

First Quarter | 2025

Quarterly Volunteer Newsletter



That All May Read

FROM THE DIRECTOR



The end of 2024 and the beginning of 2025 brought a lot of changes to the Washington Talking Book & Braille Library. The retirement of several long-time staff members and the relocation of the ALL Foundation to WTBBL has resulted in many new faces at the library.

As we move into the new year, WTBBL is fully staffed with a great team, ready to provide patrons and community members with the best service possible. There is renewed energy in the building, and we are excited for things to come.

Our Braille and Audio Departments are growing and have brought on additional volunteers to help in the increased production of books in braille and audio. Within the Audio Department, we are thrilled to have finally launched our first series in our Podcast Program. The show is Literary Notes and features new and archived interviews with authors. Episodes are available anywhere you get your podcasts and are released every other Thursday.

We had a great turnout for our Living with Vision Loss Workshop, which we are now offering quarterly as a hybrid workshop. Our Training & Assistive Technology Librarian, Jordyn, also held our first Introduction to VoiceOver workshop in-person and via Zoom to a wonderful group of attendees and had support from fantastic volunteers assisting the participants. We hope to continue to offer this workshop in the future.

Last year, we held our first silent art auction, "Opening Windows to the World," and it was a success. We are in the early planning stages of another silent art auction that will be held in late August. So, artists and crafts people, get your creative juices flowing! Watch for more information about how to submit your art and other details in our upcoming newsletters, emails, and social media posts.

On the cover: Long-time volunteer, Gregg Porter, narrates a book in the WTBBL studios.

Speaking of art, since the 1950s, WTBBL has been the proud home of a sculpture by well-known Northwest sculptor Dudley Pratt. Pratt was chosen to create a sculpture in memory of Harry Hartman, a prominent Seattle-area bookseller. This would complete the handrail leading into the reading room of the library

in a former location on Harvard Avenue East in Seattle's Capitol Hill neighborhood.

This tactile sculpture made of rosewood has moved with the library and until recently, was somewhat hidden and foundering with a broken base in the WTBBL foyer. We wanted to bring it back to its glory and into a space where it could be seen, touched, and appreciated. The base of the sculpture has been redone, and it is now on display in our public area for all to enjoy. Information, including an artist statement, is available in braille and print for visitors. Look, touch, and explore this unique piece of Seattle history the next time you are at the library!



The Dudley Pratt sculpture was originally positioned as part of the handrail leading into the reading room.



The Dudley Pratt sculpture, now displayed in the library with a new base.

VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION

VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION CELEBRATION IS APRIL 23RD!

Join us in person or via Zoom for our annual Volunteer Appreciation Celebration.

Wednesday, April 23 1-3PM
Washington Talking Book & Braille Library
2021 9th Avenue
Seattle, WA 98121

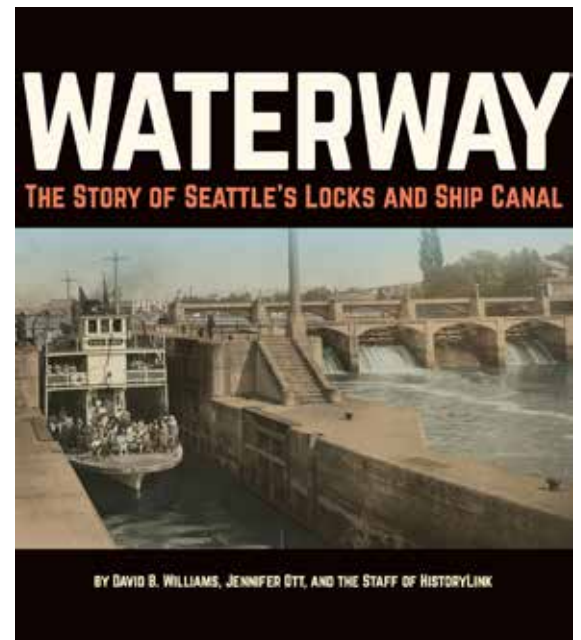
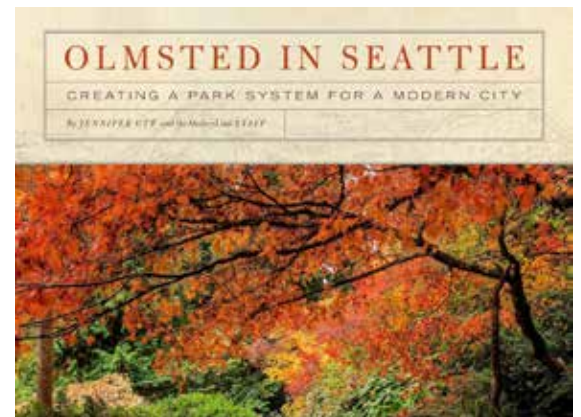
Gather with your fellow volunteers, hear from WTBBL Director, Danielle Miller, and learn about Seattle maritime history from our special guest speaker, Jennifer Ott. Ott is an author, historian, and Executive Director of HistoryLink. She'll be talking about her books on Seattle history, including her newest: **Where the City Meets the Sound: The Story of Seattle's Waterfront.**

WTBBL has produced/ will produce her books:

- **Seattle at 150: Stories of the City Through 150 Objects from the Seattle Municipal Archives**
- **Waterway: The Story of Seattle's Locks and Ship Canal**
- **Olmsted in Seattle: Creating a Park System for a Modern City**
- **Where the City Meets the Sound: The Story of Seattle's Waterfront (forthcoming)**

Secret Garden Books will be on hand to sell her books. Light refreshments will be served. Free parking is available.

Zoom information: <https://bit.ly/41JwMu2>
Meeting ID: 895 1528 9189 | Passcode: 543923



HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

Happy birthday to our wonderful volunteers! We are so grateful for all that you do, and we hope you had a birthday as special and wonderful as you!

January

Addi B.
Amy S.
Ann B.
Betsy H.
Danie A.
Diane S.
Elizabeth G.
Ilias B.
John O.
Katy S.
Kristen H.
Mark D.
Patrick D.
Rachel G.
Stacy T.

February

Abby T.
Brentley S.
Carolyn H.
Diane N.
Erin W.
Jeff H.
Lanae N.
Liza S.
Ros W.
Scott H.
Srithi S.
Tara K.
Veile U.
Warren A.

March

Adam A.
Ahmed M.
Amanda R.
Barbara L.
Carol G.
Chris S.
Clarus S.
Debra G.
Eun-Gyong L-R.
Florence M.
Jashoda B.
Joel T.
Kevin P.
Laura M.
Margarita M.
Mary K.

BRaille BOOKS IN 2024

Thank you, Braille Volunteers, for all of your work this past year. As some of you know, NLS put a pause on uploading braille books to the national collection two years ago. We're pleased to say that it looks like uploading will begin again later this spring so that all of your amazing work will be available to NLS patrons locally and across the country. We currently have 73 books ready to upload! In the meantime, we continued to produce hard-copy braille books, mostly picture books and board books with overlay (print/braille).

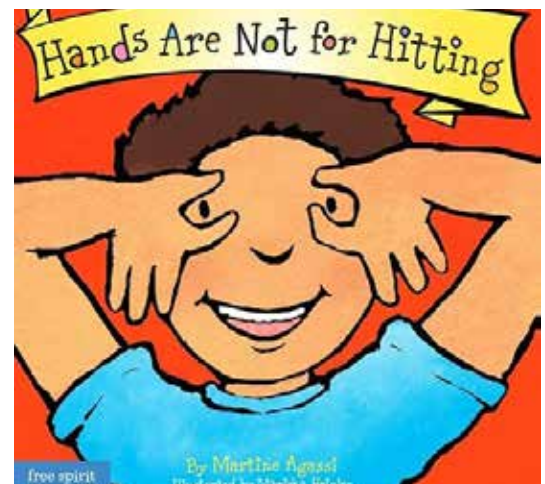
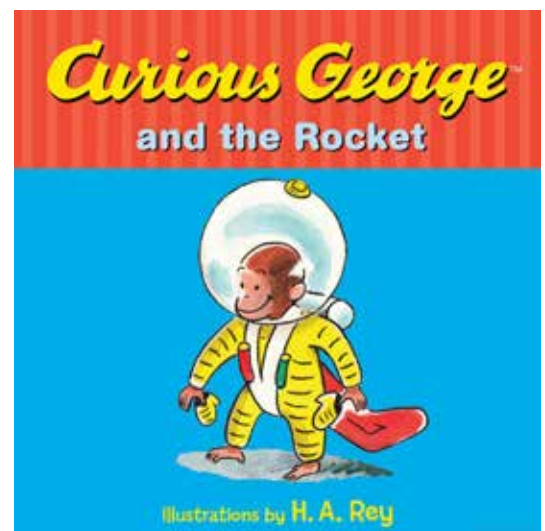
In the calendar year 2024, braille books produced by WTBBL circulated 125 times.

The most circulated WTBBL-produced braille books of 2024 were all kids' books (given the upload pause):

1. **Shapes** by Fleur Star
2. **Curious George and the Rocket** by H.A. Rey
3. **O is for Orca** by Andrea Helman
4. **Hands are Not for Hitting** by Martine Agassi
5. **The New Baby (part of the Ana & Andrew series)** by Christine Platt

We produced 88 books in 2024.

We currently have 90 books in progress.



NEW BRAILLE BOOKS

Check out these Pacific Northwest-inspired kids' books and more from the WTBBL Braille Department.

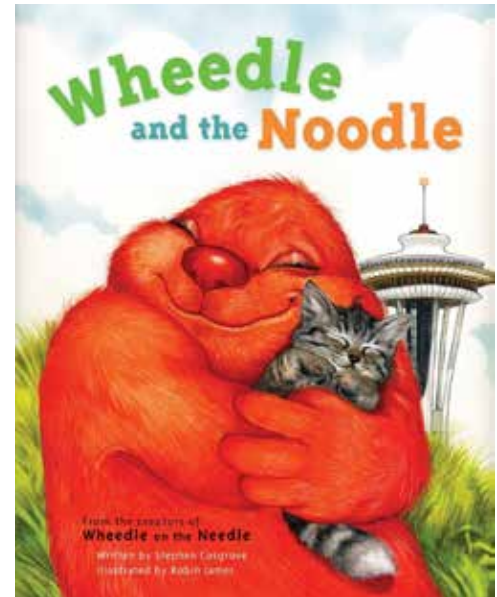
CHILDREN'S FICTION

[BER00189](#) **Wheedle on the Needle** by Stephen Cosgrove

Deep in the woods of the Pacific Northwest lives a red-nosed creature named the Wheedle. Wheedle has to flee the forests, and then the mountains, to try to find peace and quiet. Finally, he gets to the very tip-top of Seattle's Space Needle and finds contentment.

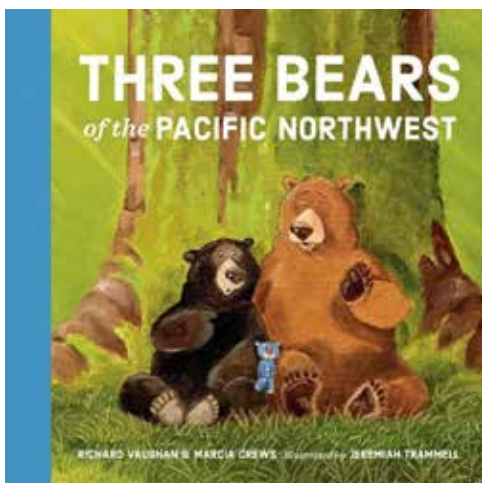
[BER00188](#) **Wheedle and the Noodle** by Stephen Cosgrove

Wheedle, a creature with a red, blinking nose, lives atop Seattle's Space Needle. The usually grumpy creature meets a lost kitten, Noodle, who is looking for a home. Wheedle learns to share his life and his Needle with the abandoned pet in a story about friendship.



Both books are PRINT/BRAILLE. An embossed uncontracted braille version is spiral bound and packaged with the print version of each book. For preschool-grade 2. 2009.

Transcriber: Joan Moritz.



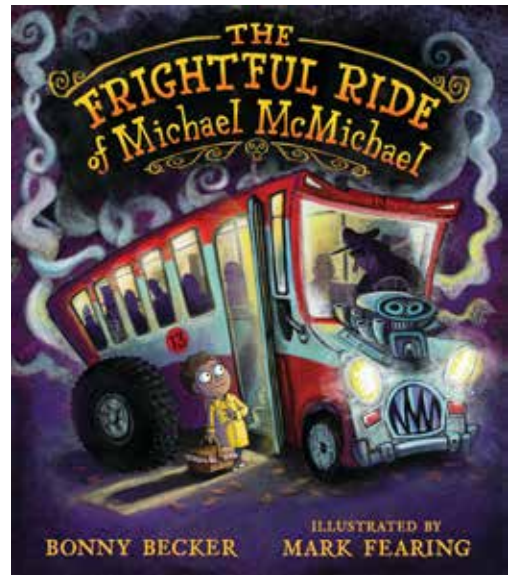
[BRP01411](#) **Three Bears of the Pacific Northwest** by Richard Vaughan and Marcie Vaughan

When a teddy bear falls out of the RV he was traveling in with his boy, Black Bear, Brown Bear, and other creatures in the Pacific Northwest mountains and forests help him find his way back home. PRINT/BRAILLE. For grades K-3. 2011. Transcriber: Mary Forster.

[BRP016177](#) **The Frightful Ride of Michael**

McMichael by Bonny Becker

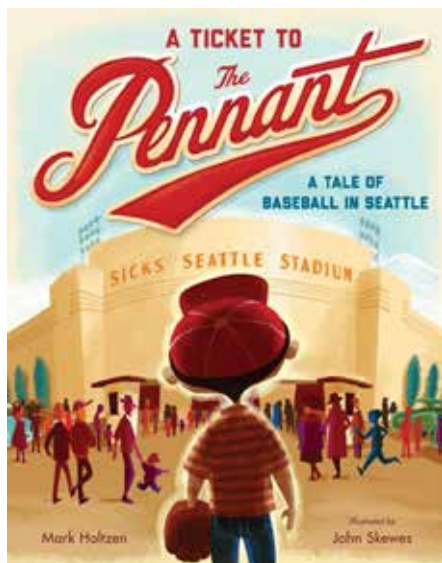
When the 13 bus pulls up one dreary, stormy evening, something about it doesn't seem quite right. The driver grins down with a mouthful of long, white teeth, and there's barely any room to sit, but Michael McMichael is bringing his gran something very dear, so he gets on board despite his misgivings. But as they travel on and the rest of the passengers get off, Michael realizes there's nothing normal about this bus — and the driver is getting creepier by the minute. PRINT/BRILLE. For K-3. 2018. Transcriber: Evangeline Mandeville; Proofreader: Pam Lorenz.



CHILDREN'S NONFICTION

[BER00190](#) **Think Smart Be Fearless: A Biography of Bill Gates** by Sharon Mentyka

Think Smart, Be Fearless tells the inspiring story of Bill Gates, one of America's most fascinating entrepreneurs, starting from his early years as a precocious, inquisitive child who faced challenges fitting in with his classmates. Young Bill, known as Trey in his family, was a bit of a troublemaker, bored at school and prone to acting out. That all changed in high school with his discovery of the early world of computers. PRINT/BRILLE. For grades K-3. 2019. Transcriber: Pam Lorenz; Proofreaders: Lanae Naugle and Martha Oman.



[BER00191](#) **A Ticket to The Pennant: A Tale of Baseball in Seattle** by John Skewes

Travel back in time to 1955, when the Seattle Rainiers faced the Los Angeles Angels for the Pacific Coast League pennant. Follow Huey, a young baseball fan, as he retraces his footsteps through South Seattle, trying to find his missing ticket to the big game. Note: the embossed contracted braille version is spiral bound and packaged with the print version of the book. PRINT/BRILLE. For grades K-3. 2016. Transcriber: Pam Lorenz; Proofreaders: Lanae Naugle and Martha Oman.

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT



This month's Volunteer Spotlight is focused on Gregg Porter, a former WTBBL employee who has become a long-time volunteer. Gregg began working at WTBBL in 2008 as a broadcaster with the Evergreen Radio Reading Service (ERRS). After leaving WTBBL in 2011, he returned to the library three years later to become a volunteer in the Audio Department. He's been an audiobook narrator and reviewer now for 11 years. When asked why he returned, he said, "I had a continuing friendship with John [Pai, WTBBL's Audiobook Production Supervisor], and we often met for lunch. John mentioned they needed volunteers. I came back, because it's a place where everyone cares about the mission, people help one another. It's just a joy to be here."

Gregg has narrated and reviewed 40+ books for WTBBL, and helped out with audio for local newsletters (like this one!), training manuals, and special projects. Those

familiar with his book narration might recognize his voice in the audio version of the Washington State Voters' Pamphlet, too.

Being a volunteer narrator and reviewer draws on Gregg's love of reading and his skills honed from an impressive background in radio broadcasting. Gregg grew up in Iowa and moved to Seattle in his 20s to take a job at Seattle radio station KUOW. From there, he worked at KING FM and Muzak. Highlights of his radio career include being a panelist and host of two nationally syndicated radio quiz shows (Sandy Bradley's Potluck and Says You!), being an actor and director for American Radio Theater, and engineering public radio interviews with Jimmy Carter and Dave Brubeck. He's an avid reader who read more than 100 books in 2024. He mostly reads nonfiction, but said the book he enjoyed most recently was the graphic novel version of **Watership Down** by James Sturm (Richard Adams's original version is on BARD as [BR010851](#) and [DB035730](#)).

Gregg also plays Hawaiian music for a local hula troop. He started out as a dancer, but then realized he liked the music part better and switched to playing ukulele and bass. He's produced jazz, gospel, and Hawaiian music albums. He also considers himself an unofficial recruiter for the library — encouraging people to become patrons or volunteer. He calls volunteering at the library, "A true highlight."

Thank you, Gregg. Volunteers like you make a difference!

SALLY JO HAGEN RETIRES



Sally Jo Hagen, known as Sal to her coworkers and friends, retired in December after nearly 26 years of service to the print-disabled community. In her time at WTBBL, she oversaw the circulation of millions of books in record, cassette, audiobook, braille, and large print formats. As WTBBL's Shipping Supervisor, she was the person responsible for getting patrons their books, machines, and other equipment.

She played a major role in seeing the library through many transitions: books on cassette transitioning to books on digital cartridge, duplication-on-demand services, the circulation of CCTVs, the distribution of braille eReaders and iBill currency readers, and the distribution of digital magazines. She diligently worked with the U.S.

Postal Service to make sure WTBBL patrons received their books, machines, and other equipment on time. She worked with equipment repair facilities and NLS to ensure nonworking equipment was replaced and quickly made available to patrons.

WTBBL Director Danielle Miller worked with Sal for 17 years and described her this way: "For 26 years, Sally Jo poured her heart into making sure WTBBL patrons got their books and reading equipment. She cared deeply about the library and services and was always the first to say yes to any new initiative, service, or just helping out wherever needed. Sally Jo was a champion for WTBBL and truly believed in working as a team to fulfill our mission That All May Read."

Sal's care for our patrons was unsurpassed. She was a well-loved coworker with a creative side and a great sense of humor. She was someone who always offered to step in and help. She truly exemplified WTBBL's values. Thank you, Sal, for your many years of service.



AUDIOBOOKS IN 2024

Our Audio Department Volunteers continue to produce a staggering number of books. Your books are reaching readers throughout the country and the globe!

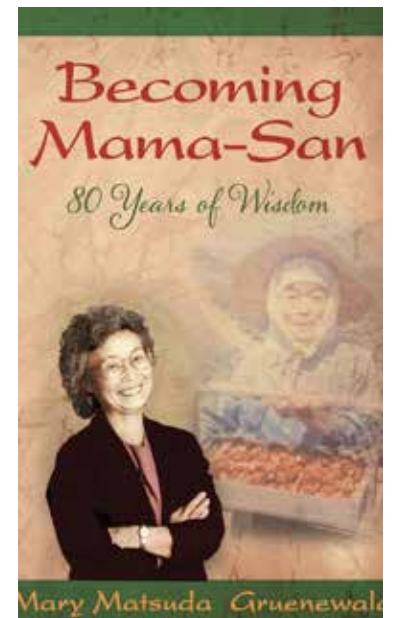
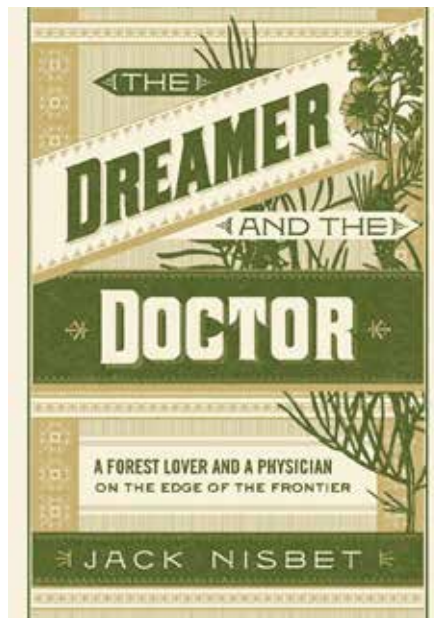
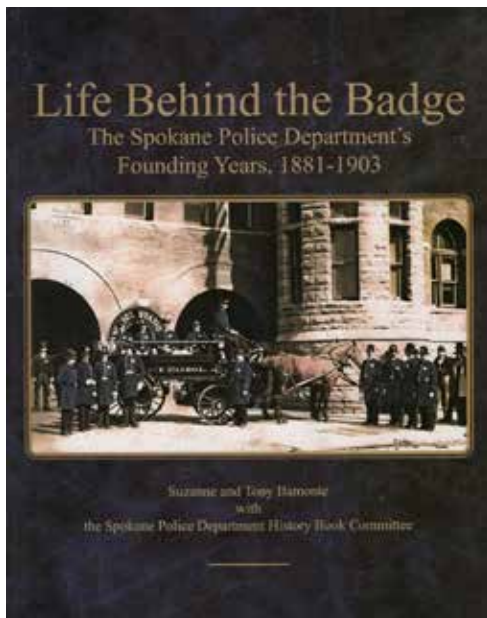
In the calendar year 2024, audiobooks produced by WTBBL circulated 4,728 times.

The most circulated WTBBL-produced audiobooks of 2024 were:

1. **Life Behind the Badge: The Spokane Police Department's Founding Years, 1881-1903** by Suzanne Bamonte
2. **The Dreamer and the Doctor: A Forest Lover and a Physician on the Edge of the Frontier** by Jack Nisbet
3. **Miracle on the 17th Green** by James Patterson
4. **Digressions of a Native Son** by Emmett Watson
5. **Becoming Mama-San: 80 Years of Wisdom** by Mary Matsuda Gruenewald

We produced 107 books in 2024.

We currently have 700 books in progress.



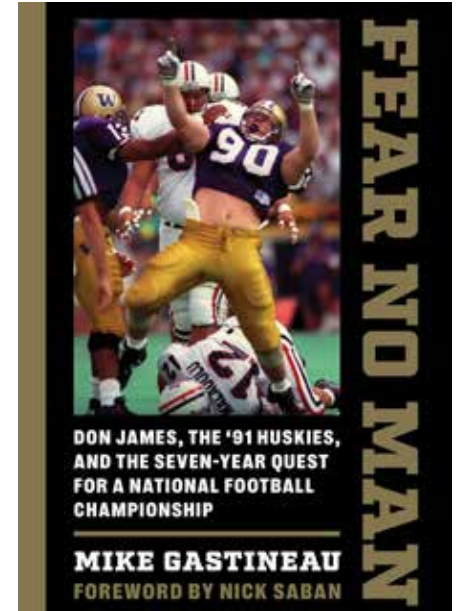
NEW AUDIOBOOKS

Snow on the ground! Punxsutawney Phil sees his shadow! The dog days of winter are just getting started here in the Northwest. We've uploaded lots of new books to BARD since late fall and hope you find time to beat the cold by snuggling up with a good book!

ADULT NONFICTION

[DBC19355](#) **Fear No Man: Don James, the '91 Huskies, and the Seven-Year Quest for a National Football Championship** by Mike Gastineau

In 1984, the University of Washington Huskies won every game but one, ranking second in national polls. For most coaches, such a season would be a career pinnacle. But for Don James, second place motivated him to set aside what he knew about football and rethink the game. James made radical changes to his coaching philosophy, from recruitment to becoming one of the first college teams willing to blitz on any down and in any situation. His new approach initially failed, yet it finally culminated in one of the most explosive teams in college football history.



In *Fear No Man*, Mike Gastineau recounts the riveting story of Don James and the national champion team he built. Undefeated, the 1991 Huskies outscored opponents by an average of 31 points per game while on their way to winning the Rose Bowl and a national championship. The team included 25 future NFL players, and in Gastineau's gripping account, they come alive with all the swagger and joy they brought to the game. A brilliant examination of one of college football's greatest coaches and teams, *Fear No Man* is the inspirational story of an improbable journey that led to one classic and unforgettable season. 2021. Narrated by Bob Carlson; Reviewed by Judy Ogliore.

NOTE: An interview with the author, conducted by WTBBB volunteer Bob Carlson, is included. It is also available via our website at tinyurl.com/WTBBBPodcast.

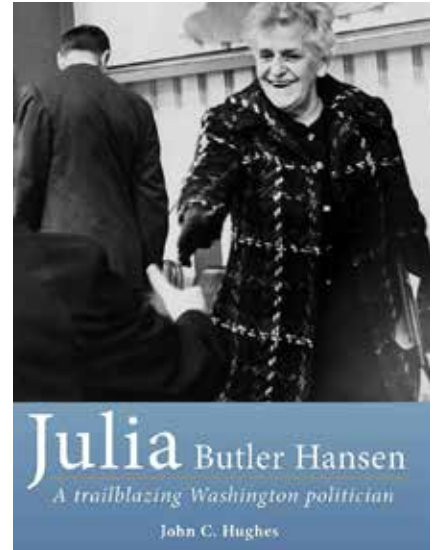
[DBC19207](#) **Ski Jumping in Washington State: A Nordic Tradition** by John W. Lundin

Scandinavian settlers brought ski jumping to Washington State where it became a popular spectator sport. This book describes the history and people involved with this sport. 2021. Narrated by John Ogliore; Reviewed by Martha Oman.

NEW AUDIOBOOKS

[DBC19139](#) **Julia Butler Hansen: A Trailblazing Washington Politician** by John C. Hughes

Julia Butler Hansen rose from being on the Cathlamet City Council in the 1930s to being one of the most influential members in Congress in the 1960s. Along the way, she served in the Washington State House of Representatives and was a major force in the development of the postwar highway system in the state. Part of the Washington Legacy series. 2020. Narrated by Debra Godfrey.

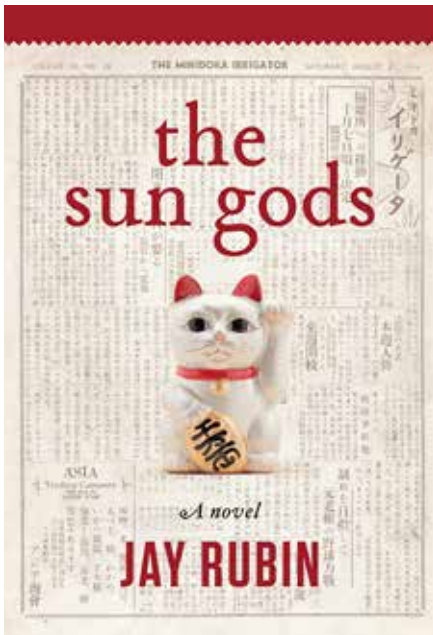


[DBC19253](#) **I am a Stranger Here Myself** by Debra Gwartney

Narcissa Whitman is best known for having been killed along with her missionary husband, Marcus, by Cayuse Indians in 1847. This biography covers her life, death, and its aftermath, as well as being a meditation on the author's life as a Westerner. 2019. Narrated by Nadine Haglin; Reviewed by Judy Ogliore.

ADULT FICTION

[DBC06818](#) **The Sun Gods** by Jay Rubin

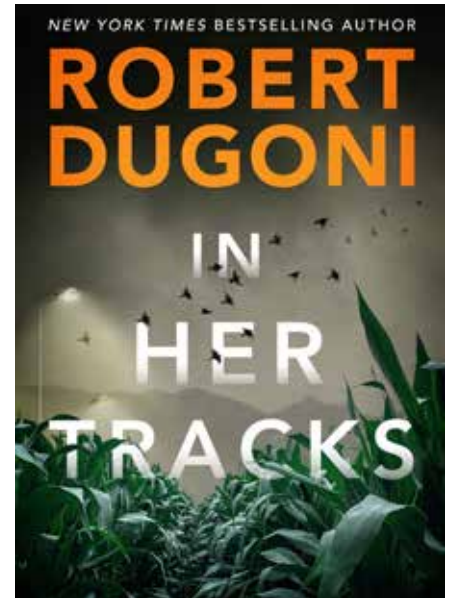


In 1939, Tom Morton, a widower with a young son, met Mitsuko, a recent emigrant from Japan, and married her. Their marriage was torn apart by anti-Japanese sentiments in World War II that sent her to an internment camp. Twenty years later, his son Bill travels to Japan in search of answers to the mysteries of his childhood. 2015. Narrated by Rick Sipe; Reviewed by Linda Nelson and Steven Zon.

NOTE: An interview with the author, conducted by Rick Sipe at WTBBL, is included. It will also be available on our website, tinyurl.com/WTBBLPodcast.

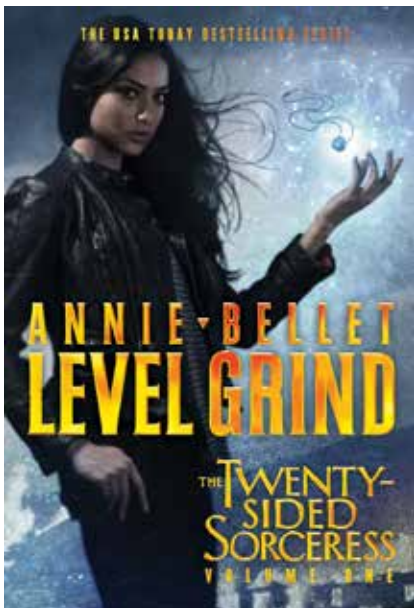
[DBC19288](#) **In Her Tracks** [#8, Tracy Crosswhite] by Robert Dugoni

Returning to Seattle PD's Cold Case Unit, Tracy Crosswhite is quickly immersed in her first case: the abduction of a 5-year-old girl whose parents, embattled in divorce, were once prime suspects. Concurrently, Tracy is brought in on the active case of a young woman who vanished along an isolated jogging trail in North Seattle. Deception lies behind each case, leaving Tracy to rely on her intuition to follow the long cold and unsettlingly fresh clues to find two missing persons at the end of dark and dangerous leads. 2021. Narrated by Courtney Maheras; Reviewed by Martha Oman.



[DBC06947](#) **The Dismal Science: A Novel** by Peter Mountford

Vincent D'Orsi is a middle-aged widower who is not aging gracefully. He was forced into early retirement from his job at the World Bank after washing dirty laundry in public. After an unsettling meeting with someone who might be with the CIA, he tries to make sense of his life and his relationship with his daughter. 2014. Narrated by Larissa Zhou; Reviewed by Kathy Ridderbusch.



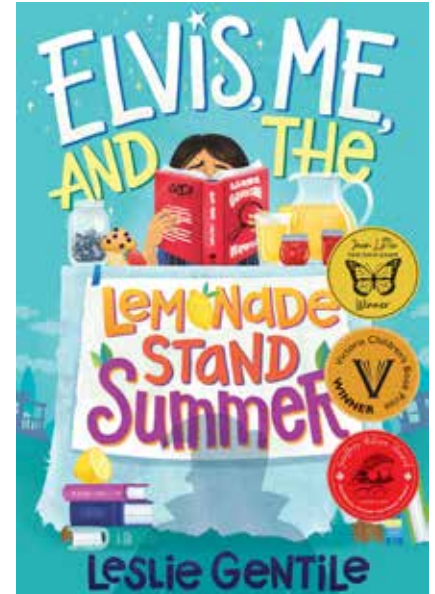
YOUNG ADULT AND JUVENILE

[DBC07014](#) **Level Grind: Books I Through IV** [#1, **The Twenty-Sided Sorceress**] by Annie Bellet

Includes four novellas: "Justice Calling," "Murder of Crows," "Pack of Lies," and "Hunting Season." This volume collects the first half of the Twenty-Sided Sorceress series. Jade Crow is a self-proclaimed nerd who owns her own comic book and game store in the Pacific Northwest. But she's also a powerful sorceress on the run from her sorcerer ex-boyfriend, who might want to eat her heart and steal her powers. For senior high school readers and older. 2016. Narrated by Melissa Tyler; Reviewed by Emma McDonnell.

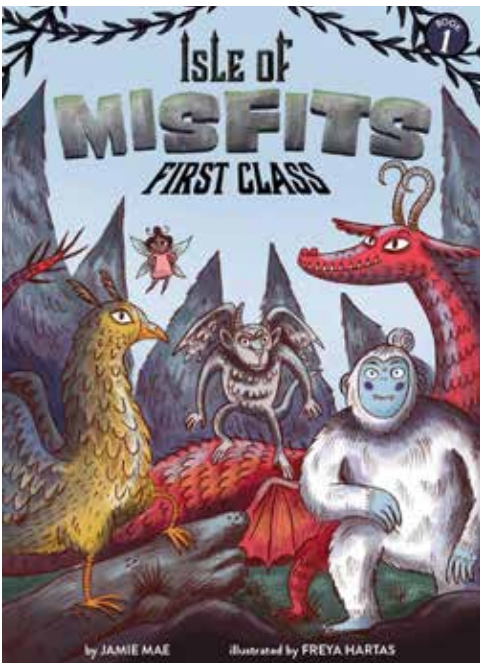
[DBC19091](#) **Elvis, Me, and the Lemonade Stand Summer**
by Leslie Gentile

It's the summer of 1978, and most people think Elvis Presley has been dead for a year. But 11-year-old Truly knows Elvis is alive and well and living in her trailer park. Truly is determined to raise money for herself through her lemonade stand and to prove that her cool new neighbor is the King of Rock 'n' Roll. And when she can't find motherly support in her own home, she finds sanctuary with Andy El, the Salish woman who runs the trailer park and is a connection to Truly's own Indigenous roots. For grades 4-7. 2021. Narrated by Pamela Frick Schwartz; Reviewed by Michael Memmo.



[DBC15829](#) **Isle of Misfits: First Class [#1, Isle of Misfits]** by Jamie Mae

Gibbon is a gargoyle who has been unable to sit still for hundreds of years. One day, he leaves his post from the castle he was meant to be guarding, and a person sees Gibbon, who panics and runs away. As Gibbon is sadly walking back, he meets three gargoyles who bring him to an island filled with other legendary creatures. There, he goes to a special academy that will train him to go on missions to protect all sorts of mythical creatures who are in trouble. For grades K-3. 2019. Narrated by Martha Baskin.



NEW STAFF AT WTBBL

BY DAVID BLAKESLEE



Hey! My name is David Blakeslee, and I am the new Circulation and Audiobook Production Technician at WTBBL. My responsibilities include circulating all the physical braille and large print books, along with the talking book machines and all other equipment. Additionally, I fill all the book orders every morning and make sure the cartridges get sent in the outgoing mail every afternoon. I also work with the Audiobook Production department, where I edit audio recordings and prepare them to be reviewed by our volunteers.

I was raised in Everett, but after high school, I left Washington and attended Antioch College in Yellow Springs, Ohio, where I studied media production. At the behest of a few of my professors, I went on to complete a master's degree in creative writing at the University of Edinburgh in Scotland. When I returned to Washington, I bounced around a few different jobs, from a server at an Irish pub to a member of a trail-cutting crew with the Washington Conservation Corps to a clerk at the Gig Harbor Library. Most recently, I spent two years as the crew lead at Wild Hare Organic Farm in Puyallup. I am very glad to return to library work, and to make myself useful by helping to provide necessary services to fellow Washingtonians.

Outside of work, I can usually be found at home in Tacoma, haunting coffee shops, wandering around the arboretum in Wright Park, riding my bike around Point Defiance, writing short stories and drafts of novels that will probably never see the light of day, working on house renovation projects with my partner, and (when I find time) volunteering at the Grand Cinema.

NEW STAFF AT WTBBL

BY APRIL LUYCKX



Hello! My name is April Luyckx, and I am the new Circulation and Systems Librarian for the team at WTBBL. My role is to ensure that our patrons have continued and consistent access to audiobooks, braille, magazines, eReaders, CCTVs and a plethora of other materials and equipment!

I was born and raised in Calgary, Canada, and I've had the privilege of serving as a Research Librarian in niche markets such as Oil and Gas, Architecture, Fashion Design and Financial Consulting.

I'm an explorer. I completed my Bachelor of Arts degree and my Master of Library Science degree at Western University in London, Canada. But I also studied at Texas A&M University and the University of Cambridge. They were all unique experiences, but my heart belongs to the mountains and rivers. That's why I chose to move west. I am a new mother and a dog mom. Our family loves to ski, camp, hike, and fish.

I feel very grateful that I was able to land a role that empowers, entertains, and serves the public. It's a privilege that I get to go to work every day knowing that I might get the chance to make a difference.

NEW STAFF AT WTBBL

BY NORA SWINDLE



Hi! I'm Nora, and I'm excited to be joining WTBBL's Audiobook Production department!

Although I was born in San Diego, I only lived there for six months before my family moved to Norway. Over the years, I've called 11 different places home: San Diego, California; Trondheim, Norway; Bellingham, Washington; Vancouver, Canada; Provo, Utah; Cape Girardeau, Missouri; Nashville, Tennessee; Cambridge, England; Chattanooga, Tennessee; Sendai, Japan; and, most recently, Seattle, Washington. While I consider myself from Tennessee, I've been happily settled in the Pacific Northwest since 2019, and I'm confident it is where I'll be for the long haul.

I'm passionate about storytelling, and I've found that sound — whether through music, dialogue, or audio — is my favorite medium for it. I am a naturally curious person and can easily be delighted with a fun fact! My love for learning comes from my dad, a college professor, and I also inherited his dry, deadpan humor (though my partner is slowly turning me into a pun enthusiast). I'm the youngest of three siblings, and we are all bafflingly different individuals.

I earned my Master's degree in Composition and Film Scoring from the Seattle Film Institute, graduating in July 2020, right in the thick of the pandemic. For my capstone, I conducted a 60-piece orchestra performing my original film score! Before joining WTBBL, I worked on a variety of contract projects, including scoring short films, recording and English dubbing for TV, and voiceover/TTS (text-to-speech) editing. I also have nonprofit experience through Opportunity Council, Whatcom County's community action agency.

When I'm not diving into audio editing, you can find me knitting, crocheting, or cross-stitching with a classic movie playing in the background. I also love playing video games, spending time outdoors, and catching live music. My favorite recent read is **Project Hail Mary** by Andy Weir ([BR024103](#) and [DB103718](#)).

I'm thrilled to be part of WTBBL and look forward to contributing to its mission!

NEW STAFF AT WTBBL

BY HAZELLE WITHERS



Hello! My name is Hazelle Withers and I am the new Administrative Assistant at WTBBL. You can usually find me bouncing around the office with an armful of papers or covering for Claire at the reception desk. I am beyond grateful for the opportunity to work at an amazing library with a supportive staff.

I moved to Seattle in May 2024 from New York and have been loving living in the Pacific Northwest. Previously, I worked as an archivist and administrative assistant at a nonprofit foundation that housed a photographic archive and funded photographic educational endeavors. Most days after working there, I would go straight to some of New York's most iconic music venues where I worked as a front of

house supervisor. I have seen some amazing musical performances and have a handful of wild tales from working there. While juggling two jobs, I also attended New York University and graduated with honors. After temporary pause in my academic career due to the Pandemic, I received a Bachelor of Arts in Cinema History and Photography with a minor in Child Psychology.

When I am not at WTBBL, I enjoy snuggling with my gray kitten named Rainy, crocheting, and watching movies. (Sometimes I do all those things at the same time!) I also like to play videogames on my partner's Xbox and listen to music. I occasionally work at The Showbox on the weekends and get to see bands play live.

Much like everyone at WTBBL, I love a good audiobook. Although my favorite genres of books are true crime or celebrity memoir, my favorite book that I read in 2024 was **The Bell Jar** by Sylvia Plath ([BR016452](#) and [DB021558](#)). It was my first time ever reading it, and I actually listened to Maggie Gyllenhaal's beautiful narration of it twice. Aside from being an important part of feminist literature, I enjoyed the vivid descriptions of the characters settings and how she speaks about her feelings.

NEW WTBBL PODCAST

BY NATHAN URETA

After much preparation and recording, WTBBL's very first podcast is finally online!

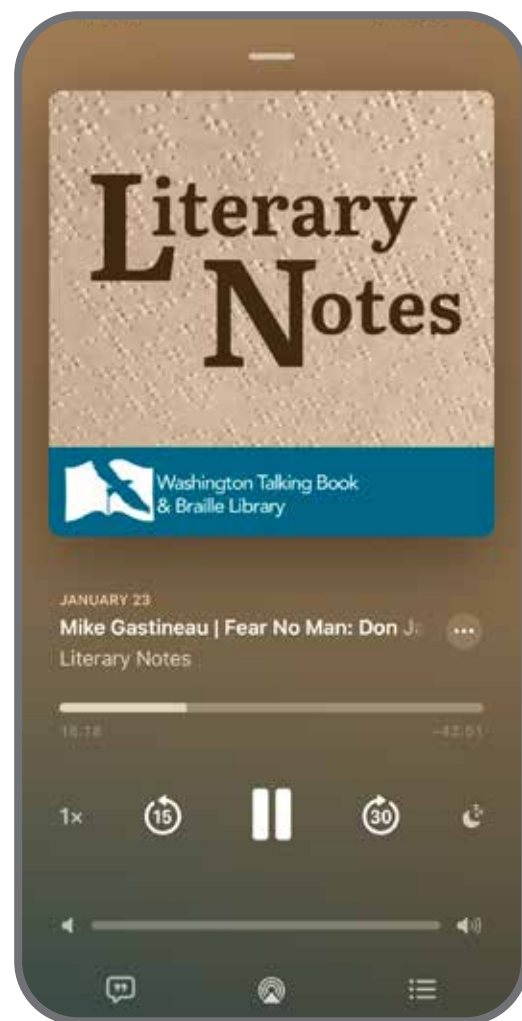
Literary Notes is a new podcast from WTBBL where library volunteers sit down with authors to chat about the books they have written. The show launched on January 23 and will release new episodes every other week. So far, we've had conversations with Seattle sportscaster Mike Gastineau, disability activist Syren Nagakyrie, journalist Blaine Harden, and more. Nearly every book we talk about is in the WTBBL collection, and at the end of each episode, we announce the book's number for easy access on BARD and our library catalog.

The show will also feature interviews from the library's archives. In years past, WTBBL volunteers interviewed authors for Literary News, one of the shows on the Evergreen Radio Reading Service. We'll be combing through those interviews and bringing you the ones that are sure to pique your interest. Our first archival interview is with physicist and science writer Micho Kaku. He stopped by our studios in 2008 to talk about his book, **Physics of the Impossible: A Scientific Exploration Into the World of Phasers, Force Fields, Teleportation, and Time Travel** ([DB067077](#)).

It's been a blast to listen to these interviews as we record and edit them, and we're very excited to share them with you.

Literary Notes is available on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, Audible, Amazon Music, YouTube and our website: tinyurl.com/WTBBLPodcast. If you have a smart speaker, you can tell it to play Literary Notes and it will pull the latest episode up for your listening enjoyment. We'll be putting out an episode every other Thursday, so we hope you'll tune in!

If you'd like more info about the podcast, have any feedback, or if there's a local author you'd like us to interview, contact Lead Media Technician Nathan Ureta at nathan.ureta@sos.wa.gov.



AUDIO DESCRIPTION

BY CHRISTINE LONGÉ, A SEATTLE-BASED AUDIO-DESCRIBER

What Is Audio Description?

Audio description (AD) provides the spoken “translation” of details — such as physical actions, costume designs, and scene settings — timed within the pauses of a program’s dialogue. This commentary helps audiences with limited eyesight to understand what’s happening in the visual storytelling.

NOTE: Because the word “audio” is so strongly associated with the hearing sensory experience, beware the potential mix-up with assisted listening devices (those that only augment the volume of a performance) when you request audio description services!

Where Do We Find Audio Description?

Theater & Live Performances: A variety of Seattle companies provide AD for dance, opera, and theater (plays and musicals). Contact each venue to inquire about their services and/or request AD for your desired date and showtime. For example, the Paramount Theater in Seattle offers audio-described Sunday matinees for touring Broadway musicals. Some upcoming are: “Life of Pi” on Apr. 20, “Six” on May 11, “Riverdance” on June 1.

Film & Television: Many TV programs include AD, which can be activated via the accessibility settings, or by selecting the appropriate audio channel. You can request AD at the cinema, too! Even Seattle’s Pacific Science Center IMAX theater offers AD headsets for most films.

Online Streaming Services: Platforms like Netflix, Amazon Prime Video, and Disney+ offer audio-described content. You can enable this feature in the Settings menu: check for the audio or language options, or from the accessibility options like closed captioning.

How To Get Started

Adjust The Settings: Familiarize yourself with your TV or streaming device menus to enable or disable AD whenever desired. Ask for help if navigating the technology is an obstacle.

Explore Available Content: Begin by playing an episode or movie with AD to introduce yourself to how it sounds. Start inquiring about AD services at your favorite theaters, museums, galleries, and zoos/aquariums!

Use Helpful Resources: The Audio Description Project (adp.acb.org) offers thorough guidance on finding and using AD services. Plus, their parent organization, the American Council of the Blind, provides peer support and mentoring programs among their many resources, like accessible travel information (acb.org/peer-support-and-mentoring).

New volunteers get a tour of WTBBL's Orrico Children's Room during Volunteer Orientation

