

Louisiana Hotlines



A Newsletter of the State Library of Louisiana
Talking Books and Braille Library
Office of Lt. Governor, Department of Culture, Recreation & Tourism

Vol. 26 No. 4

Fall 2026

Holiday Closings

Nov. 3 Election Day
Nov. 11 Veterans Day
Nov. 26-27 Thanksgiving
Dec. 25 Christmas
Jan. 1 New Year's Day

The 2026 Louisiana Book Festival

The Louisiana Center for the Book in the State Library of Louisiana is excited to announce the return of the Louisiana Book Festival on Saturday, October 31st. The 22nd annual event will be held from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. in downtown Baton Rouge at the State Library of Louisiana, Capitol Park Museum, and the surrounding Capitol Park area.

"There's no better showcase of Louisiana's rich literary heritage than the Book Festival," says Lieutenant Governor Billy Nungesser. "Every fall, the streets around the State Capitol fill with book lovers from across the state and beyond, drawn by an outstanding lineup of acclaimed authors and programs. It truly is a celebration of the culture, storytelling, and creativity that makes Louisiana like nowhere else. Whether you're a lifelong reader, an aspiring writer, or introducing a child to the joy of books, there's some-

thing for everyone. We can't wait to welcome everyone to an experience for readers of every age that ranks among the very best in the nation."

This year's Louisiana Book Festival will welcome over 200 featured writers representing a multitude of genres including biography, action & adventure, thriller & suspense, politics, science fiction, fantasy, history, true crime, mystery, cookbooks, and much more. Featured writers will participate in book talks, panels, and signings throughout the day, sharing insight about their work and process with festival attendees.

No Audio Version of Hotlines

Until further notice, we will not be producing the audio version of Hotlines. If you have an email address, you can sign up for email delivery of Hotlines, which sends a link to the PDF version. With your smart phone or a free online text-to-speech tool, you can have that software tool read the PDF version of Hotlines to you. If you want to switch your Hotlines subscription from audio (or even from the paper version) to email delivery, please give us a call and ask your reader advisor to make the switch.

TBBL Patron Selected for Implant Project

TBBL librarian Charlene Moore recently met with Chyvonne Blanchard, the Project COPE Coordinator at the Affiliated Blind in Lafayette, and learned about her involvement in a special, groundbreaking project called the Intracortical Visual Prosthesis (ICVP) project.

The ICVP is a research study led by the Illinois Institute of Technology in collaboration with The Chicago Lighthouse and several leading medical institutions. Unlike other current studies that require an intact retina or optic nerve, the ICVP system bypasses the eyes entirely. The technology utilizes a series of tiny, wireless stimulators called Wireless Floating Microelectrode Arrays (WFMAs). These are surgically implanted directly into the brain's visual cortex. By sending wireless signals to these arrays, researchers aim to create "phosphenes" (perceived spots of light) that could help a person who is totally blind navigate their environment and perform visually guided tasks using their brain rather than their eyes.

Chyvonne, who lost her vision due to glaucoma, underwent brain surgery in April of 2026. She became the third patient to have the WFMA device implanted. Following a recovery period, she began the research phase of the project. This commitment involves trips to Chicago one week every month to work directly with the scientific team. As a blind participant, her role is vital; she provides the real-world feedback necessary to map how these wireless stimulations translate into meaningful "vision" for the user.

For Chyvonne, this is more than just a scientific trial; it is a personal mission.

Chyvonne shared, "Knowing that I am contributing to the future of the rehabilitation field makes me feel amazing. It is an honor to be selected for the ICVP team and to represent our blind community in such a significant way."

Chyvonne is eager to keep the blind and visually impaired community informed of her progress. She will be sharing updates on her experiences and the research milestones reached in Chicago.

Follow along on her journey:

TikTok @chyvonnsmiles;
Youtube @chyvonnsmiles;
Instagram @chyvonnsmiles; and
Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/chyvonne.blanchard/reels/>

Fall Book Recommendations 2026 by Sneha Padumane

DB 132738 *The Secret Librarian*
by Soraya Lane

New York, 1942: Avery is engaged to be married. Longing for adventure instead, she jumps at an unexpected offer to trade her library job for undercover intelligence-gathering in Portugal. But her new life in Lisbon, known as the Capital of Espionage, challenges everything she thought she knew about herself.

DB 136303 *Cosmos Confidential: Bill & Neil's Excellent Bromance* by William Shatner and Neil deGrasse Tyson

Experience an unscripted conversation between two icons who have indelibly shaped our culture's view of space. The setting for this audio original program is the backyard of William Shatner's Los Angeles home, where he and Neil deGrasse Tyson enjoy a powerful, open-hearted conversation steeped in wonder.

DB 130002 *Moby Dick* by Herman Melville

More than just a novel of adventure, more than an encyclopedia of whaling lore and legend, this book can be seen as part of its author's lifelong meditation on America. Written with wonderfully redemptive humor, *Moby Dick* is also a profound inquiry into character, faith, and the nature of perception.

DB 135644 *How to Cook a Coyote: The Joy of Old Age* by Betty Harper Fussell

From telling what it's like to go blind to confronting the ongoing erosion of time and the mystery of what's to come, this book recounts a decade of change as the celebrated food writer and critic Betty Fussell moves from Manhattan to the Montecito retirement community where Julia Child once resided.

DB 136238 *Agnes Aubert's Mystical Cat Shelter* by Heather Fawcett

Agnes Aubert leads a meticulously organized life, and she likes it that way. She has devoted her life to finding forever homes for stray cats. Now it's the shelter that needs a new home. And the only landlord who will rent a space to a cat rescue is a mysterious man called Have-lock — who also happens to be the world's most infamous magician, running

an illegal magic shop out of his basement.

DB 135740 *Backbeats: A History of Rock and Roll in Fifteen Drummers* by John Lingam

Rock and roll thrives on rhythm, but the drummers who drive that pulse often stay in the shadows. In *Backbeats*, acclaimed music historian John Lingam brings these unsung heroes into the spotlight, delivering a fascinating journey through six decades of rock history.

DB 135786 *The Astral Library* by Kate Quinn

Welcome to the Astral Library, where books are not just objects, but doors to new worlds, new lives, and new futures. Alexandria 'Alix' Watson is working three dead-end jobs to make ends meet and takes nightly refuge in reading room at the Boston Public Library. One day she stumbles through a hidden door and meets the Librarian: the ageless, acerbic guardian of a hidden library where the desperate and the lost escape to new lives inside their favorite books.

DB 136075 *You with the Sad Eyes* by Christina Applegate

Applegate came of age on sets and stages, expected to be on time, with lines learned, ready for lights-camera-action. She first gained stardom as an audience favorite playing Kelly Bundy in the sitcom *Married, With Children*. Applegate unveils the full story of her years in the public eye and the painful moments the public didn't see.

DB 135763 *Kin* by Tayari Jones
Vernice and Annie, two motherless daughters raised in Honeysuckle, Louisiana, have been best friends and neighbors since earliest childhood but are fated to live starkly different lives. Raised by a fierce aunt determined to give her a stable home in the wake of her mother's death, Vernice leaves Honeysuckle at eighteen for Spelman College, where she joins a sisterhood of powerfully connected Black women and discovers a world of affluence, manners, aspiration, and inequality. Annie sets off on a journey that will take her into a world of peril and adversity, as well as love and adventure, culminating in a battle for her life.

DB 135179 *Just Visiting This Planet* by Neil deGrasse Tyson
In this companion volume to *Merlin's Tour of the Universe*, we visit again with Merlin, a timeless space traveler from Planet Omniscia, who answers a collection of imaginative questions about the cosmos from curious stargazers.

DB 130869 *The Art of Flourishing: Conversations on Disability* by Liz Bowen
Scholars, artists, and thought leaders with disabilities reflect on what 'flourishing' means to them. Disabled people are experts in innovation and adaptation, experts in building networks of support and knowledge sharing, and experts in navigating a world that is not built for them.

DB 134828 *The Last Stand* by Mickey Spillane
When legendary mystery writer Mickey Spillane died in 2006, he left behind the manuscript of one last novel he'd just

completed: *The Last Stand*. He asked his friend and colleague (and fellow Mystery Writers of America Grand Master) Max Allan Collins to take responsibility for finding the right time and place to publish this final book. Now, on the hundredth anniversary of Spillane's birth, his millions of fans will at last get to listen to *The Last Stand*, together with a second never-before-published work, this one from early in Spillane's career: the feverish crime novella *A Bullet for Satisfaction*.

DB 136246 *Jesus Calling* by Sarah Young
These much-loved devotions will help you look forward to your time with the Lord and experience a deeper relationship with Jesus as you savor the presence of the One who understands you perfectly and loves you forever. This powerful audio recording of *Jesus Calling* contains the words and Scriptures Jesus lovingly laid on Sarah's heart. It offers words of reassurance, comfort, and hope.

DB 136049 *Judge Stone* by Viola Davis and James Patterson
In Judge Mary Stone's courtroom, a person has to take a stand. In Union Springs, Alabama (population 3,314), Judge Mary Stone is a local celebrity. Born a farmer's daughter, she holds her courtroom to the highest standard in the land. Then she draws the biggest case Alabama has ever seen. Criminally, it's open-and-shut. Ethically, there is no middle ground. Essentially, it's a choice between life and death. As she fights to determine the wisest course, Judge Stone will make history — or die trying.

Election Day

The United States midterm elections for the U.S. Senate and the U.S. House of Representatives are on Tuesday, November 3, 2026. If you have any questions, the Louisiana Secretary of State's office has an elections hotline: 1-800-883-2805.

They have also prepared two booklets that you may be interested in: *The Disabled, Senior and Nursing Home Voter Information* booklet and the *Voting in Louisiana* booklet. These guides contain information on the entire voter registration and voting process.

New from Hadley: Vision Loss and Emotions

Hadley's new *Adjusting & Coping Together* free video series explores the emotional side of vision loss through real, personal stories and coping strategies. Each episode looks at everyday situations that can stir up difficult emotions, including grieving the loss, asking for help, isolation, and more.

Learn more at <https://hadleyhelps.org/workshops/adjusting-and-coping-together> or call 800-323-4238

East Bay Center for the Blind offers at-home braille classes

The East Bay Center for the Blind offers free, at-home braille classes, including focused instruction on UEB. For more information and to sign up for the program, visit www.eastbaycenterfortheblind.org/classes-and-activities. Recordings of its two weekly webinars, *I Love Braille* and *I Learn Braille*, are also available.

Perkins releases Braille Bloom

Perkins School for the Blind recently released the Perkins Braille Bloom, an accessory that allows users to connect their Perkins Brailers to the Internet. The device attaches to the bottom of a Perkins Braille and connects to computers, tablets or smartphones via USB or Bluetooth. With a Braille Bloom, users can send texts or emails via their Perkins Braille, or communicate using other messaging apps. For more information, visit www.perkins.org/perkins-braille/perkins-braille-bloom.

Books and Beyond: A Section for Children and Teens

White Cane Safety Day, October 16th

The Louisiana School for the Visually Impaired will be celebrating White Cane Safety Day on Friday, October 16, 2026. A variety of family-inclusive activities will take place on the school campus from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. For further information, contact the school office at 225-757-3481.

LSU White Cane Day Event

The 2nd Annual LSU White Cane Day is scheduled for October 15, 2026, from 2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. at the LSU University Recreation complex, located at 102 Student Rec Complex, Baton Rouge, LA 70803. Hosted by LSU Disability Services, the event celebrates independence, accessibility, and community awareness for individuals who are blind or visually impaired. For more information, contact Blind Grace at 225-521-1350 or LSU at 225-578-5919.

Louisiana Book Festival for Younger Readers

The Louisiana Book Festival will be on Saturday, October 31, at the State Library in downtown Baton Rouge from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Enjoy walking the State Capitol grounds, touring the exhibit tents, and listening to your favorite authors at the Storytelling tent. Then, head on over to Teen HQ for the scavenger hunt or visit the Children's Pavillion for fun crafts and activities. There is something for everyone at the Book Festival!

Need free homework help? Check out HomeworkLA

If you need help with schoolwork, the State Library of Louisiana offers a free online resource available at www.homeworkla.org.

Homework Louisiana provides free live tutoring for grades K-12, college and adult education, test preparation, and job search assistance to all Louisiana residents. In addition, there is a "connect with voice" option for the visually impaired.

New Dyslexia Friendly and Graphic Novels

Grades K-3

LPD00002 *Dear Peter Rabbit* by Alma Flor Ada.

Peter Rabbit suffers a severe head cold and can't attend the three little pigs' birthday party.

LPG000075 *Hello, Crabby* by Jonathan Fenske.

Plankton attempts to cheer up Crabby by baking him a birthday cake.

LPG000025 *The lost sloths* by Graham Annable.

When a hurricane destroys their home, Peter and Ernesto go on an adventure to find a new one.

Grades 2-5

LPG000037 *Be prepared* by Vera Brosgol.

Adventure awaits for those brave enough to attend Russian Summer Camp.

LPG000018 *The Night Door* by Frank Cammuso.

Uncle Earl introduces Edison Beaker to the true nature of his family's pest-control company on an emergency call to the Night Door.

LPD000044 *Alice's adventures in Wonderland* by Lewis Carroll.

Classic portal fantasy about young Alice who discovers a wondrous land ruled by the absurd Queen of Hearts.

LPG000055 *Redwall* by Brian Jacques.

Graphic novel follows the classic adventures of a young mouse destined to become the next Protector of Redwall.



Support Our TBBL Friends Organization

Since 1981, the Mrs. W. Carruth Jones Foundation has acted as a friends group for the Talking Books and Braille Library in the State Library of Louisiana.

It provides a mechanism for accepting donations to enhance and support services to the blind and physically handicapped community state-wide.

The Jones Foundation directly supplements the programs and initiatives of TBBL within the State Library.

It is a primary sponsor of the State Library's large print collection, TBBL's summer reading program, staff enrichment, and early literacy program.

To contribute, make checks payable to the Jones Foundation and mail to the following address:

**Mrs. W. Carruth Jones Foundation
1131 N. River Road
Port Allen, LA 70767**

All donations are tax deductible.
Anyone who makes a donation receives a one-year membership to the Jones Foundation.

For meeting information, call Shelia Coleman at 225-342-4942.

TBBL Directory

Library address

Talking Books & Braille Library
701 N. Fourth St.
Baton Rouge, LA 70802

Phone numbers

Baton Rouge: 225-342-0035
Statewide: 1-800-543-4702
Fax: 225-342-6817

Special services

Music section: 800-424-8567
Braille service: 800-453-4293

Email

tbbl@library.la.gov
tbblkids@library.la.gov

Walk-in hours

Monday – Thursday
10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Phone and email hours

Monday – Friday
8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Library services

Audio books and magazines
Braille books and magazines
Large print books and big books
Online catalog
BARD download service
BARD mobile apps
Newspaper reading service

Eligibility

Any Louisiana resident who is unable to read or use standard print materials as a result of a temporary or permanent visual or physical limitation is eligible to receive free library services.

State Library of Louisiana
Talking Books and Braille Library
701 N. Fourth Street
Baton Rouge, LA 70802

**FREE MATTER FOR THE
BLIND OR HANDICAPPED**

Special format library materials are loaned
to qualified patrons by

Talking Books and Braille Library

State Library of Louisiana

Office of the Lieutenant Governor

Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism

Supported in part by funding from the
Institute of Museum and Library Services

