

**BRaille AND TALKING BOOK LIBRARY USER ADVISORY COUNCIL  
DRAFT 1.2 Provisional Minutes (Slated to be voted on at meeting of Jan. 26,  
2016.  
December 5, 2015**

**Attendees:**

**Members Present:** Alan Smith, Mary Willows, Kathleen Berman, Karen Parsegian, Roslyn McCoy, Margie Donovan.

**Members absent:** Debee Armstrong, Claire LeDonne, Elena Thomason, Rio Popper.

**Staff present:** Mike Marlin, BTBL Director: Mary Jane Kayes, Librarian, Donna Scales, Readers Advisory Supervisor.

Note taker: Mary Willows

**INTRODUCTIONS AND WELCOME:**

The sixth meeting (fourth of 2015) of the Braille and Talking Book Library User Advisory Council was called to order at 10:10 a.m. by President Alan Smith. All members and staff introduced themselves.

**Approval of Agenda**

Mover: Margie Donovan, Seconder: Kathey Berman

The agenda was approved unanimously.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes of August 29, 2015 were approved with one abstention and one amendment. Rio Popper is on the Selection Committee not the Recognition Committee.

Mover: Karen Parsegian, Seconder: Roslyn McCoy.

**CSL Volunteer Form (Online)**

As background, BUAC members had been asked shortly before the meeting to complete the CSL online volunteer form for Human Resources administrative protocols in addition to the official BUAC application form. Some members encountered some issues which were discussed. Recommendations were made to improve the form.

First, Alan Smith recommended that an additional comment be added to the instructions. Volunteers should be warned that the on line form will “time out”. Librarian Mary Jane said that the developer has been notified and will work to eliminate the time-out restriction on the software.

Second, it was pointed out that no instructions for Phone number format on the form exist. Quotation marks are used after the parenthesis around the area code. If you cannot see the quotation mark you learn by trial and error how to write the phone number.

Third, the “Continue” button at the bottom of the page should be relabeled “Submit.” The word “Continue” implies that there is more to fill in yet clicking or

pressing Enter on Continue completes the process and one cannot go back to make changes.

Fourth, Roslyn McCoy indicated that Dragon Naturally Speaking assistive technology dictation software, does not interface accurately with the form fields.

It was moved by Margie and seconded by Karen that the Council recommends to the Volgistics Company (developer of the volunteer tracking forms) that the previous four changes be made. Motion passed unanimously.

Kathey Berman asked if BTBL Advisory Council members will need to fill in another form even though the information was provided at the time when she applied for the Council. Mike said that he would look into that because the application information was provided to BTBL and the Volgistics form is required by the HR Department of CSL. The purpose of the Volgistics volunteer application form is to provide official documentation for CSL so that volunteers are covered by state workers compensation insurance.

#### **BTBL LIBRARY DIRECTOR'S REPORT:**

Mike Marlin reported on news from the Braille and Talking Book Library, events and happenings.

The library held a volunteer appreciation/recognition event which is an annual occurrence during the winter holiday season. There are many volunteer opportunities at the BTBL. Interested persons should talk to Mike and fill in an application for such jobs as: machine repair; labeling; reminder phone calls; matching up loose cartridges with corresponding containers, and monitoring or narrating in the BTBL recording studio.

In 2014-15 fiscal year approximately 80 volunteers logged 4,197 hours. BTBL has been the inspiration for the CSL-wide volunteer program which kicked into gear in 2012-13.

Another upcoming event is Sacramento Museum Day on Saturday, Feb. 6, 2016 with free museum admissions throughout the city. CSL will be included this year and former BTBL reader advisor Laura, who now works in the Information Services section, is planning audio/tactile tours for interested parties with print disabilities.

Mike mentioned the recent HABC training in Washington D.C. for 3 BTBL staff as well as the forthcoming update of recording studio computers and Hindenburg Audio Book Creator software. Both have been received and the Information Technology Bureau plans to implement the upgrades in January. HABC is fully accessible with screen reader software.

It was suggested we advertise recording studio opportunities to college students who could get credit. This is a good idea which Mike will investigate although he is confident BTBL will have no trouble recruiting interested monitors and narrators. Thus far the biggest impediment has been the lack of a paid studio coordinator position, but the staff will share responsibilities for relaunching the

studio once the upgrades have been completed. Once the studio is back in business, completed Californiana books (books by CA authors or about CA) will be submitted to NLS for posting to BARD, including the pilot book BTBL volunteers are engaged in recording now: Chasing Aphrodite: the hunt for Looted Antiquities At The World's Richest Museum (Getty). Mary Jane explained some of the intricacies of markup, the process of inserting navigation points into the software in order to achieve a navigable NLS formatted book.

Mike mentioned the upcoming retirement on Dec. 30 of State Library Services Bureau Chief David Cismowski, Mike's boss for the past 6 years. David has been incredibly supportive of BTBL and ideally so will his replacement, hopefully in place by the middle of 2016.

Mike has been asked by State Librarian Greg Lucas to draft a new Strategic Plan to replace the 2007-10 Short Range Plan drafted by former BTBL Director Aimee Skourakis. Copies of that plan will be sent to the BUAC. Lucas feels a new plan is pivotal for convincing the Department of Finance to move BTBL operation funding from federal back to general funds, as well as sow the seeds for additional staffing. Mike will be working on a new strategic plan and will be welcoming input and feedback from the Council during this process.

Mike mentioned the receipt of 8,000 peach cartridges from NLS and the corresponding translucent containers not yet received. Subsequently the containers arrived in early January. This means that BTBL will soon commence a "duplication on demand" process to fill in the gaps of the collection with titles on cartridge that were formerly available only via download. He also mentioned the possibility of patron-centric cartridges, i.e. monthly or bimonthly burning multiple titles to cartridge for specific patrons based on their requests. The feasibility of this project will depend on current supply of peach cartridges after duplication on demand and future shipments of blank cartridges either from NLS or purchased by BTBL.

Per Roslyn's query, Mike reminded everyone that patrons can receive downloading assistance from their local public librarians, and public libraries can sign up for demonstration BARD accounts to learn how to use the BARD system.

### **TRENDS: Generating Awareness of the Service, Diminishing Numbers, and How to Reverse the Trend: Overall Philosophical Discussion**

There is a nationwide drop in patronage for NLS network libraries, including CA BTBL.WHO, CA Health Survey, and other surveys estimate 1.2 million potentially print disabled in California, 20.6 million in the U.S. California presently serves 45,000 individuals between its two network libraries, NLS nationwide patronage is roughly 500,000 or .5 million including 35k Braille subscribers. This trend, combined with reduced staffing is worrisome. Technology and automation means a slight decrease in staffing is warranted, but states were hit hard by the 2008 recession. Margie mentioned how astounded she was at Enchanted Hills Camp at the number of youth who did not know about BTBL or NLS. We need to reach

out to TVI (Teachers of the Visually Impaired) to start with kids when they're young. Can we piggyback on the AARP magazine article about NLS? Alan mentioned that library visits are starting to trend down as the economy has improved. Alan had heard about the Libraries Transform advocacy campaign from ALA of which Mike, as an ALA Executive Board member is well aware. Pew research studies showing that fewer Americans read was also cited as a reason why patronage has dropped, i.e. literacy levels are much reduced in the U.S.

Alan wondered/suggested we might consider whether the library's name could be changed to better draw in potential patrons? A long discussion about the "Braille and Talking Book Library" name ensued, with mention of Library for the Blind and Print Disabled (San Francisco Public Library's subregional name), Washington Talking Book and Braille Library (where Braille emphasis comes second rather than first), etc. etc. The topics of BTBL advertising in public libraries near their large print sections was broached as was the idea of BTBL/Braille Institute/California Regionals large print bookmarks for public library LP collections.

Roslyn reminded us about 37% of population being dyslexic/learning disabled and that we have to reach them (since Vocational Rehabilitation is not proactive with LD). VR Blind Field Svcs does attempt to sign up every new client with NLS library services.

Writing up a template article about the service for various organization newsletters was suggested and Mike/MJ will work on one.

Alan has an idea for a program about BTBL at the 2016 CLA (California Library Association) conference in Sacramento. All agreed this idea should move forward and a proposal be submitted.

The list of libraries that responded to the State Librarian letter about the CSL print disabilities portal page was once again requested. Mike will send it out before the next Council meeting.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **Selection Committee – Chair Kathleen Berman**

After discussing the applications, three were unanimously chosen to serve on the Advisory Council. The applicants had very good references. We welcome Willis Lyon, a Monterey Bay area veteran and vets advocate, Hyam (Hy) Cohen from Stockton, and Shannon Ramsay (deaf-blind attorney ) from Davis as new members starting in 2016 for three year terms.

There was some discussion about retooling the applications process, changing submission deadlines, reference checking procedures, etc. and the committee will bring suggestions for revised procedures back to the full Council at the Spring 2016 meeting.

### **Legislative Tour – Chair Alan Smith**

The BTBL Advisory Council would like to hold a reception and informational Open House for the legislators so they become familiar with the Braille and Talking Book Library services to all print disabled residence.

Options for dates and times were discussed. The Council agreed to hold the event on Monday, January 25 at 3:00 to 5:00 P.M. and as an alternative the next morning, Tuesday, January 26 at 8:00 to 9:00 A.M. for anyone who could not attend on Monday. Invitations can be sent out via email and postcards. All members of the Council are asked to contact their legislators over the next week to invite them to the event.

### **Outreach Committee**

Karen reported that she was disappointed in the number of responses to the survey she sent out. The purpose was to increase the customer base by 500 patrons over the next year. Generally, it was felt that the application for service is cumbersome. Mary Jane said that there is a possibility that the National Library Service (NLS) may be able to help with sending out email and hard copies of the applications.

**Outreach- Chair Karen Parsegian** will be helping out Mike and Mary Jane with an outreach event on Monday December 7 in Santa Rosa at the Earle Baum Center.

Rosilyn McCoy reported that she has already attended two community outreach events in Redding and Chico to talk about the BTBL and pass out applications. She brings her own equipment and volunteers her time to do this. She was at an event in Chico and Siskiyou County Services for people who work with disabled children and a Lions event in Redding.

Mike said that he would put together a calendar of events over the next few months. There are at least two events each month. We want to collect the number of attendees and the location of the events.

### **2016 Meeting Dates**

The next meeting will be Tuesday, January 26 10:00 A.M. – 3:00 A.m. Setting the other dates was deferred until the next meeting.

**The meeting adjourned at 2:40 PM.**