of the Orphanage is a reckoning with a past that has stayed buried for too long, with tragic consequences.

Oklahoma Insights

PWDAD Raises Awareness for Disabilities

The halls of the Oklahoma History Center were alive with activity on March 5 as Oklahomans came together for the 30th annual People with Disabilities Awareness Day. Staff from the Oklahoma Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped participated in PWDAD as volunteers, provided braille transcription of PWDAD materials and ran two tables exhibiting the OLBPH's services.

PWDAD is organized by the Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services and raises awareness among Oklahoma lawmakers, and among the public, of the number of Oklahomans impacted by disabilities. Nearly 16% of Oklahomans have a disability, and many more are affected by disabilities as the loved ones and caregivers of people with disabilities.

“PWDAD allows people with disabilities to connect with their legislators and tell them firsthand how the services they receive affect their lives. It also allows constituents to let their legislators know in what areas services aren't meeting their needs,” said Lacey Downs, the OLBPH's administrative programs officer and braille transcriber.

“This is a chance to be seen,” said Kat Jensen, director of the OLBPH Recording Studio and a volunteer at PWDAD. “This is a time to put a light on the people we serve, with the general public and with lawmakers.”

Search #PWDAD on Facebook for more insight into the action!

*OLBPH staff provides information about our services at PWDAD.
Photo by Dana Tallon >>*



PWDAD also includes a disability resource fair. This year, 70 organizations or programs were represented, including the OLBPH.

“I think PWDAD is a great way for people to get to know what is available to them,” said Kat. Kat adds that it is important for the OLBPH to participate at events like PWDAD because many people are unaware of the OLBPH’s services. “Everyone that works at the OLBPH wants as many people to benefit from our services as possible. The more people we talk to, hopefully, the more we get our services out.”

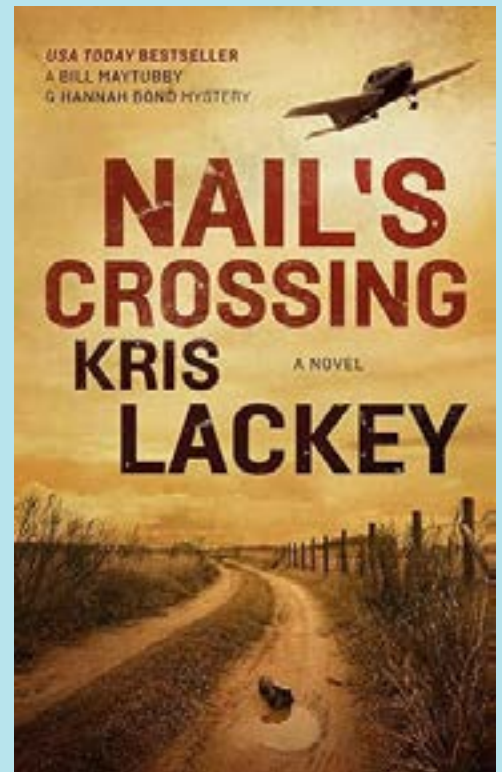
Oklahoma Reads: *Showcasing books about Oklahoma*

Nail’s Crossing by Kris Lackey, DBC 18964

Nail’s Crossing is Oklahoma author Kris Lackey’s debut novel in the Chickasaw Nation Mysteries series that is gaining popularity with each new release. In Nail’s Crossing we meet tribal Lighthorse policeman Bill Maytubby and county deputy Hannah Bond as they discover the buzzard-ravaged remains of Majesty Tate, a young drifter with a blank past. Maytubby and Bond set out on a hunt for answers about Tate’s death through Oklahoma and deep into the Louisiana bayou.

They soon learn that Tate was tied to a diverse group of characters, including a violent local meth dealer, an aspiring politician, a shady itinerant preacher and a mysterious character on a motorcycle who enjoys taunting Maytubby as he and Bond try to find the killer. The murder begins to unravel as a bizarre conspiracy. As they get closer to solving the case, their leads start being picked off one by one. Will they find the identity of the murderer before the killer eliminates anyone who has the answers they need? Find out by listening to this fast-paced mystery featuring Oklahoma’s red dirt roads.

Cover of Nail’s Crossing



Volunteer Spotlight

Miss Grand Lake, Miss OLBPH

Alyssa Payne always wanted to do voice-over work. So when she found a flyer at her local bookstore that was recruiting volunteers for the Oklahoma Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped Oklahoma Telephone Reader program, she seized the opportunity.

“I had wanted to do voice-over work my entire life, but growing up with a speech impediment, I had assumed that I would not be a good fit due to my disability. I thought the OTR program would be a good way to test if I wanted to do voice-over, and I absolutely fell in love with it,” said Alyssa.

Alyssa is now a regular reader for the OTR program and a narrator for the OLBPH Recording Studio. As an OTR reader, Alyssa reads and records headline articles from the Oklahoman, which can be played on-demand through the dial-up service. In the Recording Studio, Alyssa narrates and records audiobooks and magazines, such as Oklahoma Today. Alyssa will have been a volunteer at OLBPH for two years in August.

Alyssa is a senior studying animation at Oklahoma City University and takes pre-physician assistant courses. She is also a member of the Gamma Phi Beta sorority and a leader of the OCU We Dine Together club. Alyssa works as a character performer, performing as Disney princesses and other characters. In her spare time, Alyssa enjoys hiking, traveling, tap dancing, writing and watching Pixar and Studio Mappa animations. Alyssa currently serves as Miss Grand Lake 2024 and will be competing for Miss Oklahoma in June. She has used her position as Miss Grand Lake to advocate for and promote the OLBPH.

In many of her activities, Alyssa channels her creative energy and skills into serving others, especially her fellow Oklahomans. She encourages others to do the same, and to consider volunteering at the OLBPH.

“I am so thankful to volunteer at a place dedicated to helping Oklahomans,” said Alyssa. “I know voice-over and narration can be outside of many

people's comfort zones, but it is truly an incredible experience knowing that you're serving patrons across our state. Voice-over work will help you be a better speaker and will increase your confidence."

The OLBPH is thankful for Alyssa's hard work and her passion for serving others.

"Alyssa is a fantastic volunteer. She is always willing to contribute to anything and everything we need and brings a positive attitude to her work," said Kat Jensen, OLBPH recording studio director.

Alyssa has also become a great asset for the Recording Studio and the OLBPH.

"Alyssa's young voice has been a wonderful addition to our studio and broadened the scope of what we can record," said Kat. "She has also become a wonderful partner in advocating for the library."

The OLBPH wishes Alyssa luck in the upcoming Miss Oklahoma competition!

To volunteer at the OLBPH, call 405-521-3514 or email olbph@okdrs.gov. Apply online at olbph.org/resources

*Alyssa reads into a mic in a recording booth.
Photo by Scott See*



*Alyssa models her Miss Grand Lake crown and sash.
Photo by Scott See*

ADVENTURE — BEGINS AT — YOUR LIBRARY™



Ready for an adventure?

Sign up to participate in the OLBPH Summer Reading program!

Why participate in the Summer Reading Program?

- Reading during the summer break helps keep kids' literacy skills sharp.
- Prizes, including an iPad, gift cards and more in various categories.
- Fun programs and events for children of all ages.

The OLBPH summer reading program is open to children birth through grade 12 (or age 17). To sign up, please email Kaitlyn Evans, OLBPH public information officer, at kaitlyn.evans@okdrs.gov.

Look out for more information to come in your email.

Oklahoma Library for the Blind and
Physically Handicapped
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**FREE MATTER
FOR THE BLIND**