



Texas Talking Book News

Texas State Library and Archives Commission

FALL 2020

Director's Report

Hello!

We would like to thank all of you for your continued patience as we navigate the changes required to keep everyone safe during the COVID-19 pandemic. You may have noticed that mail services have been significantly impacted over the past months, and patrons may still see delays or disruptions in shipments of reading materials, including large print, braille, and digital audio books and magazines. Currently, mail services are operating at reduced levels and incoming items are being quarantined for 72 hours before being handled for the safety of our staff and patrons. We are working to make service to our patrons as seamless and streamlined as possible. Thank you for your patience as we work through the process.

Just as a reminder, please do not make markings on the library materials or containers or otherwise damage them. Materials that have been marked on or otherwise damaged cannot be sent to other patrons, causing delays in sending books. If it appears that you have misused service by damaging materials, our staff will discuss the issue with you by telephone and send you a warning letter. If you continue to damage materials after a warning, your service will be suspended for six months. It is our pleasure to serve the patrons of the Talking Book Program. If you have need to contact TBP staff, please contact us by phone or email. Please treat our materials, equipment, and staff with care.

Back in March, we took steps to ensure the safety of our staff and you, our patrons. Many of our staff members, especially those in the reader services call center, have been working remotely. We receive 400 to 500 voicemails and email messages every day, so it may take us a few working days to address your message. We will process your request as quickly as possible. We are working diligently to respond to your requests via phone and email in the order in which they are received. Please be aware that when we return your call, the number we are calling from will show as blocked. When leaving a message, please be sure to speak clearly and slowly when leaving your name, number, and address.

Thank you for your continued support. We know what a vital service TBP provides, and we are grateful to be able to serve you.

Please take care and be well.

Sarah Jacobson, Director, Talking Book Program

The Talking Book Program will be closed on the below listed holidays.

Thursday and Friday, November 26-27 ~ Thanksgiving
Thursday and Friday, December 24-25 ~ Winter Holiday
Thursday and Friday, December 31 - January 1 ~ New Year's
Monday, January 18 ~ Martin Luther King Jr. Day

Of course, you can leave a voicemail message or send email on a holiday.

Braille and Audio Reading Download Website Upgraded

This summer the BARD website was upgraded. The upgrade includes the ability to subscribe to a book series or display the interface in Spanish, along with some security updates.

- Patrons can now change the BARD interface to display text in Spanish. In "Account Settings" under "My BARD," choose Spanish from the drop-down menu, then update at the bottom of the page.
- Patrons may now subscribe to a favorite book series. When a book in a series becomes available on BARD, the book will be added automatically to the Wish List. A new tool is also available from the BARD main page to allow you to manage magazine and book series subscriptions more easily.
- Patrons cannot reuse any of your previous eleven passwords nor reset your own password more than once per day.
- BARD will no longer accept special characters in new passwords. New passwords should not include special characters, such as @, !, or &. NOTE: If a current password contains a special character, there is no need to create a new one, unless you find that the special character is preventing you from logging into the BARD app.

For assistance using BARD or making changes to your account, email tbp.bard@tsl.texas.gov.

January 2021 TBP Book Club Title Announced!

Texas Talking Book patrons: please join us on Thursday, January 28 at 7 p.m. (CST) for our book club discussion of **BOOKWOMAN OF TROUBLESOME CREEK** by Kim Michele Richardson (**DB 95243, LB 12752**).

Our book club meetings are hosted via toll-free conference call, so all you need is a telephone to participate. To RSVP call the Talking Book Program at: 1-800-252-9605 (RSVP preferred by January 7, 2021), or email us at: **tbp.ral@tsl.texas.gov**. Please indicate if you would like us to mail you the large print book or digital cartridge or if you prefer to download it from BARD.

NLS Annotation: Kentucky, 1936. Nineteen-year-old Cussy Mary Carter has been working as part of the Pack Horse Library Project, but her father hopes she will marry—despite the family trait of blue skin. In addition to her father's hopes, Cussy must also face the prejudice of the community she serves. Some violence. Commercial audiobook. 2019.

The TBP Poetry Contest Deadline has been extended until Dec. 11!

The annual TBP poetry contest deadline has been extended until December 11. To participate, you must be a current and active TBP patron. Poems will be judged on originality, creativity, and artistic and stylistic quality.

Submit poem to: Talking Book Program
Attn: Public Awareness Coordinator
PO Box 12927
Austin, TX 78711-2927

Or e-mail to: **TBPinfo@tsl.texas.gov**

New deadline is December 11.

Magazines

Please remember to return your magazines. The loan period for large print magazines and single magazine cartridges coming from Austin is 21 days and starts from the time the magazine is mailed to you. Magazine cartridges coming from Missouri and containing only weekly magazines have a loan period of five weeks. Magazine cartridges coming from Missouri and containing monthly magazines have a loan period of nine weeks, starting from the time the cartridge is mailed to you. Braille magazines are yours to keep or recycle. If you do not return a magazine on time, you may not receive the next issue.

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Free Matter for the
Blind or Physically
Handicapped



Disability News

Visual assistants are becoming a popular alternative to expensive scanners and reading machines. Be My Eyes (free) and Aira (free for short calls) are available on both iOS and Android platforms, and use sighted guides that work through a smartphone's camera to assist people with tasks like reading labels, locating misplaced items, and wayfinding. There are also apps such as the free Seeing AI (iOS) and the KNFB reader (for iOS, Android, and Microsoft devices, \$99.99) that can read documents and perform functions that a scanner would.

Aira: <https://aira.io/>, 1-800-835-1934

Be My Eyes: www.bemyeyes.com

KNFB Reader: www.nfb.org/programs-services/knfb-reader, 410-659-9314, choose option 7

Seeing AI: www.microsoft.com/en-us/ai/seeing-ai

Comments or complaints regarding programs and services of the Texas State Library and Archives Commission may be made to:
Director and Librarian, P.O. Box 12927, Austin, TX 78711-2927

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Get to Know the TBP Staff

We are continuing in our series highlighting the TBP staff who work hard every day to provide you services through the program. In this newsletter meet Sylvia, Bibliographic Control and Interlibrary Loan Librarian, and Sarah J., Service Clerk at the TBP circulation facility on Shoal Creek.

Name: Sylvia

Title: Bibliographic Control and ILL Librarian

How long have you been with TBP/TSLAC? 12 years

What do you do? Copy cataloging, Interlibrary Loan functions, and other library technical services work with TBP collection.

What is an average day like in your position? A lot of attention to detail, making sure the collection's records in WebReads are correct, and that patrons have access to the materials they request.

Favorite book? MEANS OF ASCENT by Robert Caro (**DB 30837**).

Favorite author? Robert Caro.

What is the last book that you read? BIG WONDERFUL THING by Stephen Harrigan.

If you could choose a superpower, what would it be? To be invisible.

What are your hobbies? Reading and gardening.

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Name: Sarah J.

Title: Service Clerk

How long have you been with TBP/TSLAC? Since March 2006 (I evacuated New Orleans for Hurricane Katrina, leaving my job at the Freeman School of Business Library)

What do you do? Select, send, and unpack and re-shelf braille books and other tasks, as needed.

What is an average day like in your position? I arrive, get address cards for braille, select and pack braille books for mailing. I also scan barcodes, compress digital books, sort digital books and assist with the mail.

Favorite book? DARK LORD of Derkholm (**DB 48321**)

Favorite author? Diana Wynne Jones

What is the last book that you read? THE GIRL WHO FELL BENEATH FAIRYLAND AND LED THE REVELS THERE by Catherynne M. Valente

If you could choose a superpower, what would it be? Healing.

What are your hobbies? Biking around Austin, art, and cooking.

Texas Talking Book Program Produced Books Now Available

Check out some of the books that the TBP Volunteer Recording Studio produced this past year.

RENEGADE TRAIL by Matthew S. Hart (DBC 17942)

Many a time Cody has eaten the alkali dust of West Texas while riding on the trail of a hardcase killer...but never in pursuit of a sworn comrade. Barry Whittingham used to be a Ranger. Now he's a lawless gun. Cody must step in to prevent a wide-open bloodbath and a war on the open range. Western stories. Strong language.

CAN YOU GET THERE FROM HERE?: STORIES by Donley, Watt (DBC 18059)

This collection of short stories explores the emotional and psychological cost of the economic bust of the 1980s on the lives of ordinary Texans. These men and women whose lives have been disrupted and dislocated by hard times transcend their East Texas geography and evoke the common elements of humanity under duress. Adult. Strong language.

EASY GARDENING FOR TEXAS by Joseph Gebran Masabni (DBC 17955)

When is "full sun" not full sun? When you're trying to grow vegetables in Texas. Because a full day of sun here will stress all but the toughest plants. Gardening in the Lone Star State has unique challenges, but that doesn't mean you can't grow vegetables here. You'll learn what varieties to plant for the best harvest, which insects are your foes and which are your friends, what vegetables you can grow in Texas winters, how to keep weeds to a minimum with least effort, and what the symptoms of common diseases look like and what to do about them. Gardening.

MY REMEMBERS: A BLACK SHARECROPPER'S RECOLLECTIONS OF THE DEPRESSION by Eddie Stimpson (DBC 18079)

An account of the author's life growing up on a dirt farm in Texas during the Great Depression, providing details of the ordinary life of rural African-American families during one of the most difficult periods in the country's history.

MURDER BY THE SLICE: A FRESH-BAKED MYSTERY by L. J. Washburn (DBC 18068)

Shannon Dunston, despotic president of the Oliver Loving Elementary's Parent-Teacher Organization, is found stabbed in the chest in a school hallway. Distraught, Phyllis learns that she may have used the knife that killed Shannon. Now she must clear her name and find Shannon's killer. Mystery and Detective Stories. Adult. Some strong language and violence.