

Bright Future

Newsletter of the Oklahoma Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped

How do you want to receive this newsletter?

As you may have noticed, we're trying something new. Many of you got this issue of *Bright Future* in your email inbox for the first time. Others received it through the traditional mail, as usual. Our question now is: what is YOUR preference?

Email is more affordable, faster, and much easier to distribute. However, we also know a large-print version will continue to be needed for those who don't do email or simply want a print copy. Braille versions will continue to be mailed as before, and PDF, Word, braille, and audio versions will still be on our website.

If you have internet access and a current email address, we would be happy to send you future issues that way. If you want to change how you receive this newsletter, please call or email, using the contact information on the right side of this page. Thank you.

A publication of the Oklahoma Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired division, Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services

Vol. 36, No. 4, Fall 2021

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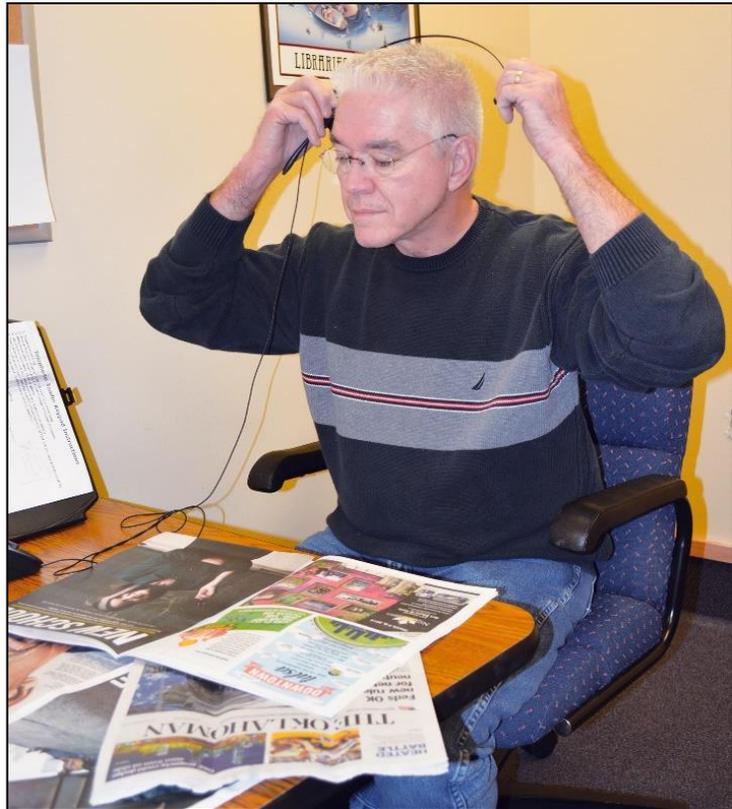
Website: www.olbph.org

Bright Future is also available in Braille, on Oklahoma Telephone Reader, on Oklahoma Recorded Magazines, and on our website.

Director's Column: "Home, James"

Colleague and friend James Jenks just retired at the end of October, completing his career after six years at the library. However, his service to blind and visually impaired Oklahomans has spanned three decades, also working as a Vending Technician, Warehouse Manager and Business Consultant with the Department of Rehabilitation Services' Business Enterprise Program. Many times, I have enjoyed James' traveling stories of the days he traversed the highways and byways of Oklahoma, repairing or replacing vending machines and servicing snack bars in numerous government buildings.

James was a natural with what we refer to as "transferable skills," migrating less than a mile down Lincoln Boulevard to the OLBPH. His passion for service carried over to the position he held here – taking care of the Digital Talking Book Machines (DTBM's) that play our audiobook cartridges. James "maintained the fleet" so to speak for his six years at the OLBPH. This particular function of the library does not get a whole lot of



James Jenks



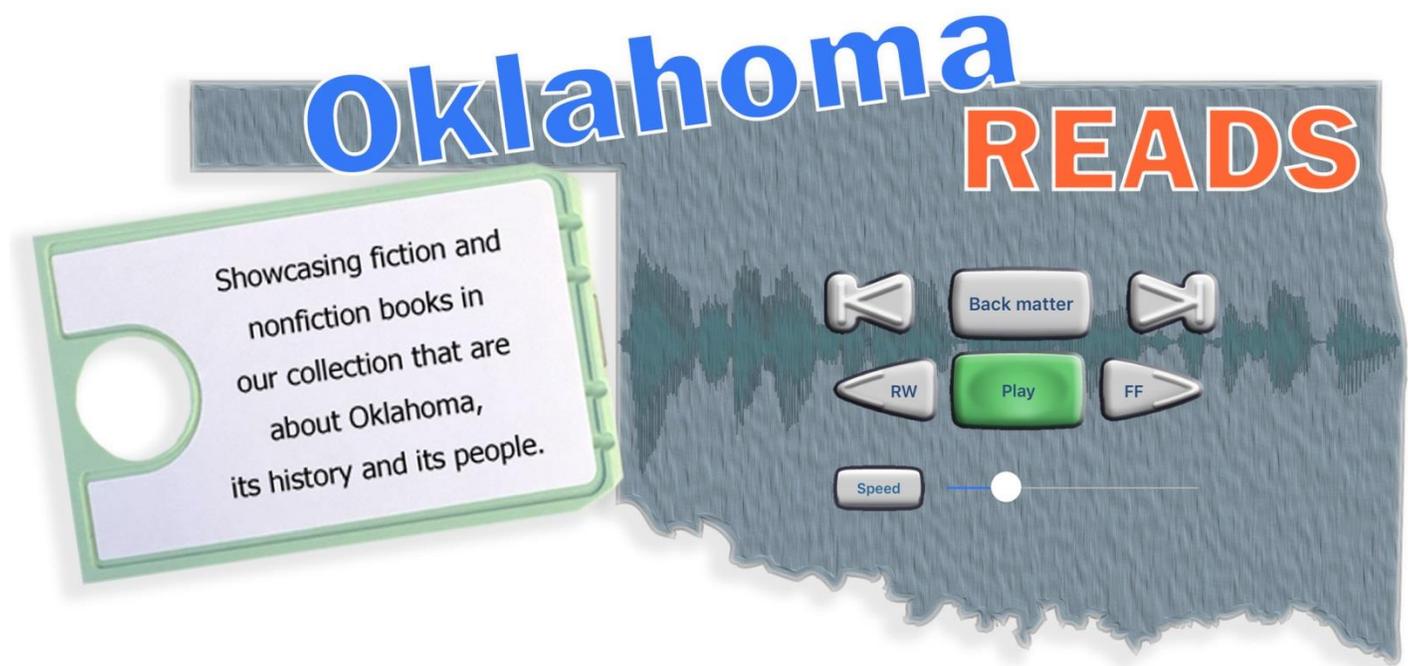
attention. However, if a stock of working players, batteries and other needed supplies is not maintained, this position becomes well known in not such a good way. James was popular with many patrons needing his assistance, be it

replacing a battery, updating firmware versions, or operating our DTBM's. The library benchmark for sending out DTBM's to new patrons or swapping for repairs is three days. Typically, barring COVID slowdown, James had players out next business day. His motto was "players in, players out." Indeed, this was the case. So, tip of the cap to James for doing his very important part of the total Team Library effort.

I'd also like to acknowledge James' willingness to be available for those "other duties as assigned" or just simply asked. For example, his handyman skills around our building and grounds will be missed. James also helped out with our Oklahoma Telephone Reader service (as depicted in the first photo). And finally, James served many times as chauffeur, getting other library employees to and from exhibiting events.

So, in closing I say "Home, James" to you, my friend. Have a blessed retirement.

--Kevin Treese, Library Director



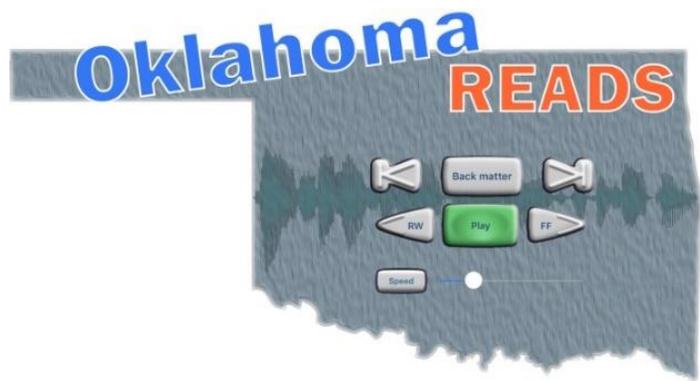
Books with an asterisk (*) next to the title were produced by our own digital recording studio. Other titles are books produced by the National Library Service, a branch of the Library of Congress.

THE TRAIL OF TEARS: A forced march into a strange land marks a monumental and tragic moment in our nation's history.

The year is 1830. Native Americans of the American South and the old Northwest live on the land they cultivated. Despite struggles and hardships, they've held onto what rightly belongs to them. The land is a part of them. It is their lifeblood and their salvation. It is theirs until broken treaties and broken promises rip it away.

What happened at the hands of the American government forever changed the landscape. Cruelty, degradation, sickness, and death followed. Pushed out of their homes, they are forced to start over in an unfamiliar territory with no resources.

To follow this heartbreaking story and discover the truth about why this horrible atrocity happened, read the following books on The Trail of Tears in the NLS collection.



DB 42034 – *Trail of Tears: The Rise and Fall of the Cherokee Nation*

DB 75014 – *Driven West: Andrew Jackson and the Trail of Tears to the Civil War*

DB 76865 – *African Cherokees in Indian Territory: From Chattel to Citizens*

--Sammie Willis, Librarian

***DBC 18953 – *Deep Calls to Deep* by Audrey Streetman**

If poetry is an interest of yours, you should try this Audrey Streetman collection of poems, which has just been recorded and produced by the library's very own studio. Narrated by Streetman herself, she reflects on a life that is observant of the great and small pleasures and griefs we experience. (*Editor's note:* For much more about the narration of this book, its author, and the friend who helped make the recording happen in more ways than one, please enjoy our Volunteers Spotlight that starts on Page 8.)

***DBC 18954 – *My Mastodon* by Barbara Lowell**

Another new entry from our studio, *My Mastodon* is a children's tale inspired by the artist and scientist Charles Wilson Peale and his family during the 19th Century. It tells of a girl and her favorite companion, a fossilized mastodon.

--Andrew Shockley, Librarian

New adult seasonal reading program challenge

OSLS (Oklahomans for Special Library Services) is excited to offer a new program in conjunction with OLBPH called the Adult Seasonal Reading Program Challenge. Patrons will be challenged to read books based on a theme for the season and report what they read. At the end of the challenge, participants will receive a participation prize as well as being included in a drawing for a special prize.

Winter Reading Challenge

The 2022 Adult Winter Reading Program theme is "All About Winter." The challenge is simple – read 4 books following our theme requirements. For extra points, watch a movie related to the book read, and attend a Zoom meeting.

Requirements:

- Read 1 book that has the word "Winter" in the title.
- Read 1 book that has the word "Snow" in the title.
- Read 1 book that has a winter-related sport woven into the storyline or is about a winter-related sport.
- Read 1 book that is set in a winter or cold setting.

Extra Points:

- Watch 1 movie that is based upon a book as stated above (winter/cold setting).
- Participate in a Zoom meeting with a blind athlete (to be announced later)

You must complete all of the above in order to be entered into the big drawing for prizes. Participants completing just the four book readings get a certificate and participation prizes.

Registration to Participate:

To participate, complete the form online at <https://forms.gle/CXmqFUMRCiF8EDTR9>. The form will include the following questions:

First Name:

Last Name:

Phone:

Mailing Address:

Email Address:

Preferred method of contact: Phone, email, snail mail

Preferred method of reading: BARD or cartridges

Once you have registered for the challenge, we will set up a Beanstack account for you to help you log and track your progress. Beanstack is available as an app for your smart device or can be used on the web via our special portal that we will send to you.

--Debbie Sanders, OSLS

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!

Volunteers Spotlight

This season's spotlight is shining on a pair of friends who had integral roles in one of the newest OLBPH-produced books. *Deep Calls to Deep* (DBC 18953) is a book of poetry, written and



Tarah Sparks (left) and Audrey Streetman

narrated by Audrey Streetman. The book and the author made it to our digital recording studio thanks to longtime volunteer Tarah Sparks. Tarah suggested to studio director Jill Womastek that Audrey narrate her book.

"We did exactly that, and it was a terrific experience," Audrey said. "I felt

privileged to work with Jill and Tarah. They were very professional, but it was also comfortable. We even had some fun along the way with a few tears here and there."

As well as getting the ball rolling, Tarah also took an active role in multiple phases of the production.

"Audrey narrated, and Tarah and I monitored the sessions together," Jill explained, "with me running the controls and Tarah providing artistic direction. She then edited the book."

The artistic direction Tarah provided comes not only from their friendship, but also from her strong familiarity with Audrey's work.

"I met Audrey several years ago during a spiritual formation class we were in together," Tarah said. "One day, after the meeting, she took me out to the parking lot, opened her trunk, and signed a couple of books she had written. We began a friendship quickly and soon were sharing our poetry and insights together on a regular basis."

Indirectly, the COVID-19 pandemic also played a role in the production. Tarah, an Edmond resident who is married, has three adult sons and one grandson, says she's been a Body Worker and Energy Practitioner for 25 years.

However, she saw her professional life in massage therapy take a big hit.

"Last year, as my practice came to a complete halt due to the shutdowns, I thought about what a wonderful opportunity it would be to promote Audrey's published poetry books," Tarah said. "She is an amazing writer, and it is always such a treat to hear her read live. My wish has come true!

"She conveys such honesty in her writing and readings so intimately and personally. You find yourself moved between tears of laughter and poignant sorrow. I am so thankful she has shared her gifts so prolifically."



Tarah Sparks



Audrey Streetman

Audrey, who lives in Oklahoma City, has three daughters, eight grandchildren, and four great grandchildren. She had a 35-year banking career as a Commercial Loan Officer for Liberty Bank/Bank One and BancFirst before retiring as a Senior Vice President in 2007. Months later, she wrote her memoir, *The Well*, and is now the author of five poetry books, two of which have been finalists in the Oklahoma Book Awards.

Even though Tarah raves about Audrey's narration skills, the author says it was a learning process. "The experience taught me a lot about the importance of enunciation as my diction had to be perfect," Audrey said. "It was somewhat tiring as it took complete concentration and more than a little energy."

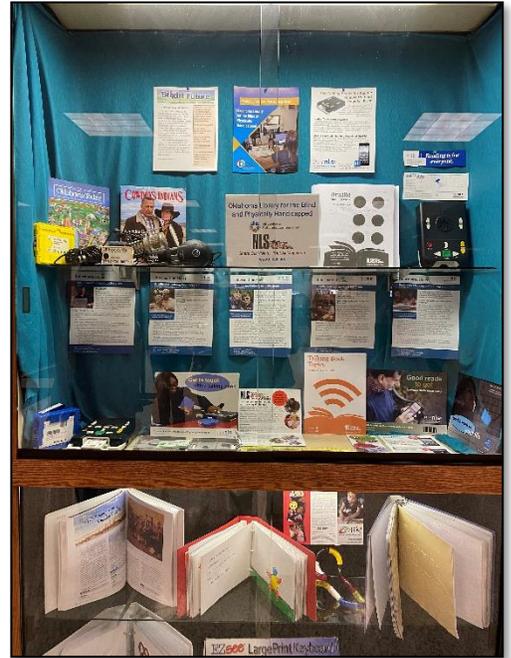
Both of the friends said they were grateful for the opportunity to record *Deep Calls to Deep*, but the feeling is certainly mutual. As with all our dedicated volunteers, we're grateful for them sharing their time and talents with our patrons.



--Brian King, Editor

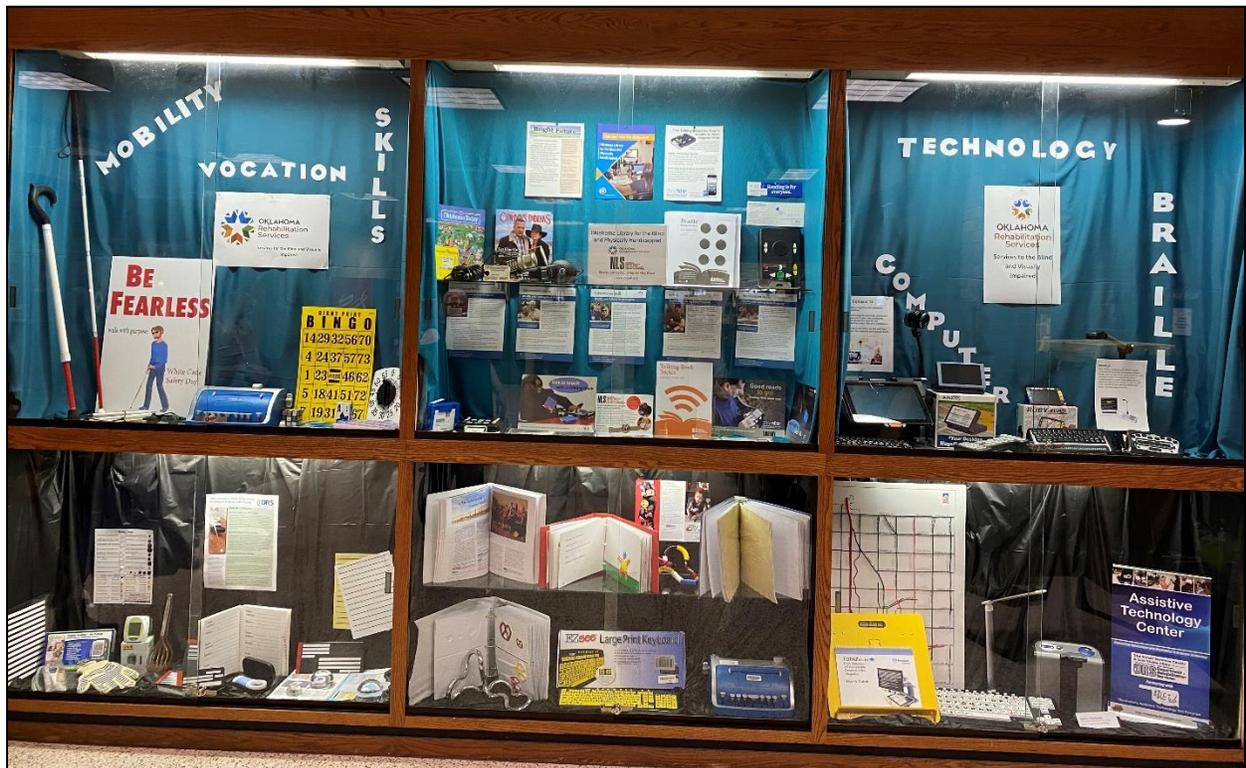
SBVI on display in Moore Library

Some of our best friends in communities across Oklahoma are in the local libraries. And here's a new example of one reason why. The Moore Public Library, part of the Pioneer Library System, invited our agency's Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired (including OLBPH) to use their front entrance display space for the month of November.

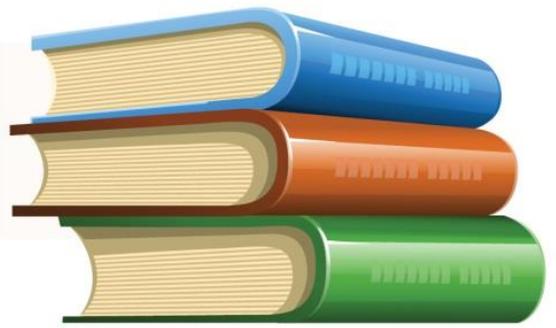


Community libraries can be a huge help by letting us show off some of our equipment, information, and loanable materials. It is a terrific way for people to see the kinds of services we offer.

If your local library has some display space available for a great cause, please let us know.



Book Corner



DB 102183 – *Page Murdock Books 1-2* by Loren Estleman

This contains the first two books in Estleman's Page Murdock western series. In *The High Rocks*, US Deputy Marshal Page Murdock attempts to bring in legendary killer Bear Anderson. In *Stamping Ground*, Murdock is sent to Dakota Territory to apprehend a renegade named Ghost Shirt.

DB 31284 – *The Thanksgiving Visitor* by Truman Capote

Thanksgiving isn't far off, and Truman Capote originally penned this timely short story in 1967 for *McCall's* magazine. In it, eight-year-old Buddy, who is polite, neat, and small, was constantly being bullied by Odd Henderson. So it was a surprise to him when Odd appeared at Buddy's door on Thanksgiving Day.

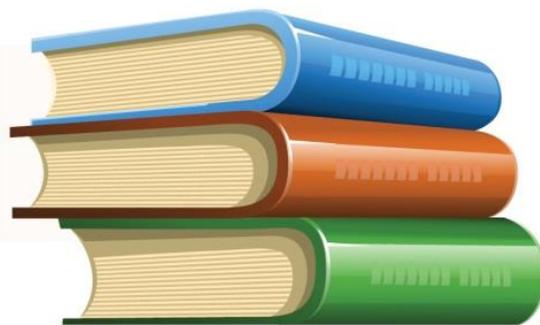
DB 100790 – *The Shape of Water* by Andrea Camilleri

Early one morning Silvio Lupanello - a big shot in his Sicilian village - is found dead in his car. Since he was parked in a rough part of town, rumors begin to circulate. Enter Inspector Salvo Montalbano. Thus begins the Montalbano detective series.

DB 100396 – *Twilight of Democracy* by Anne Applebaum

The Pulitzer Prize-winning author and historian examines the rise of populism and nationalism in the early twenty-first century. She theorizes why some might find authoritarianism or one-party rule appealing, particularly those who have not thrived in a meritocratic or democratic system. Draws on international reports and historical examples.

Book Corner



DB 97387 – *When Christmas Comes* by Katherine Spencer

Liza Merritt returns home to Angel Island for the holidays and is excited to see her dear friend Claire North. But Liza is troubled by the state of the inn. In Cape Light village, Emily Warwick and her sister plan a surprise party for Ezra Elliot's ninety-fifth birthday.

DB 100376 – *Stonecraft Saga, Books 1-3* by B.N. Rundell

Contains the first three books in this western series, all published in 2020. In *Escape to Exile*, Gabriel and Ezra journey to the far wilderness of the west after a bloody duel leaves a powerful man dead. Also includes *Discovery of Destiny* and *Westward the Wilderness*.

DB 100392 – *The Night Swim* by Megan Goldin

In this suspense novel, true crime podcast host Rachel Krall covers a controversial rape trial. She finds herself drawn deep into the small town's dark past and a brutal crime that took place there years before.

DB 104817 – *Peril* by Bob Woodward and Robert Costa

Famed author and reporter teams with Washington Post reporter Robert Costa to present an inside look at the final days of the Trump presidency. Draws on interviews with firsthand sources, meeting notes, diaries, call transcripts, emails, among other records.

--Andrew Shockley, Administrative Librarian

MOKA Conference early registration

The MLV Foundation will be hosting the MOKA Conference for the Blind in Bentonville, Arkansas, on August 4-6, 2022. Registration is now open, and you can save \$25 on your registration fee by registering before December 31.

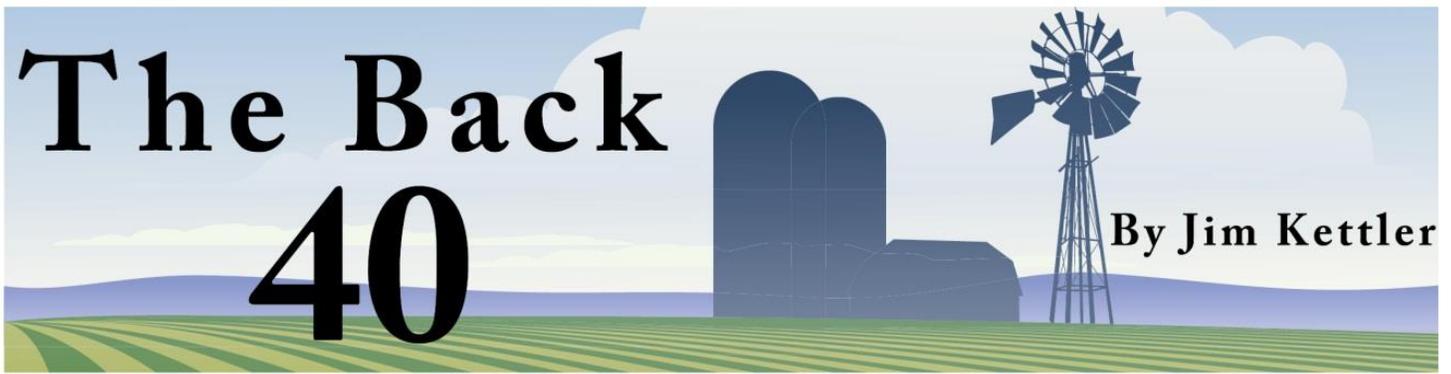
This is a four-state regional conference focused on helping provide resources to and training for the blind and visually impaired of Missouri, Oklahoma, Kansas, and Arkansas (MOKA). The keynote speakers at the event are blind YouTube star Tommy Edison; Oklahoma's own Dr. David Cockrell, past AOA President; and Russell Shaffer, past board of directors president of the American Foundation for the Blind.

There will be 12 breakout sessions, including presentations from WalMart and Microsoft. Along with some great sponsors and exhibitors, there will be some great door prizes given out, as well. A really fun addition to the conference this year will be the Wag and Swag Fun Fur Fashion Show where guide dog teams get to dress up and strut their stuff on the cat, er, dog walk.

MLV Foundation is also procuring a chartered bus to help with the always present issue of lack of transportation. It will originate out of Oklahoma City with another pickup point in Tulsa. There will be scholarships available to help with transportation costs. For more information, be sure to visit the event website at www.MOKACFB.com.

This event is geared to help those struggling to find help and resources in their vision loss journey as well as building connections with those in the region who are on a similar journey. Come. Learn. Grow. Connect at the MOKA Conference for the Blind.

--Debbie Sanders, MLV Foundation



We've been through a lot over the past two years or so, haven't we? The COVID crisis came along, we went through a pretty contentious presidential election and campaigns, there have been so many different confrontations between political factions... It's been hard, hasn't it?

This week I ran across a post in Facebook that made me smile, stop, and think. It said something to the effect of "Congratulations! You've made it through 100% of all your hard times up to today!" Now, that's something from which we can all take some encouragement. And encouragement is something we can all use, wouldn't you say?

Once I started thinking along these lines, it reminded me that over ten years ago I was looking to make a career change and I went back to the Vocational Rehabilitation division of the Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services for some help. With their urging, I applied for a job online with the state of Oklahoma. Long story short, I was hired at the OLBPH (Oklahoma Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped) as a technician, cleaning, repairing, and inventorying talking book machines. That was the beginning of one of the best times of my life.

As time has passed, I have done some different things in the same agency, working with contracts and with the BEP (Business Enterprise Program, the program that assists blind entrepreneurs, setting up their own business of vending and/or snack bars in government buildings).

Not only have I survived, I have thrived, and feel so grateful to have discovered my "dream job" rather late in life. Remember that "tough times don't last, but tough people do."

--Jim Kettler, Contract Monitor

So... have you thought about your preference?

It's been 15 pages since our opening question, so what do you think? Email users, are you okay with having *Bright Future* show up in your inbox four times a year? Or would you rather have a large-print copy delivered to your mailbox?

Perhaps you received this issue in the traditional mail but have a working email address and would prefer electronic delivery. As we mentioned earlier, email is more affordable, faster, and much easier to distribute. You can help us improve efficiency by sharing your email address with us. It will not be used for any other purpose or shared with any other organization, so you don't have to worry about getting more unwanted messages.

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Bright Future is the official publication of the Oklahoma Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped. It was printed by Heritage Solutions in El Reno, OK. It is published four times a year. Kevin Treese is the Library Director and Brian King is the Editor. In providing information to readers of Bright Future, the Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services does not endorse any product or service referred to by this newsletter. This publication is authorized by the Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services in accordance with state and federal regulations, with copies deposited with the Oklahoma Department of Libraries Publications Clearinghouse. Cost of printing and distribution was \$2,528.95 for 2,300 copies. DRS does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age or disability in employment or the provision of services. For additional copies, contact the Oklahoma Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, (405) 521-3514.