



Texas Talking Book News

Texas State Library and Archives Commission

SPRING 2020

Director's Report

The Talking Book program is continuing to operate on a very limited basis. We are now able to ship a limited number of books and machines. However, patrons will likely experience greater than normal wait times for materials. Our call center operations are being handled remotely, and we cannot take phone calls directly. To reach us through the call center, please call and leave a detailed message with your request. We will return calls only if needed. Email remains the quickest way to reach us; we are now processing and responding to email messages within one to two working days after we receive them.

Here are some helpful email addresses:

For general TBP inquiries, to add books to your request list, or for Disability Information and Referral, email **tbp.services@tsl.texas.gov**.

For BARD inquiries or to sign up for a BARD account please email **tbp.bard@tsl.texas.gov**.

For assistance from our Readers' Advisory librarians in selecting books please email **tbp.ral@tsl.texas.gov**.

TBP's priority is the safety of our patrons and staff. We quarantine all books and machines we receive for at least 72 hours before starting to prepare them to be mailed out again. Currently, staff are wearing gloves when handling materials. All machines are cleaned before they are mailed, and we strive to make sure our cartridges and cases are clean. Once items leave our possession, however, we are no longer able to control how they are handled. Please use your own discretion and follow recommended CDC guidelines for handling packages.

We urge you to register for the Braille and Audio Reading Download (BARD) service. Through BARD, you can get all the books you want without receiving physical items in the mail and listen to them on your DTBM or other approved device. BARD has been improved in the last few years, and is easier to use than ever—especially BARD Mobile, which allows you to listen to books on your smartphone or tablet. Please contact us at **tbp.bard@tsl.texas.gov** if you would like to register.

You can now also find the December 2019 and March 2020 issues of *Texas Monthly* and April 2020 issues of *Texas Monthly* magazine available for download on our website at <https://www.tsl.texas.gov/tbp/txmagazines>.

Finally, we ask for your patience during this time. Most staff are still working remotely and may not have easy access to some of the resources we use on-site. As always, we will do our best to serve you as quickly as we are able. For updates, check our website at TexasTalkingBooks.org or call the information line at 1-866-388-6397.

We appreciate your understanding. Please take care and be well.

Best wishes,
Sarah Jacobson, Director, Talking Book Program

July 2020 TBP Book Club Title Announced!

Texas Talking Book patrons: please join us on Thursday July 21 at 7 p.m. (CST) for our book club discussion of *Story of Arthur Truluv* by Elizabeth Berg (DB 89990, BR 22155)

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 June 30 or email us at: tbp.ral@tsl.texas.gov. Please indicate if you would like us to mail you the digital cartridge or if you prefer to download it from BARD.

NLS Annotation: Grieving widower Arthur eats lunch in the cemetery every day, to be near his wife's grave. There he meets troubled teenage Maddy, and the pair form a friendship that helps them both out of their isolation. Some strong language and some descriptions of sex. Commercial audiobook. 2017.

Update on the NLS Braille eReader

The National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled (NLS) will start testing and being a pilot program with network libraries in Iowa, Kentucky, Utah, and New Jersey this summer and run for six months. The Talking Book Program will not be participating in the pilot. There are two eReaders with 20 Braille cells, Bluetooth capability and Wi-Fi connectivity. NLS hopes to begin

distributing the eReaders by the end of 2021. We will keep you updated on any future developments.

BARD Accounts

The NLS announced that any BARD patron account that has not be used in 180 days or more will be moved to an inactive/suspended status. When BARD identifies and moves the account to an inactive/suspended status, it will occur automatically. Any BARD account that is made inactive/suspended due to inactivity can be reactivated by contacting us at TBP. For more information or for reactivation call 1-800-252-9605 or email [**tbp.bard@tsl.texas.gov**](mailto:tbp.bard@tsl.texas.gov).

Cassette Book Machines (CBM's) No Longer Available

We have received a few questions regarding cassette book machines, they are no longer available for loan or exchange. Since the switch to the new digital talking book machines, we no longer have any usable cassette machines left and we do not expect to have any of them available for the foreseeable future. For more information about other sources, please contact the Disability and Information Referral Center at 1-800-252-9605.

Helpful contact information for the Talking Book Program:

- To order books or report a problem with your machine: 1-800-252-9605
- To request an application or ask about enrollment: 1-800-252-9605
- To access the toll-free information line: 1-866-388-6397
- To contact the Disability Information and Referral Center:
1-800-252-9605
- To contact the Public Awareness Office: 512-463-5452 or
1-800-252-9605
- To send email to anyone in the Talking Book Program:
[**tbp.services@tsl.texas.gov**](mailto:tbp.services@tsl.texas.gov)
- To ask for assistance using BARD or to make changes to your account:
1-800-252-9605 or [**tbp.bard@tsl.texas.gov**](mailto:tbp.bard@tsl.texas.gov)
- To ask a librarian for reading advice or reference assistance:
1-800-252-9605 or [**tbp.ral@tsl.texas.gov**](mailto:tbp.ral@tsl.texas.gov)
- To access the TBP blog: [**https://www.tsl.texas.gov/texastalkingbooks/**](https://www.tsl.texas.gov/texastalkingbooks/)
- To see the TBP book club schedule:
[**https://www.tsl.texas.gov/tbp/tbpbookclub/index.html**](https://www.tsl.texas.gov/tbp/tbpbookclub/index.html)

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Free Matter for the
Blind or Physically
Handicapped



Disability News

The Disability Information & Referral Center (DIRC) has been compiling resources to help people who are elderly and/or disabled during the COVID-19 pandemic. Fact sheets include resources for people with visual impairments, mental health information, virtual entertainment and educational sites, and telephone resources for people who do not have Internet access. These fact sheets are available at <https://www.tsl.texas.gov/tbp/dirc/covidinfo/html>, or contact the DIRC for more information.

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 starting a new series in our newsletters highlighting the TBP staff who work hard every day to provide you services through the program. In this newsletter we highlight Sarah Jacobson, TBP Director; Laura Jean, Reader Advisory Librarian; and Craig York, Lead Audio Tech.

Name: Sarah Jacobson

Title: Director

How long have you been with TBP/TSLAC? I have been with TSLAC for 11 years; TBP for less than a year. My first several years I worked with the State and Local Records Management Division of TSLAC.

What do you do? Well, as director, my main role is to provide leadership and support for the staff of the Talking Book Program. There is a whole team of dedicated and professional staff working for TBP and I try to make sure they have everything they need to succeed and provide the best services to our patrons.

What is an average day like in your position? My average day consists of various meetings and conversations with staff and other stakeholders. Also, since I am new to TBP, I will spend a lot of time reading information about TBP, analyzing statistics and operations to make sure things are operating smoothly.

Favorite book? Very hard to pick just one! My favorite book is a childhood favorite, *Anne of Green Gables* by L.M. Montgomery (on BARD DB14670 or DB56114).

Favorite author? I have read a lot of Cormac McCarthy; most notable books are *All the Pretty Horses* (DB34043) and *No Country for Old Men* (DB60768). I find the way he writes very unique and intriguing.

What is the last book that you read? My most recent reads that I would recommend are *The Water Dancer* by Ta-Nehisi Coates (DB96729) and *Normal People* by Sally Rooney (DB94878).

If you could choose a superpower, what would it be? Teleportation so that I can avoid traffic whenever possible.

What are your hobbies? Bowling league and book club.

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Name: Laura Jean

Title: Reader's Advisory Librarian

How long have you been with TBP/TSLAC? 5.5 years.

What do you do? I answer reference questions, I help walk people through using BARD and troubleshooting BARD problems, and offer reading advice, but only when asked.

What is an average day like in your position? Multi-tasking. When I am not answering transferred reference, magazine, and BARD calls, I answer email reference requests and BARD technical queries, and process BARD applications. Sometimes I create blog posts or create bibliographies or create questions for a book club, if I am moderating. We are always staying busy.

Favorite book? *Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood (BR 11911, DB 24695, LB 12641) and *Doomsday Book* by Connie Willis (DB 36888, BR 21178).

Favorite author? Elmer Kelton.

What is the last book that you read? *Shootist* by Glendon Swarthout (DB 55309, LB 05175).

If you could choose a superpower, what would it be? To go without sleep so I could read books all night long and still be fresh for work in the morning.

What are your hobbies? I like to read, and I make candles in my spare time.

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Name: Craig

Title: Lead Audio Tech

How long have you been with TBP/TSLAC? Since October 2001.

What do you do? Assisting in the assignment and digitizing of our old reel masters for current TBP patrons. I narrate, work with volunteer narrators, and conduct the occasional orientation.

What is an average day like in your position? Take the lines above, clip them into individual phrases, jumble them in a hat, and repeat.

Favorite book? *Requiem for a Ruler of Worlds* by Brian Daley.

Favorite author? Tough call. Probably Lois McMaster Bujold, followed by Ian Hogg (military historian).

What is the last book that you read? *House of Leaves* by Mark Danielewski.

If you could choose a superpower, what would it be? Regeneration. I really hate going to the dentist.

What are your hobbies? Model building and dabbling in poetry.