

READING MATTERS

Summer
2019



WASHINGTON TALKING BOOK & BRAILLE LIBRARY

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That All May Read

FROM THE DIRECTOR

BY DANIELLE MILLER

Welcome to the summer edition of Reading Matters. Summer is one of my favorite times at the Washington Talking Book & Braille Library, when we celebrate reading, literacy, and lifelong learning with our youth Summer Reading Program. This year's theme, "A Universe of Stories," gives a space focus to our by-mail programming and events at WTBBL, throughout Eastern Washington, and at the University of Washington Planetarium. I have such fond memories of fascinatedly watching the original Carl Sagan Cosmos series with my family that I look forward to engaging with the summer reading activities and participants. Read ahead for more about the program and the great things happening in our Youth Services Department.

Summer is also when we welcome student workers to the library. Students from two programs work at WTBBL over the summer, helping us complete important tasks and projects while gaining valuable work experience and developing skills needed for career or academic readiness. Youth Employment Solutions II, or YES II, is a six-week program for blind and visually-impaired students age 16 through high school graduation, sponsored by the Washington State Department of Services for the Blind and the Washington State School for the Blind, which also includes a residential component building independence and skills in public transportation. The Seattle



Danielle and Cindy

Youth Employment Program (SYEP), provides internships for young people in Seattle ages 16 to 24 who are from low-income households and communities that experience racial, social, and economic disparities. These programs benefit both the students and WTBBL. The students bring great energy and enthusiasm to work with them, and we love having them spend the summer with us.

This summer is also a time that WTBBL staff and volunteers can appreciate some peace in their workspace. Over the winter and spring months, WTBBL underwent several facility maintenance or renovation projects and we stayed open and working through all of it. Some of the updates included replacing the carpet, installing more energy-efficient lighting, and upgrading network cabling. We also rearranged and revitalized our public area, bringing out more braille and digital books and created a sitting area with new furniture, called "the Living Room." I hope you will take the opportunity to come and visit us. Enjoy the rest of your summer and your own universe of stories.

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Washington Talking Book & Braille Library

STATE LIBRARIAN UPDATE

BY CINDY ADEN

Hard to believe it is summertime; the recent Washington Legislative session, which ran from January to May, made the year so far fly by, and the impact of that session is still being absorbed. WTBBL was treated well, as were all divisions within the Secretary of State's Office. WTBBL got permission to increase expenditures in order to complete needed upgrades to its building, in anticipation of a new upstairs tenant.

The big news of the session was the approval of funding for a new State Library-Archives building, to be built in Tumwater, a few miles from the Capitol. The current State Library building is located nearby, and many government offices, like Labor & Industry and Dept. of Corrections, are located in the vicinity, too. Tumwater has become a second campus for Washington government, as space has disappeared on the Olympia campus.

Plans for the new building are being drawn up now. The architecture firm, Miller Hull of Seattle, also designed the Alaska State Library Archives Museum in Juneau. We are confident we have an experienced partner to design a building to include all our divisions, which in addition to the Library and Archives, includes Elections, Corporations & Charities, and Community Programs.

The State Library was awarded a \$1.8M grant from the Legislature for statewide job skills training — particularly

technical skills — as part of the Library's ongoing partnership with the state Workforce Board. The State Library is focused on making libraries a local resource for all job skills training, unemployment support, and career exploration — activities supported by the Workforce Board. WTBBL is the first branch of the State Library to be certified as a Worksource Connection Site, and we are proud to say we started this effort for our blind and low-vision community. We are working with the two job skills learning platforms, LinkedIn Learning and Microsoft Academy, to make sure their products are accessible to the primary community we are serving in Seattle.

Libraries across the state received \$12.8M in support from the Legislature to address capital projects via a new grant program, to be run by the Dept. of Commerce. And finally, the State Library was included in the Governor's rural broadband bill, so libraries will be at the table when outreach to rural communities is discussed.

It was a terrific Legislative session for libraries. We are happy to see so much acknowledgement from lawmakers that libraries are making a difference.

YOUTH SERVICES NEWS

BY ERIN GROTH

The Youth Services Department is “all systems go” with our space-themed Summer Reading Program well under way. It has been a great journey across the Universe of Stories so far, starting with our spectacular Kick-Off Party on June 29, which featured a visit from a NASA Solar System Ambassador; continued weekly by-mail STEAM packets centered on interstellar exploration and inspiration for early learners, children, and teens; and several more special events in the works.

Youth Librarian Erin recently had the opportunity to connect with Cherry Crest Elementary in Bellevue to work on a community service project based around Summer Reading as well. Over 100 second graders participated in a hands-on presentation about braille, tactile illustrations, and the library. They were excited to learn about our patrons, and especially eager to start their service project: creating tactile coloring pages for WTBBL Summer Readers! As pictured on the cover, using puffy paint, the students made aliens, planets, and spaceships fitting this year’s theme to be sent out as part of the weekly activity packets. The day was such a success, Cherry Crest Elementary has asked that WTBBL come back and do something similar next year! Special thanks to the school’s staff, Erin Miller and Elma Nahm, for working with Librarian Erin to set this up.

There’s still a galaxy worth of fun to be had this summer! All are welcome to attend the upcoming events, whether participating in the SRP or not. Join us as we reach new heights of fun at programs in Seattle, Everett, Yakima, and Spokane this summer.

- Friday, July 26, 2:30–4:45 p.m. (4 sessions): Teen/Tween-Accessible Escape Room — Alien Abduction! — at the Shadle Branch of the Spokane Public Library. **Registration is required at the Spokane Public library website.
- Friday, August 2: Multisensory Nature Walk at the Yakima Arboretum, in conjunction with the Yakima Public Library.
- Saturday, August 10: WTBBL Field Trip to the UW Planetarium for a hands-on astronomy lesson.
- Saturday, August 17, 11 a.m. – 5 p.m.: WTBBL’s Accessible Gaming Lab at the Pacific Science Center’s Curiosity Expo.
- Saturday, August 24: Challenge Air Fly Day at Paine Field in Everett. **Registration is required at the Challenge Air website.

Young readers get ready to blast off for summer



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Washington Talking Book & Braille Library

NEW BRAILLE SCANNER AT WTBBL

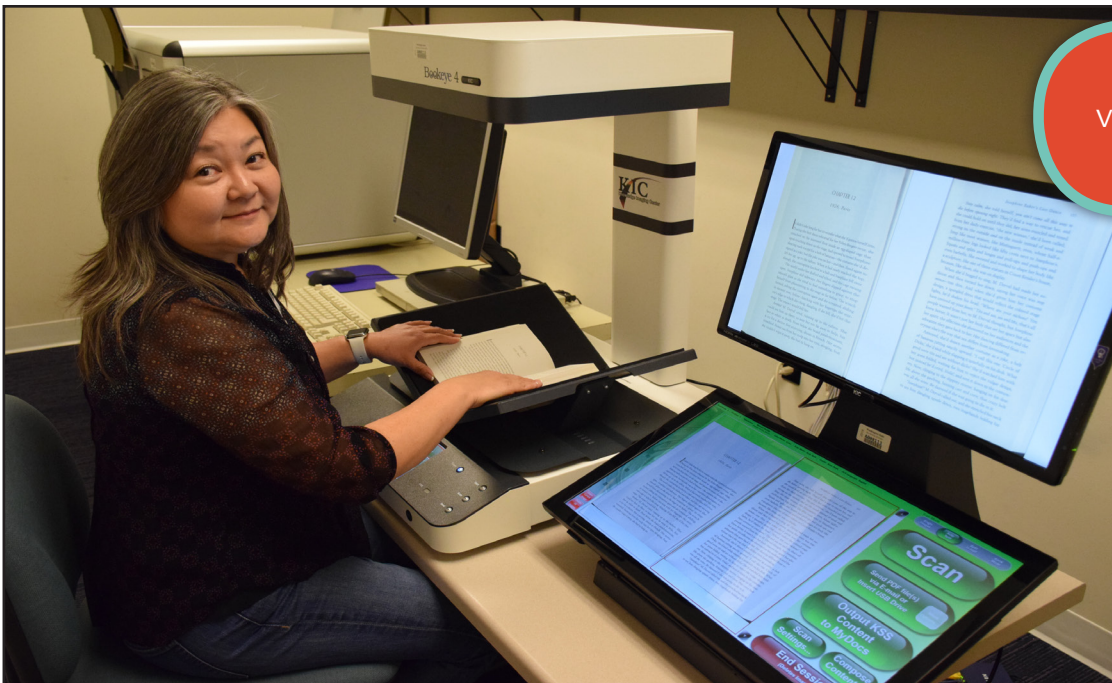
BY ED GODFREY AND ALCIA ENSMINGER

At the Washington Talking Book & Braille Library, the Braille Department focuses on transcribing print books into braille. Braille transcription is a technical and time-consuming process that requires skill and great attention to detail. In order to expedite this process, WTBBL purchased a new scanner with Optical Character Recognition (OCR) software included. The scanning process allows a trained operator to scan an entire 300-page book in less than an hour. The scanned file (a Word document) is then translated by braille software to braille text in less than a minute. This greatly reduces the time required for manual transcription of a similar amount of print text into braille.

The department's goal is to produce braille books that are equal in content and quality to the print edition. This means a volunteer transcriber will still be required

to check the translated braille file to correct formatting, scanning, and translation errors. Three volunteer braille transcribers are currently testing the new scanner and braille translations — Karen, Randi, and Allyn — all graduates of WTBBL's braille transcription class. Testing has been very successful as a new workflow has been established for scanning and transcribing books. Not all print books are suitable for scanning, particularly those with extensive photographs or graphics. However, the bulk of the Library's braille production is literary material, both fiction and nonfiction.

While it will take some time to fully implement this new technology, the Braille Department staff and volunteers remain optimistic and excited about this new tool!



WTBBL braille volunteer Allyn with the new scanning system

NEW AUDIO BOOKS FROM WTBBL

BY JOHN PAI

Books for a summer's day in Washington.

Summer has arrived here in the Pacific Northwest and as we all look to enjoy some extra time for relaxation we have a variety of recently-completed titles to add some understanding, joy, and reflection with a range of topics.

For the Northwest Historians we have:

DBC 385 *Rogues, Buffoons & Statesmen* by Gordon Newell.

The inside story of Washington's capital city and the hilarious history of 120 years of state politics. Told from a sometimes irreverent but detailed perspective, the book presents a refreshing look at the birth and adolescence of politics in Washington state. 1975. Narrated by Melissa Tyler.

DBC 6975 *Selected Writings of Ella Higginson* edited by Laura Laffrado.

Ella Higginson was the first prominent Pacific Northwest literary author in the late 19th century and early 20th century. Long out of print and unavailable this anthology collects some of her poems, short stories, and excerpts from two of her books. Famous in her own time and all but forgotten today, Higginson deserves the favorable recognition granted by her contemporaries. 2015. Narrated by Debra Godfrey.

For the folks looking for a little mirth we have some classic Patrick McManus and life sharing with Phyllis Diller:

DBC 180 *How I Got This Way* by Patrick F. McManus.

Patrick McManus got that way by landing on his head as a child. This collection of essays deals primarily with growing up in rural Idaho but offers up humorous insight into the rural life of Tenner shoes, car repairs that didn't quite work, and hunters who couldn't keep their stories straight. 1994. Narrated by Michael Memmo.

DBC 6939 *Like a Lampshade in a Whorehouse: My Life in Comedy* by Phyllis Diller with Richard Buskin.

Phyllis Diller was a pioneering female stand-up comic. Her personal life had more than its share of turmoil, but she persevered despite it — and she cracked jokes the whole time. 2005. Narrated by Courtney Maheras.

For the introspective and stories that reflect the diversity of our worlds we have:

DBC 6745 *Bright Moments: The Life and Legacy of Rahsaan Roland Kirk* by John Kruth.

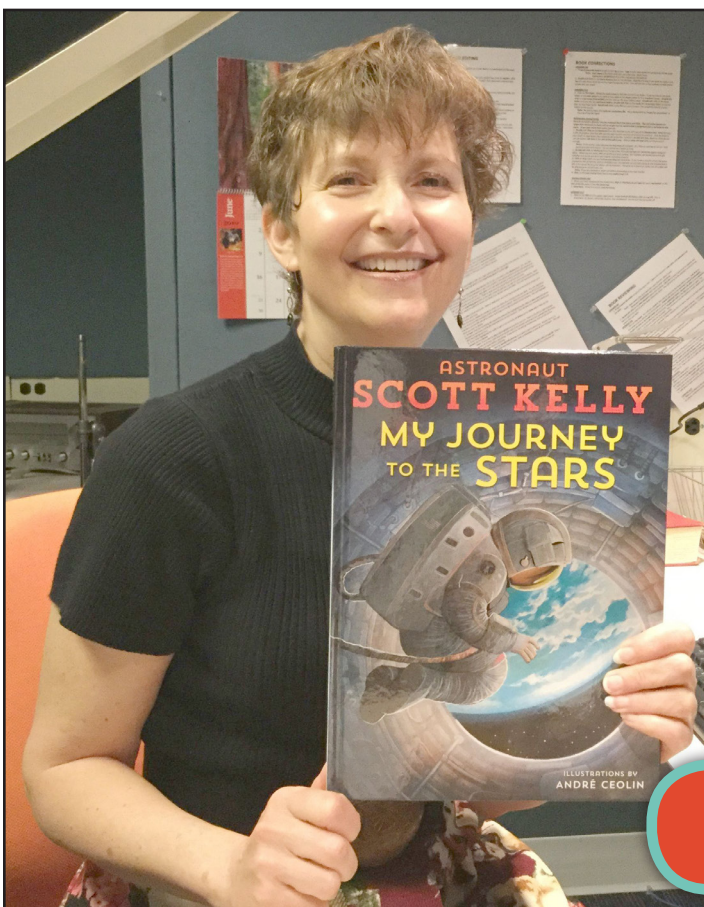
Rahsaan Roland Kirk (1936-1977) lost his vision at age two and then went on to become one of the most innovative jazz musicians of his time. His mastery of breathing allowed him to play two or three saxophones at once; other

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musicians made their careers based on his techniques. Compiled from in-depth interviews, historical documentation, and articles. 2000. Narrated by Michael Memmo.

DBC 15856 *The Best We Could Do* by Thi Bui.

Thi Bui was just 3 months old when her family fled Vietnam. *The Best We Could Do* tells the story of her family's history in Vietnam and the painful adjustments of being refugees adjusting to life in the United States. 2017. Narrated by Angela Nguyen.



DBC 6763 *The Doctor with an Eye for Eyes: The Story of Dr. Patricia Bath* by Julia Finley Mosca and Daniel Rieley.

As a girl coming of age during the Civil Rights Movement, Patricia Bath made it her mission to become a doctor. When obstacles like racism, poverty, and sexism threatened this goal, she persevered — brightening the world with a game-changing treatment for blindness! 2017. Narrated by Joanna Whitney.

DBC 15727 *My Journey to the Stars* by Scott Kelly with Emily Easton.

NASA astronaut Scott Kelly was the first to spend an entire year in space! Discover his awe-inspiring journey in this fascinating picture book memoir (the perfect companion to his adult book *Endurance*) that takes readers from Scott's childhood as an average student to his record-breaking year among the stars. 2019. Narrated by Rachel Glass. Also available in braille as BRW 8684 or BRJ 1519 (print/braille).

And this is just the tip of the iceberg for the titles we have available. Please check out the most recent update to the catalogue and happy reading!

My Journey to the Stars
narrator Rachel Glass

NEW BRAILLE BOOKS FROM WTBBL

BY ED GODFREY

WTBBL's Braille Production Department and its volunteers have been working hard to make more locally-produced books available to our patrons. Here are some of the latest titles for summer reading:

BRW 8695 *Outside the Lines* by Amy Hatvany.

A gripping novel about a woman who sets out to find the father who left her years ago, and ends up discovering herself. 2012. Transcribed by Gail Viscione.

BRW 1448 *Seattle Justice: The Rise and Fall of the Police Payoff System in Seattle* by Christopher T. Bayley.

By the late 1960s Seattle police were willing to tolerate vice for a price. Christopher Bayley describes how he and a band of clean government crusaders took down corrupt police and the entrenched politicians who supported them. 2015. Transcribed by Joan Moritz.

For young adults:

BRW 1444. *No Excuses: Growing Up Deaf and Achieving My Super Bowl Dreams* by Derrick Coleman, Jr.

The author describes his early life as a deaf person, and describes his rookie year, when the Seattle Seahawks

went to the Super Bowl in 2014. 2015. Transcribed by Karen Hara.

BRW 8672 *Outside In* by Jennifer Bradbury.

After Ram loses his bag of winnings from playing a stick-and-ball game called gilli, he stumbles upon an art garden in the middle of the jungle, created by a mysterious man named Nek. Nek introduces him to stories from the Ramayana, which enthrall, educate, and inspire the young homeless boy. Based on a true story. For grades 4-7. WA State Book Award nominee. 2017. Transcribed by Karen Hara.

And finally, for very young readers:

BRW 8684 *My Journey to the Stars* by Scott Kelly with Emily Easton.

NASA astronaut Scott Kelly was the first to spend an entire year in space! Discover his awe-inspiring journey in this fascinating picture book memoir (the perfect companion to his adult book *Endurance*) that takes readers from Scott's childhood as an average student to his record-breaking year among the stars. For grades K-3. 2019. Also BRJ 1519 (print/braille) or DBC 15727 (audio). Transcribed by Ed Godfrey.

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VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT: JESSIE GRAY

Hi! My name is Jessie, and I use they/ them pronouns. I started volunteering with WTBBL in February of this year, and I absolutely love it. Everyone at WTBBL has been kind and welcoming from the first second I walked in. I especially love the camaraderie I have now with Amy Ann and Sally Jo in the Shipping Department; they always make me feel like part of the team. Helping in shipping is an excellent fit for me because I enjoy organizing and straightening shelves; I also experience great satisfaction seeing the post office bins fill with hundreds upon hundreds of books ready to be sent to our patrons. Another of my favorite tasks is helping Shannon by reading patron notes and requests. Shannon is so much fun to work with, and I enjoy seeing the variety of books and topics requested by our patrons.

Before I started volunteering with WTBBL, I was a nurse for nine years, working mostly with children and teens. I have loved reading for as long as I can remember, so when it came time for a change in lifestyle for me, becoming a librarian was a natural choice. I am most passionate about public libraries, and want to research how libraries impact community health. I don't know exactly what it will look like yet, but I hope to merge my careers in nursing and librarianship to improve the lives of children and families. I am beyond excited to start my Masters in Library Science degree from the University of



Washington this fall and move further towards this goal. I will always have a soft spot in my heart for WTBBL for giving me my first library position and therefore a big first step in my journey. I love being a part of this amazing place, and I plan to continue volunteering here once a week when I start classes. See you around!

Interested in volunteering at WTBBL?
We have opportunities in
talking book production,
braille services, shipping,
library services, and much more!

Please visit wtbbl.org
for more information!

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