

Braille and Talking Book Library User Advisory Council Virtual Meeting

Date: Saturday, June 5, 2021

Present:

Council Members

Connie Bateman, Member at Large
Shannon Dillon, Member at Large
Maile George, BUAC, Secretary; CCB Liaison
Jana Litrelle- Member at Large
Roslyn McCoy, Chair, representing the Dyslexic community
Richard Rueda, Member at Large
Janet Snowe, BUAC, Vice Chair, NFB liaison

Visitor

Maria G. Smith

BTBL Staff

Laura Kellen, Outreach Librarian
Mike L. Marlin, Director
Donna Scales, Readers Advisory Supervisor

Absent- Lenore Presley, Alan Smith

10:02AM- Roslyn called meeting to order, and welcomed new BUAC member, Jana Litrelle, and visitor Maria Smith

Approval of agenda – MSC by Maile/ Richard (Carried)

**Approval of minutes of March 6 meeting, MSC-Janet/
Shannon (Carried)**

Roslyn reviewed meeting ground rules and Zoom courtesy standards

BTBL Director's report, Mike Marlin

Provided a brief history of the BUAC

Provided updates from the recent virtual NLS Western/Midlands regional conference plus information from subsequent monthly NLS network library forums

Update from NLS/ Highlights:

Duplication on Demand- single title cartridge model is quickly becoming obsolete. Now, 47 network libraries have converted to DOD. NLS created its own duplication system called Gutenberg, which is implemented for smaller libraries using Web READS software; Remainder of network libraries use KLAS (Keystone Library Automation System) software, and KLAS created its own duplication system called Scribe. The Braille Institute is currently using Scribe; BTBL will be converted to Scribe ideally by the end of year. BTBL opted for Gutenberg system but due to strict security protocols BTBL pivoted to Scribe because Keystone is able to comply with California's strict security needs.

Braille EReaders- NLS is conducting a rolling pilot. NLS patrons have been and will continue to be invited to participate in each state/network library pilot. The devices targeted for use in the pilot are manufactured by HumanWare and Zoomax. Both feature a basic, stripped down refreshable Braille display. Select California patrons will test the Zoomax model starting in late summer or fall, 2021. If interested in participating in the pilot, send Mike Marlin your contact info. NLS goal is to provide a Braille EReader to all patrons who want one by 2023.

"The good news is that Interest in Braille literacy is on the rise!"

Question from Jana: Will hard copy Braille ever go away. Mike's response was no, [not ever. Pre-production of hardcopy braille will decrease incrementally. It will take a least a few years to gauge the appetite for electronic Braille, and to determine the electronic versus hardcopy ratio, leading toward a Braille on Demand (BOD) service model

-Next generation Talking Book Players: NLS has been encouraged by the Library of Congress Inspector General to work more with the commercial market and increase the use of off the shelf products.

RealSam won the contracts for both smart speaker development and next gen talking book players. Voice activated Smart Speakers, specifically Google nest and Amazon Echo/Alexa, are being tested. The current thought is that patrons will supply their own Smart Speakers. Privacy and patron security is a big consideration.

DA2 is the next generation talking book player. It's a locked down Android-based device that features talking menus and voice activated commands to access the NLS collection via WIFI and will have a cartridge slot and ample storage memory. Field testing to be conducted. Unit is based on the HumanWare" Stratus" - features storage capability. Pilot TBD

-BARD: patrons will find that BARD is much faster because it's now on the cloud. BARD Express, a PC software application enables patrons to download as many books as they want. Soon BARD Express will allow storage and direct playback for the PC within the application. Go to BARD website to download BARD Express. a new version is in the works.

New Business

Roslyn introduced a motion for the BUAC to review, discuss and approve the minutes as soon as they are created and sent to council members. Currently, the minutes are sent to council members along with the agenda of the next meeting. MSC-Shannon/ Jana (carried) discussion concerning future Guest speakers. Council members should review the NLS org chart which was sent as an attachment with the agenda, then email Roslyn and Mike with suggestions.

Committee Reports

* Recruitment / Selection Committee* – Chair Alan, Janet, Connie, Maile. (Janet reported that the committee was happy to welcome Jana to the BUAC; and that they look forward to conducting interviews with Maria Smith's references this week. Please check your email for the next steps toward inviting Maria on board!

*Outreach Committee – Chair Roslyn, Laura, Maile, Janet

Roslyn had no updates; however, Laura has started tracking those who have asked through NLS about local service, been referred to BTBL, then signed up for service. So far, BTBL gets 160 inquiries per month; of those, 6% sign up. According to Kristen at NLS, 6% is consistent with the success rate at other state libraries. Our number of patrons is now a little below 8000. When Covid is behind us, we may want to engage and train Outreach Ambassadors in some of our 43 Northern California counties.

*Legislation Committee – Chair Alan, Shannon Shannon summarized a proposal which set the stage for a substantial library funding package. It was adjusted and adopted by both houses. The legislature will now negotiate this joint plan with Governor Newsom. It will not be final until the Senate, Assembly, and the Governor come to formal agreement before June 15th, which is the constitutional deadline for passage of the state Budget. One key provision for us to be aware of is the [\$1.64] million one-time and \$220,000 ongoing support funds for a pilot project to implement new assistive technologies and expand access to resources to visually-impaired Californians. This is a collaborative project between the State Library and the Braille Institute of America in Los Angeles. Mike assured us he would provide us with updates ASAP. Discussed the possibility of naming a Legislator of the Year. Outcome- Mike agreed to ask the California Research Bureau for possibilities- legislators who have been instrumental in heightening awareness around Braille and Talking Book Libraries in California and what they have done to support our community over the past year or two.

8. Miscellaneous Concerns, Questions and action items

Q and A

The following questions were submitted by the California Library Users of America (CLUA), a CCB special affiliate. Mike responded.

Q- Is BTBL staff available to answer the phone?

A-: Yes; our staff is available to answer questions. If no one picks up, patrons should leave a message. (Note: library is not open to the public or volunteers yet.

Q- What's the status of California regional titles and the recording studio?

A-So far, the Narration Studio Coordinator, Christopher, has converted over 1/3 of the 300 plus local title analog collection to digital format - going back to 1994. 37 Californiana titles are available to patrons via BARD; close to 100 more to come. Volunteer projects in process were suspended in March 2020 as a result of the Covid closure. BTBL is hoping to bring the volunteers back in 2021; however, the date is not yet definite.

Q- What kind of outreach is being done to potential high school and college age patrons?
Laura and Mike are focused on attending K through 12 events- parent group meetings/PTA, public libraries, Bookmobile, CTEVI workshops. Richard has additional suggestions-California School for the Blind, California Transition Council (members are TVI's and VR counselors.)
Mike and Laura are also planning to speak with student disability centers at northern California community colleges and universities.

Q- What's the best way to prevent my account from going inactive?

BTBL requires borrowing or downloading a book at least once every 12 months; BARD considers a patron inactive if they don't download a book every six months. BARD accounts are made inactive after 6 months of inactivity, including email warnings to the patron. If an account goes inactive, it is easy for BTBL to reactivate it.

CLUA member and former BUAC member suggested posting frequent reminders about this in our newsletter.

Action items

All Council members -review the attachment sent with the agenda; email Roslyn and Mike with suggestions for future guest speakers- either from the NLS org chart, or with names of other relevant speakers.

Shannon- check with a potential BUAC member- the parent of a six-year-old who's blind/ low vision.

Janet - reach out to recruitment committee members to finalize Maria Smith's application.

Mike:

*** Follow-up with Dominic Spinelli about the more authentic recording of "The Burning- The Tulsa Race Massacre of 1921." Is it on BARD yet?

*** Send Maile the answers to the questions posed by CLUA members.

*** Ask the California Research Bureau for names of legislators who have been instrumental in heightening awareness around issues that are important to the Braille and Talking Book Library of Sacramento and its patrons.

Next meeting- Saturday, August 28, 2021 10AM to 12 noon via Zoom

Roslyn adjourned meeting at approximately 12:15PM

Respectfully submitted,
Maile George

Secretary- BUAC