

Braille and Talking Book Library  
User Advisory Council  
Meeting Minutes by Shannon Dillon  
July 27, 2019

Location: Braille and Talkingbook Library 900 N Street, Sacramento, CA 95814  
Time: 10:30 AM to 3:00 PM

## 1. Welcome and Introductions

Members present:

Richard Rueda, Chair, Sacramento  
Lenore Presley, Sacramento  
Alan Smith, Concord  
Shannon Dillon, Folsom  
Connie Baitman, Sacramento  
Ervin Andy Anderson, Cottonwood

Telephone attendance:

Roslyn McCoy, Mount Shasta, Vice Chair  
Janet Snowe, Redding, representing National Federation of the Blind of California (NFBC)  
Warren Cushman, San Lorenzo, representing California Council of the Blind (CCB)  
Maile George, Concord

Braille and Talking Book Library (BTBL) staff:

Mike Marlin, Director  
Donna Scales, BTBL Readers Advisory Supervisor  
Mary Jane Kayes, BTBL Outreach/reference Librarian

Absent:

Gayle Miller, Winton  
Osvaldo Martinez, Merced

## 2. Approval of Agenda

Alan Smith moves to approve the agenda. Janet Snowe seconds. All are in favor. None is opposed. The motion passes.

## 3. Approval of April 27 Minutes

The April minutes were amended to reflect the discussion and query about discovery for BARD-only titles (raised by Alan Smith and later inserted by Mike Marlin). AS wanted to obtain information for approaching his federal congressional representative to expand Talking Book Topics among other discovery solutions. All are in favor of amended minutes. None is opposed. The motion passes.

#### 4. Old Business

A. Profiles. Members of the committee need to give Mike their Statements of Interest for BUAC web page.

B. Recruitment. We have not recruited anyone this year. Is the template up to date? We were trying to set things up so there are staggered terms. We have not been able to do that. Every one is on the same two-year cycle.

Lenore will contact the Lighthouse for the Blind and Society for the Blind and Blind Veterans Organizations. The library will put the announcement for recruitment in their next news letter. Representatives for the National Federation of the Blind of California and California Council of the Blind will put announcements on the NFBC and CCB lists. Richard Rueda will provide announcements to the Society for the Blind and the Teachers of the Blind and Visually Impaired.

#### 5. BARD and BARD Mobile Update from NLS (Don Olson and Neil Bernstein)

Don Olson is the BARD Operations Officer at NLS.

Neil Bernstein is the Research and Development Officer at NLS.

Neil explains:

- BARD accounts that are not used in six months are deactivated. There are 50,000 active BARD BARD accounts. 47893 different users registered 130,000 mobile apps. The mobile apps exceed usage of the web site.

- BARD was launched in 2006.

- Bard is moving to the cloud. It has been running from the Library of Congress (LOC) server. It will start living on Google or Amazon and use LOC as a back-up. That means the system will be able to endure a larger load. Storage is more plentiful. The system is more secure. It will become more reliable. It will go faster. Downloading should be faster. There is a hold-up when you download from mobile app. The decryption key is different from the one you use with the talking book machine.

- NLS is breaking BARD into pieces or microservice architecture. BARD was written in the 2000's. They just break the software into big pieces instead of one piece of software. They will live as pieces and work together. One microservice will be dedicated to searching. Once the search is running, it will run faster and index more books. It will support the web site and mobile app.

Don Olson explains:

- Hardware. There will be a new player. The new player will have over the air distribution. The device will be able to pull the books from the cloud portably. About 80 pc of the people who participated in the pilot got books through cellular service. certain parts of country do not have cellular service thus twenty percent of people who will not access books portably.

Players are being asked to stream books. Right now all books are meant to be downloaded. Right now, unless all files have been downloaded the book will not play. Users will be able to stream books on mobile devices and the new player.

- BARD Express. BARD Express is another interface through which patrons can access BARD. It is for people who do not use the Web. It is a menu driven interface that a person uses with four keys. People with all skill levels and comfort levels can use BARD Express. It has simplified navigation and file management. The next version of BARD Express will enhance existing features and add new features. The new version will handle braille. You can search for braille, add to the Wish List and download it. If you have downloaded a book it will tell you when you downloaded it.

- Subscriptions. Users have been able to subscribe to magazines for some time. With both BARD Mobile and BARD Express, users can subscribe to magazines and books they like. It will automatically send the newest book in a series.

- There is a find feature. It can invert a search to include all books that do not include violence. That ability will be in the new BARD Express.

Neil Bernstein explains:

- NLS is testing a new version of BARD for iOS. When the app is in in good enough shape, they will release it. They are always looking for beta testers. Anyone interested in beta testing can contact Neil at [nber@loc.gov](mailto:nber@loc.gov) . He wants beta testers. A beta test is coming up in about a month's time.

In BARD Mobile version 1.3. You will be able to choose books by author, subject, or series. You can use one button to find those.

Actions have been added to the rotor.

You can switch to books you have ordered already.

Simultaneous downloading has been available in the Android version but will be added to iOS. You will be able to download three books at a time.

"Show me" will hide formats you do not read. You could hide braille or audio.

NLS is giving the app the ability to send a diagnostic log to the support team. It will be associated with a support request. It may include what you have been reading. For privacy, they will make sure you know what will be reported if you send the log.

Braille auto scrolling feature. You can have Braille books scroll at a speed you select.

iOS 13 has been announced and will probably be released in September.

- Questions from Audience:

The library anticipates fewer outages with the change to microservices.

Text to speech has been pushed to the background. They are continuing to work on text-to-speech although they are not focusing on it. Text-to-speech files will be used for items like cookbooks and self-help books rather than novels.

People will not be required to have a mobile device to use BARD. It will be accessible from your desktop.

The new player will not have to be purchased.

Will a version be built for Apple desktop computers? No. There are not 5,000 mac users using BARD. Also they have to weigh resources and projects they are trying to work on.

Catalina will allow developers to check a box to make Ipad apps usable on Catalina.

Will users continue to receive books by mail? Yes. Twenty percent of people who do not have a broadband or cellular. Book delivery by mail will continue.

Will the new player continue to use cartridges? The new player will have something like a cartridge or USB slot.

How big will the new player be? We do not yet know the size of the new player.

Will there be a forty-cell braille reading device? It will be kept to a twenty-cell display. Forty cells is cost prohibitive.

Will users be able to stream braille books? NLS has not looked at streaming braille because the files are small and can be downloaded.

NLS is always working with publishers with digital born EPUB which is good news for text to speech eBooks and braille as well. They can convert more text into braille. So they will produce more Braille in the future.

Humanware will need to continue working with BARD to make their devices talk to BARD. But how the user will access BARD with the Victor Stream is up to Humanware.

NLS is looking at streaming because if a user is going to read five minutes and not read the whole book, it saves NLS money if the user does not have to download the whole book.

NLS will be using Android to develop their device because it is more flexible than Apple. Everything these days is built off Linux or Android.

## 6. New Business\*

We decided to move the October 26 meeting to December 7.

The race course for the California International Marathon (CIM) 5k will be run on December 8 on N street but there will be smaller pre-marathon activity on Dec 7.

\*New Business is continued in 9 below.

## 7. Director's Report

New Reader-Adviser Heather will start Monday. She will support outreach and scheduling and do other projects as assigned.

BARD Accounts can be made inactive after six months. It used to be one year.

Nationally there are about 54,000 inactive accounts.

The postal service is not required to pick up return books. Especially if you have numerous boxes of braille, you should probably contact the postal service. It is part of the free matter regulations that they do not have to pick up talking book machines, cartridges, Braille. They are not required to pick those things up so you have to work with the post office on a case by case basis.

Patron Centric Cartridge (PCC). The library creates an order in the database that can be put on a cartridge and sent to you. They can put multiple books on one cartridge. Nearly 800 patrons have signed up for PCC but active users in a given month roughly 4-500., about five percent of the users. It is labor intensive. There are errors. Some cartridges from NLS do not work with it. The service is well-liked by patrons who are using them.

Meanwhile, NLS is working on Duplication on Demand (DOD). It is the same idea. You customize a cartridge. But it is not tied to a single person. It's a cartridge. You put content on a cartridge and send it to a person. It comes back. You erase the content, load a new order and send it to someone new. For NLS libraries it will ultimately lead to more space saving where space is at a premium. It will also allow for customization.

There are two systems for Duplication on Demand. They are gutenber and Scribe.

Gutenberg. six READS network libraries (ReaderEnrollment and Access Data System) are on board with another dozen or so smaller libraries to soon be implementing it. Instead of maintaining a library, they have a production line. NLS has made Gutenberg available to network libraries who use READS, a different circulation system. There is software that can take material from BARD and put it on a cartridge. You just have to put the cartridge into a slot and click buttons. Gutenberg then prints the cartridge contents (first 8 titles) to a mailing card and then staff make sure cartridge matches card so item goes to correct patron. Colorado and Georgia are pilot testing Gutenber in conjunction with Keystone Library Automation System (KLAS). BTBL and other network libraries hope to begin KLAS/Gutenberg DoD sometime in 2020.

Gutenberg is a hard drive provided by NLS with entire BARD collection, about four terrabytes. It is connected through the Internet through a syncing process so it is constantly being updated. The workflow is different from Scribe. You print out one cartridge at a time. You send out two to five cartridges per patron a day. It will be a slower and less voluminous workflow than we are used to.

Scribe. Like current work flow you print out all mailing cards once every morning. You take a blank cartridge, bar code wand it, insert it into a tower of fifteen slots. You press a button. The content loaded is based on book orders, what a patron or reader adviser chooses. Next to each cartridge slot you can put the corresponding mail card in the container so you don't easily mix them up. It is just another convenience. The advantage for us is the workflow is the same as we have now. The cartridges that are returned get tossed into a bin. The book title or author is not on the label.

Gutenberg prints out a double-sided card. It contains the ten titles on the cartridge. They are not in large print. That option is not available with Scribe. The book title or author is not on the label with Scribe.

Equipment. If furnished through nls. NLS will provide free cartridges and containers for anyone going to DOD. There will be generic labels.

NLS will give us half of the cartridges we need. The other half will come from our basement. We have to strip the labels from the containers and cartridges. It is not labor free but the labor is up front. NLS sends computer to unlock them. We can relock them.

Right now we are only talking about audio books on cartridges.

Originally the braille eReader was going to be available in early 2020. We do not know when it will be available now. But there will be a different prototype, possibly in consultation with Humanware. Braille files are brf files which are not protected.

Anyone who agrees to DOD has to agree that within a year, whether or not you have gone to 100 percent DOD, your copy allotment goes to 0.

Keystone Library Automation System engineered it so Keystone can work with Gutenberg or Scribe. You do not want to switch back and forth regularly but we can try one then move to another. For the longterm you need to commit to one of the two systems because of the different workflow.

The third option is continuing to do what we do without making changes.

NLS will supply approximately five cartridges per patron. So for people trying to only have one book per cartridge, that will be a lot harder.

This will be the end of the physical collection as we know it. After this, the only way to get talking books is through DOD.

How do we explain to users why DOD is important? Why is it advantageous?

Maybe we could give incentives to users for going DOD.

Users have to understand the labeling is different. If people are used to reading the title and author, it will not be on the cartridge or container. That will be a change.

To find out the titles of the books on the cartridge, the user has to use the Bookshelf.

BUAC members should send feedback to Mike.

Different workflow means different tasks and skills for network library staff. Staff now work and triage and maintenance. But their jobs will change. Their jobs are secure despite new duties. State agencies have to find positions for permanent state employees if their job duties change enough that current classifications or skill sets differ.

Users have to use the Web to get to the audio described movies. Or you can use Safari and go to BTBL and enter "DVS" in as a keyword.

DVS service. BTBL has been buying 50 or 60 DVS titles per year. They have 517 titles available per year. We got cool containers that are like NLS containers. They have stopped producing them. So BTBL is trying to figure out what to use. Going forward the question is where to get those containers. There is an expensive vinyl mailing pouch. One library uses them but they are \$8 each instead of \$2. If you know someone who works for a container company and would like to design something for BTBL, let Mike know.

Marrakesh Treaty. BTBL signed

an agreement to provide locally produced books in order to get books. There is a database for the Marrakesh Treaty ratifying countries, the ABC database. Mike is being signed up for training. Mike and staff have to be trained. They have to decide what file types will be. Will they be on cartridges? How will circulation be counted in the system? With ABC there are more than 500,000 books available. We have to obtain catalog records in the database and figure out how and where to load them. We also need to embed a URL in our catalog so that read only searches can be conducted by foreign language stakeholders.

## QUESTIONS

A. Whether Keystone would rebuild their system to create a catalog for people who do not type well to use. If they had money from us would they rebuild their catalog.

B. What happens to defective cartridges? They are set aside and checked. Where they are all defective they send them to NLS. DOD will help us handle defective cartridges. If they are not under warranty, NLS will not replace them. They are not set up for doing small batches of production.

C. Last week it looked like our catalog was down. It was back up on Monday. Is there someone who monitors the web site on weekends. We do not require staff to check the system on weekends.

D. Regarding the increase in number of books BTBL recorded of California history. If someone donates books can they be recorded by BTBL? There have to be two copies of each book and the book has to get through the selection process. These are books regarding California history.

## 8. Committee Reports

A. Recruitment / Selection Committee We discussed recruitment briefly earlier. Any other thoughts?

Mike will send out language for recruitment. It includes a blurb for the Advisory Council and the application for service is online. BTBL may be changing it to make it shorter.

## B. Outreach Committee

On Nov 2, The Society for the Blind in conjunction with BTBL and North State Assistive Technology is holding a Resource and technology Fair. We will need people to staff the lobby. Two hundred people attended last year.

The BTBL table will be in the lobby.

Connie can help. Janet may be able to help. Shannon may be able to help.

The hours are 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM. Set up is around 9:00 AM. Shannon may be able to do it.

On October 10 the Center of Visual Enhancement (COVE) is having an outreach event in Merced there is a low vision fair. A lot of people attend. There should already be people there working who can represent BTAL.

Sacramento Public Library in conjunction with BTBL and SFB will put on the first annual Sacramento Superfest. It has been going on in the Bay Area for many years. It includes films about people with disabilities. The film festival will come and show films for free.

They will bring actors or directors of films to talk on a panel after the movie. All films have captioning and Audio description built into the film. It will likely be a Sunday evening event, 5:00 to 8:00 PM roughly. If it is successful we may expand it to a full day event. Right now it is a week long event in the Bay Area.

C. Legislative Update - See New Business below.

## 9. New Business (continued)

A. Legislator of the Year award.

Greg is receptive to it. We have a green light to go ahead with this. Public Information Officers are ready to go. The California Research Bureau is willing to do the research to find out which senators and assemblymembers work with disability or blindness issues and whether they propose legislation, etc. Person at the California Research Bureau said to send her an email and they will see if they can come up with recommendations. Alan will draft an email to the California Research Bureau. We should do that soon.

B. Meeting Recurrences and Duration. Do we want a phone meeting? Do we want to continue to meet on Saturdays? Some people work during the week. A virtual meeting is less expensive because there is no expense for travel or food. There needs to be an in-person interpreter for some representatives. Should we have three meetings per year? If we meet for a shorter period of time we could plan and get through things more quickly. We will talk about this at our next meeting.

We could maybe meet every four months.

C. December 7 meeting - We will have elections. The vice chair and chair will be elected. We need a secretary. Richard will not run for chair next year.

## 10. Member Updates

Richard will send a list of members whose terms are ending and members whose are continuing next year.

## 11. Action Items Review

A. Mike will email recruitment blurbs.

B. Alan will write guidelines for The California Research Bureau to find legislators who worked on disability laws. Shannon will send names of legislators who have worked on disability issues to Alan and Mike and Richard.

C. Mike will ask if Greg can speak to us in December since we moved our meeting date from October 20.

## 12. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 2:55 PM. Richard moves and Maile seconds the motion to adjourn. All are in favor. None is opposed. The motion passes.