



# BTBL News

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

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## A Message from Mike Marlin, Director

Greetings to you from Sacramento, the River City that is overflowing with braille and talking books for your reading pleasure. Speaking of libraries, on September 14, Dr. Carla Hayden, former CEO of the Enoch Pratt Library in Baltimore, MD, was sworn in as the 14th Librarian of Congress, overseeing many important sections of the nation's library including the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS). It has been a long time since a professional librarian has assumed the helm of the people's library. She is also the first female and first African-American to hold the

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position. Our colleagues at NLS are very excited to work with Dr. Hayden and a great feeling of pride and enthusiasm is in the air.

BTBL was able to convert - on short notice - the California Secretary of State's audio narration of the 2016 Official Voter Information Guide into our own digital talking book format. We posted it as a downloadable book on our web site and made cartridge loans upon request to patrons who don't have downloading capability. This time we were only able to notify patrons for whom we have email addresses. We hope to do a similar conversion again for future elections - watch for announcements on our web site or Facebook page or contact your Reader Advisor within a few months of a pending election.

Another recent initiative at BTBL is High Demand Duplication. NLS has been converting books originally issued as cassette tapes into digital versions and posting them on BARD (publication dates roughly from the 1950's to 2009). NLS has not provided us with a supply of these books to circulate by mail. Now NLS has given us batches of blank peach-colored cartridges and translucent mailing containers and we are going to use them to make circulating copies of some of the titles in highest demand. Volunteers are helping us with production and labeling and we hope to gradually fulfill the thousands of patron requests for older titles on cartridge. We will also continue to fill lower demand items via interlibrary loan requests to our NLS multi-state center in Utah.

We want to extend sincere thanks and farewell to two longtime BTBL staff members. Machine repair technician Charlie Johnson retired in early August after 25 years of distinguished state service. We will miss Charlie's mechanical aptitude and ability to achieve the perfectly functioning talking book machine. BTBL's Office Assistant Daniel Monahan retired in November after 16 years of consistent high quality work in all aspects of BTBL circulation, including being the first one in at 6:30 AM to print out the day's mailing cards. Congratulations on your retirements, Charlie and Daniel!

On a sad note, we also say farewell to Kathleen Berman, a member of BTBL's Advisory Council and phone survey volunteer for BTBL, among other activities in the local blindness community. Kathey passed away in September after a

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bout with cancer. Her gentle demeanor and hard work ethic touched everyone who knew her. The BTBL staff sends its heartfelt condolences to her family.

Finally, if you are curious about Library Services for People with Print Disabilities throughout California, or would like to share information with someone who may benefit from our services, a great place to send them for more information is our new Print Disabilities launch page at [pd.library.ca.gov](http://pd.library.ca.gov).

## **To Read or Not to Read – Aye, There's the RUB!**

Are you a ravenous reader who wants to give back to your fellow patrons? You can help by volunteering to rate "Unrated" books (RUB). Since 2013 commercial publishers have donated audio books to NLS to be converted into its talking book format. Unlike talking books produced directly by NLS, these donated audio books are not rated for strong language, descriptions of sex, or violence. Many BTBL patrons do not wish to read books that contain one or more of these rating categories. But they may be missing a perfectly fine book because they have chosen to bar all "unrated" books from their preference lists. As a RUB volunteer you will assist your fellow patrons by reading selected book titles and identifying ratings for these unrated, commercially produced talking books.

The project is a group effort by several NLS network libraries. We will be assigned a specific group of book titles -- RUB volunteers will \*not\* be able to randomly select unrated books on their own. A 9-point rating system will be used and instructions will be provided to volunteers. If you are interested, please contact us by email or phone us and follow the prompts for volunteers (1 for English, then 5 from the main menu) and leave a voice mail (see last page of newsletter for addresses or phone).

## **High-Volume Player and Headphones**

(Adapted: Ohio Library for the Blind & Physically Disabled *OLBPD Dimensions*, vol. 12, no. 43)

NLS has developed a high-volume version of the digital talking book machine for use by patrons who are hearing impaired. The high-volume player is available in either standard or advanced models that have been programmed to have an amplified volume up to 120 decibels. It can be issued only by NLS

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and will bear a warning label. The high-volume feature only works with the set of stereo headphones that NLS provides with the player. The high-volume player/headphone replaces the old amplifier/headset accessory.

To receive a high-volume player and headphones, a patron must provide certification of hearing impairment from a physician or audiologist. An application for the high-volume player can be downloaded from the NLS web site at [www.loc.gov/nls/pdf/hvp.pdf](http://www.loc.gov/nls/pdf/hvp.pdf). After completing Parts I, II, and III of the application, patrons should submit it to the Braille and Talking Book Library, P.O. Box 942837, Sacramento, CA 94237-0001. We will fill out our portion and send it on to NLS. Please note that, although the online application includes a way to sign using a digital ID, we need actual signatures on the application. If you need any assistance with this application please contact us.

Patrons will be asked to return their current regular player upon receipt of a high-volume player and headphones. A return label for this purpose will be included with the high-volume player.

## **A Rainbow of Boxes**

We know some of our patrons can't see color, but those who can may be surprised by the range of colors arriving in the mail. For many years, talking books were recorded on cassettes and these cassettes arrived in green, plastic boxes. When digital books were introduced they were sent out in blue boxes, to try to make it easier to tell the formats apart. In recent years, several additional colors have been added to the talking book palette and some of our patrons may be wondering why they received a grey or yellow box in the mail instead of the familiar blue or green. Here is a list of all the different box colors currently in use and what you would find inside them:

- Blue box with white cartridge - digital book produced by NLS
- Translucent white box with peach cartridge - digital book duplicated in-house at BTBL using NLS-supplied cartridge
- Grey box with mint green cartridge - digital book duplicated in-house with cartridge purchased commercially. This would also be the color scheme of any cartridges and boxes purchased by individuals.
- Red box with light blue cartridge - digital magazine produced by NLS

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- Green box - cassette tape book produced by NLS
  - Yellow box - descriptive DVD
  - Small Black box - descriptive DVD
  - Big Black box - descriptive video cassettes
  - REALLY Big Black box - braille books

Remember that, whatever color the box is, you should turn over the mailing label to return the item (except for the TBT on cartridge - see next article).

## **No Mailing Card with My New TBT Cartridge**

*Talking Book Topics* (TBT) in audio format is now arriving in a new container. The digital cartridge in its plastic mailer box is now accompanied by its large-print paper ordering form and both are inside a disposable cardboard container. When you have finished listening to the magazine, return the cartridge the usual way in its plastic mailer box - with one exception - no card to turn over. There is instead a permanent address label on the plastic box which will get it to the proper location to be used again for another magazine (don't take off the label). Just put the cartridge inside its plastic box into the mail.

Meanwhile, you can mark the printed order form with your latest requests, seal the form with a small piece of tape on the right side, and put it into the mail. It will mail to the library's address that is already printed on the form. Your address is there already, as well, so we know who is sending the request.

The cardboard container should be discarded - don't try to return it.

## **New Magazine Choices in Braille from NLS**

Three new braille-format magazines are available via BARD download or by subscription to the embossed version via the mail. The magazines and their frequency are:

- *Cooks Illustrated*, bimonthly
- *O, The Oprah Magazine*, monthly
- *Popular Science*, bimonthly

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Contact us if you wish to receive these magazines in hard copy by mail.

If you prefer to download your magazines, you may set up your BARD account to automatically place a new magazine issue on your wish list once the issue is available. For this service, go to the page for a particular magazine title and press the "Subscribe to ..." button. Once you have subscribed you will receive email notification when there are new issues.

## **I Can't Log In to BARD! What's a Security Question?**

If you've forgotten your password to BARD (Braille and Audio Reading Download service), don't panic, we can help. Contact us by phone or email and let us know you need to have your BARD password reset. A new temporary password will be sent to the address you use as your email with BARD. Log in with your temporary password and you will then be prompted to create a new permanent password that you will use in the future to log in to BARD.

Please be aware that BARD Mobile (the app version of BARD) does not support making password changes. You must first use the main BARD website to establish a new permanent password. You can then open your BARD Mobile app and add the new password to your app settings.

To speed up the process for the next time you might need a password reset, be sure to set up a security question. Once it is established you don't have to wait for us to do the reset. You can do it yourself by selecting the reset password option on the BARD main screen, then correctly answering your security question. Your email account will receive a new temporary password.

To *\*create\** a security question, log in to BARD and navigate the main page to the lower portion of the screen under the Additional Links section. From there, select the option "Update Account Settings".

When on the Update Account Settings page, find the password instructions section toward the bottom where there are two fillable boxes. The first box is for typing in your question and the second is for the answer. Be aware that the answer is case sensitive. Once you have filled the two boxes, click on the "Update" option. If you do not wish to have a security question at this time, just leave these boxes blank.

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## **Building Bridges at the Governor's Wall**

The Braille and Talking Book Library will be on display - literally - at the State Capitol for a week from Monday, January 9 through Sunday, January 15. Several posters and photos of whom and what we're all about, as well as a special tactile map of California (produced for us by The Lighthouse for the Blind) will adorn the fabled Governor's Wall for all to see.

The large wall space in the first floor corridor next to the Governor's office and across from the main Capitol elevators routinely hosts visual displays of California projects, initiatives, and other important cultural artifacts. We invite any and all to visit the Capitol in Sacramento during business hours January 9-15 to view this imaginative exhibit that captures the importance of accessible library service.

## **How Do I Listen to More Than One Title on a Cartridge?**

(Adapted from Carnegie Library of Pittsburg Feb. 2016 Newsletter)

If you are signed up for more than one magazine subscription you may receive a magazine on cartridge that has more than one title on the cartridge. Or, if you use BARD to download multiple books onto a cartridge or USB flash drive you may find these instructions helpful.

To access the multiple titles on the cartridge follow these directions:

1. Insert the cartridge that has multiple titles on it into your player.
2. Hold down the Play/Stop button (the large square shaped button in the center of the player) until you hear a beep and the word "Bookshelf." You are now in "Bookshelf" mode and can release the Play/Stop button.
3. Next, you can use the fast forward or rewind buttons (they are triangle shaped buttons directly to the right and left of the Play/Stop button). Press and release (don't hold down) the fast forward or rewind buttons to move to the next title on the cartridge.
4. When you come to the title you want to listen to, press and release the Play/Stop button. The title will begin to play.
5. If you want to switch titles again, you can enter "Bookshelf" mode by repeating these steps at any time.

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## More Book Awards: the Best of the Best, continued

In our fall 2015 newsletter, our article about award-winning books received a lot of positive comments from readers and many of you were interested in reading those books, so we are pleased to offer up a few more suggestions for books that are the best of the best in their specific field or genre. Here are a few more book awards to check out.

The PEN/Faulkner award has honored one American literary fiction work of excellence annually since 1981. The 2016 PEN/Faulkner award went to James Hannaham for the novel *Delicious Foods* (DB81066). The 2015 award went to Atticus Lish for *Preparation for the Next Life* (DB81409).

We mentioned the Pulitzer Prize for fiction works in the last newsletter, but the Pulitzer Prize is also awarded to certain types of nonfiction books. The 2015 best general nonfiction book was *The Sixth Extinction an Unnatural History* (DB78463/BR20478) by Elizabeth Kolbert, and the Pulitzer 2015 for best biography went to *The Pope and Mussolini the Secret History of Pius XI and the Rise of Fascism in Europe* (DB78327) by David I. Kertzer. The 2016 Pulitzer for best history book went to *Custer's Trials a Life on the Frontier of a New America* (DB83009) by T. J. Stiles.

The Spur Award has been given out annually by the Western Writers of America since 1953 and honors a variety of fiction and nonfiction books about the American West. The 2016 best historical Western novel was *Paradise Sky* (DB82034) by Joe R. Lansdale. *Bad Country* (DB80369) by C. B. McKenzie won for best contemporary Western novel in 2015.

The Agatha Award honors mystery books published in the U.S by a living author writing in the style of Agatha Christie. These books do not contain explicit descriptions of sex and/or violence. There are several categories included such as contemporary mystery, historical mystery, best first novel, and more. The 2014 best contemporary mystery was Hank Phillippi Ryan's *Truth Be Told* (DB79865) and the best historical mystery for 2014 was Rhys Bowen's *Queen of Hearts* (DB79668).

The Hammett Prize is awarded by the International Association of Crime Writers North America Branch (IACW/NA) for excellence in crime fiction

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published either in Canada or the United States. IACW/NA defines crime books to include many genres and subgenres such as mysteries, suspense, espionage, and thrillers. The 2014 winner was Stephen King's *Mr. Mercedes* (DB79570).

The Nebula Award is bestowed by the Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America and has been awarded since 1965. The 2015 Nebula for best novel went to *Uprooted* (DB81693/BR21282) by Naomi Novik.

The Bram Stoker Award is presented by the Horror Writers Association to works of fiction that exhibit superior achievement in the horror genre. The 2013 best novel was *Doctor Sleep* (DB77471/BR20278) by Stephen King and the 2012 best novel was *The Drowning Girl a Memoir* (DB76134) by Caitlín R. Kiernan. In 2015 the best novel was *A Head Full of Ghosts* by Paul Tremblay (DB82566).

The American Library Association selects several books a year in the categories of teen, middle school, and children's books, for the Schneider Family Book Award, which honors authors whose works embody "an artistic expression of the disability experience for child and adolescent audiences." *The Unlikely Hero of Room 13B* (DB82326/BR21201) by Teresa Toten won the 2016 Schneider award for best teen book. *Fish in a Tree* (DB80497/ BR21151) by Lynda Mullaly Hunt and *The War that Saved My Life* (DB80472/BR20662) by Kimberly Brubaker Bradley both won the award for 2016 best middle school book. *Emmanuel's Dream the True Story of Emmanuel Ofose Yeboah* (BR21066) by Laurie Ann Thompson won the 2016 Schneider award for best children's book.

## **2017 Braille Calendars Available**

Miniature, spiral bound braille calendars are available while supplies last. Please call, write, or email the library at [btbl@library.ca.gov](mailto:btbl@library.ca.gov) to request one.

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## Tax Return Preparation Help

People who are unable to complete their tax return because of a physical disability may get assistance from a local IRS Tax Assistance Center (TAC) or through a Volunteer Income Tax Assistance or Tax Counseling for the Elderly site (VITA or TCE). To find a TAC near you, visit [IRS.gov](https://www.irs.gov), select the link Contact Your Local Office. You can also find a nearby VITA or TCE location by calling 1-800-906-9887.

The IRS also provides popular federal tax forms and publications for download in braille, large text, and accessible PDFs. Helpful tax topics are discussed in online videos that include captions, audio description, American Sign Language, and text transcripts. Visit [www.irs.gov/accessibility](https://www.irs.gov/accessibility).

## Summer Camp Group Tours BTBL

In late June, the Community Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired - from Stockton - brought their summer camp kids to Sacramento for a special tour of BTBL and the California State Library (CSL). Current staff had never presented a kid-only low-vision group event on the premises, so the seven guests, ages 9-13, were good-natured "guinea pigs."

In the morning they were given a tour of the rehabilitated historic CSL building across the street from us. The docents had designed a special tactile tour just for this group, so they were allowed to touch artwork - statues large and small - and play with the old-fashioned catalog card file drawers which make up the walls of a restored room.

After a lunch break, they came to us. We toured the two floors of the library occupied by BTBL, talked about equipment options, and let them have "hands-on" with as much of the equipment and books as we had time to inspect - from rolling bookshelves to the insides of cartridges. We even managed to squeeze in a tactile craft project. None of the attendees had been signed up with us prior to the event and all left wanting to sign up, so we considered the day a success.

Other individuals and groups are encouraged to contact us for onsite tours.

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## **Accessibility Phone Support from Microsoft and Apple**

Microsoft has a Disability Answer Desk (DAD) featuring staff who specialize in assisting customers with disabilities as well as providing support using accessibility settings in Microsoft products. Help is available for screen magnifiers, speech recognition software, Microsoft-compatible devices and accessibility features.

The DAD at 800-963-5900 is available Monday - Friday from 6am - 10pm and weekends from 7am - 6pm. More information, including a 24/7 chat link, is available at [microsoft.com/enable](https://microsoft.com/enable).

Apple also offers a telephone support desk specifically for customers who have visual, hearing, motor, or learning impairments and features Apple representatives who are trained in providing support using accessibility services for all Apple products. Apple Accessibility Support at 877-204-3930 is available 24/7. More information is available at [apple.com/support/accessibility](https://apple.com/support/accessibility).

## **"BARD Express" Software for PCs Is Here**

NLS has been designing a new software program aimed at helping BARD (Braille and Audio Reading Download) users who have personal computers which run on Windows operating systems (XP, Vista, 7, 8, 8.1, and 10) to download books. The goal of the software is to simplify logging in, searching, browsing, downloading, and transferring audio reading material from the BARD website. (BARD Express is *\*NOT\** a replacement for the BARD Mobile application which is meant for mobile devices like smartphones and tablets.) The software and more information about it is now available on your BARD main page under Additional Links, then BARD Express. NLS has also produced a set of tutorial videos, called the BARD Express How-To Series which are linked from the Frequently Asked Questions pages found in the BARD Express Documentation link.

Braille and Talking Book Library  
California State Library  
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Sacramento, CA 94237-0001

Free Matter for the Blind and  
Physically Handicapped

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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.

**916-654-0640** or **800-952-5666** (toll-free in CA)

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

Office closures: We will be closed Dec. 26 (Christmas Day observed), Jan. 2 (New Year observed), Jan. 16 (M. L. King, Jr. Day), Feb. 20 (Presidents Day), Mar. 31 (C. Chavez 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 8<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 345, Sacramento, CA, 95814-4809. Donations can also be made online at: [cslnfdn.org](http://cslnfdn.org). Follow the link to "Join/Donate Online." There is a place to designate BTBL as the recipient.