

Braille and Talking Book Library User Advisory Council

Meeting Minutes produced by Gayle Miller, Secretary

December 7, 2020 10:30 AM - 3:00 PM

Location: Braille and Talking Book Library

900 N Street, Sacramento, CA 95814

## 1. Welcome and self-introductions

### Attendance

Richard Rueda, Chair, Sacramento

Roslyn McCoy, Mt. Shasta, Vice Chair

Lenore Presley, Sacramento

Maile George, Concord

Gayle Miller, Winton

Alan Smith, Concord

Janet Snow, NFBC representative

Braille and Talking Book Library staff

Mary Jane Kayes, Outreach/Reference Librarian

Donna Scales, Reader Advisor Supervisor

Phone Attendance

Shannon Dillon, Folsom

Andy Anderson, Cottonwood, Board Member

Mike Marlin, BTBL Director

## 2. Agenda

Amend agenda under “new business” to include under the selection of meeting dates for upcoming 2020 BuAC meetings.

(A. Smith)

## 3. Approval of minutes for July 27, 2020

Amended minutes approved.

Minutes from July 27, 2019 - Approved

## 4. Remarks from the Chair

## 5. Presentations

The following representatives from several Advisory Councils, and, or, libraries shared information about their Advisory Council and Braille and Talking Book Library.

Fresno Talking Book Library – Ivy Bennett

Los Angeles Braille Institute Advisory Council - Reed Strege

San Francisco Talking Book and Braille Library -Tom Duffy

Librarian, Jane, Library Manager, Ricardo - Technical Assistant

San Francisco Talking Book and Braille Library

This library is located in the public library in downtown San Francisco. There are a lot of walk ins and they are open 7 days per week for a total of 62 hours per week. There is a small advisory committee (6) which meets every other month with Jane. The meetings are conducted in person, however, there are some who will call in. This committee mostly does outreach and advises on things that should be done. Recruitment for this group is difficult. Library visitors are between 1500 and 2000 per month. The advisory committee shares library information such as the quarterly newsletter and calendar of events with NFB Newslines. The committee is also working to provide a list of phone numbers as a resource for transit related issues and other things available. Outreach events are set up also. Programs at the library include a monthly book club, audio descriptive movie showing, and exhibitions.

They are working on duplication on demand (DOD), remodeling is also taking place to allow people to enjoy programs and just hang out together. With DOD more space will be available by removing shelving since space is limited.

There are no reader advisors. The librarians take care of patrons at the public service desk and answering phones. Through this library there are also events such as “author talk” and a “holiday piano lounge” for the holiday, a disability series is in the New York Times, a twice monthly yoga program is also available.

Patrons served are about 850. Last year experienced an increase probably due to the NLS national advertising campaign. The present year had a very slight decrease in patron number.

The area served by this library is only the city and county of San Francisco. Visitors from outside this area can receive services such as program participation, computers with assistive technology are available and magnification aids are also available for use. Patrons from the East Bay are given a regular library card enabling them to use “e” (?) research which may, or may not, be accessible.

#### Fresno Talking Book Library

Fresno serves a four county area (Madera, Kings and Tulare) and is a part of a public library which covers a seven county area. Walk in patrons are very minimal and telephone calls are quite high.

Fresno BTBL was one of the NLS pilot projects for the download on demand service. They have now provided the service for one year and hope to be 100 percent DOD within this next year.

There is no active advisory council at this time although they work closely with the BVA and the Valley Center for the Blind. Work is done jointly and on a referral basis. There is a desire to get the advisory council started again.

The number of active patrons is about 1500. Recent years have reflected an increase this also due to NLS advertising. The past several months have also shown an increase in applications.

Braille Institute, Los Angeles

The Braille Institute is a nonprofit organization that serves ten counties in southern California and distributing the NLS program is most, but not all, of the libraries activities. The Braille Institute has 7 centers with another to open soon. They offer several national programs for children but primarily focus on southern California.

Registered patrons =21,000 and Active individual patrons number 13,000 with active accounts in good standing and about 1500 institutional accounts. In a given year approximately 13000 patrons are served through checking out a book through the mail or downloading a book on BARD, or calling into the phone reader news program California News Program. This number has been flat for about the past 3-5 years. Additions to the NLS service are about 75 per month with about the same number decreasing due to moving or leave the service. Because of the large population area there are more persons eligible for NLS service. Reaching these people is a consistent challenge they face.

A current goal is to convert as many people as possible to use BARD which appears to be the future of this program. Working with NLS has improved BARD significantly. These improvements will start to increase and consolidate, for this reason as many

people as possible are being trained to use their devices to access BARD. For those not interested in BARD, and will never be, movement is being made to DOD. Progress in 2019 has been made in converting patrons to DOD. This number being over a thousand. There will soon be only BARD and DOD available to these patrons within the next 1-3 years.

The Braille Institute has a training facility to assist patrons in learning how to use their devices and NLS equipment. A class is also offered to assist people in learning how to access things outside the NLS system. The use of Smart phones and other devices for streaming music, podcasting, descriptive video, and other options for audio books and magazines has increased. Training is necessary for these options also.

The library staff has an outreach person that will go to potential partner sights such as health care facilities, senior homes, health fairs, events which target this community. Keeping current information up to date at Institutions is a big challenge. For growth a coordinated strategy is needed to get the NLS information to the public.

There is no specific outreach or marketing directed at the dyslexic population.

The Braille Institute has an active Advisory Committee that meets quarterly. Ideas for further engaging the committee are encouraged from others. The committee is solicited for their skills, NLS survey is discussed, ideas for programing such as suggested authors to bring in. This committee is also

encouraged to do outreach with their networks also. This is not formalized as far as implementing this outreach. The Advisory Committee will meet in person, but some will call in.

The kitty of the Advisory Committee is quite large, however, the core group makes up the quorum along with the officers. Unfortunately, the group is not very well geographically distributed. Attendees are persons who are able to get to the LA center conveniently. Teleconferencing might bring in more members. The group consists of about 15 persons with 8-10 being the core group. Elections are run on a regular schedule which might be every other year.

BTBL Sacramento- Mike Marlin

Serves about 9000 people. About 1000 patrons have been signed up for Patron Centric Cartridges with 600-700 active.

What kind of work does the Sacramento Advisory body do?

We meet quarterly. Richard is ending his 2<sup>nd</sup> year as Chair and 3<sup>rd</sup> year as a member. This council has been in existence since May 19, 2014.

A new program is being developed to name at least one legislator of the year who has done something to help the blind. The guidelines have been developed and are in the hands of the state librarian and council staff to identify the person and to hold a ceremony to honor that person in their respective chamber. Hopefully this is both an Assembly person and a Senator.

We have also tried to get some legislators to the library and also visited the Capital which was not very successful.

In 2016 council members put on a presentation at CLA about the library. There were some great speakers including Mary Jane, Roslyn, and Alan. There was a turnout of about 35. This spread the news within the library community a bit.

Work is being done to get an ambassador program together. We have a new Reader Advisor that tasked to assist with outreach which may help bring this to fruition.

Other presentations at the CLA, public libraries, senior living facilities, the Lighthouse for the Blind and the Insightful Day in Chico seem most beneficial.

The Advisory Council also gives advice to the BTBL staff, such as, the online catalog with Keystone and suggestions for NLS changes.

Jane from San Francisco stated that their Advisory Committee advocate within the administrative body. Things moved more quickly with the remodeling when the committee spoke with the city Librarian. They have also been advocating for the improvement of the adaptive technology and message support from the IT department. They serve a valuable function in that they are the “patron complainers” for the SF Subregional.

Reed encouraged any committee members or staff that have any ideas for really engaging the committees in a meaningful way to please email him.

A “brain storming summit” is being considered (Mike).

Alan added that in Contra Costa County the Library Commission tries to meet with state legislators on state funding issues.

Congressmen reached this year were Jerry McNerney who is east and south county and some of Alameda county and Mark De Saulnier

(?) who is Contra Costa county. One of the things talked about was remembering to support IMLS because, at least for us, much of funding is from that source. So if your people can meet with their legislators, their congressional delegation to the degree they possibly can is a good way to put a word in for your libraries.

The sharing of best practices among the councils was suggested.

Connection Point at Los Angeles offers computer use with adaptive technology available and training. Trainers are blind or visually impaired. iPhone training is teaching users to use other resources available. San Francisco also gives iPhone training.

Reed stated trainers at the LA facility are paid and volunteers are not generally used because of the specialized skill necessary.

A thank you to Ivy, Jane, Tom, Ricardo, and Reed for contributing an hour of time. It is very appreciated all that you do for blind book readers in California and elsewhere.

Mike suggested Chancy Fleet from the New York City sub regional and the New York Public Library as a guest speaker for next year.

## 6. Elections

Positions open were Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary.

Richard expressed his pleasure serving as the BUAC Chair. Gill Johnson was the previous Chair and was a master. Richard did his best to follow in Gill's steps. As he passes the baton he wishes the next Chair well. Richard would still like to continue as a member, however, he does not wish to run for any other positions due to work commitments.

First position to be filled is the Chair person. Allan nominated Roslyn stating that the things he said about her last year when nominating her for Vice Chair are still true. Richard asked for any other nominations for Chair and there were none.

Repeated. Having none, by a unanimous vote Roslyn is the new Chair of the BUAC.

Goals-Roslyn stated that Alan's work with our Legislators would bring a different flavor to what we can do, outreach and recruitment will also be important to bring people into BUAC.

Nominations were opened for Vice Chair. Alan nominated Janet Snow stating that she had been a vital part of the taking of new applications and the vetting process last year. Janet accepted the nomination. Mention was made that self-nomination can

take place. There were no other nominations. Janet was unanimously voted to be the Vice Chair.

Janet's goals as Vice Chair are like everyone else has said. All is good. Recruitment is so important and the legislative part. She is not sure how involved she will be able to be. She would like to see the council grow along with the growth of the library.

Nominations were opened for Secretary. Lenore recommended Gayle Miller. Alan stated that this position has no term limits. Maile was willing to give support to Gayle and job sharing was suggested. Further nominations were sought. None given. Gayle was unanimously voted Secretary.

Rotating member positions- All members' terms expire next year due to the same start date. Rotation was suggested. Mike, Richard, and Gayle will work toward new recruits and have potentials in mind.

Maile is the new CCB representative. Alan and Roslyn's terms are up next year.

Richard still has another year on the Council.

Richard had asked about his term, if it was ending, if he could come back. Mike stated that Richard still has another year as a member.

The Society for the Blind's Annual Resource and Technology Fair held the first Saturday in November was a success. The BTBL table had 75 visits.

Richard and Mike presented at the San Francisco TVI program to talk about advocacy and the BTBL to incoming teachers of the visually impaired around the state.

Lenore's term is ending. If no other person vies for the position she can reapply. There is a concern about representation of the deaf/blind community.

The Chair position has a limit of 2 years.

## 7. BTBL Director's Report

NLS name change- to National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled. There is also a Spanish version. Old forms, literature, ext. will be used up before new are made.

Texas and Pennsylvania pilot programs- In an attempt to increase service to persons with disabilities, the disability certification from a medical doctor have been removed from the application. Certifying authorities can now be such as a speech therapist or language coach.

Texas is involved because there is a new state law that says anyone who attends a school for the blind who is learning disabled must be signed up for the Talking Book program. They are expecting, in Texas, over 8000 people to be signed up this year and probably 4-5000 in Pennsylvania. If you think about it, this is a lot of people. One of the provisions is that people should utilize BARD and if they need a machine they should fill out a waiver form saying I need more than just BARD.

Availability of digital players is a concern. When the one-year

pilot is over they will make assessments, look at patron anecdotal feedback as well as quantitative measures as well to find out how well things went. This is trying to be coordinated with the availability of a new talking book machine type device, the new Braille eReader, with DOD, and the new robust BARD within the next 3-5 years.

Cloud Base- as mentioned in the July meeting, there is going to be no more physical collection except for DOD collections and BOD. With all this also comes shifting personnel, tasks and job positions, strengthening job positions to fold in some of the new technological requirements for someone working in the more modern NLS library.

Handling of Braille on demand - Those libraries that order braille order copies ahead of time (costly and space requiring). There is the thought that once the Braille e Reader is on board and distributed to all eventual 35,000 braille readers that people will look for a mix of electronic braille along with physical braille. And, if NLS is not having to produce the thousands and thousands of braille books produced each year, if only a fraction of those have to be produced, because we know that of those 35,000, let's say 50 percent or even 30 or 40 percent, are getting purely electronic books that means that the braille can come out on demand. Since everything is being mastered digitally it is a little easier to produce braille than in the past where you had to basically produce it by hand. Now you have computer and braille embossers and there would just

be the binding process that would be the most labor intensive. So that is kind of it in a nut shell.

When a braille book gets printed and returned we would continue to have a collection. We currently, the library, orders one copy of braille, of each braille title, and a very rare instance two might be ordered, and for print braille we order two copies because they are not as bulky and they are usually more in demand. Other libraries have higher braille circulation and they order more than one copy. So we may not have to order one copy more than one copy of every single thing. We have books that do not circulate that we order because we made a promise to be a braille library, but if things are not circulating, for example like computer books don't get a lot of circulation. There are things that do not ever get circulated. We are always doing an analysis, but, as I said we made a commitment to have at least one copy of braille. But if it becomes an on demand system, I am pretty sure we would probably only have to order about half of what we are ordering now. For the occasional circumstance where someone wants something that we did not order we would ask for it to be produced on demand which would be a lot less strain on the national production process to have to produce one copy for us and get out to us rather than ahead of time do 300 copies or something.

In some instances, persons are signed up for PCC because the requested book is a BARD only title because they have been retrospectively converted and the only way to get it to the patron

is via PCC. And because of the way the system works that patron is now a PCC customer. The big difference is the way our program works now and the same with Braille Institute you can have a combination of PCC and blue container cartridges from NLS. You can have them mix and match. When we go to the full on PCC system, that will no longer be the case. It will be duplication only and there will be no going back. There will be a roll out to notify patrons. People will understand that it is happening. That does not mean everyone will love it. I think as other libraries indicated people have been open and those people who were not able to fully embrace it, they just got DOD cartridges with one title on it. We probably won't be able to offer many cartridges to those folks because we will have a limited supply. We will encourage people how to use multiple cartridges. But if they only want one maybe they will get 5 one title cartridges instead of 5 ten title cartridges. There is going to be a paradigm shift and there is going to be some growing pains.

This new shift does not really put a bigger load on our Reader Advisors according to Mike because they are basically doing the same thing they have been doing which is getting people the books they want. I don't know, it is subtle.

PCC and DOD will still allow for "auto select". So if you have authors you have "auto selected", genres like mysteries those can be part of the formula that goes on your duplicated cartridge. It can be a combination of requests as well as "auto

select” items. Like anything new it is going to take a lot of repetition to let it sink in and become second nature. There is going to have to be a concerted marketing campaign and we are sort of waiting to get the green light from NLS that we are ready to go. Because there are a lot of preparation on our end. We are going to have to strip labels off of 20,000 books in our basement to get them ready for the whole process. NLS is going to gift us 25,000 and we are going to have to equally match that from our own collection. And so there are some technological hoops to jump through before we get ready. We are hoping that it is going to be sometime next year but we are not going to start talking about it prematurely.

Suggestion: why not have NLS for all the books that are download only, create their own NLS channel on YouTube and put them all out there and each library will assign a user a particular code so we could get into it and then you wouldn't have to worry about PCC. They would all be available on the computer and we could all listen to it that way.

Mike replied that YouTube is not protected in any way whatsoever. It is an open channel and anyone in the world can log into YouTube. However, I think, my recollection is, that it is the discovery issue.

Those books are all being advertised in Talking Book Topics now. All the BARD only books and we are trying to work with NLS to come up with a way to have a quarterly listing on the

NLS website. Eventually everything is going to become duplicated on a cartridge and it isn't going to make a difference whether we have a physical copy in our collection or not. Eventually we won't have any physical copies of anything.

Alan stated he and his wife have tried downloading from BARD and it was beyond their understanding and gave up.

Catalog hyperlink suggested- i there is a link in the catalog which will take you to BARD for any title. However, this does not help Alan because he is not able to download from BARD.

Everything will soon be in the Cloud and no waiting. If you call your Reader Advisor or send an email and say, "here are 10 books that are BARD only, I want them." The Reader Advisor with just a few key strokes put that into your que and you will have your cartridges.

Waiting for a new release is shorter. The majority of those books are being gifted from commercial publishers to NLS.

Twenty five titles are up on BARD, or are about to be.

Marrakesh- we have full access to the Accessible Books Consortium (ABC) data base which has over 550,000 titles in it. Those titles are records, not necessarily books because the way the system works. If the library gets a request they produce the book and upload it and once something is already loaded into

the system then you can go and grab it. Otherwise it works like a request. For example, if a French patrons sees a title that he, or she, wants, lets us know, we put in a request and hopefully within a couple of days, maybe a week, we get a message back saying the title is ready for download. We have not done this for any patrons yet, we have done it for ourselves, we have downloaded some materials in other languages to see if they will play on our machines and they do. They are navigatable MP3s or Daisy books. The braille ready format is just that, like with NLS there is no special protection for it other than it is braille ready and only braille readers can make sense out of it.

Discovery is a concern. And so ABC is in the process of making a catalog anyone can search and is then linked to their library. So for example we had a request for Dutch titles a couple of months ago. And Robert, our Copy Cataloger, went and downloaded a couple of these, they worked, but one thing he discovered was that there were 14,000 titles available. Not being able to read the language was discovered to be an issue. So they are making this tool that allows anyone on the user side to search their catalog and if they find something they want they can request it and that request will go to the host library, which would be us in this case. It will flag us that we need to download this for this patron. We had hoped instead that it would be a discovery tool, that it would search things and then send us the title rather than create an actual request. Because

with our staffing we do not know when we will be able to get to stuff. The other side of the equation is us being able to supply our books from our recording studio to the rest of the world as far as the Marrakesh countries that are on board.

We have 17 titles on BARD now, which can be found by searching the phrase "California on a collection". We will have a bibliography soon. This has been in our newsletter which some of you may have seen. But we will have a place on our website that will have a constant updated inventory of our local books. But we have to not only provide the catalog records for the rest of the world, but we have to be able to supply them with unencrypted files in the Daisy 2.02 format which is not the current format. So we are waiting on ABC to provide us with a conversion tool. The biggest challenge is going to be finding the staffing. If we had a librarian who could once we had this advertised sufficiently we had generated enough interest to have someone on staff who can be able to constantly fulfill international or foreign language documents upon request. And like I said, there are over 550,000 in 84 languages right now. Russia just came on board. Japan just uploaded all of theirs and we have Japanese speaking individuals who want books. The National Library of Spain was just uploaded, their 100,000 titles, or what not. So there are Arabic titles which we have interest in and they are primarily through the Swedish Library for the Blind, go figure. They have a pretty sizeable Arabic speaking population in Sweden.

So it is all very interesting and really ground breaking and I hope we are able create a set of protocols where we can do this smoothly without too much overwhelming our staff to pull it off. But I am hoping things will start happening because I am supposed to be giving a presentation about this at an NLS conference in May. So I am hoping I will have something to say about it. I think we will, things should be sufficiently in play by then, enough to at least talk about some of the positive things as well as the challenges of getting Marrakesh on the ground.

NLS BPD- we will maybe have to go and modify the neighboring legislation because right now NLS is only allowed to loan to US residents and foreign nationals. The legislation does not allow NLS to loan books that we have produced to anyone who is not a US resident or foreign national. That is in process and that has to be tweaked and I am not sure where they are in that process. And then NLS is working out similar scenarios that we are grappling with such as, how to catalog these items, how to make discovery available for all the patrons of NLS, whether or not they will just start putting things on BARD with a special designation, I don't know. MDB for Marrakesh Digital Book or, well maybe not because of Musical Digital Books, but I am not really sure.

Gaps in the collection –There is a Collection Development Department with 3 or 4 Librarians which is ran by Dominic Spinelli. They have a collection building policy on the NLS

website. They try to represent as broadly as possible, but there are gaps. BookShare can be used as a resource to fill gaps also.

But keep the requests coming. We look at things and if we deem them to be sufficiently reviewed and in the general purview of the NLS collection then we will go ahead and pass that on to the Collection Development Department.

There is also a Collection Development Committee made up of Librarians and regional representatives from the patron population

We may get there (no gaps) just because of technology, publishers' electronic feeds, eBook format, etc.

Books with incorrect information- these book titles can be sent to the library to see if they are riddled with errors or perhaps the narrator made the errors.

If a book was riddled with errors and was meant to be history then it would be referred to NLS. We don't like to remove books from the collection because it can appear to be censorship, but this does not mean that there is no discussion about the item.

Insufficient braille books- can textbooks be converted to braille like Daisy?

Braille on demand won't likely give us the capability to increase the number of electronic braille files that are created. Most years they struggle to reach all 650, but if a master electronic file is all that is needed because people have braille e readers then that should help in continuity.

It is suggested to contact Karen Kenniger the Director of NLS. She has done a lot to publicize braille and keep it flowing.

Recording studio- there are 7 or 8 teams. More people are contacting the BTBL to volunteer as narrators, monitors and reviewers. In the past year a production workshop and narration workshop have been held.

## 8. Committee reports

### A. Recruitment

This committee is made up of the Chair, Vice Chair, and Alan. Committee duties include reviewing an application seeing if there is any reason to not go forth. The checking of references, progression is discussed, recommendation to BUAC is presented.

Alan received no applications. Mike received one phone inquiry. The Vista Center in Palo Alto and the Western Vets were contacted, both which may have vets in mind. The NFB and CCB email lists were also contacted.

Maile will follow up to be sure CCB emails are sent. There is a prewritten recruitment invitation that is available.

At Super Fest on January 12, in Sacramento, Mike will mention recruitment for BUAC.

Recruits have been zero this year.

Maile would like to be a part of the Recruitment Committee.

#### B. Outreach Committee

Roslyn contacted Eastern Star to set up a booth.

An Outreach meeting was held with Heather at the library. A master list of events will be available soon, outreach kits for Ambassadors was discussed. Advertising on Volunteer Match was discussed with a follow through of meeting these volunteers at least once to establish a relationship. More booth and fair participation is a goal. Others from BUAC can attend this meeting also.

Funding is requested from the State Library Services Bureau. There does not seem to be a shift from Federal funding back to the State general fund. The Department of Finance is approached for proposals, etc. and funding is denied due to the receipt of Federal funding.

Fundraising advocacy can be done through Legislators by letting them know how important the program is. This may be

done as an individual, but not as a BUAC member or representative.

### C. Legislation Committee

Legislator of the Year program is ready for a nomination. The California Research Bureau is ready to assist with selection along with Shannon and Alan's suggestions. Mike will check on progress with Ann.

An attempt to meet with individual congress members was encouraged, and to bring up the importance IMLS to the library.

Maile volunteered to be on the Legislative Committee.

## 9. Old Business

### A. Revising terms

Bylaws state that when a potential member has been vetted and approved they can be brought on. Alan suggested that new members should be accepted at any time.

## 10. New business

### A. Goals and vision

Alan suggested the goal of seeing our Congressperson sometime during the year or send them an email. Remind them about IMLS.

The president of the American Library Association, Julius C. Jefferson, will be doing a publicity bus tour focusing on libraries who serve underserved populations. Sacramento will be

featured with local and national press when that happens. This will be in August 2020.

It was suggested to recruit Julius Jefferson as a BUAC speaker when he is in Sacramento.

*Raising the visibility of the Library for the Blind and Print Disabled* is the BUAC 2020 goal/vision.

#### B. Speakers for 2020

Greg Lucas- Mike will continue requesting Greg.

An NLS Collection Department speaker was suggested.

Chancy Fleet from New York was suggested.

Neil Bernstein from Research and Development was suggested so he can give a BARD update.

#### C. Legislature

See above

#### D. Meeting Dates

March 7 and May 23 will be the next meetings with August being left open for Julius Jefferson's availability and October 31 set for the final 2020 meeting.

#### E. Response to Emails

Quick response is needed.

The bylaws state that if a member misses two, or more, times without notice that the council needs to address whether it is fair to keep them on board.

Roslyn, as Chair, will put something together in regard to contacting member(s) whose attendance is in question and run it past Mike first. Encouraging the member was suggested to be a part of the communication.

Attendance requirements were brought up. How many must be in person etc. This will be an Action Item.

#### F. Member updates

Alan shared an email about library advocacy and it stressed not talking about stats. Tell your story. What did your library do? Alan will share the email the Council.

#### 11. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 2:55 pm. Motions were by Janet and Maile.

Action Items: Members to see what the BUAC attendance requirements are.