Bright Future

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

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

**OLBPH makes history with new NLS book**

The phrase “making history” has a double meaning for a new Oklahoma-produced book in the National Library Service (NLS) for the Blind and Print Disabled’s collection. OLBPH produced the audio version of the historic nonfiction book *The Burning: Massacre, Destruction, and the Tulsa Race Riot of 1921.* In the process, we made history by providing the audio recording of a book NLS intended to produce itself. NLS had identified *The Burning* as a title it wanted to record but discovered that OLBPH already had a high-quality digital recording.

One interesting part of this exchange is that it covers a span of 16 years! The OLBPH recording was produced in 2005 for cassette playback. For more details on the new developments, and the people involved, check out Oklahoma Reads (Page 4) and our Volunteer Spotlight (Page 6).

**Director’s column**

In our last issue we highlighted the security and accessibility improvements to our reception area as people walk in the double doors of the library. This issue I’d like to apprise our supporters of another improvement development where one stage has ended but more incremental stages will ensue.

Since 2009 when the introduction of digital audio book cartridges and players began, the need for shelving has lessened. However, one facet of our library operations, the Accessible Instructional Materials (AIM) Center, will always need shelves for products to dispense to our birth through twelfth-grade students.

While one big section of shelving in the AIM Center has recently received a major upgrade, two other sections amounting to roughly the same building space have been removed. Next to consider is the advent of yet another space-saving technological breakthrough. In the next 1-2 years patron-centric multiple book cartridges will require even less shelving space than a traditional book collection. So, what to do with all this space? Trust me when I say, “eyes have been cast and ideas are being formulated.”

Our building has been home to other facets of Oklahoma Rehabilitation Services (DRS) through the years, and that is about to go on the uptick. Stewardship of property assets demands it. As our Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired (SBVI) Administrator Tracy Brigham announced at the April Commission Meeting, the SBVI programs currently housed at the Shepherd Center in Oklahoma City under lease will move to the agency-owned Travis Leon Harris Building. There’s a very involved build out still to take place, but the wheels are turning to make this a reality.

When I first came to the library in 2010, I was tasked with clearing out the cassette era materials and making way for the digital era materials. Now I’m excited to help usher in this next progressive development. Changes are coming, not just on the library service front where patrons will no longer have to wait for copies of books to be produced, but also for the bigger SBVI and DRS mission.

--Kevin Treese, OLBPH Director

The movable shelves in the AIM Center recently got some internal repairs and exterior updates and are now all working again! *Photo by Brian King*

**Oklahoma Reads**

Showcasing fiction and nonfiction books in our collection that are about Oklahoma, its history and its people.

**DB 102500 – *The Burning: Massacre, Destruction, and the Tulsa Race Riot of 1921* by Tim Madigan**

*The Burning*, originally published in 2001, is one of the most recent additions to NLS’s national collection even though its path to get there started in 2005. That’s when the book was recorded in the OLBPH studio by producer Paul Adams and narrator Linda Brown. Studio Director Jill (Streck) Womastek recently planned to convert the cassette version to a digital talking book. Soon thereafter, the studio staff learned the book was on the national “to do” list.

“NLS collection librarians had selected *The Burning* for production,” Alice O’Reilly, chief of the NLS Collections Division, explains, “and found that Oklahoma had already produced this title locally – and had done an excellent job.”

After completing the quality control checks that are run on all of NLS’s audio books, the important title was added to the NLS catalog as a DB.

O’Reilly added, “The collaboration was positive for all parties and included the added benefit of a bit of Oklahoma ‘flavor’ in the narration of this historically significant audio book that all NLS patrons can now enjoy.”

Dominick Spinelli, head of the NLS Collection Development Section says using OLBPH’s production of the book “reflects the significance of this topic, in both local history and current national focus. The care and attention of the Oklahoma Library staff, along with the authenticity conveyed by an Oklahoma narrator, resulted in an impactful production that we are proud to include in the national collection.”

--Brian King, Editor

In recognition of the 100th year since the Tulsa Race Massacre, here are two other titles about that tragic event to consider:

**DB 90544 – *Riot and Remembrance* by James Hirsch**. The author recounts the events of a race massacre--sometimes known as the Greenwood riot--that took place in Tulsa in 1921. Discusses the events of that night, their lasting impact, and the community's response to the riot, including the destruction of many records pertaining to it.

**\* DBC 12207 – *Tulsa Burning* by Anna Myers**. In 1921, fifteen-year-old Noble Chase hates the sheriff of fictional Wekiwa, Oklahoma, and is more than willing to cross him to help his best friend, a black man, who is injured during a race massacre in nearby Tulsa.

**Volunteer Spotlight**

When Linda Brown and Paul Adams were collaborating on a recording in the OLBPH studio in 2005, they couldn’t have imagined our spotlight would be on them and their work now, 16 years later. Linda was the narrator, and Paul was the producer for a recording of Tim Madigan’s *The Burning: Massacre, Destruction, and the Tulsa Race Riot of 1921* (DB 102500). The book was just added to the NLS national collection. Here are their reactions now in their own words:

“It was an honor really, for me to be a part of this production,” Paul, who was the Studio Director at the time, said. “The book is an important part of history, and working with Linda Brown was the icing on the cake.

“Linda was the perfect person to narrate the book. She put herself in the Greenwood district, in Tulsa, in 1921 and became a part of the story. I don’t know how she did it. I listened to every word as she narrated the book, and again several times during the editing process. During certain passages I literally got goosebumps listening to her because her voice inflections were so on point that it was like watching a movie.”

“It was an emotional roller coaster,” Linda recalls. “Reality became, vividly, what was on each page.

“The book significantly made it a human experience of historical facts. It took me through identifying with a routine day for everyone to a horrific experience for everyone. Innumerable life changes immediately for people, witnessed by the reader on the pages of this book. If you ever wonder how something like this specific massacre could have happened, this book answers that question. That is what I remember. I no longer had questions, I had answers.”

Paul goes on to say he doesn’t remember ever studying about this event in Oklahoma History class. “That bothered me,” he said. “Everyone in America should know about this shameful and totally unnecessary massacre, especially people raised in Oklahoma. At first I thought the title was overly dramatic - but upon reading the text I quickly figured out how accurate it was.”

Paul, who is retired but still records magazine articles for OLBPH voluntarily from his home studio, says a lot of people deserve credit for the accomplishment, including our staff, our committed volunteers, and NLS advisors. “And I can’t forget the support we always received from the administration at our parent agency, The Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services.

“Hopefully other NLS network libraries will be motivated and encouraged by this accomplishment. I’m very proud that Jill and everyone that helps her continue to serve in the best interests of their patrons. As for me, well, I’m just glad I got to help.”

Now, NLS patrons nationwide can be glad they get to hear Paul and Linda’s extraordinary work.

--Brian King, Editor

**Book Corner**

**DB 98762 – *The Cactus League* by Emily Nemens**

Do you have nostalgia for America’s traditional past time? Give this baseball novel a try. Jason Goodyear, a star outfielder, is with his team in the Arizona desert for their annual spring training. Handsome, famous, and talented, Goodyear is nonetheless coming apart at the seams, and everyone around him wants to know his secrets.

**DB 98289 – *Deliverance: Mary Fields, First African American Woman Star Route Mail Carrier in the United States* by Miantae Metcalf McConnell**

Emancipated slave Mary Fields is believed, by USPS historians, to be the first African American female mail carrier. This biography explores her daring life as a Western pioneer in the Montana wilderness after she moved there in 1885. The book recounts her efforts to improve living conditions, her plan to register to vote, and her work as a mail carrier.

**DB 55287 – *The Master Executioner* by Loren Estleman**

This western takes us to Idaho in 1897. Oscar Stone is a professional hangman traveling throughout the West practicing his craft. He prides himself in performing his task efficiently. Then Stone learns a terrible truth from an encounter with his ex-wife.

**DB 85558 – *Black Holes: A Very Short Introduction* by Katherine Blundell**

Black holes are regions of spacetime where gravity is so strong, nothing can escape them, not even light. The author, an astrophysics professor, describes the basics of black holes and scientists' theories and concepts: dark stars, spacetime, wormholes, Hawking's radiation, quasars, the Eddington limit, gravitational lensing, and more.

**DB 95304 – *The Unhoneymooners* by Christina Lauren**

In this romance, Olive Torres is used to being the unlucky twin until her sister’s entire wedding party gets food poisoning. The only two not affected are Olive and the best man, Ethan. Rather than have her sister’s Hawaiian honeymoon go to waste, Olive and Ethan soak up the aloha spirit and pretend to be newlyweds.

**DB 92383 – *Walls: A History of Civilization in Blood and Brick* by David Frye**

Historian David Frye discusses the role of man-made barriers throughout history. Explores the importance of walls in ancient civilizations, a thousand-mile-long wall in Asia, sieges of fortified cities, political conflicts centered upon walls, gated communities, and more.

**DB 86608 – *Born A Crime* by Trevor Noah**

This title is an autobiography of *The Daily Show* host Trevor Noah. It shares his experience as the child of a white father and Black mother in South Africa. Their very union was considered a crime, and when the author was born during apartheid, his biracial status made him an outcast.

--Andrew Shockley, Administrative Librarian

**Hooks, Oars & S’mores coming up June 5th**

The MLV Foundation is pleased to announce the return of its fun-in-the-sun event for V.I.P.s (visually impaired persons). This year’s Hooks, Oars and S’mores will be **Saturday, June 5, from 8 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.** The venue this time will be **Boomer Lake in Stillwater, Pavillion #5.**

MLV has lots of fun planned and would love to have V.I.P.s and their companions come from all over the state to enjoy this event. They will be enjoying a small continental breakfast, then fishing (rods, reels, and bait will be provided), and later, a great fresh fish fry along with campfire s'mores.

As a V.I.P., your registration is free, and you will receive a t-shirt. You are more than welcome to bring one companion at no cost; however, they will not receive a free t-shirt. There will be a $5 charge for each companion more than one. Event t-shirts for companions can be purchased separately prior to the event. If transportation is an issue, they can help with that, too!

To register, or for more information, go to www.hooksoarsandsmores.com.

**The Back 40**

Musings on a beautiful Spring day in 2021. Do you think or have you ever thought “it’s too near the end of the day (week, month, etc.) to start something new”? Having compiled a large collection of birthdays, I’ve noticed that I’ve been thinking “it’s too near the end of life to start something new.”

Now that may sound morbid to some, but it’s honestly been a somewhat subconscious thought making the rounds in my marble-topped dome. And it’s absolutely wrong! There are so many reasons to do just the opposite.

Anna Mary Robertson (Grandma) Moses didn’t start painting until the age of 76. Colonel Harland Sanders did not start developing Kentucky Fried Chicken until he was in his 60s. Laura Ingalls Wilder was 65 years old when she published her first book in the “Little House on the Prairie” series.

I believe that a common thread for each of these “late bloomers,” other than advanced age, is that they ignored the natural tendency to not start something at a late date. Instead, they had something to contribute and followed their hearts. The world has been made a better place for such motivation.

And there is the personal dividend for starting something new; a reason to get up and do something constructive on an ongoing basis. I’m far over the official retirement age but look forward to each day of work because that’s what I enjoy. If that’s not what you enjoy, write a book, volunteer at a food pantry, join a Bible study group, knit a sweater, take up needle point… anything that has a time commitment. It might just lengthen your life! And the world will be made a better place for it.

--Jim Kettler – Contract Monitor & BEP Training Associate

**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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