



BTBL News

Braille and Talking Book Library
California State Library, Sacramento, CA

New Series no. 30 (Spring 2024)

In This Issue:

- Director's Message
- Improved Phone Menus
- Summer Reading Program 2024
- Borrow a Handheld Magnifier
- Borrow a Handheld Talking Book Player
- Borrow a Connection to the Internet
- Top 5 BARD Downloads
- America's Field Trip
- BTBL Staff Picks
- Newest Titles from the Californiana Collection

A Message from Mike Marlin, Director

Greetings from the Sacramento accessible book depot, also known as the California Braille and Talking Book Library. Keeping with the railroad motif, welcome to a jam-packed freight car of *BTBL News*. This literary load includes a mapping of BTBL's new phone menu, the 2024 BTBL & NLS Summer Reading Program, what's new in the Californiana Collection of locally recorded books that have been uploaded to BARD (Braille and Audio Reading Download), a spot check of the most current patron favorite book titles, our popular Assistive Tech lending program, the always intriguing Staff Picks, and other loco-motivating information!

Before I continue, please allow me a brief and amateur haiku for your poetic contemplation:

Our goal Stretch your brain
Gauge what is and what could be
All aboard the train!

Speaking of metaphorical travel, please hop on our new automatic call distribution system in which we have tried to make connecting with our staff simpler and more direct. Every patron has a designated Reader Advisor, a conductor of your library account who can assist with book and magazine selection, and BARD technical support among other core reading services. Each Reader Advisor serves a robust yet manageable number of patrons. Put the wheels in motion and reach out to your Reader Advisor whenever you need advice on authors, titles, subjects, and series in both fiction and nonfiction genres. And if you have requests for books to add to the collection, we will do our best to pass them on to the National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled, our mothership library and the big engine that could. Or, if local to California interests, consider them for production in our own recording studios.

Speaking of our Californiana studio, the caboose that helps backup the ever-expanding NLS collection, I'm pleased to note that after a three-year hiatus due to the Covid-19 pandemic, we have relaunched and are slowly ramping back up with live, local book production. It will take a few years to get back to our pinnacle of 2019 with 12 narration teams and several reviewers, but we look forward to the challenge as we work to add lesser-known California authors and topics to the Californiana collection.

While you are at the accessible book station, please consider the electronic schedule of programs posted via NLS's Patron Engagement Section. The PES now hosts an announce-only listserv that includes announcements about NLS programs, services, and products that might be of interest. Announcements include, but are not limited to, Zoom links for online events, reminders about the release of the latest Talking Book Topics, or BARD updates and new features. New announcements are posted to the list a few times per month, depending on current programming. To sign up for this listserv, please send your name and email address to the Patron Engagement Section at NLSPE@loc.gov. You will be able to unsubscribe yourself from the list at any time.

Finally, no need to pull the emergency brake, if you are truly a ravenous reader and interested in synthetic voice audio or electronic braille, consider a free Bookshare membership through BTBL. With up to 500 statewide Bookshare licenses, there are still several available membership slots. For more information, visit Bookshare.org and contact BTBL for details.

Improved Phone Menus

We have been working to improve the phone menus of our automatic call distribution system. Most questions can be answered by a Reader Advisor, found in the first menu option. Here is a step-by-step guide to help you reach your Reader Advisor.

- Press 1 for Reader Advisors
- If the patron's last name begins with the letters:

A, B, or C, Press 1

D through G, Press 2

H through L, Press 3

M through Q, Press 4

R, S or T, Press 5

U through Z, Press 6

To contact other staff at BTBL, from the main menu you can press:

2 BARD/AT - For help with the BARD download service or Assistive Technology Lending Program

3 Applications - To receive a new application or reach the applications desk

4 - For Institutions

5 - Update Account Information - To make changes to address, phone number, or to cancel service

6 Reference Librarian - For more complex reference questions

7 Hours/Location - a recording of our contact information

0 Receptionist

If you do not press any buttons at all or if you are having difficulty, you may just stay on the line to be eventually connected with our Receptionist or Receptionist voicemail (or press zero).

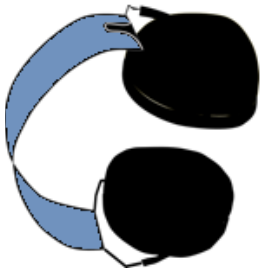
Summer Reading Program 2024

We may be inundated with spring showers, but summer is just around the corner, which means the return of the BTBL Summer Reading Program. BTBL's Summer Reading Program rewards participants of all ages for reading books during the summer months. Adult participants who read 5 books or more during the Summer Reading Program from June 1st to August 31st, will receive a Starbucks gift card for \$10 and a small BTBL reusable bag. Participants under the age of 18 do **not** have to read 5 books, they can track **any** books they read and how much time they spent reading. Younger participants can also use a bingo book card to track what they read. Participants under the age of 18 will receive a \$10 Baskin and Robbins gift card AND their choice of a stuffed dog or earbuds.

Please contact the library if you would like a large print Summer Reading Program packet sent to you. The packet will include a large print reading log (or bingo book card for younger patrons), a themed book list to help you find your next favorite book, information about the program, and an envelope already addressed to the library to help you send back your completed reading log.

For your convenience, a large print Summer Reading Log has been included in this issue. Please let us know if you are a younger patron and would like a bingo book card. You are also always welcome to email us the list of books you read for the Summer Reading Program. Please be aware that we cannot accept your list of completed books over the phone.

The National Library Service is also putting on a Summer Reading Program with online presentations by authors, Q&A sessions, and additional activities. More information about the program will be available as we get closer to summer. You can find the latest news at the National Library Service Summer Reading Program page: [loc.gov/nls/summerreading](https://www.loc.gov/nls/summerreading).



BTBL's Summer Reading Program



Reading Log for patrons to be used June 1st through August 31st 2024. Remember to return the reading log to BTBL by August 31st to be eligible for a prize.

Patron's full name: _____

Phone number: _____

	Book Title	Date Read
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		

(fold reading log in half, staple once/lightly tape, and mail; no postage due)

Braille and Talking Book Library
P.O. Box 942837
Sacramento, CA 94237-0001

Free Matter for the Blind
Or Handicapped

Braille and Talking Book Library
P.O. Box 942837
Sacramento, CA 94237-0001

[staple/tape]

Borrow a Handheld Magnifier

The Humanware Explore 5 magnifier is a compact and lightweight device. It has a 5-inch LCD screen, a camera, an image storage gallery, large tactile keys, a retractable handle, and 2 LED lights. The Explore 5 has a magnification range between 2X to 22X. This handheld magnifier can connect to another external display screen, like a TV or computer monitor, to enlarge text or images. The loan period is one year long, and it can be renewed based on availability. BTBL provides training on the device as well. Speak with your Reader Advisor to borrow this device free of charge.

Borrow a Handheld Talking Book Player

The Victor Reader Stream 2 is a handheld audio player. Users can listen to books, magazines, newspapers, Internet radio, music, and podcasts, using online or offline options. The Victor Reader Stream can directly connect to the following libraries: NFB Newslines, Bookshare, and NLS BARD. Patrons must have a valid email address and an active BARD account prior to borrowing this device. The loan period is one year long, and it can be renewed based on availability. BTBL provides training on the device as well. Speak with your Reader Advisor to borrow this device free of charge.

Borrow a Connection to the Internet

The Orbic Wi-Fi hotspot is a portable Internet access tool. The device has a default 2.4 Ghz Wi-Fi setting and will support up to five Wi-Fi enabled devices at a time, with unlimited data. Patrons requesting a Wi-Fi hotspot must consent to the California State Library Wi-Fi Agreement. The loan period is one year long, and it can be renewed based on availability. Speak with your Reader Advisor to borrow this device free of charge.

Top Five BARD Downloads

Audiobooks - Fiction

[DB 117211](#) Resurrection Walk by Michael Connelly

[DB 117204](#) The Edge by David Baldacci

[DB 117448](#) Inheritance by Nora Roberts

[DB 117097](#) Dirty Thirty by Janet Evanovich

[DB 116897](#) The Secret by Lee Child

Audiobooks - Nonfiction

[DB 116332](#) What Every Blind Person Needs You to Know by Leanne Hunt

[DB 116687](#) My Name is Barbra by Barbra Streisand

[DB 113672](#) Stupid Things I Won't Do When I Get Old by Steven Petrow

[DB 104584](#) Pimsleur Spanish Level 1 by Pimsleur

[DB 117524](#) Behind the Seams: My Life in Rhinestones by Dolly Parton

Braille - Fiction

[BRG 04313](#) The Home for Unwanted Girls by Joanna Goodman

[BRG 04268](#) Every Note Played by Lisa Genova

[BRG 04314](#) Something in the Water by Catherine Steadman

[BR 24742](#) Mad Honey by Jodi Picoult

[BR 24839](#) My Sister's Keeper by Jodi Picoult

Braille - Nonfiction

[BR 24434](#) The Complete Slow Cooker: From Appetizers to Desserts by
America's Test Kitchen

[BR 24951](#) The Complete Book of Clean: Tips & Techniques for Your Home by
Toni Hammersley

[BR 24800](#) Taste of Home Make-Ahead Comfort Foods by Taste of Home

[BR 24433](#) Cooking for One by America's Test Kitchen

[BRG 04351](#) Dead Reckoning: How I Came to Meet the Man Who Murdered My
Father by Carys Cragg

America's Field Trip

NLS and the Library of Congress are excited to be participating in America's Field Trip, part of the official celebration of the nation's semiquincentennial - the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776.

America's Field Trip is a nationwide contest inviting students in grades 3 through 12 to submit artwork, videos, or essays responding to the question "What does America mean to you?" First-place winners will have the opportunity to participate in special tours at historical, educational, and cultural sites across the country such as Yellowstone National Park, the Statue of Liberty, and the Library of Congress.

The deadline to enter is May 17, 2024. Find more information and submission guidelines at america250.org/FieldTrip.

BTBL Staff Picks:

The Authenticity Project by Clare Pooley

DB 98492

"This is really a book about an unlikely group of people coming together around a mysterious notebook. My favorite character was the octogenarian!"

-Sarah, Reader Advisor

Forty Acres: A Thriller by Dwayne Smith

DB 107699

"This riveting tale that turns racial discrimination on its head was as disturbing as it was intriguing for an ally such as myself. Not for the faint of heart and very thought provoking in terms of what alternative morals and justice mean or how they can be twisted."

-Mike, Director

Children of Time (Children of Time book 1) by Adrian Tchaikovsky

DB 98554

"The best, most surprising ending ever."

-Morgan, Assistive Technology Librarian

Demon Copperhead by Barbara Kingsolver

DB 110786

"Everyone has been reading this book for book club, and there's a good reason for it. This reimagining of David Copperfield takes place in rural, impoverished Appalachia. Kingsolver really captures the time and people, and without being overly sentimental, echoes Dickens's well-known bildungsroman."

-Melissa, Reader Advisor

Untamed by Glennon Doyle

DB 98981 *some strong language

A powerful and inspiring book that challenges readers to embrace their true selves and live life to the fullest. Written in a self-help/memoir style, this book is perfect for anyone who is looking to break free from societal expectations and live a more authentic life. This was recommended to me by a therapist. It's helping me understand how to listen to my gut feelings, trust myself and just how important all that is."

-Donna, Reader Advisor Supervisor

Newest Titles from the Californiana Collection

For a complete catalog of our Californiana Collection, ask your Reader Advisor. Here are the recently completed talking books:

The Lost Landscape: A Writer's Coming of Age

by Joyce Carol Oates

[DBC 26698](#)

A memoir recounting how an impoverished childhood on a rural farm in New York helped the author grow into the famous writer that she would become. From an early age, the author coped with the harsh realities of daily life by making up stories about what she encountered in her surroundings, whether it be relatives, neighbors, livestock, or landscape. Unrated. Commercial audio book.

11 hours, 25 minutes. Narrated by: Cassandra Campbell.

Whose Names Are Unknown: A Novel

by Sanora Babb

[DBC 26699](#)

In the midst of the Dust Bowl, the poor but proud Dunne family is forced to leave their Oklahoma farm to survive. Upon arriving in California, the family quickly finds work on a farm, but are unable to make enough to feed themselves. Through their struggles, they awaken to the possibilities offered by the labor movement, and they urge their fellow workers to join them in protest. Unrated. Commercial audio book.

8 hours, 45 minutes. Narrated by: Alyssa Bresnahan.

The Green Age of Asher Witherow

by M. Allen Cunningham

[DBC 19012](#)

In nineteenth-century Nortonville, CA, the Black Diamond Mines produces the majority of coal for the region. Asher, the son of Welsh immigrants, comes of age in this gritty and dangerous company town at the foot of Mount Diablo. Descriptions of sex. Violence.

9 hours, 40 minutes. Narrated by: Bill Rosenfeld.

Chasing Aphrodite: The hunt for Looted Antiquities at the World's Richest Museum

by Jason Felch

[DBC 07156](#)

In 2005, the art world was rocked by scandal when news broke that the prestigious J. Paul Getty Museum had a long history of purchasing looted antiquities. Beginning in the 1960's with Getty's purchase of questionable European statues, this story chronicles the rise of the world's richest museum, and documents how the museum's curators knowingly purchased stolen art until 2000, when a Rome magistrate sued for the return of Italian statues. California Book Award winner. Some strong language.

12 hours, 40 minutes. Narrated by: Walter Phelps.

Becoming Native to This Place

by Wes Jackson

[DBC 19013](#)

Six essays praising the virtues of sustainable and organic agriculture, especially for rural communities who have concluded that industrial agricultural practices provide an inadequate living wage for their residents. With topics ranging from American history, to the anecdotes of small town farmers, to political commentary, these essays argue that society can only be salvaged if and when people reject city life and return to the land.

13 hours, 49 minutes. Narrated by: David Michener.

Many Californias: Literature from the Golden State

by Gerald W. Haslam

[DBC 20155](#)

Haslam has collected short prose excerpts and poems which illustrate the variety of experiences in the lives of Californians. Strong language.

13 hours, 3 minutes. Narrated by: Jan Schwartz.

Writing Home: Award-winning Literature from the New West

by Brian Bouldrey

[DBC 19512](#)

The stories, essays and poems in this collection are all prizewinners of either the prestigious Jackson or Phelan awards, given annually to talented young writers. This book reflects the multicultural diversity of its authors, their fierce individuality, and "celebrates the chaos of the West."

10 hours, 15 minutes. Narrated by: Bill Rosenfeld.

Hillinger's California: Stories from All 58 Counties

by Charles Hillinger

[DBC 19001](#)

Colorful stories from each of California's counties give the reader a sense of how unique and interesting each local area is, with its own history and character.

10 hours, 0 minutes. Narrated by: David Michener.

The Homesteader: A Novel

by Oscar Micheaux

[DBC 20163](#)

Set in South Dakota in the early twentieth century, black homesteader Jean Baptiste represses his feelings for Agnes, who is white, and enters a loveless but socially acceptable marriage. Betrayal, cruelty, and a plot for murder ensue until the marriage ends tragically, and Jean is forced to flee to Chicago. 18 hours, 32 minutes. Narrated by: Jonathan Graham Powles.

John Charles Frémont: Character as Destiny

by Andrew F. Rolle

[DBC 20152](#)

John Charles Frémont led five expeditions exploring the American West, spent time as the territorial governor of Arizona and political leader in California's liberation from Mexico, served as a Major General in the Civil War, was elected one of California's first U.S. Senators and the first presidential candidate of the Republican party. This comprehensive biography carefully examines the historical record of "The Pathfinder" with a psychobiographical approach that explores the rash rebelliousness of Frémont's character.

18 hours, 45 minutes. Narrated by: John Swanson.

Indian Running: Native American History & Tradition

by Peter Nabokov

[DBC 25113](#)

In 1980, a group of Pueblo Indians gathered in Taos, New Mexico, for the Tricentennial Run, a reenactment of a 1680 run in which the Pueblo Indians sent messengers to the Hopi villages 300 miles away in a coordinated attempt to overthrow Spanish rule. The author chronicles the events of this six-day run, while explaining the cooperative nature of Native American running, as opposed to the more competitive attitude found in Western-style athletics. 6 hours, 22 minutes. Narrated by: Mary McGeorge.

The Jews in the California Gold Rush

by Robert E. Levinson

[DBC 25116](#)

A history of Jewish culture and community in California from 1849 to 1880. When news of the Gold Rush broke, recent immigrants from Central Europe arrived in the port of San Francisco, including thousands of Jews. As they branched out throughout Northern California, they built synagogues and cemeteries, set up businesses and schools, established benevolent societies, and created close-knit communities that brought economic stability and social benefits to mining camps and rural towns.

7 hours, 41 minutes. Narrated by: Jack Krieger.

Reminiscences of a Ranger: Early Times in Southern California

by Horace Bell

[DBC 20190](#)

Los Angeles in the mid-nineteenth century was a small, Spanish-American town with a big problem: organized gangs of outlaws controlled the territory through raids, bribes, and violence. In response, an all-volunteer militia called the Los Angeles Rangers was formed to restore law and order. In this adventurous, first-person account, ranger Major Horace Bell recalls a criminal cast of characters and the troop members who brought them to justice.

18 hours, 43 minutes. Narrated by: Sid Piper.

Bitter Harvest: A History of California Farmworkers, 1870-1941

by Cletus E. Daniel

[DBC 25128](#)

A history of farmworkers in California from the late nineteenth century through the Great Depression. Explores how small family farms were gradually replaced by industrial scale farming, which required large sources of cheap labor to make it profitable. Native Americans and the Chinese were forcibly pressed into service, while poor whites were attracted by misleading advertisements of high wages and false claims of land ownership. These labor injustices, which persisted for decades, led to high profile unionization efforts by the AFL-CIO (American Federation of Labor and the Committee for the Industrial Organization.)

12 hours, 7 minutes. Narrated by: Sandra Swafford.

Outposts of Eden: A Curmudgeon at Large in the American West

by Page Stegner

[DBC 25122](#)

A series of essays from a self-described "grump environmentalist." The author journeys from Mono Lake to the Mojave Desert, through the Humboldt National Forest, and across the Grand Canyon, recording his observations as he goes. Descriptions of the natural beauty are interlaced with sharp criticisms of the state and federal agencies responsible for preserving public lands, water, and forests. For high school and adult readers.

7 hours, 31 minutes. Narrated by: Jack Kreiger.

History of the Sierra Nevada

by Francis Peloubet Farquhar

[DBC 25119](#)

A history of the Sierra Nevada, beginning with Spanish exploration in the sixteenth century and concluding in the mid-twentieth century with the latest activities from the Sierra Club. Examines how different explorers such as Jedediah Smith, the Donner Party, John Charles Frémont, Clarence King, and John Muir interacted with the mountain range.

9 hours, 51 minutes. Narrated by: Sandra Swafford.

The Hangings

by Bill Pronzini

[DBC 25123](#)

In the tiny town of Tule Bend, California, Constable Lincoln Evans has an easy job keeping the peace. The only time he gets called out is on Saturday night, when someone has had too much to drink at Swede's Beer Hall. But when a drifter is found hung behind the town's saddle shop, it's up to Evans to determine if the killer is an outsider, or if their community isn't as innocent as it seems.

4 hours, 35 minutes. Narrated by: Samuel Schwartz.

Braille and Talking Book Library
California State Library
P.O. Box 942837
Sacramento, CA 94237-0001

Free Matter for the
Blind or Handicapped

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

BTBL News is written and edited by staff of the Braille and Talking Book Library at the California State Library. It is available in braille, audio file, through email, and in large print upon request, or through our website.

916-654-0640 or **800-952-5666** (toll-free in CA)

Email: btbl@library.ca.gov Website: btbl.ca.gov Catalog: btbl.library.ca.gov

Library Service Hours: 9:30 AM - 4:00 PM, Monday-Friday

Office closures: We will be closed May 27 (Memorial Day), July 4 (Independence Day), September 2 (Labor Day), November 11 (Veteran's Day), November 28-29 (Thanksgiving).

Donations to BTBL are accepted at any time and are used to enhance and improve library services. In the case of memorials or donations in honor of a particular person or event, please include the name(s) and address(es) of those to be notified. Checks should be made payable to the California State Library Foundation and should include a note that the donation is for the Braille and Talking Book Library.

Donations should be sent to: California State Library Foundation, 1225 8th Street, Suite 345, Sacramento, CA, 95814-4809. Donations can also be made online at: csfndn.org. Follow the link to "Join/Donate Online." There is a place to designate BTBL as the recipient.