



# Texas Talking Book News

Texas State Library and Archives Commission Fall 2011

## Director's Report

Greetings! Here is the latest news:

**Many thanks for your support and donations:** Many of you have responded to the bad budget news discussed in the last newsletter with very heart-warming letters of support which I have shared with National Library Service (NLS) staff, our State Librarian, and the State Library's commissioners. After the very tough spring and summer the agency has just gone through, your support means so much to all of us. We also have received a number of donations toward purchasing digital cartridges, and we will be using those funds throughout this new fiscal year to purchase those cartridges. We can't thank you enough for these donations as they will help us keep the books coming.

We also heard from many of you that you were not aware that you could make monetary donations to the Talking Book Program (TBP). We do take donations all year long. To send a donation, make your check out to the Texas State Library; either on the memo line of the check or in an accompanying note, indicate that the donation is for TBP. Checks should be mailed to P.O. Box 12516, Austin, TX 78711-2516. You may make a donation for a number of reasons, such as a memorial for someone who has passed away, in honor of someone's birthday, or just because you want to support the Talking Book Program. You may designate your donation be used for a specific purpose--such as digital cartridges--or you may make an unrestricted donation which allows us to use the funds where needed. We use donations to purchase supplies and equipment, for operational services (such as printing this newsletter), and to purchase Braille and large print books. We cannot use donations for staff, such as paying salaries or buying food, but we do appreciate all the offers of pizza.

**Federal budget update:** Many of you contact your state legislators and let them know how important TBP is to you. These contacts are very informative for the legislators, who want to know that state government programs are working and that state revenue assigned to programs is being well spent. Now is the time to contact your congressional representatives and speak up for the budget of the National Library Service (NLS), which is part of the larger Library of Congress' budget. Early indications are that NLS may lose approximately 10% of both its budget and its staffing, which would have a major ripple effect on TBP. Such losses of funding and staffing could severely reduce the number of digital machines and cartridge books that NLS makes available to regional libraries such as TBP. Please call 1-800-252-9605 and ask a reader consultant if you need assistance in finding your senators' and representatives' contact information.

**Disaster update:** If you are living in an area affected by a disaster—such as the recent wildfires—and as a result have lost your digital talking book machine (DTBM) or any of your books, please call 1-800-252-9605 and report your losses to a reader consultant. We have plenty of DTBMs in stock and can loan you another one right away.

**Save the date:** TBP has a number of volunteers who work in the Volunteer Recording Studio, recording both books and magazines to supplement the materials produced by NLS. On February 9, 2012, the Texas State Library and Archives Commission will present a program focusing on the volunteers who work in our recording studio; the program will be held at the Lorenzo de Zavala State Archives and Library Building here in

Austin. The program is still in the planning stages but will feature readings by some of our volunteer narrators, tours of the recording studio, and a reception. Please save the date, and make plans to attend!

The recording studio was founded in 1978, and volunteers have produced approximately 5,000 books and countless magazines. Each recording team consists of a narrator who reads the text, a monitor who runs the recording session and operates the recording equipment, and a reviewer who listens to the recording and makes certain that the text has been read correctly and that the narration sounds acceptable. Four of our narrators will be reading selections from some of the books they have recorded. The narrators who will be doing readings are Ev Lunning, Dianna Dorman, Sue Bilich, and Robert Rodriguez. Between them, they have recorded 100 books and many magazines. If you would like to read some of the books they have recorded, please call a reader consultant at 1-800-252-9605, and add some of their books to your request list.

**Books on BARD but not on cartridge:** Some digital books are “download only,” meaning they are available on the Braille and Audio Reading Download (BARD) site but are not on digital cartridge. If you are interested in one of these books, tell your reader consultant to add it to your request list. If enough patrons request a “download only” book, it will rise to the top of the list of books to be transferred to cartridge. Once on cartridge, you will be able to receive a copy in the mail. If you have not received a requested book after three months, you may ask us to move it to your reserve list; this will speed the process of getting the book transferred to cartridge.

**Announcing a retirement:** Dr. Stephen Biles, TBP’s Public Awareness Coordinator, will be retiring at the end of December 2011. Many of you have met Stephen—who has been our Public Awareness Coordinator since 2005—as he travels all around the state, educating individuals and groups about the services of TBP. Stephen began working for us at the Circulation facility in 2004, and before that, he worked for Texas A&M University and Dell Computers. Stephen often says that the public awareness job is the best he’s ever had because he has been allowed to meet many interesting people and see a large portion of the state of Texas. While we hate to see Stephen retire, we wish him all the best as he goes off to enjoy his books, music, and young grandson.

**A reminder on call center hours:** The call center is open Monday through Friday, except for holidays when the State Library is closed. The hours are 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 (noon) p.m. and 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. While the call center is closed, you may leave voice messages. Staff are assigned to handle voicemail (and emails, too), so someone will contact you as soon as possible.

**Newsletter by email:** Do you want to receive our newsletter by email instead of on paper? If so, please call a reader consultant at 1-800-252-9605 or send an email to [tbp.services@tsl.state.tx.us](mailto:tbp.services@tsl.state.tx.us). Tell us that you want to change your newsletter preference to email, and give us your email address. The newsletter also is available on our web page at [www.texasalkingbooks.org](http://www.texasalkingbooks.org) and on the toll-free information line at 1-866-388-6397.

Until next time,

Ava Smith, Director, Talking Book Program

Call the Disability Information and Referral Center toll-free at 1-800-252-9605 for information about disabilities and health conditions.

## A Sampler of Books by Texas Authors

Texas has a variety of writers of fiction and nonfiction. They write in many genres including drama, satire, history, commentary, short story, and novels of mystery, romance, and westerns. This sampler includes books by people who were born in Texas, lived in Texas, as well as some who say they came to Texas, "as fast I could."

**Collision DB/RC 67269** by Jeff Abbott Military consultant Ben Frostberg's bride is shot dead on their honeymoon. Two years later an assassin is murdered – and Ben's card is found in the victim's pocket. As Ben tries to convince Homeland Security agents he's being framed, a deep-cover government agent violently rescues him. Violence and strong language.

**Holly Blues: A China Bayles Mystery LB 06437** by Susan Wittig Albert China Bayles is fit to spit when her husband's troubled ex-wife, Sally, shows up at her herb shop, claiming to be broke with nowhere else to turn. When she invites Sally to stay, China starts receiving menacing calls from an "ex" of Sally's, who seems to have a connection to the murder of China's parents. Strong language.

**Yokota Officers Club RC 54726** by Sarah Bird Okinawa, 1960s. Hippie Bernadette Root returns to her large, nomadic, Air Force family after a year stateside at college. She wins a dance contest then performs on tour through Japan, looks up her family's former maid, and discovers past secrets. Strong language.

**First American: The Life and Times of Benjamin Franklin RC 50878** by H.W. Brands Biography of one of America's founding fathers, incorporating correspondence and anecdotes of his contemporaries. Franklin was heralded as a leading inventor and scientist, author, and diplomat as well as a bon vivant. In exploring Franklin's conversion from British loyalist to revolutionary, Brands seeks out the genius within the man. Best seller.

**Glass Rainbow: A Dave Robicheaux Novel DB 71706 and LB 06465** by James Lee Burke Louisiana detective Dave Robicheaux worries about his adopted daughter Alafair's involvement with local writer Kermit Abelard, whose protégé is an ex-con memoirist Robert Weingart. Robicheaux's concerns grow when he and PI Cleve Purcel find connections between the Abelard clan and the murders of seven young women. Violence and strong language.

**Woman Hollering Creek and Other Stories RC 33451** by Sandra Cisneros A collection of twenty-two short stories about growing up female in a culture where men are unfaithful and families are held together by the church and a sense of community. The stories reflect the experiences of these women, born south of the border but living in the United States and caught between two cultures, the past, and the present. Some strong language.

**Cow People BR 08805 and CT 04648** by J. Frank Dobie A chronicle of Texas ranchers and their customs. Written in the natural rhythm of Texas language, it is an affectionate and nostalgic remembrance of life lived long ago.



**Lone Star** CT 03669 by T. R. Fehrenbach A history of the Lone Star State, as well as an insider's look at the people, politics, and events that shaped Texas.

**Farewell: A Memoir of a Texas Childhood** CT 06443 and RC 49782 by Horton Foote The prize-winning writer of drama and screenplays reminisces about his family experiences in Wharton, a small Texas town. He describes his parents' circumstances at the time of his birth in 1916 and continues until he leaves home at age seventeen to study and work at the Pasadena Playhouse in California.

**God Bless John Wayne** RC 45711 by Kinky Friedman Kinky Friedman, country singer turned mystery writer, reluctantly agrees to help his buddy Ratso find his birth mother. The simple search becomes a case for the irreverent, wisecracking "Kinkstah" when Ratso's previous PI turns up dead. Strong language and descriptions of sex.

**Old Yeller** BR 07798, BR 11976, RC 47404, and DB 47404 by Freed Gipson 1860s Texas. Fourteen-year-old Travis at first resents the big, yellow stray dog that hangs around his home, but he comes to love and depend on him. With his father away on a cattle drive, Travis is the man of the house and looks to Old Yeller for help and protection. Newberry Award winner.

**Goodbye to a River** CT 02908 by John Graves John Graves leads us through an exciting three-week trip down the Brazos River in this classic narrative. An excellent history of the early inhabitants along the river is well woven into this engrossing book, with memories of events in Texas history that took place along that river.

**Gates of the Alamo** RC 51379 by Stephen Harrigan Saga of the legendary mission in the Mexican territory called Texas in 1835-1836. Features fictional characters of Edmund McGowan, a traveling botanist; widow Mary Mott, a San Antonio innkeeper; and Mott's sixteen-year old son Terrell, as well as historical personalities. Some descriptions of sex and some strong language.

**The Gift of the Magi and Other Stories** BT 03343 by O. Henry Includes the classic "The Gift of the Magi" and other short stories featuring O. Henry's trademark "twist endings."

**Strangers on a Train** CR 01846 by Patricia Highsmith Two men, a tennis star and a psychopath, meet by chance on a train and "swap" murders. Strangers on a Train was the source for Alfred Hitchcock's classic masterpiece. Some violence.

**Klail City** CT 05280 by Rolando Hinojosa Rolando Hinojosa is one of the best known and most prolific Mexican American novelists. Klail City in its Spanish version won Latin America's most prestigious literary award, Casa de las Americas. The pivotal novel in Hinojosa's continuing saga, Klail City deals with power and race relationships in the lower Rio Grande Valley. Strong language.

**Conan the Warrior** RC 22180 Robert Ervin Howard (edited by L. Sprague de Camp) Heroic fantasy features Conan the Cimmerian, a barbarian adventurer of massive strength living in the Hyborian Age. Tiring of uneventful guard duty in a border post, Conan finds his next adventure when he befriends a beautiful woman pirate who is fleeing from the Stygians.



**Fax Me a Bagel: A Ruby the Rabbi's Wife Mystery, No. 1** CT 06420 by Sharon Kahn When a patron drops dead in The Hot Bagel, Ruby's friend the baker faces interrogation and it's up to Ruby to fill the holes in the story. Ruby Rothman loves bagels, as did her late husband, Stu, formerly the rabbi of a thriving congregation in Eternal, Texas, before a hit-and-run driver killed him. Ruby is particularly partial to the bagels her friend Milt sells in his shop, The Hot Bagel. She likes them so much, in fact, she's seriously considering Milt's offer to become a partner in the business. Her plans don't change when Marla Solomon, the sister of a "mover and shaker" in the congregation, drops dead, nearly at Milt's feet, from ingesting a poisoned bagel. Some strong language.

**Buckskin Line** DB 50220 and LB 04794 by Elmer Kelton On the Texas frontier in 1840, Comanche warrior Buffalo Caller claims a red-haired boy during a raid that kills many settlers. The orphan, Rusty Shannon, is eventually rescued, grows up to become a Ranger; and, years later, has another encounter with Buffalo Caller.

**Who Let the Dogs in? Incredible Political Animals I Have Known** RC 59290 by Molly Ivins Texas columnist portrays national figures from the Reagan era through George "Dubya" Bush's first term. Selections, which previously appeared in Ivins's newspaper column or elsewhere, include irreverent commentary on Ross Perot, Dan Quayle, Newt Gingrich, John Ashcroft, Ann Richards, Phil Gramm, and Madonna. Some strong language. Best seller.

**Death of a Healing Woman: A Texana Jones Mystery** RC 47921 by Allana Martin Texana Jones operates a trading post on the Mexico-U.S. border. She is still mourning the death of two friends when she finds the body of a third, healer Rhea Fair. The authorities blame drug couriers. As Texana investigates, an outbreak of rabies spreads through the countryside. Spur Award Winner. Some violence.

**The Road** BR 17072 and RC 63649 by Cormac McCarthy A father and his young son journey south after the destruction of the civilized world. Their survival kit consists of a few blankets, a pistol, a cart of scavenged food, and their love for each other. Their values are tested by encounters with other desperate survivors. Best seller.

**Dead Man's Walk** BR 12567 and LB 04497 by Larry McMurtry This prequel to Lonesome Dove recounts the early days of Gus McCrae and Woodrow Call. Not yet twenty, they join the Texas Rangers under the command of Caleb Cobb. Traveling with the Rangers is Matilda Roberts, a hefty prostitute who occasionally provides comfort to the men as they head for Santa Fe across the *Jornada del Muerto*. Violence, strong language, and some descriptions of sex.

**Texas** BR 06335 and RC 22973 by James A. Michener In this novel, the Texas governor charges a task force with studying the state's history to encourage citizens to appreciate their heritage. The author blends fact and fiction in an expansive panorama that follows the lives and fortunes of several families of varied ethnic backgrounds, from the days of the Conquistadors to the modern lives of contemporary oil barons. Some strong language and some descriptions of sex.

**Pale Horse, Pale Rider** BR 17498, CT 03767, and RC 65339 by Katherine Anne Porter A short story collection. In "Old Mortality" girls Maria and Miranda learn about



the young woman pictured in an old framed photograph at their grandmother's house. "Noon Wine" is about Olaf Helton, who hires on at a Texas dairy farm. The title piece recounts a grown-up Miranda's tragic love affair with a soldier.

**Deerinwater RC 25272** by Jan Reid Jared Ramey, ex high school football star, college dropout, and Marine, returns to his home town of Deerinwater, Texas, to seek his little daughter's love. He also wants to try to reclaim his former wife and win back the respect of his parents. Working as a deputy, Jared is drawn into a fierce feud between his boss, Sheriff Sam Bookout, and District Attorney Jerome Ramey, Jared's father. Violence, strong language, and explicit descriptions of sex.

**Lightning Thief: Percy Jackson and the Olympians RC 63443** by Rick Riordan Upstate New York, 2005. Sixth-grader Percy Jackson is shocked to discover that he is the son of Poseidon and a mortal mother. He attends a summer camp where demigods learn to defend themselves against the predations of monsters from Greek myth. . After Percy angers Zeus, his friends Grover, a satyr, and Annabeth, daughter of Athena, join him in a quest to resolve the problem. For grades 5-8.

**Arms of Nemesis RC 41404** by Steven Saylor The Spartacus Slave Revolt is underway in 72 B.C., and some slaves are suspected of murder. Gordianus the Finder is awakened at night by a visitor who insists he come with him to Baiae on the Bay of Naples. Upon arrival, Gordianus learns the overseer of Marcus Crassus's estate has been murdered, and if the guilty parties can not be found before the funeral games, ninety-nine slaves will die. Some violence.

**The Tourist DB 69186** by Olen Steinhauer After barely surviving a difficult mission, Milo Weaver transfers out of his post as a CIA assassin or "tourist." But when an old friend is suspected of espionage, Milo must leave his family and desk job to revisit his dark past. Some violence and some strong language.

**Lone Texan DB/RC 69944 and LB 06519** by Jodi Thomas Galveston, Texas, 1859. Widow Sage McMurray Lander of Whispering Mountain Ranch returns home after studying medicine back East. Drummond Roak has waited for Sage and begins courting her, but unsavory outlaws and Sage's brother-in-law cause problems that include kidnapping and murder. Explicit descriptions of sex and some violence.

**The Great Plains CT 03807** by Walter Prescott Webb A landmark work in historical interpretation of the West, this book examines the causes and effects of development of the plains. It analyzes the land, climate, barbed wire, dry farming, wells, windmills, and native animal life in a very readable style.

**The Looming Tower: Al-Qaeda and the Road to 9/11 BR 17079, RC 63287, and DB 63287 as a download** by Lawrence Wright Traces Islamic fundamentalism from 1948 to the 2001 attack on America. Highlights Al-Qaeda leaders Osama bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri. Asserts historical lack of concern from intelligence agencies except for FBI agent John O'Neill and Saudi prince Turki al-Faisal. Violence and strong language.



The Talking Book Program will be closed on the following holidays.

Friday, November 11 – Veterans Day

Thursday and Friday, November 24 and 25 – Thanksgiving Day

Monday, December 26 – Day after Christmas

Monday, January 16 – Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

Monday, February 20 – Presidents' Day

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

### **Featured Author: Neil Gaiman (born 1960)**

Neil Richard Gaiman is an English writer of award-winning books, films, stories, comic books, and graphic novels. Gaiman writes for all ages from elementary school students to fantasy fans of all ages. His works feature tales of fantasy, science fiction, and great wonder. The comic book series, The Sandman, is a favorite for many readers. Several of his novels have won awards, including the Hugo, Nebula, Bram Stoker, Newberry, and Carnegie Medal in Literature.

One of Gaiman's books, The Graveyard Book, won both of the prestigious awards for children's literature, the Newberry in 2009 and Carnegie medal in 2010. He is "the first author to win both the Newberry and the Carnegie medals for the same work." ("Neil Gaiman." [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neil\\_Gaiman](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neil_Gaiman). Retrieved on March 16, 2011.)

The Talking Book Program has eleven of his books. To check out this book, please call 1-800-252-9605 and ask for its number.

#### **The Graveyard Book**

**BR 18241, DB/RC 68027, or LB 06191**

by Neil Gaiman      A toddler enters a cemetery pursued by the knife-wielding stranger who just murdered his family. Resident ghosts Mr. And Mrs. Owens protect and adopt the child, naming him Nobody "Bod" Owens. Bod's graveyard upbringing serves him well, but why was his family targeted? For grades 5-8 and older readers.

#### **Warning: Beware of a caller asking you to provide your bank account number.**

The Texas Health and Human Services Commission warns Texans with Medicaid coverage to be aware of a scam where a caller asks them to provide a bank account number and tries to sell them a replacement Medicaid card.

"Please don't give any personal information to these callers," said Texas Medicaid Director Billy Millwee. "There's no charge for a replacement card and we wouldn't ask for anyone's bank account number. Just make a note of the number the call came from and report it to the state immediately" by calling 1-800-436-6184.

(Office of the Governor Rick Perry Committee on People with Disabilities. E-mail message from [txgov@govdelivery.com](mailto:txgov@govdelivery.com). Received on October 13, 2011.)

You may enjoy reading this classic western by calling 1-800-252-9605 and asking for it.

#### **Shane**

**BR 00473, BR 13561, or DB/RC 60163**

by Jack Warner Shaefer

Wyoming Territory, 1889. A mysterious stranger named Shane rides into the Starretts' ranch and learns of the trouble between cattle baron Fletcher and the homesteaders. Shane decides to stay and help the family keep their stake. Some violence. For senior high and older readers.

Texas Talking Book Program  
Texas State Library and Archives Commission  
P.O. Box 12927  
Austin, Texas 78711-2927

Free Matter for the  
Blind or Physically  
Handicapped



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 Telephone: 512-463-5460 Fax: 512-936-0685

These four books have great stories and fascinating characters.  
To order one, please call 1-800-252-9605 and ask for its number.

**Carmelo; or Puro Cuento DB/RC 55405 and available for download**

by Sandra Cisneros Celaya Reyes spins out her story weaving threads about her immediate family's bicultural adaptation in Chicago, journeys to her grandparents' home in Mexico City, and melodramatic strands from past and present. The tale sustains her, like her ancient inherited caramel-colored shawl. Some strong language.

**Dark Voyage DB/RC 59801** by Alan Furst 1941. Captain DeHaan and the crew of the Dutch merchant freighter Noordendam join the war effort on behalf of the British navy. With the Noordendam disguised as a neutral Spanish ship, they prowl European waters on dangerous clandestine missions. Some descriptions of sex, some violence, and some strong language.

**Their Eyes Were Watching God BR 16074 or RC 35745** by Zora Neale Hurston This classic novel tells the story of Janie, a handsome black woman, and her three marriages: to middle-aged Logan Killicks, a prosperous farmer; to Joe Starks, a go-getter who makes Janie Mrs. Mayor Starks of Eatonville, Florida; and to Tea Cake Woods, who teaches Janie, at forty, the reality of love and happiness.

**A Tree Grows in Brooklyn BR 01620, RC 44769 or LB 03212** by Betty Smith Francie Nolan is an Irish-American who struggles with poverty and works to get an education. The setting is Brooklyn's tenement life of the early 1900s.