



BTBL News

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

New Series no. 8 (Winter 2012/2013)

A Message from Mike Marlin, Director

Once again I extend greetings and thanks to all of our patrons for a successful year of reading. Whichever format you prefer (braille, cassette, cartridge, descriptive video, electronic download, or even through alternate means such as bookshare.org, audible.com, learningally.org, etc.), I am encouraged that you are staying informed — and entertained — in the ever-changing and rapid paced world of the 21st century.

Speaking of important changes, soon National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS) magazines will be available on circulating digital cartridge and the cassette magazine service discontinued. In addition, as of November 27, 2012, electronic (formerly web) braille, has been added to the Braille and Audio Reading Download (BARD) web site. Please read through the following articles to learn about these developments. We continue to receive questions about apps for the Android and iOS devices. NLS director, Karen Keninger, has made this a top priority, and NLS staff are busy working to develop and implement apps that will enable NLS patrons with Android and iPhones to listen to downloaded BARD content. Though I cannot provide an exact launch date, I would hazard a *guess* that contracts with Google and Apple will facilitate implementation sometime in 2013.

On the descriptive DVD front, we are in the process of acquiring 80 new titles for movies released within the past year and a half. We hope to have these items cataloged and ready to circulate sometime in early 2013. Stay tuned to our web site or ask your reader advisor for updates on new DVS films. Check out the ensuing article on movie theaters nationwide implementing DVS — an exciting development. Finally, I want to welcome Peggy Dreher, our newest Reader Advisory Services staff member who comes

to us from the California State Library's Information Services section. Peggy is busy learning the intricacies of BTBL, and you will undoubtedly be hearing her voice on the phone more often. As for departures, State Librarian of California, Stacey Aldrich, has moved on to become State Librarian of Pennsylvania, an opportunity that takes her back to her PA family roots. I want to thank Stacey for all her hard work and advocacy on behalf of BTBL over the past five years. She is committed to equal access for persons with print disabilities and will no doubt continue that support for patrons in her new state. Library Development Services Chief, Gerry Maginnity, is serving as Acting State Librarian.

Audio Magazines Going Digital

(Adapted from Idaho *Connections Talking Book Service News* Summer 2012)

In early 2013, NLS will begin transitioning its audio magazine program to digital cartridges. Upon completion of the transition, all audio magazine readers who receive their magazines by mail will need to have a digital talking book machine in order to listen to their magazines. Please contact us to request a digital player if you do not already have one.

The blue audio magazine cartridges will ship in dark red containers with a distinctive logo. The cartridges may contain several audio magazines to which you subscribe. When a cartridge with more than one magazine is inserted into a digital talking book player, it will announce instructions for navigating among the multiple magazines on that cartridge.

The cartridges will be sent out at the frequency of your most frequent magazine. For example, readers of *The Week* will receive their cartridges once a week. The cartridge will also contain any of their monthly magazines that have arrived during that week.

Magazine cartridges are reused and **must be returned**. The process for cartridge return is the same for both books and magazines: turn over the address card on the container and place the cartridge in its container for mailing. As with books, if cartridges are not returned your service may be disrupted.

Readers who receive *Talking Book Topics* (TBT) on cassette will soon receive it on digital cartridge with their other audio magazines. The print order forms for TBT will be mailed to users separately from the magazine cartridge. As with other magazine titles circulated on cartridges, TBT must be returned in order to receive future issues.

NLS Overhauls the BARD Site

NLS has recently implemented a major upgrade of the Braille and Audio Reading Download (BARD) service. Current BARD users will notice big changes and former Web-Braille users will now need to access their electronic braille files of books, magazines and music scores via BARD.

The addition of braille to the site means that all users may view both braille and audio materials. But if you are not a braille reader or don't own a device* that can read the downloaded braille files, there is a way to suppress the braille displays. From the BARD main page, choose "Update Account Settings" and then find the combo box labeled "Display Results." The default setting is "both," but you can choose "audio" or "braille" to display only materials in the selected medium.

NLS has added the ability to create a "wish list," eliminating the need to go directly to download when you find a title of interest. The wish list items stay in place through multiple BARD sessions until you remove them. The new BARD also displays your "previous downloads list" — a handy way to check a previous author or series name you can't quite recall or just to be sure you haven't already downloaded the item.

When you first search BARD you will get short entries with the basic information about a particular book, but if you click on the link at the top of the entry, you will get a much more detailed description of the item which also includes further links to the author's other works on BARD or the series name, etc., and the ability to place it on your wish list.

For a complete listing of the new changes to BARD, please visit <https://nlsbard.loc.gov/NLS/NewBARDOverview.html> .

(*NLS digital talking book players do not play braille files.)

Holiday Reads

Pull up a chair in front of the fire, settle in with a cup of hot cocoa, and enjoy these holiday-themed reads! Please contact your reader advisor with your request.

The Frugal Gourmet Celebrates Christmas BR 14218, RC 54501

Holiday stories, traditions, wit, and wisdom, as well as recipes for Christmas, Hanukkah, and European feasts.

When Christmas Comes BR 15868, DB/RC 59692

Two strangers meet over the internet and swap homes seeking a quiet Christmas - only to discover new romance instead.

The Dog Who Came to Stay DB/RC 64728

A nature writer's account of his dog, Pat, a stray who wandered onto his farm one stormy Christmas night and found a lifelong home.

Christmas at the Mysterious Bookshop DB 72892

Seventeen short holiday mysteries about a New York City bookstore. Includes well-known authors such as Mary Higgins Clark and Anne Perry.

The New Year's Quilt: an Elm Creek Quilts Novel BR 17646, DB/RC 66840

Newlywed Sylvia recalls youthful New Year's memories, prompting her to reach out to her new stepdaughter.

Kwanzaa: an African-American celebration of culture and cooking DB/RC

34528 A sourcebook for the observance of the week-long African American celebration of the "first fruits" (December 26 - January 1).

The power of light: eight stories for Hanukkah DB 71860

Stories for young and old, one for each of the eight nights of the holiday.

2013 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 to request one.

Movie Theaters Make Movie-going Accessible

Regal and Cinemark theater locations now offer technology that assists blind and low-vision movie-goers (as well as deaf and hard-of-hearing patrons). Currently, all Regal theater locations nationwide and all Cinemark theaters in California offer this technology. Cinemark plans to have these features in all theaters nationwide by mid-2013.

At the theaters, movie-goers can borrow special headsets to hear descriptive narration (DN) tracks. DN tracks are a second audio track with special narration describing the action on the screen during natural breaks in the film dialog. Patrons may also borrow special devices (lightweight eyewear at Regal or an OLED display at Cinemark) to enable direct viewing of closed captioned (CC) text. DN and CC can only be accessed by use of this special equipment and is not audible or visible to other movie-goers. This means that DN and CC are available for all show times throughout the day (for those movie titles that offer DN/CC).

To find movie titles that offer DN/CC:

- Call your local theater directly to ensure a movie has DN/CC.
- Fandango.com - movie titles will be noted with "Accessibility Devices."
- CaptionFish.com - all movie times/theaters listed have DN/CC.
- Cinemark.com/closed-caption-list - a "quick look" text list of all current movie titles playing at Cinemark that have DN/CC.
- Cinemark.com - Visit the "Theaters" tab to find your local theater. Movie titles will be noted with an image "Descriptive Narration" or "Closed Caption." Also, a section titled "Caption/Description" has a text list of current movie titles with DN/CC at your local theater.
- Regmovies.com - First find your local theater's webpage. Individual movie times are followed by "(CC)." According to a staff member at Regal, about 90% of the movies listed with "(CC)" also offer a descriptive narration track.

Improved Phone Menus

We have been working to improve the phone menus of our automatic call distribution system. Most questions can be answered by a reader advisor, found in the first menu option. Here is a step-by-step guide to help you reach your reader advisor.

- Press 1 for English
- Press 1 for Reader advisors
- If the patron's last name begins with the letters:
 - A through D, Press 2
 - E through K, Press 3
 - L through Q, Press 4
 - R or S, Press 5
 - T through Z, Press 6
 - For Institutions, Press 1

Contact other staff of the Braille and Talking Book Library using these options.

- Press 1 for English
- Press 2 for staff in other BTBL Departments
- The options on this menu are:
 - 1 Applications - To receive a new application or reach the application desk
 - 2 Registration - To make address, phone number, or name changes or to cancel service
 - 3 BARD - For help with the BARD download service
 - 4 Magazines - For help with magazine subscriptions
 - 5 Reference Librarian - For more complex reference questions
 - 6 Library Director - To contact BTBL's program manager for additional questions and concerns.

If you do not press any buttons at all or if you are having difficulty, you may just stay on the line or press 0 (zero) to connect with our receptionist.

Digital Talking Book Machine Tips

Three common problems you may be having with your digital talking book machine (also called a digital player) are as follows:

Problem: "After I insert a book into the player, it starts describing the controls and will not play the book."

Solution: This will happen when the book is not inserted into the player all the way. When pushing a book into the player, it will come to a slight stop, then push slightly harder and the book will click into its playing position. Do not be overly gentle: both the book and player have a sturdy design. If you still cannot get the book to play, please contact us for assistance.

Problem: "While I was listening to a book, I pulled the book out of the player and heard 'Cartridge Error'."

Solution: This error is benign, and can be ignored.

Problem: "When I insert a book from your library, the player says 'Cartridge Error'."

Solution: Try another book from our library. If another book works, the first book may be defective and should be returned to us marked "damaged." Please check the box on the return label in the upper left hand side of the card where it says "Check if damaged." If you would like to have a replacement copy of the defective book, please contact your reader advisor. If all the library books you insert say "Cartridge Error," please contact us for assistance.

Affordable Computers for the Blind or Visually Impaired

The Texas Center for the Visually Challenged (TCVC) offers affordable computers that are customized for visually impaired users across the United States. TCVC asks for a \$100 gift to cover replacement parts and handling. To express your interest in receiving a computer send an email to info@computersfortheblind.net or call (214) 340-6328. A representative from TCVC will call the potential computer recipient to talk about the computer learning process and describe the technology requirements.

Reading Room Computers Get a Facelift

BTBL is happy to report that we have updated our assistive technology workstations in our Sacramento reading room with the latest versions of Jaws for Windows, WindowEyes, Magic, Zoomtext, Open Book, Kurzweil1000, and Duxbury. At present there are two adjustable and accessible workstation Windows-based computers outfitted with the aforementioned screen reader, screen magnification, optical character recognition, and braille translation software. Each computer has its own attached scanner for scanning print documents into accessible text, and one PC attaches to a braille embosser enabling computer files to be embossed into braille. These workstations are available to use via walk-in or by appointment to all existing and/or eligible patrons, and we encourage you to utilize these resources. BTBL librarians and reader advisors are available to assist and/or troubleshoot with assistive technology and BARD questions, and we encourage scheduling ahead for more in-depth rather than cursory assistance.

At present we share our reading room with three other California State Library sections while CSL's Library and Courts I building nears the completion of its renovation. In mid- to late 2013, when BTBL resumes sole occupancy of our reading room, we are looking to expand training opportunities for patrons requesting help with assistive technology and downloading from BARD. Meanwhile, if you live in the greater Sacramento metropolitan area, are passing through, or would like to visit us and examine our accessible computer workstations, please contact us to set up an appointment.

Patron Spotlight: 96 Year Young Jack Vance, Legendary Fantasy/Science Fiction Author

Born John Holbrook Vance in 1916 in San Francisco, Jack spent many formative years on his maternal grandfather's ranch in Oakley in the Delta of the Sacramento River. He enrolled at U.C. Berkeley where he studied mining engineering, physics, journalism, and English, graduating in 1942. Soon thereafter Vance joined the Merchant Marine. The theme of boating appeared frequently in his writings and many years later led to a joint venture

sailing a houseboat in the Sacramento River Delta with co-builders and fellow science fiction authors Frank Herbert (*Dune*, DB/RC 44126) and Poul Anderson (*Tau Zero*, DB/RC 13290). Over the years Vance and his wife Norma traveled around the world, living for extensive periods in Ireland, Tahiti, South Africa, Positano (Italy), and on a houseboat in Lake Nagin in Kashmir.

Legally blind since the 1980s due to complications from a medical procedure, Jack continued to write using specialized software. His final novels, *Ports of Call* (RC 49461) and *Lurulu*, a duology published in 1998 and 2004, are his favorites. He followed these with his final publication, an autobiography, in 2009. Since his first published story, "The World-Thinker" in *Thrilling Wonder Stories* in 1945, Jack has written over 60 books, novellas, and hundreds of short stories.

Vance received the Edgar Award for *The Man in the Cage* in 1961, the Hugo Award in 1963 for *The Dragon Masters*, in 1967 Hugo and Nebula awards for *The Last Castle*, the World Fantasy Award for Life Achievement in 1984 and the World Fantasy Award for Best Novel in 1990 for *Lyonesse: Madouc*. *The Lyonesse Trilogy* is available on cassette only: *Suldrun's Garden* (RC 20515), *The Green Pearl* (RC 39261), and *Madouc* (RC 39552). *The Jack Vance Treasury* (DB/RC 65161) is a fantastic mixture of short stories and novellas, including *The Dragon Masters* and *The Last Castle* that will give you a taste of Jack's prose, wit, and imagination.

Since losing his sight, Jack has been a voracious reader of NLS talking books. He has collected NLS annual catalogs going back several decades, and goes through each one meticulously to find detective and murder mysteries, paranormal science and modern physics, occult fiction, world history, art, and poetry. Reading is important to Vance and has been all his life. No longer able to sail, travel the world, or drive around California to various state and national parks as he once did frequently, Jack finds solace in magazines such as *National Geographic*. Asked if he reads current science fiction or fantasy authors, Jack gave an emphatic "No," harking back to the days of writers such as Robert Silverberg, Ray Bradbury, Robert Heinlein, and Harlan Ellison as the masters of the craft. When probed further Jack revealed he simply lost interest in the genre and prefers to read mysteries.

Jack says he feels quite healthy for 96. He spends much time these days listening to and playing music, mostly swing, big band, and old-timey jazz with a little Hawaiian music sprinkled in. Jack sings, plays baritone ukulele, harmonica, and kazoo, and is about to release "Jack Vance and the Go for Broke Band," a duo CD which will soon be available through www.jackvance.com, a web site that sells eBooks and other items from the Vance Catalog.

In discussing paranormal science, Jack fondly remembered checking out books about ghosts in the American West. Though he doesn't consider himself religious, Vance said he could be convinced that telepathy is real: "Nobody knows how telepathy works, quantum physics, too, so maybe there is a type of radiation that nobody knows how to define. I think there has to be some kind of energy going on, I mean just being alive leaves an imprint in the environment that must last after you're dead." There's no doubt Jack has left an imprint with his millions of readers around the world as well as the BTBL reader advisory staff who have fed his ravenous literary appetite for the past 30 years!

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 or through a Volunteer Income Tax Assistance or Tax Counseling for the Elderly site (VITA or TCE). To find a Tax Assistance Center near you, visit IRS.gov, select Contact IRS, and then select Contact Your Local IRS 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.

What is BTBL Staff Reading?

Major Pettigrew's Last Stand DB/RC 70760, BR 18827

"A staunch, retired Major falls unexpectedly in love with a Pakistani shop owner. This sweet love story starts a bit slow, but is a light and uplifting read. I love that the book explores the blending of two cultures and intolerance from family members that the couple must face." -Joan, Circulation

The Tin Drum DB 71622, RC 11512

"Considered a classic and penned by a Nobel Prize winning author, the unique perspective of German culture during the Nazi regime stands out in this odd story of drummer, Oskar Matzerath, who quits growing at the age of three." -Johanna, Circulation

The Girl Who Circumnavigated Fairyland in a Ship of Her Own Making
DB 73304

"Fans of *The Wizard of Oz* and *Alice in Wonderland* will enjoy this magical tale of a clever girl from Nebraska and her adventures in Fairyland. Filled with humor, heart, and vibrant writing." -Robert, Reader Advisor

Still Alice DB/RC 68429

"This fictional novel offers an eye-opening exploration into Alzheimer's disease from a unique perspective — that of the patient. Follow Harvard professor Alice Howard's fall into early-onset Alzheimer's." -Sarah, Reader Advisor

Condominium DB/RC 10862

"You feel like you're there to experience the fast-paced world of those who chose retirement living in Florida's Keys only to find their world turned 'upside down' by corruption, greed, and the vagaries of the unexpected." -Valerie, Reader Advisor

What books do you recommend? We are looking for "not-so-popular" book selections and *the reason why you enjoyed them* (more than what they are about). Send us your recommendations and they may appear in a future newsletter!

Braille and Talking Book Library
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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
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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 Dec. 24 & 25 (Christmas), Dec. 31 & Jan. 1 (New Years), Jan. 21 (MLK), Feb. 18 (Presidents' Day), April 1 (Cesar Chavez), May 27 (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: www.csifdn.org. Follow the link to "Join/Donate Online." There is a place to designate BTBL as the recipient.