

STAYING CONNECTED

WINTER 2023-2024
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Take a look!

THE OREGON TALKING BOOK AND BRAILLE LIBRARY COMPLETES ANOTHER GREAT YEAR – A MESSAGE FROM PROGRAM MANAGER, ELKE BRUTON

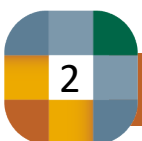
Happy New Year to you! What an incredible year we've had here at the Oregon Talking Book and Braille Library. 2023 was full of big changes, transitions, and transformations. Over the course of a year of limited staff, our small team pushed forward with determination and care. The following notes are just a few shining examples of how our staff performed wonders throughout the year.

Mailyn J. excelled at circulating books to all our patrons, getting new and refurbished machines out to everyone, and delivering outstanding fund development services. Our two incredible Readers Advisors, Andrea C. and Jennifer G., worked tirelessly to set up new patron accounts, fulfill book requests, update profiles, and organized another set of incredible summer and winter reading campaigns.

Our biggest transformation of the year was our voyage to becoming fully staffed. When our former administrative specialist received a promotion to Volunteer Coordinator within the State Library's Operations Division (thank you for your many years of dedicated work, Joel H.), we dug within our agency and unearthed a hidden talent within the Library Support Division. Max R. eagerly took on the administrative role, bringing with him a background in audio production to expand our recording studio operation from two volunteers to five, developing a training program for new narration volunteers, and upgrading the studio recording environment.

Our staff's metamorphic year continued when Crystal G. started a new journey with our colleagues in the Government Services Division (thank you for everything Crystal!). We were soon able to create a new Registration Support Specialist role and appoint Lisa J. to the position to process new applications and welcome new users to the library. When our former Student Worker, Jasmine C. graduated from Western Oregon University (thank you Jasmine!), we recruited Sarah O. to continue making day-to-day connections with our patrons, ensuring strength of service in all that we do.

Perhaps our biggest windfall was the addition of a full-time Public Services Librarian position to our team. We are thrilled to welcome aboard Jen R. to our team, who comes to us with significant experience in the library community spanning the West Coast from Seattle, Washington to San Mateo, California. We're so happy she decided to find out what it's like here in Oregon! Jen's experience encompasses a wide breadth of library work, including positions in Virtual Instruction and Teen Services, Children's Services, Digital Initiatives, Technical Services, Access and Acquisitions, and Senior Librarian. Jen will be working hard on community outreach, patron services, collection development, cataloging new materials, and coordinating the Center for the Book.





From left to right, Mailyn J., Lisa J., Jen R., Elke B., Helix (the office dog), Sarah O., Jennifer G., Andrea C., and Max R.

As we turn the corner on 2023, this division is really looking forward to a stunning 2024. Please stay tuned for more outreach visits, new Oregon audio books, an expanded collection, broader Readers Advisory Services, more creative content, and who knows what else! Anything is possible, and we are so excited to see all that we can do together in this new year. My gratitude goes out to you for your patience and kindness with our team this past year, and always, for your patronage to the greatest little library in the world, Oregon Talking Books!

Yours sincerely,

Elke Bruton

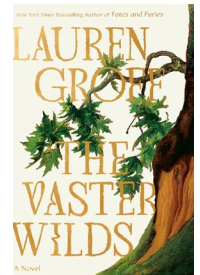
Program Manager, Talking Books

READER'S ADVISORY (RA) CORNER – WINTER 2023-24

Hello, Readers! Our hard-working staff do a lot of work behind the scenes to get materials to your door, but the people you're probably most familiar with are our Readers' Advisors (RAs) who help make sure you *like* what you are getting! The RA Corner is where we share books that we think you'll enjoy, trends in what patrons are reading, and general gushing about books and authors we love.

STAFF FAVORITES

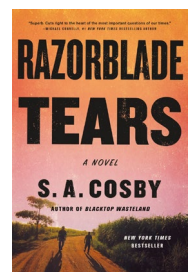
For this first installment, I asked staff "What are some great books you read in 2023?" Here you'll find answers from individual staff followed by a handy list of all our favorites broken down by genre.



Jen, Librarian: "The book I could not stop thinking about this year was *The Vaster Wilds* by Lauren Groff ([DB116370](#)). It's the story of a girl who's escaped the harrowing, plague-ridden Jamestown settlement in the winter of 1609. In the beginning, it's all about the girl's minute-to-minute survival, but it turns into so much more! It was gripping, deeply philosophical, tender, and ponderous."

Andrea & Jennifer, Readers Advisors: Andrea loved reading the *Timber Creek K-9* series by Margaret Mizushima because they are set in Colorado where she lived for over 9 years, "it's fun to recognize the places mentioned!" Andrea's also been enjoying JD Robb's, *Eve Dallas* series. Jennifer really enjoyed *Remarkably Bright Creatures* by Shelby Van Pelt ([DB107924](#) / [BR24204](#)). She especially loved the chapters written from Marcellus' (the octopus) perspective. She's also been getting into the engrossing *Three Pines* series from Louise Penny featuring Chief Inspector Gamache.

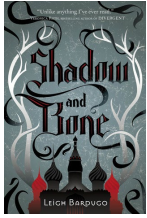
Elke, Program Manager: "*Razorblade Tears* by S.A. Cosby ([DB104101](#) / [BR23915](#)) came at me during a time when I was grieving. It's a story about a father who loses his son and the guilt, turmoil, and regret he feels from that loss. He connects with another father suffering the same loss and the book takes a turn toward righting wrongs. Heartbreaking, rewarding, thrilling, and brutal in its violence; this book was just the balm my heart needed at the time."



Going forward, we will be "tagging" these books, and any others we are enjoying, in our online catalog. You can see all our favorite books by searching for the subject "Staff Picks" in our online catalog or clicking here: [STAFF PICKS](#).

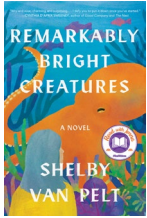
Without further ado, here's the full list of our favorite books we read last year. You can place a hold on a title using our online catalog, find these books on BARD, or give us a call and let us know the titles or authors you'd like added to your next cartridge!

TALKING BOOK STAFF FAVORITES in 2023



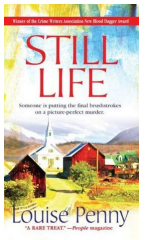
Action, Sci-Fi, & Fantasy

- [DB107945](#) *The Murder of Mr. Wickham (Darcy & Tilney #1)* by Claudia Gray
[DB075094](#) ***Shadow and Bone (Grisha Trilogy #1)*** by Leigh Bardugo
[DB102299](#) *The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes* by Suzanne Collins
[DB116107](#) *Zero Days* by Ruth Ware



Fiction

- [DB104101](#) / [BR23915](#) *Razorblade Tears* by S.A. Cosby
[DB102687](#) *West with Giraffes* by Lynda Rutledge
[DB116370](#) *The Vaster Wilds* by Lauren Groff
[DB107924](#) / [BR24204](#) ***Remarkably Bright Creatures*** by Shelby Van Pelt



Mystery

- [DB114201](#) *The Housemaid (Housemaid #1)* by Freida McFadden
[DB095187](#) *Killing Trail (Timber Creek K-9 #1)* by Margaret Mizushima
[DB059555](#) *Naked in Death (Eve Dallas #1)* by J.D. Robb
[DB066731](#) / [BR20557](#) ***Still Life (Three Pines #1)*** by Louise Penny



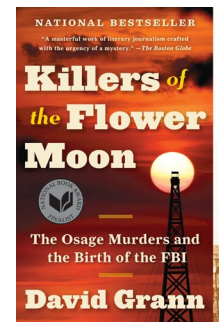
Romance

- [DB113860](#) ***Romantic Comedy*** by Curtis Sittenfeld
[DB114959](#) *Georgie, All Along* by Kate Clayborn

MOST WANTED: DECEMBER 2023

Here's where we highlight what you are reading! This is a sampling of patron favorites from December 2023. You can add any of these to your reading queue using our online catalog or contacting Readers Advisors via email or phone. Enjoy!

- [DB116351](#) ***23 ½ Lies*** by James Patterson
[DB116600](#) ***Holly*** by Stephen King
[DB116853](#) ***Judgment Prey*** by John Sandford
[DB87767](#) / [BRG04247](#) ***Killers of the Flower Moon: The Osage Murders and the Birth of the FBI*** by David Grann
[DB107538](#) ***Lessons in Chemistry*** by Bonnie Garmus
[DB116345](#) ***None of This is True*** by Lisa Jewell
[DB116896](#) ***Obsession*** by Stuart Woods
[DB115529](#) ***On Sight & Insight: A Journey into the World of Blindness*** by John Hull
[DB116127](#) ***Out of Nowhere*** by Sandra Brown
[DB116365](#) ***Payback in Death*** by J.D. Robb
[DB111598](#) ***Secrets of My Heart*** by Tracie Peterson



[DB114114](#) ***Simply Lies*** by David Baldacci

[DB110760](#) ***Spymistress: The True Story of the Greatest Female Secret Agent of World War II*** by William Stevenson

[DB116418](#) ***Sugar and Spite: An Amish Cozy Mystery*** by Samantha Price

[DB115667](#) ***The 4 Habits of Joy-Filled People: 15 Minute Brain Hacks to a More Connected and Satisfying Life*** by Marcus Warner

[DBC19142](#) / [BR21495](#) ***The Boys in the Boat: Nine Americans and Their Epic Quest for Gold at the 1936 Berlin Olympics*** by Daniel Brown

[DB116410](#) ***The Exchange: After the Firm*** by John Grisham

[DB116672](#) / [BR15904](#) ***The Things We Do For Love*** by Kristin Hannah

[DB113965](#) ***The Wager: A Tale of Shipwreck, Mutiny and Murder*** by David Grann

[DB116686](#) ***The Woman in Me*** by Britney Spears

[DB116555](#) ***Tom Lake*** by Ann Patchett

A VISIT FROM OREGON AUTHOR, TINA ONTIVEROS

This past December, Oregon Talking Books welcomed Oregon author, Tina Ontiveros to our library. Regular readers of *Staying Connected* may recall that Tina is the 2021 Pacific Northwest (PNW) Book Award winning author of the book, *rough house: a memoir*, a book that was recently added to the National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled (NLS) catalog.

Recorded and edited here in Oregon in 2023, *rough house* tells the tale of Tina's upbringing in a variety of rural logging communities in the Pacific Northwest in the 1980's. The story begins with a baby Tina coming home to the woods of Headquarters, Idaho; learning to ride a bike in the timber outlets of Packwood and Clallam Bay, Washington; visiting her brother in the harbor of Ketchikan, Alaska; and finally moving south with her family into Oregon's Camas Valley and The Dalles. It is a dark and deeply poetic glimpse into the many pitfalls of economic strife and domestic abuse, but mostly it is a love letter to her dad, Loyd, a loving and lovable, yet sadly troubled man.

We couldn't have done it without our narrator for the book, Jennifer M. Imai, who joined the visit with Tina, bringing together the author and the voice for a special meeting and celebration of the completed work. Tina and Jen's visit included a tour of the library and recording studio, a reception, and a book cover signing. The newly framed cover has been placed in the studio to honor the occasion, starting our decorative book cover wall of fame, highlighting Oregonians narrating books by Oregonians for Oregonians!





During the tour of the studio, we took the opportunity to get Tina into the studio booth and ask her a special question to share with our users:

“What does it mean to you to know that readers with print impairments all across the country are now able to read and enjoy your book?”

Tina had this to share in response:

“The first thing I think of when I hear this question is that I’m just really grateful for the work that you all do. You know, I grew up without access to a lot of things, so creating access and inclusivity is just a really base value for me. Whether you did this with ‘rough house’ or not, I’m just very grateful for the work you’re doing to create access for people.

When I think about it in terms of my own book, I think about every time another person reaches out to me to tell me they’ve read it and what their human emotional reaction was, it feels like a miracle because I think of literature as almost like a physical space that exists outside of physical space and time; a place where people who’ve never met can meet. Until now, there were a lot of people excluded from meeting me in that space, but this creates an avenue or a threshold that more people can cross to meet me in that space, so I think that’s really beautiful and I’m really grateful for it.”

As we wrapped up our time together, we made certain to ask Tina if she had any other books in the works. She shared that she is currently working on a few different projects and would assuredly keep us in the loop so that we could get her next book into production whenever it was available. For now, be sure to check out [rough house \(DBC08804\)](#) with your next round of books, and be on alert for more Oregon authored/Oregon recorded books, coming soon to a player near you!



TALKING BOOK & BRAILLE LIBRARY CLOSURES

The Talking Book & Braille Library will be closed on the following holidays:

- January 15, Martin Luther King's Birthday
- February 19, Presidents' Day
- May 27, Memorial Day
- June 19, Juneteenth
- July 4, Independence Day

Remember that holidays create mail delays for both incoming and outgoing cartridges. Be sure to get in any requests several days ahead of these dates to improve the chance of receiving those books before holidays.

This newsletter is available in large print, audio, Braille, or on our website at TalkingBooks.Oregon.gov. Contact the Talking Book & Braille Library if you would like to change the format you receive.

Any mention of products and services in *Staying Connected* is for information only and does not imply endorsement.

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