

BTBL News

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

New Series no. 9 (Summer 2013)

A Message from Mike Marlin, Director

Blazing summer greetings from the Central Valley and Sacramento - land of a thousand trees. I hope the first half of 2013 was a productive time for all of you and that you have found lots of great books and magazines to read and enjoy.

With the advent of the new Magazines on Cartridge (MOC) program from the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS), which is highlighted in this newsletter, it is important to note that this *BTBL News* edition will be the last issued on audiocassette. As we move into the fifth year of the analog-to-digital book transition in the NLS network, the Cassette Book Machine has become a secondary mode of playback and is slowly moving toward obsolescence. For this reason, we plan henceforth to begin circulating our newsletter on audio cartridge, similar to the way magazines on cartridge now circulate. We are awaiting purchase of cartridges in August or September, and, if all goes well, we should be able to begin digital cartridge newsletter circulation by early 2014. If we are unable to produce and circulate the next *BTBL News* edition on cartridges, we will send large print versions to "audio-only" recipients and continue to post the audio version for download on our web site. When we are ready, we will make newsletters on cartridge available to those who require and prefer them. If you have questions or concerns about *BTBL News* formats, please feel free to contact a BTBL staff member with your feedback.

I'm excited to announce that in 2014 we will be inaugurating a long-awaited venture - a BTBL User Advisory Council. Please read the article about it in this issue and consider applying this fall to serve as a council member beginning in early 2014.

Still wondering about Braille and Audio Reading Download (BARD) apps for Android and iOS devices? The good news is that a beta version of the iOS BARD app was demonstrated at the American Council of the Blind and National Federation of the Blind national conventions in July. We hope it will be ready for prime time in the fall of 2013 followed by an Android app several months later. It will be worth the wait!

NLS convened a "Braille Summit" in June in Boston, Massachusetts to discuss how the network and braille stakeholders can move forward to strengthen NLS's commitment to braille and braille literacy in light of technological changes and opportunities. A report summarizing the Summit is forthcoming and we'll link to it from our web site when it is available. If you have feedback about the NLS braille service, I encourage you to contact me so that I can pass your comments along to NLS Director Karen Keninger.

Our latest batch of 80 new descriptive movie DVDs are now available to borrow, and we expect to buy another slate of new titles by the end of the year to be ready for circulation in 2014. Please let us know how the service is working for you.

We plan to roll out a patron survey in conjunction with the next newsletter, and we will look forward to your responses then. The survey will cover library services, customer service, and technological trends and will randomly select a predefined number of patrons but will also be available to take online and via telephone for those who are interested.

We say farewell to the California State Library Foundation's retiring Executive Assistant Julia Schaw, who for the past 8 plus years has handled BTBL donations, special purchases, and various BTBL fiscal matters. We will miss Julia's organizational prowess, wry sense of humor, and warm heart, and we wish her a wonderful retirement. Julia's replacement, Marta Knight, is off to a running start and we are extremely pleased she has joined the Foundation and will be working on our behalf.

Have a great summer in Northern California and enjoy the beauty that surrounds us.

Audio Magazines Now on Digital Cartridge

The National Library Service (NLS) has completed its transition of the audio magazine program from cassettes to digital cartridges. All NLS-produced magazines are now being circulated on digital cartridge.

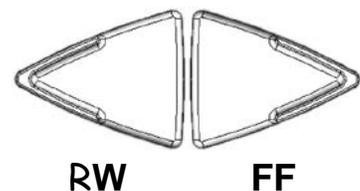
The digital cartridges are much more expensive than the cassettes but their cost is offset by their reuse. Please **do not throw away NLS magazines on digital cartridge** as you may have done with your past cassette subscriptions. You now need to return your digital magazines to their producer (not BTBL), whose address is on the flip side of the address card.

Digital magazines come in a red box and the cartridges are light blue. Raised lettering and braille on the box give another indication that a magazine is inside. Each of the cartridges may have more than one magazine on it, particularly if you are subscribed to multiple magazines. If there are multiple magazines loaded on the cartridge, the player will tell you how many there are as soon as you push in the cartridge.

The digital talking book player has a bookshelf feature to let you access the different magazines. To activate the bookshelf feature, press and hold the green, rectangular Play/Stop button on your player until you hear it say, "Bookshelf."



You can then use the FF and RW buttons to move through the list of magazines on the cartridge. Once you have selected the magazine you want to read, press the Play/Stop button again to start playing it.



Complete audio instructions for using the bookshelf feature are included at the beginning of all cartridges that contain more than one magazine issue.

The loan period for digital cartridges is not the same as for books. The loan period for cartridges with just weekly publications on them is one week after you receive them. The loan period for cartridges containing monthly, bimonthly, and/or quarterly publications is one month after you receive them, even if they also include weekly publications.

Summer Reading Picks from the BTBL Staff

Remarkable Creatures by Tracy Chevalier DB 70792

"Loosely based on a true story, this book explores the friendship between a spinster and a young girl who are brought together as they collect fossils. The excellent writing style made this a joy to read." - Johanna, Circulation

The Art of Racing in the Rain by Garth Stein DB/RC 66787, BR 17801

"This is an amusing, yet touching story written from the perspective of a dog. I laughed, I cried, and couldn't put it down. Definitely my all-time favorite book." - Joan, Circulation

Eucalyptus by Murray Bail BR 12057

"Like some modern fairy tale, anyone who wants to marry Ellen must first name all the varieties of eucalyptus on her father's estate. Meanwhile she falls in love with a storyteller. A great love story." - Robert, Database Administrator

The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter by Carson McCullers DB/RC 58532, BR 11395

"This book is for anyone who has ever felt a little 'different.' Great character development and compassion displayed as the players explore their world and relationships to those around them in a small American town." - Valerie, Reader Advisor

*A Summer in Sonoma** by Robyn Carr DB 71790

"A relaxing read about four girlfriends turning 30 together. As a northern California native, I enjoyed the way the author incorporated real-life landmarks, shops, cafes, and wineries into the story." - Laura, Reader Advisor

*Strong language

*The Witness*** by Nora Roberts DB 74582

"Sixteen-year-old Elizabeth witnesses a homicide and goes into hiding, but twelve years later she must confront the past - with the help of a sexy sheriff. A fast paced adventure with a strong heroine!" - Juana, Circulation

**Sex, violence, strong language

BTBL User Advisory Council Inaugural Launch

In 2014, following the example of NLS network libraries nationwide, BTBL will launch a 7-15 member User Advisory Council. The bylaws for the council will soon be posted on our web page. In September or October we anticipate soliciting council member applicants with an application form. The form will be available online and via fax or U.S. mail in all formats upon request. The purpose of the group will be to provide advice to the California State Library (CSL) and BTBL. Council members will have an opportunity to advise and make recommendations to BTBL and CSL management for improvements to library services. The Council is not a policy-making body.

We will be seeking diverse geographical and print disability demographic representation, as well as appointed representatives from the California Council of the Blind, National Federation of the Blind of California, and the Blinded Veterans Association of California. The initial applications will be reviewed by a selection committee of BTBL staff. Once the council is set in motion, the responsibility to review applications will fall to the council. The council will meet three to four times per year - via teleconference or online - with one annual expenses-paid, in-person meeting at the State Library in Sacramento. Councilor terms will last for three years, with some one- and two-year terms in the beginning in order to achieve three-year staggered terms for the duration.

Spotlight: Circulation Department

The Circulation department staff members at BTBL work hard to provide your chosen reading materials. Their day starts around 6:30 a.m. when Daniel arrives to start printing out the 2,500-3,000 mailing cards to be matched to outgoing books and equipment that day. When Marian (Circulation Supervisor), Joan, Johanna, Tanisha and Joanna arrive, they begin matching the cards to the books to prepare them for the outgoing mail by 11:00 a.m. After these items have gone out, the staff members sort the books that have returned (another 2,500-3,000), put as many as possible through our volunteer-supported book inspection, and then check them in so they are available for the next reader the following day. Books that came in the previous day but

which have not been chosen by the computer for immediate re-circulation are re-shelved.

After the bulk of the day's mail has been handled, the staff moves on to other circulation duties:

- Daniel takes care of the outgoing and returning digital and cassette machines. He prepares the outgoing ones for shipping, and unpacks and sends incoming ones to Charlie in our Machine Repair department.
- Joan maintains our braille collection. She pulls the books that you have requested, checks them back in when you return them, and puts them away. She also processes the new braille books so they are ready to fill requests.
- Johanna enters the requests from the order forms you send in from your *Talking Book Topics* or *Braille Book Review* magazines. She helps with our reception calls in the afternoons, so you may hear her friendly voice when you call us.
- Joanna checks the books you have marked as damaged and matches loose cartridges with containers that have arrived separately or mismatched.
- Tanisha works on getting the shelves properly labeled to receive our new books.

All of the staff works hard to make room for new books by shifting the books around in our 12,000-square-foot basement and removing books no longer needed. The extra books are offered to other NLS libraries or sent for recycling (cassettes) or reuse (cartridges) - a procedure which requires yet more mail processing and computer updates.

You can help our hardworking circulation department by paying attention to several things as you prepare to mail books back to us:

1. Check to make sure that the book container you are returning has a book inside and that it is the CORRECT book for the container (and the COMPLETE book if it is a cassette format).
2. Make a large "X" mark in the upper left corner of the returning mail card if something is wrong with the book inside.
3. Don't put notes or other communications inside the container or on the mailing card.

Digital Talking Book Player DOs and DON'Ts

DO play your digital talking book player **with or without** having it plugged in.

DON'T leave your player **UN**-used for long periods of time without having it plugged **IN**.

DO leave your player plugged **IN**, if you can.

DON'T expect the battery to always recharge to the original 29+ hours it got when new (anything at or above 12 hours is considered acceptable).

DO call us for a replacement machine if your battery won't charge above one hour.

DON'T be surprised if the charging time drops dramatically from one time to the next - especially if you have been using a flash drive instead of a cartridge.

DO call us for a replacement machine if your battery charge time is too short for your convenience (if it is charging less than 12 hours).

Talking Book Topics (TBT) Now on Digital Cartridge

(Adapted from *See Note* by the Utah State Library for the Blind and Disabled, Summer 2013)

Talking Book Topics (TBT) is produced every two months and contains information on the newest books produced by NLS. Like other magazines, the audio version is now being produced on digital cartridge. **Readers are required to return these TBT magazine digital cartridges for reuse.**

The order form for TBT will arrive separately from the digital cartridge. Please send your completed order form to the Braille and Talking Book Library in Sacramento, not to the TBT producer. Please return the TBT digital cartridge to the TBT producer.

Braille and Talking Book Library
California State Library
P.O. Box 942837
Sacramento, CA 94237-0001

Free Matter for the Blind and
Physically Handicapped

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

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, on cassette, through e-mail, and in large print upon request, or through our website.

Library Service Hours: 9:30 AM - 4:00 PM, Monday-Friday
Phone: 916-654-0640; 800-952-5666 (toll-free in CA); 916-654-1119 (fax)
E-mail for customer requests or contact information: btbl@library.ca.gov
Website: btbl.ca.gov ; Web Catalog: btbl.library.ca.gov.

Office closures: We will be closed Sep. 2 (Labor Day), Nov. 11 (Veterans Day), Nov. 28 & 29 (Thanksgiving), Dec. 25 (Christmas).

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: www.csifdn.org. Follow the link to "Join/Donate Online." There is a place to designate BTBL as the recipient.