Computer friendly, but with a catch

Score another victory for technology! Oklahomans who want to apply for OLBPH services can now complete most of the application on their computers. “Most” is the key word in that previous sentence.

The “fillable” applications at www.olbph.org still have to be printed because they must include the signature of a certifying authority. An electronic signature is not acceptable. An actual, hand-written signature from the doctor, registered nurse, therapist, etc. is still required.

For all other sections, including contact information, reading preferences, requested services, and so on, future patrons can navigate to the various form fields and fill them in via a computer keyboard. A blank application can still be printed and completed by hand, if you prefer.

If you have questions about this improvement, please contact us.
Director’s Column

Since the last “Bright Future” issue when I caught you up on the changes in the library’s recent history, more happenings continue to unfold. We did, in fact, succeed in hiring a full-time employee in circulation and she is featured in this newsletter (Page 7). This is huge as we are much better able to keep up with getting your audio books to and fro.

Another project that just came to fruition was the publication of an OLBPH-focused media release by DRS. The great results of our recent patron survey were the impetus behind the effort. DRS Communications Director Jody Harlan did a masterful job of also encapsulating the 45 years of service of Electronics Technician Karl Williams, our outreach efforts, and making the release informational as to what we do and why. She and I felt the world, at least in Oklahoma, needed some good news.

Also in the realm of spreading good news, the library recently played host to the entire Visual Services Division for a training activity and an OSU alumni gathering held by former VS Division Administrator Jane Nelson. Your library also became a little more modern this fall in terms of patron applications. Future patrons who get the individual and institutional applications from our website will find the forms are now “fillable.” That means most of the information fields can be filled by typing it on your computer keyboard. The applications still have to be printed and include a hand-written signature from a certifying authority. For more information, please see the article on Page 1.

We will continue to look for ways to make your library more modern, efficient and user-friendly. If you have suggestions, please let us know. As always, thank you for your support.

--Kevin Treese, Director, OLBPH
What is your comment about the Library?

"It is the man who does not want to express an opinion whose opinion I want." – Abraham Lincoln

Your opinion is important. It’s great when the library staff receives notes of thanks, praise, encouragement, or a combination of all three. We celebrate those comments and appreciate them very much. But what’s extra special and rewarding is when we can share those thoughts outside the library with other Oklahomans.

As we travel the state to raise awareness of library services, our message is greatly enhanced when we can include the comments of our patrons, their family members and other supporters. Hearing the words of a fellow Oklahoman can be very convincing to someone who is skeptical or unsure.

That’s why we’re asking for your comments. And please let us know if we can share your thoughts with others. You can email them to olbph@okdrs.gov or send traditional mail to:

OLBPH
300 NE 18th St.
Oklahoma City, OK 73105

--Brian King, Editor and Public Information Officer
Tour group visits Quartz Mountain by road and rail

On October 27-28, 2017, a group of 22 people and two guide dogs from around the state went on a trip to Altus, Oklahoma to enjoy a ride on the Quartz Mountain Flyer excursion train. The trip was planned by the MLV Foundation and coordinated by Debbie Sanders, founder of MLV (My Limitless Vision). The group enjoyed the comfort of a chartered bus from Village Tours and Travel with a fantastic driver, Randy Gafford. Dinner Friday evening was enjoyed at Fred’s Steakhouse and Saloon in Altus. After the great meal, we went back to our hotel where some of the group stayed up and played the game “Tick, Tock, Boom”.

We awoke early, had a nice, hot meal at the hotel, checked out, and were then on our way to the train ride. The excursion train only runs once a month and for only seven months. The Quartz Mountain Flyer is a cooperative venture of the Lone Wolf Greeters and FarmRail. It was an enjoyable and relaxing ride, however the audio system was out in our car and so the State Parks Guide who was giving a narration and history about Quartz Mountain had only her voice to project and it was difficult for all of our crowd to hear her. It was still an enjoyable time nonetheless.

After the train excursion, we loaded back on the bus and headed toward Newcastle to visit the TG Farms Pumpkin Patch. We enjoyed the little petting zoo and some braved the Hay Maze. After picking out our pumpkins, we loaded back on the bus and went to Swadley’s BBQ in El Reno where we were greeted by Mr.
and Mrs. Ron and Gloria Swadley. They directed us to a nice room where they provided wait staff specifically for our group. The food was delicious. While waiting for our food, Mr. and Mrs. Swadley shared their story of how Swadley’s BBQ came to be. They were delightful.

It was a great little trip. We were thankful the weather wasn’t as awful as the weathermen had predicted.

--Debbie Sanders, MLV Foundation
Kazuo Ishiguro awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature

The Nobel Prize in Literature is the literary world’s highest honor. It is given in recognition of a writer’s entire body of work rather than a single title. This year the prize went to Kazuo Ishiguro, who as a young man wanted to be a singer and songwriter. He went on to become one of the best British writers of his generation, writing seven acclaimed novels.

Mr. Ishiguro, 62, is best known for his novels “The Remains of the Day,” about a butler serving an English lord in the years before World War II, and “Never Let Me Go,” a futuristic science fiction love story set in a British boarding school. Both novels were made into successful films. “The Remains of the Day” also won the Booker Prize. “When We Were Orphans” is a suspenseful account of a man searching his memory for clues concerning his parents’ kidnapping when he was a child. His most recent novel, “The Buried Giant” is a fantasy story set in Arthurian Britain with ogres and a dragon.

He is known for his stark and emotionally restrained prose. His novels are often written in the first person, with unreliable narrators who are in denial about truths that are gradually revealed to the reader. The beauty of his plots often comes from a rich, underlying subtext—the things left unsaid, the fragile nature of memory, the nature of time and mortality.

All four of these excellent novels are available from the library and from BARD:
DB 30751 – The Remains of the Day
DB 59667 – Never Let Me Go
DB 80886 – Buried Giant
DB 50876 – When We Were Orphans

--Sammie Willis, Librarian
Meet your new circulation pro

There is a new staff member at your library who has an important role in sending and receiving our books. Melanie Ullfers started as a Library Technician II in mid-October in our Circulation department. She handles several hundred books each day, pulling them from shelves and adding address cards to get them ready for mailing, and checking in books that are returned.

Melanie came to OLBPH from the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry, where she was a laboratory technician in the water lab. She has lived in Oklahoma since 2003. Melanie grew up in library settings because her mother was a librarian for almost 30 years. “It’s nice to have a job where I can use the skills I was raised with,” Melanie said.

When she’s not at work, Melanie enjoys creating art. A few of her paintings are on a wall of her office, although lately her artistic pursuits have been more in digital media. She also enjoys cooking, especially dishes that feature lots of spices and flavor.

We are so glad Melanie has joined the library team in our efforts to serve our wonderful patrons.

--Brian King, Editor and Public Information Officer
Remembering Elouise Bell
Narrator, author, scholar, and educator was 82

Occasionally, there are people in our lives whose obituaries deserve numerous chapters instead of a few paragraphs. Such is the life story of Elouise Bell, an esteemed OLBPH narrator who passed away Sept. 30. Words seem inadequate when attempting to summarize such an impressive, accomplished, and influential life – one that demonstrated a remarkable command of words, both written and spoken.

Elouise was a prolific author, poet, essayist, and humorist. She published several books of compilations of her work and was a newspaper and magazine columnist. Elouise taught in the English Department at Brigham Young University for more than 35 years, serving as professor and later, an associate dean of general and honors education. She was described in a eulogy on
the website of the Association for Mormon Letters as “one of the
greats of Mormon literature, education, and feminism.”

Elouise was one of our first studio narrators when the digital
recording program began in 2005. The first two books OLBPH
contributed to the National Library Service’s Braille and Audio
Reading Download (BARD) program were narrated by Elouise:
*Fire in the Hills* by Anna Myers (DBC 01821) and *Confessions
from the Principal’s Chair* by Anna Myers (DBC 01822).

She worked most directly with Nancy Jefferis. “They worked
together as a team with Elouise narrating and Nancy monitoring
and editing the recorded files,” Studio Director Jill Streck
said. “They volunteered every Wednesday morning, bringing
learning, love and laughter into the studio for many years.”

In 2013, Elouise and Nancy were the first recipients of the
Jo Anna Peter Award, given in recognition of outstanding
volunteer service at OLBPH. Fortunately for us, Elouise’s gifts of
her time and talents will keep giving for years to come. Nancy,
who married Elouise in 2015, is still volunteering with us, working
to complete the editing of some of Elouise’s last recordings.

Among the many tributes that have been written about
Elouise in recent weeks, an eloquent thought was expressed by
one of the commenters to a story in the Salt Lake City Tribune on
Oct. 6, 2017. We thought it was especially fitting for her
contributions to this library: “Though R.I.P. is appropriate for
most, for Elouise I wish R.I.J. – Rest In Joy – because she gave
joy to everyone who knew her and everyone who read her work.”

On behalf of the library staff and its grateful patrons, we say
“Amen.”

--Jill Streck, Studio Director, and Brian King, Editor
Fall Outreach Highlights

Presentations in Oklahoma City and Norman, big events in Tulsa, and trips to the south central and southwest parts of our state highlighted the library’s fall outreach activities.

Attendees at the Dean McGee Eye Institute’s “Lunch and Learn” in October got to hear an overview of library services. The event concentrated on macular degeneration, low vision, and glaucoma issues. Other meetings were held with potential patrons at big assisted living centers in OKC and Norman.

Visits to Wynnewood and Davis were followed by a health fair in Ardmore. A couple of weeks later, we participated in the Oklahoma Public Health Association conference in Tulsa and assisted with the Visual Services information table at the Tulsa State Fair.

November featured a five-city, self-guided tour of “Great Plains Country” with stops in Hobart, Sayre, Mangum, Altus, and the southwestern-most town on the state map, Hollis.

We can’t wait for what winter will bring! If you have suggestions for groups, events, or venues in your area, please contact me at (405) 521-3699 or by email: bking@okdrs.gov.

-- Brian King, OLBPH Public Information Officer
Here are some titles you may not have heard of to help keep your mind warm this winter.

**DB 71847 – Kevin Kling’s Holiday Inn by Kevin Kling**
In this title, a National Public Radio commentator pens good-humored autobiographical stories about holidays throughout the year. Among his stories, he describes celebrating his fourth birthday inside a glass "cage" at the Shriners Hospital for Children and holding his breath - and fainting - during Easter services at church.

**DB 80794 – Hell to Pay by Garry Disher**
If detective fiction is your beat, this title is worth a try. Relegated to a backwater town after a whistle-blowing incident earns him powerful enemies, Australian police detective Paul Hirschhausien confronts more local crime than anticipated, including the murder of a sixteen-year-old girl.

**DB 86941 – Lincoln in the Bardo by George Saunders**
The winner of the 2017 Man Booker Prize for Fiction is set during a single evening in 1862. Soon after the death of his son, Willie, President Lincoln goes to visit the recently interred body in Georgetown. There he encounters the ghosts of the cemetery’s residents, including Willie, who must escape the limbo he is in.
DB 83265 – *I’ll Never Write My Memoirs* by Grace Jones
The singer, model, and actress tells her colorful life story. Born into a strict Jamaican Pentecostal family, Jones rebelled and left for 1970s New York City. There she eventually became part of the burgeoning club scene and built a successful, if unconventional, career.

DB 85128 – *The Art of Crash Landing: A Novel* by Melissa DeCarlo
Pregnant and broke, Mattie Wallace learns she is her recently deceased grandmother's only heir. She heads to Oklahoma to claim her inheritance, and to find out why her mother fled home when she was a teen.

DB 87506 – *The Godmothers* by Fern Michaels
This title contains the first three books in a series about four friends. In *The Scoop*, Toots Loudenberry, a sixty-five-year-old widow, convinces her three best friends to help her buy a Hollywood tabloid. The other two titles are *Exclusive* and *Late Edition*.

DB 87210 – *In the Country of the Blind* by Edward Hoagland
After losing his job as a stockbroker and his wife to divorce, Press has retired to his cabin in Vermont to deal with losing his sight. Interacting with his eclectic mix of neighbors provides him distraction and solace as he learns his new world.
DB 85160 – *Notorious* by Allison Brennan
Renowned investigative reporter Maxine "Max" Revere tackles cold cases, but the one unsolved murder that still haunts her is a case from her own past. When Max was a high school senior, one of her best friends was strangled and another accused of the crime. This is the first title in a series of Max Revere mysteries.

DB 86834 – *The Making of Donald Trump* by David Cay Johnston
This title is an in-depth portrait of the mogul's rise to power, beginning with his privileged childhood in Queens, New York. The author examines such topics as the origins of his family's fortune, his own business empire, his education and early career, and his successful presidential bid. The author draws on interviews, financial records, court documents, and public statements.

DBC 9 – *Twelve Mighty Orphans* by Jim Dent
The author tells the riveting story of the football team of an orphanage outside Fort Worth. They became a high school football dynasty in Depression-era Texas. Despite being undersized and having virtually no equipment or uniforms, the Mighty Mites, as they came to be known, reached the Texas state semifinals three times and the championship game once. The team’s coach, Rusty Russell, compensated for the team’s physical shortcomings with imaginative formations and trick plays.
For Your Information

Be My Eyes Available on Android

With the launch of the Android version, the Be My Eyes app is now accessible to even more people, thus furthering the goal to bring sight to the blind and visually impaired.

Be My Eyes, through the assistance of volunteers, will describe what is surrounding you, read a piece of mail to you, or an endless variety of helpful information. Since Be My Eyes was released for Apple iOS in 2015, the community has grown to consist of more than 38,000 visually impaired users and 550,000 sighted volunteers.

You can download it from the Google Play Store.

Free Directory Assistance

Did you know that dialing 4-1-1 for directory assistance can cost you a service fee and valuable cell phone minutes? Many users aren’t aware there’s a free directory assistance service for those times you need to find a number and you don’t have Internet access or a smartphone nearby. Just dial 1-800-FREE-411 (or 1-800-373-3411) from your phone. Since the service is sponsored by advertisers, you’ll have to listen to a 10-second ad before you can speak, but the service is free, easy to remember, and easy to use.

(Editor’s Note: Most land lines and cell phone lines offer free directory assistance if you secure a doctor’s statement validating you have a disability.)

--Compiled by Vicky Golightly, Library Patron
Your Library is a wonderful place. It is a wonderful place to work, it is a wonderful place to receive help, it is a wonderful place to BE. The gang at OLPBH is like family. So if the staff is like family, Karl Williams is like the patriarch. And the patriarch is going to retire soon.

Karl Williams is as steady and constant as a clock. He came to work at the OLBPH in the 1970’s and has never missed a beat. He has done so many things for the patrons of the Library that it seems there is nothing he CAN’T do! From quick fixes on co-workers’ computers to helping patrons download online books to printing braille labels to whatever needs to be done.

The Library is in the Travis Leon Harris building, named after a late, former Library Director. Karl knew “Trav”, as he calls him. Karl has seen talking books progress from vinyl records to cassettes to digital cartridges and internet downloads. He has worked with a great many people who have come and gone as well as serving thousands of our great state’s people who can’t use traditional books. He’s a treasure.

One other thing that describes Karl, though, is that he isn’t his own biggest fan. He is quick to share the credit with others who form the team at the Library. He says he couldn’t have stuck with it for so long had it not been for great co-workers. And his co-workers return the compliment.

Your Library is a wonderful place. I’ve only been associated with it for less than seven years, but it has made a permanent place for itself in my heart. Karl’s place can only be filled by Karl, but another great family member will, no doubt, come to make their own place here.

-- Jim Kettler – Contract Monitor, Visual Services
Tax Deductible Donations

Every gift to Oklahomans for Special Library Services (OSLS) benefits thousands. Contributions enable OSLS to provide activities not funded by the annual Library budget. Make checks payable to OSLS and mail to Oklahomans for Special Library Services, P.O. Box 53593, Oklahoma City, OK 73152.

Donations are accepted in memory of a loved one, family member or to honor an individual. When a gift is made, it should include the name of the person being honored and the name and address of the family or family member to be notified of the gift. Please consider naming OSLS as a beneficiary of a life insurance policy or in other estate planning bequests. With the assistance of an estate-planning attorney, significant tax benefits may be possible from this gift.

Oklahoma Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped
300 N.E. 18th St.
Oklahoma City, OK 73105

FREE MATTER FOR THE BLIND