



BTBL News

Braille and Talking Book Library
California State Library, Sacramento, CA

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A Message from Mike Marlin, Director

Autumnal salutations from the Central Valley crossroads of Sacramento, the city of trees and your literary lending library. I hope you are finding entertaining and transformative books to read as we head toward 2016.

You may have noticed that there have been more choices in this year's list of book selections. In late 2014 the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS) began receiving donations of commercial audio book files from four major publishers, and this manifested in 2015 with over 900 commercial talking book titles added to the nearly 2000 produced by NLS each year. In fact, the 2,876 talking books added by NLS this past year is a record! Barring unforeseen circumstances, this trend should continue for the next several years.

In other news about our national affiliate, NLS recently joined BTBL and several other network libraries by plunging into the world of social media with

its own Facebook page: [Facebook.com/ThatAllMayRead](https://www.facebook.com/ThatAllMayRead). Please consider "Liking" it to receive notice of happenings from the mothership, NLS. And please remember to also "Like" your regional vessel, the BTBL Sacramento Facebook page: [Facebook.com/BTBLSacramento](https://www.facebook.com/BTBLSacramento).

If you had been subscribed to our Facebook page or checking our btbl.ca.gov web page, you would have learned about the August 28-September 8 Library of Congress unscheduled web outage - which, alas, also affected the availability of the Braille and Audio Reading Download (BARD) web site. We apologize for any inconvenience the outage caused for our many BARD users and we appreciate your patience as NLS staff worked frantically to resolve the issue. That was a rough 10 days and demonstrates how critical access to reading is in this age of technology.

If you have not yet received the free, handheld Currency Reader for eligible blind and visually impaired citizens from the U.S. Bureau of Engraving and Printing (BEP), you may contact BEP directly toll-free at (844) 815-9388, by email at meaningful.access@bep.gov, or at bep.gov/uscurrencyreaderform.html BTBL helped with the initial Fall 2014 batch of orders but now you must contact BEP directly to obtain the iBill currency reader.

Among many other outreach events conducted by BTBL staff over the past several months, a memorable one was our foray to Grass Valley's Nevada County Fairgrounds in August for the Nevada County Fair's annual "Day for People with Disabilities". Attendees appreciated learning about our service and especially enjoyed meeting our newest staff member, Louis, the life-size and plush golden retriever toy! If you know about a conference, local group, or organization that would benefit from a BTBL presentation, please let us know.

Finally, I want to express my gratitude to all of BTBL's volunteers for a very successful and rewarding year. From on-site book inspectors, telephone surveyors, recording studio narrators and editors to off-site Telecomm Pioneer group machine repair volunteers and machine cleaners, we could not exist without your help! And finally a hearty thanks to the BTBL staff who held down the fort in 2015 while I traveled to library meetings in Chicago and to the World Library and Information Congress in Cape Town, South Africa.

Who Is Kathey And Why Is She Calling Me?

NLS has been in the process of converting all usable analog audio cassette books (those with RC numbers) to digital format (DB numbers). As NLS nears the end of this process over the next year or so, the need for machines that play the RC cassettes is dropping drastically.

There was a time when we encouraged patrons to keep both cassette and digital players because the new digital format had fewer book choices and we wanted readers to be able to listen to a wide selection of books. When cassette magazines were replaced with digital ones, the need for cassette players decreased substantially.

We found that there are a lot of you who have both types of machine but haven't ordered anything other than the digital format for quite some time. If that is the case for you, we are hoping that you are ready to turn in your cassette machine.

We have a dedicated volunteer - Kathey - who has been calling our patrons who have not checked out any RCs in a really long time. If she only reaches your voicemail she will leave a message about the option to return your cassette player and how to accomplish that.

Federal property rules require that loaned materials be returned so we can't just leave them with you forever. If your cassette player is just taking up space and collecting dust, consider sending it back to us now - don't wait for a call from Kathey.

If you are ready to return the cassette player you may use any box (we ***cannot*** ship you an empty box). Address it to: BTBL, 900 N Street, Sacramento, CA 95814. You may need to take the box to the post office, but you won't need to pay postage if you write in the spot where the postage would go "Free Matter for the Blind and Physically Handicapped."

If you still need your cassette player because you are listening to older format books, you may keep it a while longer. And we will still issue a working cassette machine if the one you are using malfunctions.

FAQ: Why Am I Not Receiving Books?

One of the most frequently asked questions we receive is "Where are my books?" The following tips will help ensure that books and magazines continue to arrive on a regular basis.

- **Timely return of materials:** For most patrons, every time a book is returned to us, a replacement book is sent the next business day. This makes it important to return each book as soon as you are finished with it. "Stockpiling" books and returning them all at once can result in longer periods without books. Magazines must also be returned in order to receive the next issue. Too many overdue magazines will result in suspension of magazine service.
- **List only service:** If you are set up for list only service we only send you books that you specifically request, so it is important to keep a lengthy list of requests on file with us. If you run out of requests or your requests are not available, nothing will be sent to you.
- **Narrow subject interests:** If books are selected for you based on the subjects and authors you indicated you liked, you might need to expand your preferences. For example, if you only read westerns and have read all the westerns in the collection, no more will be sent unless you request to read them again.
- **Number of books:** If you read all your books and find you have to wait for more, perhaps the number of books you receive needs to be increased. Patrons can have as many books sent to them as they can read within the five week loan period, up to a maximum of 25 books.
- **Mailing time:** California is a big state so it can take a while for the books we put in the mail today to actually get where they are going. The holiday season can also significantly slow down mailing times. If you find you are running out of books because of slower mailing times, increasing the number of books checked out to you may be a way around the problem.

Luckily, the solution to most of these issues is simple: contact your Reader Advisor here at BTBL. Whether it is increasing the number of books you receive, suggesting additional authors or genres you might enjoy, or changing your service so you can receive your favorite westerns again, your Reader Advisor is here to help.

BARD Mobile App News

The BARD Mobile app enables readers to download and listen to talking books and magazines directly on their personal devices (Android, iOS, and Kindle Fire), provided they have BARD accounts. Electronic braille materials can also be downloaded using iOS devices and a refreshable braille display.

BARD Mobile App for Kindle Fire Devices

In addition to working on Android and iOS devices, the BARD Mobile app can now be used on second generation Kindle Fire devices. BARD Mobile will not work on Kindle e-book readers, only on the Kindle Fire tablets (Fire, Fire Phone, Fire HD 10, Fire HD 8, Fire HD 6, Fire HD 7, Fire HDX 8.9, Fire HDX 8.9 WAN, etc.). Download BARD Mobile for your second generation Kindle Fire device from the Amazon Appstore at amzn.to/1OiuIxR

BARD Mobile App for iOS Devices Update

A new update for the BARD Mobile app for iOS devices was released in October and is now available at the Apple App Store. Version 1.1 includes the following features: a built in sleep timer, new option to keep device from sleeping while download is in progress, ability to add to wish list directly from details screen, an enhanced braille search function, improved VoiceOver hints and labels, a new braille shortcut key, and improved Magic Tap response. This update works with iOS 9 (and earlier) versions.

Download or update the BARD Mobile app for iOS devices at itunes.apple.com/us/app/bard-mobile/id705229586

Free 2016 Braille Calendars Available

Compact, spiral bound braille calendars are available while supplies last. Please call, write, or email the library at btbl@library.ca.gov to request one.

The Best of the Best: Exploring Book Awards

Many people ask us for help finding a good book to read. And while we are always happy to help (and love to talk about books), one way to find your next

favorite read is to see what books have garnered attention nationally and even worldwide through book awards. There are thousands of book awards celebrating the best of every sort of book. Here are just a few to get you started!

The Andrew Carnegie Medal for Excellence in Fiction and Nonfiction was established in 2012 and is administered by the American Library Association and honors superlative books published in the U.S. for the previous year. The winners for 2015 are already available as digital books: for fiction, *All the Light We Cannot See* (DB 79182) by Anthony Doerr and for nonfiction, *Just Mercy a Story of Justice and Redemption* (DB 80035) by Bryan Stevenson.

For people with literary tastes, the Nobel Prize in Literature is considered by many the apex of literary achievement. It's been awarded since 1901 and can be won by an author of any nationality; authors from the U.S. have won the award 10 times. The 2014 Nobel Prize in Literature was awarded to author Patrick Modiano, who has written *Dora Bruder* (DB 80920) and *Suspended Sentences Three Novellas* (DB 80726).

Other well-known and renowned literary book awards include the Pulitzer Prize in Fiction, which has been awarded since 1917 and honors the best in fiction books published in the U.S. The 2015 Pulitzer in Fiction also went to *All the Light We Cannot See* (DB 79182) by Anthony Doerr and the 2014 Pulitzer in Fiction went to Donna Tartt's *The Goldfinch* (DB 77453).

The National Book Award was founded in 1950 and is awarded to the best in American literature in the categories of fiction, nonfiction, and poetry. The 2015 National Book Award for fiction was awarded to Adam Johnson for *Fortune Smiles* (DB 82453); the nonfiction award went to Ta-Nehisi Coates for *Between the World and Me* (DB 82201, BR 21183).

The Man Booker Prize, which was founded in 1969, is awarded annually to what is judged to be the finest fiction of the year. The 2015 winner was the historical fiction novel *A Brief History of Seven Killings* (DB 79940) by Marlon James.

The Dayton Literary Peace Prize is an international award that recognizes fiction and nonfiction books that promote peace and lead to a better

understanding of diversity. The 2015 fiction winner was *The Great Glass Sea* (DB 80014) by Josh Weil and the nonfiction winner was *Just Mercy a Story of Justice and Redemption* (DB 80035) by Bryan Stevenson.

For readers of genre fiction, there are also plenty of awards for the best genre books.

The RITA Award is administered by the Romance Writers of America and honors the best romance books in multiple categories like first romance novel, contemporary romance, erotic romance, young adult romance, historical romance, and more. The RITA award is named after the first president of the Romance Writers of America: Rita Clay Estrada. *One in a Million* (DB 81836) by Jill Shalvis won the 2015 RITA for best contemporary romance; *Romancing the Duke* (DB 78316) By Tessa Dare won the 2015 RITA for best historical romance.

The Christy Award is for excellence in Christian fiction. The award began in 1999 and honors books in multiple categories such as contemporary, contemporary romance, book of the year, historical, suspense, young adult, and more. *The Amish Blacksmith* (DB 79936) by Mindy Starns Clark won the 2015 Christy Award for contemporary series and Ted Dekker's *Outlaw* (DB 77481) won the 2014 Christy for suspense.

The Hugo Awards are for the best science fiction books worldwide as voted by members of the World Science Fiction Convention since 1955. The 2015 Hugo Award for best novel went to *The Three-Body Problem* (DB 80931) by Cixin Liu; the 2014 Hugo for best novel went to *Ancillary Justice* (DB 79102) by Ann Leckie.

There are a bevy of book awards just for the younger reader as well. The Newbery Medal was the first book award for children's books in the world and it has been awarded since 1922. The 2015 winner of the Newbery Medal was *The Crossover* (DB 79528) by Kwame Alexander; the 2014 Newbery Medal winner was *Flora & Ulysses the Illuminated Adventures* (DB 80753, BR 20592) by Kate DiCamillo.

Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA), a division of the ALA, selects ten books a year for the Alex Award. The Alex Award is given to

books that are adult-level reading books but have special appeal to a young adult audience. Some of the winners for 2014 include: *The Universe Versus Alex Woods* (DB 78141) by Gavin Extence; *Brewster* (DB 77306) by Mark Slouka; *The Death of Bees* (DB 78303) by Lisa O'Donnell; *The Lives of Tao* (DB 78240) by Wesley Chu.

Our Ravenous Readers' Corner webpage library.ca.gov/services/rrcorner.html has bibliographies dedicated to the Nobel Prize in Literature, the RITA award, the Alex Award, and the Newbery Medal, with more to come soon! We can mail you large print copies of these bibliographies upon request. We can also sign you up to receive award winning books; just contact your Reader Advisor.

Netflix Online Video Service Gains Audio Description

Audio description is an additional audio track for movies and TV shows that features a narrator's voice describing the action on the screen during natural pauses in the dialog and sound effects. Netflix's streaming video service has recently added audio description to a select number of movies and TV shows. Subscribers to Netflix can select the link "Audio Description", located at the bottom of the Netflix streaming home page. This will launch a search displaying all of the movies and TV shows currently available with an audio description track.

After choosing your movie and launching the video player screen, select the "Languages" Menu button and select "English-Audio Description". Currently, this "Languages" menu button is not compatible with screen readers and may require help from a sighted friend or family member. To compensate for this problem, Netflix hopes to add a keyboard shortcut soon.

Netflix will continue to add new movies and TV shows with audio description in the future. As of this writing, there are currently 109 movies/TV shows available, including Netflix original series *Orange is the New Black*, *Grace and Frankie*, *House of Cards*, and *Daredevil*. TV Shows include *Sherlock*, *Cosmos*, *Psych*, *NCIS*, *Raising Hope*, and *Bob's Burgers*. Movies include *The Butler*, *The Nightmare Before Christmas*, *M. Night Shyamalan's The Village*, *Gladiator*, and *Anger Management*.

Digital Talking Book Machine Tips

Here are solutions to three common problems you may be having with your digital talking book machine (also called a digital player).

Problem: My machine is turning on by itself.

Solution: The digital player is designed to automatically turn on when it is first plugged into a power outlet. Most likely, the outlet that your machine is plugged into has temporarily lost and then regained power. This would cause the digital player to "think" it has just been plugged in, and turn itself on. You can try plugging the machine into a different outlet in a different room of the house and see if the problem continues. If you cannot find an outlet with steady power, try only charging the machine at a time when the player turning on will not disrupt you. Also, be sure to remove the physical book cartridge from your player in order to save your place in the book (in case the player turns on and starts playing the book when you are not there).

Problem: Do I need to rewind digital books?

Solution: There is no need to rewind digital books. Your digital player is designed to automatically remember your place in each book. So when you return a book to us, and the book makes its way to the next person to read, when she/he inserts the book in a digital player, the book should automatically start at the beginning. Although digital books do not need to be rewound, please remember that the older style cassette tapes still need to be rewound; simply put the last tape of the book into the cassette machine braille side up, and press "Rewind."

Problem: I put the book into the machine and it announces "End of Book."

Solution: Press the large, green, rectangular "Play/Stop" button twice. The first time you press "Play/Stop" the player should say "End of Book - Press 'Play/Stop' to return to the beginning of the book". The second time you press "Play/Stop", the player should return to the beginning of the book. If you can't seem to reach the beginning of the book, please contact us for assistance. The book may have an error and we may need to send you a replacement copy.

BTBL Staff Picks: Revisiting Books from Childhood

The Phantom Tollbooth by Norton Juster

DB/RC 23208,
BR 13442, BR 03041

"This classic fantasy follows a very bored little boy named Milo through a mysterious tollbooth and into the Kingdom of Wisdom from which Rhyme and Reason have been banished. Undoubtedly reading this book in fourth grade has a lot to do with my love of words and wordplay today."

-Robert, Reader Advisor

Island of the Blue Dolphins by Scott O'Dell

DB/RC 62761,
DB/RC 22397, BR 14785, BR 06230

"This book is a special one as my Aunt had it signed by the author and gave it to me as a gift. It's a children's novel which won the 1961 Newbery Medal award. The story is about a young girl who learned to survive on an island alone for almost 20 years and all the trials and tribulations she went through."

-Diane, Reader Advisor

Clifford, the Big Red Dog by Norman Bridwell

DB 78605

"I've always liked big dogs but we could only have small dogs growing up. Clifford could walk over houses and the whole neighborhood loved him. The Clifford books got me started on all the other famous dog stories."

-Daniel, Circulation

Alanna the First Adventure by Tamora Pierce

DB/RC 65414

"This was the first book I had ever read that featured a strong female lead. The main character definitely influenced my developing personality as a young adult. The story is set in a fantasy, medieval world where characters have magical powers." -Sarah, Reader Advisor

The Old Man And The Sea by Ernest Hemingway

DB 72116, DB/RC 53792, BR 10599

"Growing up in the city, it was nice to get into a book that takes you into nature and out to sea." -Valerie, Reader Advisor

Paddle-to-the-Sea by Holling Clancy Holling

RC 22676, BR 19406, BR 01684

"This is one of my favorite books. My father used to read this book to my brother and me. It was written in 1941 and tells the story of a native boy in Canada who carves a canoe with a man in it and sets it in the ice. When the ice melts the canoe sets out on a journey, finally finding its way to the Atlantic Ocean after many adventures. The author wove a spell with his words and we couldn't wait to turn the page." -Johanna, Circulation

Matilda by Roald Dahl

DB/RC 31793, BR 17775

"Matilda is one of those books I can reread an infinite number of times. It has a special place in my heart because it was one of the first chapter books I read entirely on my own. It's quirky, fun, and helped make me the insatiable bookworm that I am today. Because no matter how old I get, the kid in me still thinks maybe I'll get magic powers if I read enough books!"

-Melissa, Reader Advisor

Charlotte's Web by E.B. White

DB 74950, DB/RC 46839,
BR 17770, BR 09405, BR 01318

"My favorite classic children's book is *Charlotte's Web*, a story about a pig and a spider and barn yard animals that help make Wilbur the most famous pig at the County Fair. It's a great book that teaches friendship."

-Peggy, Reader Advisor

The Giver by Lois Lowry

DB/RC 37689, BR 09626

"This coming of age story about a youth in a supposedly utopian society, which turns out to be much darker under the surface, really struck a chord with me when I was growing up and influenced how I see the world now. To me, the importance of *The Giver* is the idea that people should be able to live life free and to experience what life has to offer be it good or bad. We shouldn't be sheltered from experiencing what life happens to bring. I believe the book's message is that government shouldn't dictate what it thinks society should be. People should be able to make their own decisions with most things in life."

-Charlie, Machine Repairman

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BTBL News is written and edited by staff of the Braille and Talking Book Library at the California State Library. It is available in braille, audio file, through email, and in large print upon request, or through our website.

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Email: btbl@library.ca.gov Website: btbl.ca.gov Catalog: btbl.library.ca.gov

Library Service Hours: 9:30 AM - 4:00 PM, Monday-Friday

Office closures: We will be closed Dec. 25 (Christmas Day), Jan. 1 (New Year's Day), Jan. 18 (MLK Day), Feb. 15 (Presidents' Day), Mar. 31 (Chavez Day), May 30 (Memorial Day).

Donations to BTBL are accepted at any time and are used to enhance and improve library services. In the case of memorials or donations in honor of a particular person or event, please include the name(s) and address(es) of those to be notified. Checks should be made payable to the California State Library Foundation and should include a note that the donation is for the Braille and Talking Book Library.

Donations should be sent to: California State Library Foundation, 1225 8th Street, Suite 345, Sacramento, CA, 95814-4809. Donations can also be made online at: csbfdn.org. Follow the link to "Join/Donate Online." There is a place to designate BTBL as the recipient.