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CONNECTIONS: YOUR LINK TO THE
State Library of Oregon



Volume 32, Issue 2 - February 2022

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AGENCY NEWS

State Library Volunteer Shares Their Story

Jay was a volunteer with the State Library for just under a year and a half, working over 255 hours as an Optical Character Recognition Reviewer during that time. After finding a new job in December, Jay has moved on from volunteer service but left us with a heartfelt message:

“Some time ago, I was involved in a horrific traffic accident that I never imagined myself to be in. The whole legal process took a couple of years to resolve and ultimately I took a plea agreement that included hundreds of hours of community service.

For a long time, I was ashamed of myself for my mistake and I felt like a criminal that people couldn't trust anymore. I wanted to remove myself as far away from society as I could. I wasn't sure who would trust me as a volunteer to do any meaningful work given that I was ordered by the court instead of volunteering on my own.

Eventually I found the volunteer program at the State Library of Oregon and explained my court requirement. The Library was willing to trust me and welcome me as a volunteer without judgment. I started working on the optical character recognition (OCR) project in September 2020 during the COVID pandemic.

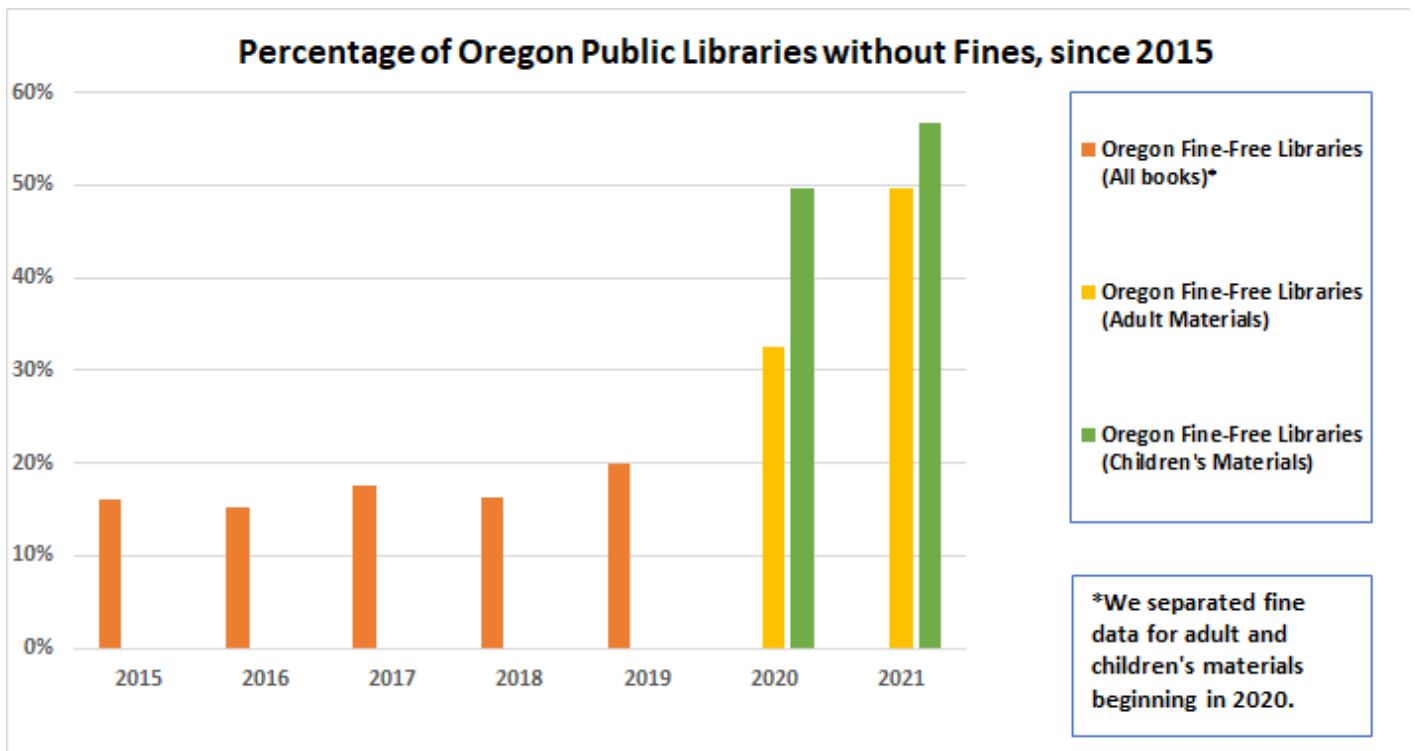
The OCR project at the Library was something I could relate to on a personal level. Having benefited from OCR during my school years when conducting research, I understood the importance of turning scanned documents into digital texts that are more accessible to the public. I found the work to be meaningful and also very interesting at the same time. Reading the citation index cards of old newspapers and magazines from decades ago gave me a small glimpse into history. There were articles about wildlife conservation, bird watching, bottle tax, bingo at retirement homes, etc. Reading the index citation cards is like reading the news by their headlines only, so by no means should they be taken out of context, but the OCR would hopefully allow people to more easily find and read the actual articles as part of history.

This volunteer experience was one of the many steps in the past couple of years that helped me regain confidence and move forward with life. I'm very thankful that the Library was willing to give me the chance to work on such a meaningful project and made me feel like a contributing member of society again.”

LIBRARY SUPPORT & DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Fine-Free Libraries in Oregon

The Springfield Public Library [announced](#) that they are joining a growing number of Oregon public libraries with fine-free policies. As the article linked in the previous sentence states, around half of Oregon public libraries have eliminated fees for late materials, with an even higher percentage of 57% eliminating fines specifically for children's materials. Here is data showing the growing trend, drawn from the [State Library's annual public library survey](#). The growth starting in 2020 can be attributed to policy changes resulting from the pandemic.



Another recent local news article, "[Is It Fine for A Library to Ban Fines?](#)," explores some of the issues that drive the decision to go fine free. "The [fine-free] policy change reflects a growing nationwide emphasis on removing barriers to people to use public libraries. Patrons will not feel

the need to avoid library usage because of late fines, or fear of having a conversation about debt.”

Clyde Miller, a member of Springfield’s library advisory board, points to the ineffectiveness of fines policies. “There’s a higher risk of people not returning items with fines,” he said, and “even when items are returned, fees make them come back slower, not faster.”

Addressing equity concerns and building trust with library users is also a reason to consider eliminating fines. A study in San Francisco entitled “[LONG OVERDUE](#),” reports that eliminating fines increased general goodwill between users and staff and increased the numbers of patrons as well as the circulation of books. San Francisco Public Library saw no increases in late book returns. A library director in Alabama [cites](#) the “overall goodwill the library earned in the community with their new fine-free policy had leveraged into increased municipal funding from a sympathetic and appreciative city council.”

Some Oregon libraries that have discussed eliminating fines with their governing board have encountered opinions about the library’s role in teaching responsibility to community members. One way to address this concern is to focus on the primary mission of the library. Sarah Houghton, Director of the San Rafael Public Library, [says](#) “it is not the library’s role to teach responsibility to any age group... the library’s role is to encourage lifelong learning, exploration, and innovation.”

Want to start the fine-free conversation at your library? Here are some resources to help!

- Fine-free policies and FAQs from [Multnomah County Libraries](#), [Eugene Public Library](#), [Cook Memorial Library](#) (La Grande), [Curry Public Library](#) (Gold Beach)
- [ALA Resolution on Monetary Library Fines as a Form of Social Inequity](#)
- [Why Have Libraries Gone Fine-free the Past Few Years?](#) Intellectual Freedom Blog, September 9, 2021
- [Why Some Libraries Are Ending Fines](#), The Atlantic, Dec. 4, 2020
- [LONG OVERDUE](#): Eliminating Fines on Overdue Materials to Improve Access to San Francisco Public Library, January 2019
- [Eliminating Fines – Resources](#) (Colorado Virtual Library)

Celebrate and Learn More about Black History Month with Digital Resources

There's never been a better time to learn more about the difficult history of voting rights in the United States, and the [*Black Women's Suffrage Digital Collection*](#) from the Digital Public Library of America (DPLA) provides a unique set of resources from across the country which relates to the experience of Black women and the right to vote between the 1850s and 1960s.

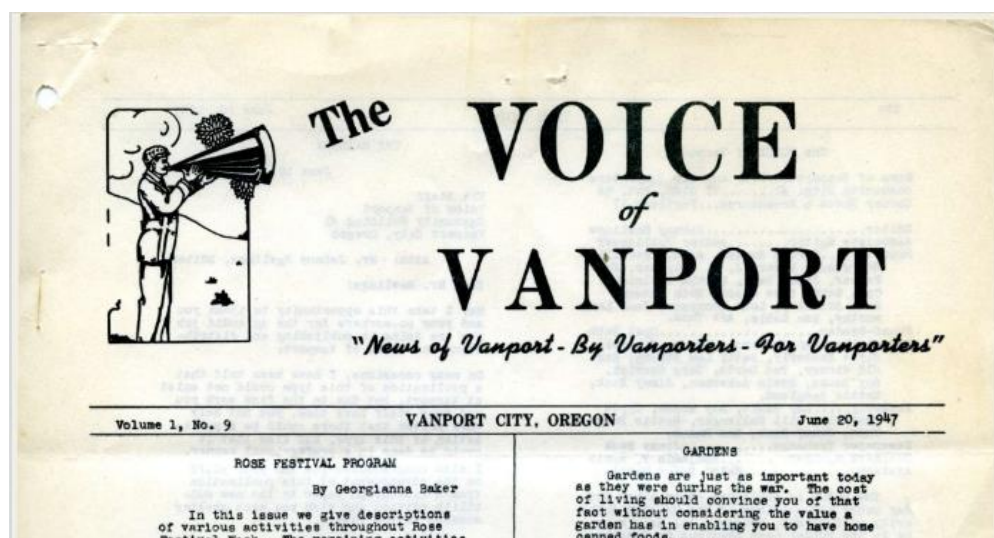
Black Women's Suffrage is an ever-growing collection of primary source materials made available through DPLA service hubs like our own [Northwest Digital Heritage](#). We are absolutely thrilled and honored that [179 items from Oregon and Washington contributing institutions](#) are already part of this incredible collection.

Highlights include [images and documents](#) related to the Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church, a civil rights landmark in North Portland, now on the National Register of Historic Places.



Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church renovation. 1950-1959. Retrieved from the Digital Public Library of America, <https://gallery.multcolib.org/node/4317>. (Accessed January 24, 2022.)

Another important resource found through Northwest Digital Heritage and the DPLA is [a series of issues of The Voice of Vanport](#), a newsletter documenting a unique period between World War II and the Vanport flood of 1948 for this critically important site for Black Oregonians.



"The Voice of Vanport" Vol. 1, No. 9 June 20, 1947. 1947-06-20. Retrieved from the Digital Public Library of America, <https://gallery.multcolib.org/node/4145>. (Accessed January 24, 2022.)

These are just a couple of examples of primary sources to help you learn more and teach about the history, culture, and contributions of Black Oregonians. For a much deeper dive, please check out the amazing collection and interpretive work being done by the [Maxville Heritage Interpretive Center](#) in Joseph, [Vanport Mosaic](#) in the Portland area, and the [Oregon Black Pioneers](#) (based in Salem, but with a statewide focus).

TALKING BOOK & BRAILLE LIBRARY

Behind the Scenes of the Talking Book and Braille Library

What's up, fam! Welcome to the northwest corner of the State Library. It's another edition of the first and only ever behind-the-scenes look at the Talking Book and Braille Library. We don't usually go into this much detail, but sometimes we like sharing some insider information.

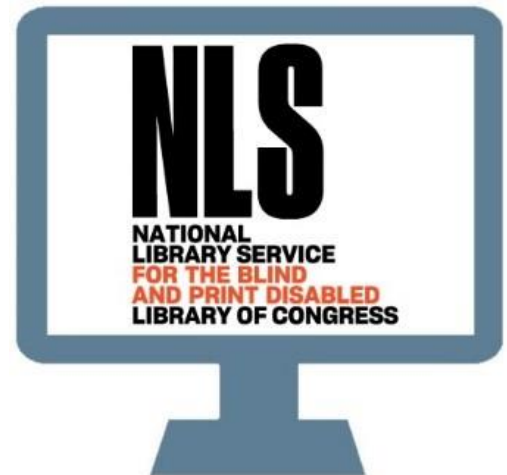


The National Library Service (NLS) uses a special audiobook format that allows for an increase or decrease in playback speed without there being an effect on the reader's tone of voice. Usually when you increase the playback speed of an audio recording, you experience the "chipmunk" effect, where the tone of the reader's voice jumps up a few frequency ranges, and vice versa if you decrease the speed. But not so with NLS audiobooks, which is great for many people with vision loss who prefer listening to audio at a faster pace.

While users are always welcome to make specific requests, our user management system also has a very robust built-in automatic selection process that chooses titles for people based on a variety of factors. The usual factors people think of are genre and author preferences, but there

is so much more. We have the option of setting narrator, book length, and explicit content preferences as well. Books in a series can also be requested in order. On top of all these factors, the system will also balance selections across preferences, so a user doesn't get every mystery that's available before moving on to every romance. Instead, they'll receive a mix depending on the weight they choose to give each preference. We also have control over how many cartridges a user receives and how many books are on each cartridge. We really can deliver a personalized connection to the world for each user!

While many other library download services limit the number of people who can have a digital copy of a book, how long they can keep it, and how many books they can have, the NLS's download-on-demand option called BARD has none of these limits. Any user can download any book at any time. Or all users could download the same book all at the same time (server capacity notwithstanding). It's that simple! BARD is also where network libraries (like the State Library of Oregon) can upload locally-recorded books so users all across the country can enjoy them as well. And with the United States getting on board with the [Marrakesh Treaty](#), BARD now has a huge selection of foreign language titles.



That's all for now. Maybe sometime we'll spill more tea, but until then, peace.

Talking Book and Braille Library TRIVIA TIME!

We're back with another Talking Book and Braille Library Trivia Time! But before we get to this month's question, we'd like to say thank you to everyone who answered last month's question. Feel free to keep participating each month.

OK, here is this month's question:

Q: By what percentage did the Talking Book and Braille Library's circulation increase in 2021 thanks to duplication-on-demand?

- 30%
- 20%
- 15%
- 10%



Hint: you can find the answer in a [previous issue of *Connections*](#).

Click the button above to submit your answer to the trivia question. If you provide your name and contact information and answer the question correctly, **you may win a fun prize!**

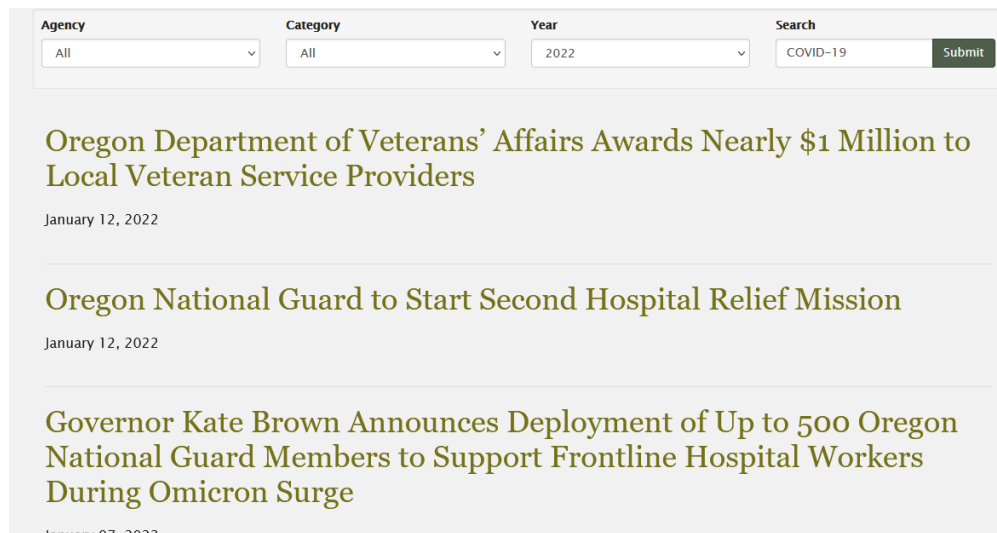
Check back next month to see the answer, and we'll be back with more trivia in future *Connections* issues.

**GOVERNMENT INFORMATION &
LIBRARY SERVICES**

Oregon Newsroom & My Oregon News

In the past, we've used this newsletter to talk about both the State Library's [eClips](#) & [eClips Extra](#) resources. This month, we'd like to try something new and mention two resources that will tie you directly to important information that is distributed by your state government.

The [State of Oregon Newsroom](#) is a searchable collection of current and archived press releases originating from the Governor's office, Secretary of State, and Oregon state agencies. These press releases can contain vital information to keep you informed about many ongoing issues.



Besides sharing facts and figures, your Oregon state agencies also want to share stories and insights about our state's people, successes, and challenges. [My Oregon News](#) is a searchable website that collects those stories in much more detail than is contained in a press release. The site includes a "spotlight" section featuring some of our fellow citizens, such as this story congratulating Oregon's regional winners for [Teacher of the Year](#). You can even sign up to receive the My Oregon News newsletter. We hope you take time to explore both resources.



New State Laws You Might Want to Know About

Another new year has rolled around, and with the passing of January 1st, a new crop of state laws has taken effect.

We wanted to take a moment to highlight a few of these measures that could affect public entities or that are just important to know about.

Public Meetings

HB 2560: Makes permanent a pandemic-era change. This measure requires government agencies, whenever possible, to stream their meetings online and give the public the opportunity to submit oral and written testimony online.

Elections

HB 3291: Requires Oregon to count ballots mailed the day of the election. Previously, counties would count only ballots actually received on or before Election Day.

Racial Equity

HB 2935: Known as the Crown Act, bans discrimination in schools or the workplace “based on physical characteristics that are historically associated with race.” The law specifies hair style and hair texture are among those newly protected traits.

Transportation

HB 3026: Beginning later in 2022, individuals experiencing homelessness will no longer need to pay a fee to receive, renew, or replace their identification cards. The Oregon Department of Transportation is developing rules and partnering with homeless service organizations to certify an individual’s eligibility for the waiver and provide a form to bring to the Department of Motor Vehicles to apply. More information on how this program will be administered will be available soon.

HB 3125: Oregonians with a driver license or identification card are able to register up to two people, age 18 and older, at [DMV2U.Oregon.gov](https://dmv2u.oregon.gov) as emergency contacts for situations in which

individuals with a driver license or ID card can't communicate due to unconsciousness, serious injury, or death. Only Oregon law enforcement personnel will be able to access the emergency contact information.

HB 2498: This bill enhances the safety of Oregonians who are deaf or hard of hearing by creating an option to add that designation to their driver license and vehicle registration card. The indicator is voluntary, and drivers can sign up any time through DMV2U.Oregon.gov.

CONTACTS

Library Support & Development Services Program Manager

Buzzy Nielsen, 971-375-3486

Talking Book & Braille Library Manager

Elke Bruton, 971-375-3509

Government Information & Library Services Manager

Caren Agata, 971-375-3483

Chief Operating Officer

Susan Westin, 503-378-5435

Acting State Librarian

Nancy Hoover, 503-378-4367

Connections is published monthly by the State Library of Oregon, and was formerly known as *Letters to Libraries Online*.

Mission

The State Library of Oregon cultivates, preserves, and delivers library and information services to foster lifelong learning and community engagement.



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Our mailing address is:

State Library of Oregon, 250 Winter St. NE, Salem, OR 97301

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