



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Celebrating 200 Years of Braille: Louis Braille Bicentennial Exhibit and Author Event Presented by the California State Library

The Braille & Talking Book Library, a section of the California State Library, is celebrating Louis Braille's 200th birthday by hosting the Louis Braille Bicentennial Exhibit. A production of National Braille Press, this national traveling exhibit features vibrant images, with print and Braille text, that highlight Louis Braille's life history, the braille production process, and the importance of braille today. The free exhibit will be open to the public September 1 through September 25, excluding Labor Day. Hours are 9 AM to 5 PM, Mondays through Thursdays, and one Friday, September 25. Location for the exhibit is the lobby of Library & Courts Building II, 900 N Street, Sacramento.

A related author event will feature C. Michael Mellor, author of *Louis Braille: A Touch of Genius*, who will discuss his richly illustrated biography of Braille. This talk will be held on Wednesday, September 9, from 2 to 3 PM in the Resources Building Auditorium, 1416 9th St., first floor. A reception follows from 3 to 4:30 PM in the nearby outdoor fragrance garden of Library & Courts Building II, 900 N Street, Sacramento. The Society for the Blind will co-sponsor this event with the Braille & Talking Book Library.

For more information about the exhibit and author event, phone the Braille & Talking Book Library reception desk at (916) 654-0640, (800) 952-5666 (toll free in CA), or e-mail btbl@library.ca.gov. Sample panels from the exhibit can be viewed at http://www.nbp.org/ic/nbp/louis/louis_life.html.

ABOUT LOUIS BRAILLE:

Louis Braille, born in France on January 4, 1809, was blinded by an accident at the age of three. At 15, this bright, creative student devised what is now known as braille, a tactile reading system using six raised dots to correspond to written language. Braille's invention proved so flexible that it has been adapted for virtually every language, as well as music, mathematics, and the sciences. Worldwide celebrations will be held all year to recognize Braille's unparalleled contribution to literacy.

ABOUT THE BRAILLE & TALKING BOOK LIBRARY

The Braille & Talking Book Library (BTBL), a section of the California State Library, serves as the Library of Congress National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped Regional library for Northern California. BTBL loans braille and audio (including downloadable) books, magazines, and playback equipment to northern Californians unable to read conventional print. For more information about BTBL, phone (916) 654-0640 or (800) 952-5666 (toll free in CA), e-mail btbl@library.ca.gov, or visit <http://www.btbl.ca.gov>.

ABOUT THE CALIFORNIA STATE LIBRARY

Founded in 1850, the California State Library is the central reference and research library for the Governor's office, state legislature, state employees, and the general public. It advises and provides technical assistance to California public libraries, and administers federal and state grants that support projects including civil liberties education, historical preservation, library construction, and volunteer programs. For more information about the State Library, visit www.library.ca.gov, or phone Laura Parker at (916) 651-6798.

ABOUT SOCIETY FOR THE BLIND

Society for the Blind serves thousands of blind and visually impaired people throughout the Sacramento area and surrounding counties. Training blind and low vision people on braille, life and job skills, and computers, the Society's mission is to empower individuals to live productively and independently through training, tools and mentorship. For more information, visit <http://www.societyfortheblind.org/> .

ABOUT NATIONAL BRAILLE PRESS

National Braille Press is a non-profit braille publisher that promotes literacy for blind children with outreach and advocacy programs. Headquartered in Boston, NBP has promoted literacy for over eighty years through excellence in braille printing and publishing. For more information, visit www.nbp.org .

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