

Texas Talking Book News

Texas State Library and Archives Commission
SUMMER 2020

Director's Report

Hello, I hope this newsletter finds you all doing well. I wanted to give you a quick update on what is happening at TBP. Our top priority is the safety of our patrons and staff. The TBP circulation facility continues to follow COVID protocols to ensure safe handling of books and machines. Please use your own discretion and follow recommended CDC guidelines for handling packages. If you would like to temporarily stop receiving materials, please let us know.

The TBP Reader Services call center can be reached through voicemail and email. Books, magazines, and machines are being shipped, and new patron applications are being processed. Although we are not taking calls directly, we are able to respond to voicemail messages. To reach us, please call 1-800-252-9605 and leave a detailed message with your request. We will return your call, if needed. Please do not leave multiple messages with the same request.

We urge you to register for BARD, the NLS Braille and Audio Reading Download service. BARD has made great strides and is easier than ever to use. The BARD Mobile app can be used on a smartphone or tablet if you do not have access to a computer. Please contact us at tbp.bard@tsl.texas.gov if you would like to register.

Don't forget that you can now find issues of TEXAS MONTHLY, TEXAS PARKS AND WILDLIFE, and TEXAS HIGHWAYS available for download on our website at www.tsl.texas.gov/tbp/txmagazines.

Please take care and be well.

Sarah Jacobson, Director, Talking Book Program

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Texas Talking Books will be closed for these holidays

Monday, September 7 ~ Labor Day

Wednesday, November 11 ~ Veterans Day

Thursday and Friday, November 26-27 ~ Thanksgiving

Of course, you can leave a voicemail message or send e-mail on a holiday.

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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 we highlight Stormie, Bibliographic Control Technician and Jennifer, Automation and Collections Administrator. You can also check out their book recommendations in this newsletter.

Name: Stormie

Title: Bibliographic Control Technician

How long have you been with TBP/TSLAC? Two years this past June. I started as a service clerk at Circulation and I am now downtown, working in Collections.

What do you do? I have a variety of tasks—many of which are focused on adding and updating digital book and large print book records in the WebReads system. Once a month, I create and post bibliographies for newly added large print books to the public TBP blog and our internal TBP blog—this lets patrons and TBP employees know about our new titles.

Favorite book? My very favorite book is THE LAST UNICORN by Peter S. Beagle, DB 40903. I have loved the movie since I was 5 years old, and when I read the book in high school, I was completely blown away by how beautiful it is.

Favorite author? Peter S. Beagle, for certain. I have read most of his work. Also, Alexandre Dumas, Ursula K. LeGuin, Louise Erdrich, Madeline Miller.

What is the last book that you read? I'm currently reading THE BOOK WOMAN OF TROUBLESOME CREEK by Kim Michele Richardson, **DB 95243**, and it's simultaneously heartbreaking and inspiring—if you know anything about FDR's WPA program and how horseback librarians were braving all sorts of potentially dangerous conditions just so they could deliver books, newspapers, and other reading materials to people during the Great Depression (who otherwise didn't have access to these materials), you have got to read this book.

If you could choose a superpower, what would it be? Cliché, but I wish teleportation were possible.

What are your hobbies? Reading, writing, and playing way too many video games I wish I had more time for my hobbies, but for some reason, I have to spend most of my time outside of work doing homework for my graduate classes.

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Name: Jennifer

Title: Automation and Collections Administrator

How long have you been with TBP/TSLAC? 20 years

What do you do? Some of my tasks include monitoring the ILS, (integrated library system) the computer system we use to keep track of materials and patrons, reporting issues to our database vendor, creating enhancement specifications, performing collection development activities like evaluating the collection and ordering titles for the Braille and large print collections, and ordering titles to record in the studio. I also retrieve statistical information for staff as needed and am responsible for the statistics we report to NLS.

What is an average day like in your position? I perform a lot of different, interesting, engaging, challenging tasks, so I have variety, but also can be interrupted multiple times a day to answer questions or work through system problems.

Favorite book? I cannot select a favorite, but my favorite genre is “microhistories”.

What is the last book that you read? I read a lot of titles simultaneously: GHOST OF A MODEL T: AND OTHER STORIES by Clifford D. Simak; RABID: A CULTURAL HISTORY OF THE WORLD’S MOST DIABOLICAL VIRUS by Bill Wasik, **DB 75472**; HUMAN SWARM: HOW OUR SOCIETIES ARISE, THRIVE, AND FALL by Mark W. Moffett, **DB 94655**; FUTURISTIC VIOLENCE AND FANCY SUITS by David Wong, **DB 83124**; EAGER: THE SURPRISING, SECRET LIFE OF BEAVERS AND WHY THEY MATTER by Ben Goldfarb, **DB 91831**; DEATH AND LIFE OF THE GREAT LAKES by Dan Egan, **DB 87702**.

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TBP Poetry Contest

The fourth annual TBP poetry contest is taking place and will run until October 31, 2020. To participate, you must be a current and active TBP patron. Poems will be judged on originality, creativity, and artistic and style quality. Good luck and happy writing. **Deadline for submissions is October 31, 2020.**

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**](mailto:TBPinfo@tsl.texas.gov)

PLEASE NOTE: By submitting your poem in the TBP Poetry contest, you are giving consent and permission to the Talking Book Program, its employees, successors, licenses, agents and assigns the right to use, for any purpose whatsoever, including publications, advertisements and governmental purposes,

in all kinds of media and without compensation as part of the Talking Book Program Poetry Contest. These rights are not exclusive.

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Collection's Staff Book Picks

The collection development team put together their top book recommendations.

Stormie's Picks:

BOOK WOMAN OF TROUBLESOME CREEK by Kim Michele Richardson **DB 95243**

Kentucky, 1936. Nineteen-year-old Cussy Mary Carter has been working as part of the Pack Horse Library Project, but her father hopes she'll 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.

Stormie's comments: Richardson explores the history of the packhorse librarians in rural Appalachia through Cussy's life experiences, while also engaging in the discourse surrounding people marked as "Others" in society—and the lengths that someone might go to so that they'll be perceived as "normal." *Book Woman of Troublesome Creek* is a heartfelt tale that truly immerses the reader in what life in rural Appalachia was like for many who lived there during the 1930s, and how their lives were improved by the Pack Horse Library Project.

JADE CITY by Fonda Lee **DB 89582**

Green Bone warriors like the Kaul family have used jade to enhance their magical abilities for centuries. Now a new drug emerges that allows anyone to wield the stone's power, and the tension between the Kauls and their rivals in the Ayt family erupts in violence. Some strong language, violence. Commercial audiobook. 2017.

Stormie's comments: *Jade City* blends political intrigue and high fantasy elements together for a truly exciting read. The action scenes will keep you engaged, as will the multi-dimensional characters, complex family dynamics, and tension between the feuding clans of Kekon—a land that is inspired in part by Hong Kong cinema and gangster/mob movies. This is the first book in Fonda Lee's Green Bone Saga trilogy, and it does not disappoint. Highly recommended for fantasy and action fans who are interested in reading an urban fantasy story that is not set within the oft-used "medieval Europe" universe.

FIFTH SEASON by N.K. Jemisin **DB 82240**

Essun is a woman living in a world ruled by the violent tectonic activity it experiences. She comes home to find her husband has killed her son and kidnapped

her daughter, all for the secret ability Essun and her children have to control the Earth. Strong language, some violence and some explicit descriptions of sex. 2015.

Stormie's comments: Fifth Season is situated nicely within the genres of fantasy and science fiction, borrowing from both to create a world that is unique, with creative worldbuilding and a cast of interesting characters—each with their own methods for surviving life on the Stillness, an alternate Earth-like planet that frequently has cataclysmic earthquakes (which can only be controlled by Orogenes, people with an innate connection to the earth). The story shifts between the point of view of three characters whose connections to one another are carefully revealed to the reader the further they progress in the book. Jemisin explores what it means to be more than just another “cog in the machine,” and the Fifth Season is an intriguing introduction to her Broken Earth trilogy.

Jennifer's picks:

EAGER: THE SURPRISING, SECRET LIFE OF BEAVERS AND WHY THEY MATTER by Ben Goldfarb **DB 91831**

Environmental journalist examines the role of the beaver in ecology and conservation efforts. Topics include their construction abilities, what happens when they are removed from an environment, hunting traditions, personalities involved in beaver conservation, ways beavers can rehabilitate ecological systems when reintroduced, and more. 2018.

Jennifer's comments: A highly fascinating and readable account of how this industrious, humble rodent can have a profound impact on the environment in surprisingly meaningful ways. Beavers are a keystone species that greatly impact other wildlife that can have a positive impact on the environment. Reading this book will make you a “beaver believer”!

DEATH AND LIFE OF THE GREAT LAKES by Dan Egan **DB 87702**

Wisconsin journalist examines the ecological impact of dense human habitation on the Great Lakes, which contain twenty percent of the Earth's fresh water. Discusses industrial practices, invasive species, connections between the lakes and the ocean, and more. Presents policy recommendations to improve the health of the lakes. Commercial audiobook. 2017.

Jennifer's comments: This seems like it might be a boring read but was very well written and kept me engaged throughout the narrative. The nation's Great Lakes hold 20% of the world's fresh water. This account discusses how they have been mistreated in the past, the ways in which they are under threat, the risks that they face, and how they might be restored and preserved.

NEW JIM CROW: MASS INCARCERATION IN THE AGE OF COLORBLINDNESS by Michelle Alexander **DB 74560**

Civil-rights attorney reviews America's racial history and argues that widespread incarceration of African Americans has replaced legal segregation as a means of social control. Suggests the war on drugs creates a pretense for mass arrests and leads to permanent second-class citizenship for former inmates. Foreword by Cornel West. 2010.

Jennifer's comments: An important, meticulous, eye-opening account of racial injustice in the United States and how current policing standards and mass incarceration of the black community has continued our racial caste system.

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End of Texas Talking Book News

Summer 2020

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Contact TBP by telephone: 1-800-252-9605 or send E-mail to:

tbp.services@tsl.texas.gov

Also, visit our new blog at www.tsl.texas.gov/texastalkingbooks/ for up-to-date information.

Copies of this publication are available in alternative format upon request.

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

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