Library hosts Visual Services training

Imagine hosting a holiday gathering for about 80 family members! That’s sort-of what happened at your library shortly before Thanksgiving, as we welcomed fellow Visual Services (VS) professionals from around the state for a day of training.

VS counselors, technicians, managers, and others heard about some amazing new assistive technology from Vince Cianfrone, vice president of NanoPac, Inc. The company is based in Tulsa and has a close working relationship with the Department of Rehabilitation Services.

After a potluck lunch that featured a lot of charcoal grilling by the Library Director, the group heard transition updates from Brandi Hurley and participated in a library-led overview and discussion of the advantages of BARD, the download service used by patrons to get books and magazines through computers, smartphones, and other devices.
Director’s Column

One of the outreach markets in which we endeavor to expand our efforts is visiting with our professional brethren in the public libraries. Freelancing as we travel to other outreach engagements, we make it a point to stop and say hello to our partners in public libraries across Oklahoma.

Sometimes it’s a reunion of sorts when they definitely know about us and make referrals. Other times it’s a teaching moment for which we are more than happy to oblige. Twice recently these initial encounters resulted in us returning to speak at public library community gatherings. We always reaffirm that we are in the helping profession together and as public library staff they are the front lines in ascertaining if their patrons are struggling with standard print reading materials and in need of our help. Our collection size resembles that of a medium to large public library, only we circulate audio books via free post for the blind and handicapped. In terms of free public library services, we are in this together.

Something else worth mentioning is that our public engagements are not always all about library services. As we are part of the bigger picture of rehabilitation services, in particular visual services, we can be the jumping off point for empowering Oklahomans seeking services to obtain a better quality of life through DRS programs. Even if all we do is make contact and leave resource materials, someone may take a brochure home and make a call that starts a life changing process. What is not to love about what we do?

--Kevin Treese, Library Director
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.


On the night of May 31, 1921, a mob of thousands of white Tulsans stormed into the Greenwood section, looting and murdering up to 300 black citizens. When the riot was finally over, 1,256 homes, churches, schools, a hospital and library had been burned to the ground and 6,000 Greenwood residents herded into detention camps.

Adding further scarring to the community was the destruction of newspaper accounts, police records and state militia records. Both black and white Tulsans were complicit in attempting to cover up the whole shameful event and forget that it ever happened. A conspiracy of silence was born, but it was not successful in healing the pain and hurt of a racially segregated and deeply divided city.

Decades passed as white Tulsa flourished and prospered and Greenwood citizens struggled to rebuild their neighborhood. Their
attempts were often officially thwarted. White Tulsa became a stronghold of the Klan, whose members included high civic officials. In the 1960s and 1970s urban renewal helped to finish what the riots had begun.

"The past is not dead. It’s not even past.” William Faulkner

Riot and Remembrance is the highly acclaimed account of the worst race riot in American history. Best-selling author James Hirsch used oral histories, investigative journalism, court and archival records, published memoirs and government reports to write a factual account of the causes, memory and forgetting of this grisly event and its tragic aftermath. The book also includes the story of how modern Tulsans are working together to finally overcome this shameful calamity and to recover and atone for the past.

--Sammie Willis, Librarian

* DBC 12204 – Beyond the Blindness: My Story of Losing Sight and Living Life by Ted Hinson

As a young parent, Ted Hinson was on top of everything. He was an active father, basketball coach, and worked in the oil and gas industry. And he accomplished all of this while completely blind. In this memoir he has an important message for anyone coping with adversity: strive to change obstacles into opportunities, and
don't let challenges limit your life. For now, this book is available on cartridge only, though it will be available on BARD soon.

* DBC 1829 – Our Faiths: A Peace Offering by Andrew Tevington

In an informal and nonjudgmental style, the author answers questions about different religions practiced in America, ranging from the esoteric Urantia Brotherhood and Native American Peyote Religion to the various shades of Christianity, Judaism, and Islam. Narrated by the author.

--Andrew Shockley, Librarian

Preserving the Digital Player’s Battery Life

It is important to remember to keep your digital player plugged in when you are not using it. If it is unplugged for an extended time, the power level in the battery could drop to a very low level and won’t ever fully recharge. When this happens you will need to send your player in to get a new battery installed and this means you will be without your player for several days. So be sure to keep it plugged in whenever possible. If you have questions about your player or its battery, call library reception and ask to speak with James Jenks.

--Library Staff
Meet our two newcomers on the library staff

Staff changes don’t happen a lot at your library, so two in one season was really unusual. This fall, we were happy to welcome a pair of terrific newcomers to the OLBPH family. Both are classified as Library Technician II but they have very different roles on the team. Kay Johnson is on her way to becoming an all-star in Circulation, while Heather Bateman is adding to the superior performance of our Studio.

Kay started in September after three combined years at the public libraries in Edmond and Stillwater. She pulls outgoing talking book cartridges and shelves books that are returned. Kay also prints braille labels for book and magazine cartridges, processes new books to get them ready for circulation, and is already a key player in our Duplication on Demand service.

New staff members Kay Johnson (left) and Heather Bateman have some fun with the tools of their trades. Photo by Brian King
We’ve already used the terms “all-star” and “player” to describe Kay, and that’s not a coincidence. One of her after-work activities is playing on the Oklahoma City Lady Force women’s semi-pro football team. She also enjoys blacksmithing, gardening, and is a big OSU fan. Kay says she has a real passion for libraries; it’s not just a job. She is devoted to high standards of professionalism and is serious about sharing our vision... that all may read.

Heather is about to complete her MLIS (Master of Library and Information Studies) degree at OU. She most recently worked with records at the Department of Environmental Quality. Before that, she was at OU’s Carl Albert Center for more than six years, archiving and managing congressional papers and other political collections.

At OLBPH, Heather is editing audio produced by the studio. She spends a lot of time with headphones on, scrutinizing every syllable to make sure the audio productions are as perfect as possible. She is also reviewing some of the editing work done by studio volunteers before moving it up the quality assurance line. Heather says her favorite part of working at the library so far is getting to know the narrators and other volunteers and being a part of the recording process. In her spare time, Heather enjoys spending time with her dogs Dexter and Jynx, baking (she’s known for the excellence of her sugar cookies), and doing origami.

Welcome to the team, Kay and Heather!

--Brian King, Editor and Public Information Officer
Volunteer Spotlight: Randy Bolliger

In 2002, Randy Bolliger was diagnosed with limb onset ALS, a slow progressing form of the disease that starts at the arms and legs and gradually weakens the muscles of the body. He became a volunteer reader for Visual Services over 10 years ago, recording the Tulsa World on the Older Blind Information Line. At that time, Randy was able to hold a newspaper and use a regular phone to dial in and record.

As he lost the ability to turn the newspaper's pages, Randy used his computer to access the online version at the newspaper's website. Over time, the Older Blind Information Line became outdated and Oklahoma Telephone Reader (OTR) was born. OTR uses newer technology but still requires the patrons and volunteer readers to enter a series of numbers in order to navigate the system. When Randy eventually became unable to dial the phone, his daughter located a Skype application that allowed him to use the computer to dial in and record. Then, when he could no longer click the mouse, Randy and his daughter discovered DwellClick, an app that automatically clicks wherever you hold the mouse.
As his ALS progressed, it became more and more difficult to move the mouse, making Randy incapable of using Skype to make phone calls. He enjoyed reading to the patrons and wanted to continue. With the help of his daughter, they researched all the available disability hardware on the market. After reviewing all the features and watching a ton of YouTube videos, they selected GlassOuse. It is pricier than the competition but is the only product Randy found that is compatible with his Apple Mac computer.

The hardware looks like glasses frames without lenses and fit above Randy’s regular glasses. His head movement controls the cursor on the screen. Since he is unable click a mouse, there is an attachment that plugs into the glasses and he bites on it to click. It works wonderfully and has once again allowed him full use of his computer. Randy’s doctors tell him that his daily recordings are great therapy for his breathing. And just as important, Randy has once again gained the ability to be a volunteer reader.

“Like many of the volunteers I enjoy reading to the listeners, picturing them as an audience that I'm performing for,” said Randy. “It's also been a great way to get a detailed accounting of the news of the day. I look forward to many more years as a volunteer.”

You can hear Randy Bolliger every weekday by calling 855-887-6397, enter 5555 to enter demo mode, and press 2 for the Tulsa World.

--Becky Bates, Director of Special Services
Fall Outreach Highlights

From Northeast to Southwest Oklahoma and a lot of places in between, fall has been a busy season for library outreach.

The pace started to pick up in late August with a swing through Skiatook and Bartlesville that included the Transitions of Care Health Fair, a huge event that drew more than 300 guests to the Bartlesville Community Center. Less than two weeks later, Director Treese and I made a big loop around Stilwell, Tahlequah, Hulbert, and Wagoner.

Mid-September was dominated by the State Fair in Oklahoma City. OLBPH representatives managed the DRS Visual Services information table for four shifts and a total of 15 hours. In between those shifts, I had the true pleasure of visiting with members of the blepharospasm support group in Tulsa. Big thanks to Helen Vaslavsky for inviting me to be guest speaker. It was a terrific discussion and educational experience.

October included appearances at the Eufaula Memorial Library and two major events: the National Rehabilitation Association conference in Oklahoma City and the Oklahoma Transition Institute conference in Norman. There was also a very well-received trip to Frederick, Walters, and Lawton, highlighted by a lunchtime presentation to a big group at the Center for Creative Living and a visit to the Lawton/Fort Sill Veterans Center.

If you know of a place or group that needs to know more about our library, please call the library or email me: bking@okdrs.gov.

--Brian King, Public Information Officer
Scenes from the Road

From left to right and top to bottom: a good crowd at the Heart, Mind, Body, and Soul Health Fair at the Shawnee Senior Center; the Okie Joe’s Bar-b-que sign in Stilwell; a group photo from the Blepharospasm Support Group meeting in Tulsa; the Eufaula Memorial Library marquee promoted our Oct. 4 visit; and our aromatic location next to the coffee shop at the OCCC Volunteer Fair.
Book Corner

Are you looking for some non-fiction to read this autumn and early winter? Here are a few titles for your consideration.

**DB 91944 – Boom Town: The Fantastical Saga of Oklahoma City, Its Chaotic Founding, Its Apocalyptic Weather, Its Purloined Basketball Team, and the Dream of Becoming a World-Class Metropolis** by Sam Anderson

This new history of Oklahoma City has been variously described by publications such as The New York Times, the San Francisco Chronicle, and The New Yorker as a “bonkers, kitchen sink cultural history,” an “unexpectedly entertaining and stimulating non-fiction romp,” and “dizzyingly pleasurable.” The book explores Oklahoma City’s past and its recent history, namely its MAPS-based revitalization and the establishment of the Oklahoma City Thunder NBA team.

**DB 91547 – Barracoon: The Story of the Last “Black Cargo”** by Zora Neale Hurston

Author of Their Eyes Were Watching God (DB 35745) recounts the story of Oluale Kossola, who became known as Cudjo Lewis - one of the last survivors of the Atlantic slave trade - as told to her in his unique dialect when she interviewed him from 1927 to 1931.

**DB 89743 – The Radium Girls: The Dark Story of America’s Shining Women** by Kate Moore

This title chronicles women employed during World War I as watch dial painters - requiring the use and ingestion of radium-laced paint - and their legal fight for compensation. Discusses the often gruesome
physical deformities and pain the women experienced and their determination to receive justice.

**DB 90801 – The Feather Thief: Beauty, Obsession, and the Natural History Heist of the Century** by Kirk W. Johnson
Chronicle of the 2009 theft of 299 rare bird skins from a natural history museum by a musician for the purpose of supporting his hobby: the Victorian art of salmon fly-tying. Discusses the underground world of feather enthusiasts, the history of the specimens, the investigation of the crime, and more.

**DB 89746 – From Here to Eternity: Traveling the World to Find the Good Death** by Caitlin Doughty
Mortician and author of Smoke Gets in Your Eyes (DB 80041) travels the world and shares death customs she encounters. Discusses mummification restorations in Indonesia, the reasoning behind a body thief in Central America taking his own grandmother's body, an open-air funeral pyre in Colorado, and more.

**DBC 14321 – A Sniper in the Tower: The Charles Whitman Murders**
Why did Charles Whitman climb the University of Texas tower on August 1, 1966 and shoot 45 people before two Austin police officers killed him? This chronicle of one of the most infamous crimes in American history is also a biography of Charles Whitman and a discussion of the problem of mass murder.

--Andrew Shockley and Erin Byrne, Librarians
Cynthia Stokes is one of the anchors within the AIM (Accessible Instructional Materials) Center who keep that part of the OLBPH running like a machine. Cynthia originally came to work there as a part-time temporary worker. After two weeks, Pepper Watson, the director of the center, asked if she would be interested in working full-time. Cynthia didn’t even have to think about it. She replied “sure!” Then in December of 2007 her job was made permanent.

One day Cynthia was working, pulling supplies to pack and ship to schools, when a passing counselor asked her whether that work was “beneath” her. She was a bit shocked by the question but without hesitation, she said “no, I consider it an honor! I’m not doing this for myself, but for the students who need what we have.” That’s the driving force behind Cynthia’s daily work, every day.

Before coming to the Library to work, Cynthia had medical issues that kept her from working. Having been denied disability benefits more than once by the Social Security Administration, she was wondering what she was going to do. So Cynthia acted right away when she saw a commercial for DRS (Department of Rehabilitation Services).
She applied for services and was introduced to Janie Fugitt, her Vocational Rehabilitation counselor. Cynthia is emotional when she talks about the experience. Janie’s kindness and respect gave her hope; hope on which she was running short. Cynthia gives Janie a lot of credit for her success.

It was through Janie that Cynthia was connected with her initial assignment as a part-time temporary employee. Cynthia can see a bigger plan behind the way her job went from part-time temporary to full-time temporary and eventually to full-time permanent. She is also quick to say that everyone who works within the Library has been helpful and willing to lend a hand whenever it is needed. But when you get to know Cynthia, it is easy to see that it is her servant spirit that gives her the drive to serve her clients with grace.

Cynthia has received well-earned awards for customer service, employee of the year, and director’s building blocks. She claims the staff of OLBPH as family. She takes great pride in what she describes as many years of “visionary” leadership. It is that leadership that has historically set the entire OLBPH apart from similar services in other states. In fact, as Cynthia points out, OLBPH sets the bar!

--Jim Kettler, VS Contract Monitor

Did you know?...

OLBPH is part of the Visual Services Division of the Department of Rehabilitation Services. This agency’s prime mission is to enable Oklahomans with disabilities to gain or keep employment. To that end, we offer many services and resources for people with disabilities. To further explore OKDRS, go to www.okdrs.gov. There you will find helpful information, including applications for services as well as contact information.
Oklahoma Telephone Reader

Oklahoma Telephone Reader (OTR) is an on-demand dial-up information service. It is intended for use by people with disabilities that prevent them from reading standard print materials. You must be a library patron in order to register for OTR.

Volunteers record articles and other content from The Oklahoman, Tulsa World, Oklahoma Gazette, Bright Future, and other publications on a daily basis. Such content includes news, editorials, sports, grocery ads, obituaries, as well as a variety of other types of articles. Listeners can access these using the key pads on their telephones and navigate directly to the publication of their choice.

For more information, please call the library at 1-800-523-0288 or 405-521-3514 and ask for Becky Bates or Steve Dowdy.

FREE MATTER FOR THE BLIND

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