

eBooks introduced

Tulsa libraries adds downloadable audio books to system

By **KAREN SHADE**
World Scene Writer

Sometimes you just want to settle in with a good book, but the driver's seat in a car turning onto 71st Street is not the place to do it.

Mike Meisenheimer takes his chances. He prefers to catch up on his book list while running, cleaning house or mowing the lawn.

"I'm not one of those people who uses audio books just because I don't like to sit and read. I really think it's just like you get the old-fashioned sense of storytelling," he said.

While he probably prefers to leave his work at the Tulsa City-County Library behind him at the end of his day, downloading audio books through the library's Web site at his home is a new convenience he'll afford.

He still checks out print books, but borrowed an audio book version of William Faulkner's "A Light in August," downloaded it onto his MP3 player from his home computer, through the library's Web link to **Overdrive.com**.

Meisenheimer read the book years ago, but said he experiences new dimensions through listening to it.

"Sometimes you want to sit down and cozy up with a book, and other times you want to let somebody else read it to you," he said.

In recent months, the technology support specialist at the downtown Central Library has trained his coworkers to access this newest service from the city-county library system.

He said his coworkers have been enthusiastic about the service.

The patrons seem to be, too. "Right off the bat, it has been received very favorably from a number of our customers," said Lynnette Erhardt, library information technology director.

The library began offering the downloadable audio books in December, advertising the new service on its Internet home page.

For the month of December, the library did 212 circulations of downloadable audio books through its partner in the endeavor, **www.overdrive.com**.

With more than 150 total titles available (and more to come), the top three checked-out or on reserve reflect the variety — the youth fantasy epic "Eragon" by Christopher Paolini, "All-Audio Spanish" language



Photos by CORY YOUNG / Tulsa World

Tulsa City-County Library employee Mike Meisenheimer still likes to browse the Central Library's stacks, but he is one of many library users taking advantage of free, downloadable audio books now available.

learning and John Grisham's latest, "The Innocent Man," a non-fiction title.

Laurie Sundborg, division director of collections for the Tulsa City-County Library, said she has been watching this format for several years as other library systems across the country have successfully tried it.

"I see the electronic or digital material as an enhancement of the collection that makes the material available 24/7," she said. "When we're closed, a person still has access to information. What's that word they use in Louisiana? 'Lagniappe.' It's extra."

Internet users go to **www.tulsa-library.org** and click on the audio book downloads link. The page that follows instructs users how to download the free media software necessary to download audio book files.

After that, users can check out any of the titles available by downloading it to a home computer, and from there, onto an MP3 player or other playback device. But just as you might be out of luck if you can't locate a certain book in the stacks, each



download is available exclusively to one reader at a time.

The library has multiple copies of several titles, and the loan period is two weeks. On the due date, the download is made available for the next person who picks it up or is on the reserve list.

Some titles may be burned to a CD (depending on publisher agreements), and from there, people can take their audio books with them on the commute or the jogging trail. This

is also the only way to get the downloads onto an iPod — the service and software are not Mac compatible at this time.

Users will not be able to download from library terminals.

Downloading is borrowing, but it's not entirely free. The library will pay about \$25,000 this year for access to overdrive.com and its titles, but it's a small percentage of the overall budget for a service that enhances the storytelling experience for people more attuned to audio,

Sundborg said.

"I think it has a lot to do with your internal method of receiving information. Some people are oral and some are visual learners, and they're more comfortable receiving information one way or another," Sundborg said.

Many users particularly like audio nonfiction.

"I think it's like listening to a lecture or radio," she said. "They say poetry really comes alive more when you read it out loud."

Listening to an author reading memoirs also might give the sense of a private conversation.

In the spring, the city-county library plans to pilot a Playaway loan service at a few library sites. Playaway MP3 players already contain a single title on them.

But the audio book format, whether downloaded or on CDs and cassettes, is no threat to print. Books will not soon go the way of shredded scrolls crammed into secret caverns.

"I don't think even remotely that either of these formats will replace books for us, certainly not anytime soon," Erhardt said. "The other thing about both of these is that they tend to feature more popular kinds of fare. Obviously if somebody's looking for a book that's 10 years old, chances of it being in this format . . . is probably unlikely."

Despite the growing demand for audio, Sundborg said she isn't worried for the future of books either.

"Each year we circulate more things to the community than we did the year before. Last year we did just over 5 million circulations, and (we) have more than 40,000 children every year participate in the summer reading program."

It comes back to convenience for multitaskers, who are trying to keep up with favorite authors, subjects and, yes, narrators as they move through a full daily schedule.

"You can be doing two things at once," Erhardt said. "If you're reading a book, you're reading a book, but if you're listening, you can be vacuuming . . . you can't read a book and drive, or at least we hope not."

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Kansas Music Hall of Fame inducts Tulsans

By **MATT ELLIOTT**
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For two raucous years, a man who is now a Tulsa architect was a vocalist and trumpet player in a rock 'n' roll/soul group that tore apart the Midwest in the 1960s but narrowly missed stardom.

Steve Alter and his band, the Rising Suns, played from Canada to the Gulf of Mexico while he was a member from 1966 to 1968, when he left to devote time to architecture.

Alter and his bandmates, who include Tulsa Sound member Bill Snow, will be inducted Saturday into the Kansas Music Hall of Fame in Lawrence. Many of its members at the time were from Coffeyville, Kan., originally, but Alter and Snow later moved to Tulsa.

About 14 of the band's members, Alter and Snow included, are in Kansas for a show they'll play for the induction ceremony, said Alter, now president of Matrix Architects and Engineers.

"It's just an unbelievable amount of fun to see all of us and get together after 35 years," said Alter, who is chairman of the Oklahoma Jazz Hall of Fame. "We're having a great time."

One original member was absent, Alter said. Lead singer Walter Downing died in 2002 from diabetes, he said.

The band was initially called the Daltons, but changed its name in 1966, Alter said. They auditioned for Mid-Continent Productions in Lawrence, got hired and performed while they were in college.

During the school year, "We played maybe three nights a week. No clubs — they were all promoted events, auditoriums," he said.

While playing as the Daltons, the band opened once for the Yardbirds at a 1965 Tulsa show at the Convention Center, he said.

The Yardbirds was a 1960s rock band that featured younger versions of a trio of now-famous guitarists: Jimmy Page, Eric Clapton and Jeff Beck.

"We had a couple really, really big breaks, recording contracts and TV things that fell through at the last minute."

Despite recording three albums, the band never really achieved national stardom, on one occasion due to a long-running conversation between Johnny Carson and one of his Tonight Show guests.

"The show ran long and we got cut," Alter said.

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Seminar could help bolster those weight-loss resolutions

By **KAREN SHADE**
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It's two weeks into the new year and time for the discouragement to set in for all of those people with newly minted resolutions to get fit.

Why do people begin to feel the lag at this point?

"Typically, people get busy and back into their normal routine" following the holidays, said Clint Howard, owner of two Tulsa-area Fitness Together locations.

"Accountability goes away. At first they're all gung ho, (but) things start to come up — the gyms are crowded, they're busy. The main thing is that people just don't know what to do," he said.

And when they have false expectations of how the scale will read, resolutions go right out with the brand-new gym membership.

"They end up quitting by March or February," Howard said.

Whether you've tried to meet that goal in a gym or on your own, Howard said it's never too late to pick up and start again.

He will show people "How to Make 2007 Your Best Year Ever" at 7 p.m. Tuesday at the Junior League of Tulsa, 36th Street and Yale Avenue.

During the seminar, Howard will talk about setting goals, exercise, nutrition and tracking results, while several other health professionals will talk about well-being through dentistry, aging and healthy living.

The cost for the two-hour seminar is a \$10 donation to the National Multiple Sclerosis Society Oklahoma chapter.



The seminar, he said, is about education, not a sales pitch.

For those who feel they have already faltered on their resolution to stay fit, the evening is about getting back on track and providing information about creating a fitness routine that will work.

"Sometimes people get in tune to how out of shape they are and don't know what to do, so they get intimidated," he said.

Instead of balking at the thought of working out two hours per day, people should realize that workouts should, ideally, amount to a few hours a week, and the better gauge of your progress is a tape measure, he said.

"If they (participants) can take something out of it, that's all we ask from them," he said.

Registration is limited. To register, go to online to **www.TulsaChallenge2007.com**. For more, call 392-3488.



Photos by A. CUERVO / Tulsa World

Clint Howard, owner of Fitness Together, works one-on-one with Dale Davison. Howard will present a health seminar Tuesday at the Junior League of Tulsa.

Young professional organizations award area arts grants

By **JAMES D. WATTS JR.**
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Grants totalling \$20,000 will be presented to six Tulsa arts organizations to help fund special programs to introduce youngsters to the performing arts.

The grants are funded through the Tulsa Arts Sampler, a program developed in 2006 by Young Professionals of Tulsa and the Williams Cos. The Tulsa Arts Sampler offered participants tickets to a variety of Tulsa arts events for a greatly discounted rate.

The six recipients of the grants are:

►The Arts and Humanities Council of Oklahoma, which will receive \$3,000 to purchase drums and help underwrite its "Math and Music" program at Cherokee, Greeley, Sam Houston, Alcott, Sequoyah and Hawthorne elementary schools.

►Light Opera Oklahoma, which will be awarded \$3,000 to fund performance costumes and instrument rentals for the children's band in its summer production of "The Music Man," June 14 to July 14.

►Tulsa Opera, receiving \$3,500 for its ongoing educational and cultural enrichment programs at the San Miguel English as a Second Language school, which includes 200 Spanish and English language copies of "The Little Prince" and matinee tickets to the company's upcoming productions, "Carmen" and "Porgy and Bess."

►Philbrook Museum, which

will receive \$2,500 for the Urban Fine Outreach Program (UFO) for third-, fourth- and fifth-grade students in Tulsa Public Schools.

►Gilcrease Museum, getting a \$2,500 grant to provide studio space and materials for students ages 13-19 who enroll in Saturday afternoon Studio Gilcrease program.

►Tulsa Ballet, receiving \$2,500 to conduct its "Journey Through Dance" multimedia program at local schools.

Amanda Hollon, one of the organizers of the original Tulsa Arts Sampler, said the grants program "is about getting more young people engaged in local cultural events, all while raising funds to promote art education in public schools."

"The success we've had so far has exceeded our expectations," she said. "We've been able to bring more corporate sponsors on board and increase the number of available packages for the 2007 season from 200 to 300."

The Tulsa Arts Sampler is sponsored by YPTulsa, Tulsa Young Professionals, Williams, SemGroup, The Kivisto Family Foundation and Bank of Oklahoma.

Tickets for 2007 are available for \$150 each. This year's offering includes performances by the Tulsa Ballet, Tulsa Opera, the Signature Symphony, Light Opera Oklahoma, as well as events at Philbrook Museum, the Arts and Humanities Council of Tulsa, and Gilcrease Museum. For more information, visit **www.tulsaartsampler.org**.