



BTBL News

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

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A Message from Mike Marlin, Director

Greetings from the Accessible Materials Foundry, also known as the California Braille and Talking Book Library. Welcome to a meticulously forged crucible of *BTBL News*. This bubbling kettle of news includes our triennial survey of patrons and stakeholders, the emergence of *Recently Added Recap* large print catalog, what's new in the Californiana Collection of locally recorded books that have been uploaded to BARD (Braille and Audio Reading Download), reminder about our popular Assistive Tech lending program, and many other items hot off the presses!

Striking while the iron is hot, we present some sizzling annual numbers to showcase the reach of the NLS library network. For the NLS fiscal year ending September 30, 2023:

- 9,147 audiobooks and 1,854 braille books were added to the NLS catalog. That includes 1,756 books of regional interest produced by network libraries like BTBL.
- Patrons requested 5,926 Braille-on-Demand titles (softcover, customized braille books mailed directly to patrons.)
- NLS acquired 2,418 works in 18 languages from other countries that are participants in the Marrakesh Treaty. Works acquired under the treaty were downloaded from BARD 48,398 times. Some 200,000 books originally produced by NLS or network libraries that are available through the Accessible Books Consortium were downloaded 6,110 times by readers in 37 countries.

It's patron survey time again! As we work to grow and improve patron services, we are asking all our readers and various stakeholders to participate in a patron survey. In the large print edition of *BTBL News*, the survey can be detached from the inside of the newsletter, folded with the library's address showing, and mailed back to us via Free Matter postage. For computer and mobile device users, feel free to fill out the survey online at: forms.office.com/g/WYWDFQzJx5. Finally, if you would like to fill out the survey over the phone, please call your Reader Advisor at 800-952-5666 or 916-654-0640.

Congratulations are in order for our 2024 Summer Reading Program participants--who received their Starbucks or Baskin Robbins gift cards, and for some a BTBL stuffed animal puppy! This year 66 participants read 783 books in audio and braille, in physical and online formats! We heartily commend the dedicated children, teens, and adults who read many great fiction and nonfiction works to stay cool this past summer.

On April 29, American Library Association President Emily Drabinski visited BTBL as part of the "Power to Certify" campaign, an effort to encourage public library staff to certify eligible patrons for NLS service. The "Power to Certify" campaign had a nationwide reach, educating thousands of public

librarians about NLS network libraries, and emphasizing the importance of public libraries working hand-in-hand with their local BTBL to help identify and provide certifying signatures for new patrons looking to sign up. In addition to a public service announcement from President Drabinski, librarians from the Braille Institute and BTBL worked together to present a webinar to a national audience through the Public Library Association, reaching 974 registered attendees, as well as a Poster session at the 2024 American Library Association Annual Conference, with over 13,500 attendees. I am grateful to President Drabinski for using some of her presidential year time to visit us and highlight the importance of accessible library service in California and nationally.

Finally, in April, BTBL welcomed our newest staff member, Circulation Supervisor Jaidan (pronounced Huh-deen). Jaidan comes to us from the Sacramento Public Library where they wore many hats, including staffing the popular SPL Maker Space including operation of 3D printers. Although mostly behind the scenes, Jaidan is a wonderful asset to the BTBL team. And, in July, BTBL staff bid a fond farewell to Meng, a Circulation team member who moved on to a new position in another state agency. We congratulate Meng on his new role, and although we will miss his industriousness, kindness, and positive attitude, we wish him the best in all his future endeavors.

Magazine on Cartridge Service Moves to Sacramento

On May 8, BTBL assumed local control over audio magazine or MOC (Magazines on Cartridge) circulation from NLS. This change should help create consistent delivery and tracking now that local libraries have taken responsibility for MOC circulation. Although this has ideally been a seamless process, you may have noticed small changes, such as, unlike the light blue cartridges in red containers via NLS contractors, magazines are now distributed on white cartridges in blue containers just like our Books on Demand cartridge service. We have also designated the loan period for magazines to a slightly longer 8 weeks, though of course sending your magazines back quickly means your next magazine cartridge won't be unnecessarily delayed.

To manage magazine subscriptions, please speak with your Reader Advisor.

Recently Added Recap: A Printed Catalog

Several times a year, BTBL will be offering a physical large-print version of a mini-*Talking Book Topics* that we are calling *Recently Added Recap*. This publication will be made up of a list of books with short annotations, all of which have been, you've got it, recently added to our catalog. If you would like to receive a copy in the mail, please talk to your Reader Advisor, call us at 800-952-5666, or email us at btbl@library.ca.gov so we can put you on the list!

Explore 5 Electronic Magnifiers are available for loan!

The HumanWare Explore 5 electronic magnifier is a lightweight tool for patrons with low vision needs. The portable device 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 also offers a 2X to 22X magnification range and a variety of contrast choices. BTBL provides complimentary Explore 5 magnifier training through the Zoom meeting platform, which allows patrons to join the training through a web browser, Zoom app, landline and/or cell phone option. The magnifier may be loaned for one-year, with renewal contingent on availability. To borrow this free device, please call BTBL's AT/BARD line at 800-952-5666, press option 2 or email btbl@library.ca.gov. You may also speak with your Reader Advisor about reserving the Explorer 5 Magnifier.

Want to borrow a portable media player?

BTBL is loaning Victor Reader Stream 2 devices to eligible patrons. The HumanWare Victor Reader Stream 2 is a compact handheld audio player with Wi-Fi capabilities. Users can listen to books, magazines, newspapers, Internet radio, music, and podcasts. The Victor Reader Stream 2 supports the following libraries: NFB Newline, Bookshare, and NLS BARD. Prior to borrowing the device, patrons must have a valid email address and an active NLS BARD account. The loan period is one-year long, which may be renewed based on availability. BTBL provides complimentary VRS training through the Zoom meeting platform. Patrons may attend trainings through a web browser, Zoom app and/or telephone conference options. To borrow this free device,

please call BTBL's AT/BARD line at 800-952-5666, press option 2 or email btbl@library.ca.gov. You may also speak with your Reader Advisor about reserving the Victor Reader Stream 2. BTBL patrons may apply for a free BARD account via btbl.ca.gov.

Need a Free Connection to the Internet?

The Orbic Speed mobile hotspot is an Internet access tool, which offers a default 2.4 Ghz Wi-Fi setting. The BTBL hotspot will support up to five Wi-Fi enabled devices at a time with unlimited data. Patrons requesting a hotspot loan must abide by the California State Library Wi-Fi Agreement. The loan period is one-year with renewal options dependent on availability. To borrow an Orbic Speed mobile hotspot, please call BTBL's AT/BARD line at 800-952-5666, press option 2 or email btbl@library.ca.gov. You may also speak with your Reader Advisor about reserving the Orbic Speed mobile hotspot.

A New Way to Listen to BARD: On your PC

BARD Express is designed to assist users who have personal computers which run on Windows operating systems to download books. And NLS is pleased to announce a new feature, the BARD Express Player! The BARD Express Player allows you to choose an audio book or magazine from your BARD Express bookshelf and listen to it directly on your PC.

Much like BARD Mobile, with the BARD Express Player, you can adjust the narration speed; jump to navigation points such as part, chapter, and article; create bookmarks; and much more. You can also create global settings for narration speed, auto-play, auto-rewind, and more. A complete list of commands for JAWS and NVDA users is available under the Help menu of BARD Express.

You can install BARD Express from www.loc.gov/nls/how-to-enroll/sign-up-for-bard-and-bard-mobile/welcome-to-bard-express/

Do you have Amazon's Alexa?

NLS now offers open beta registration for the new My Talking Books skill on Amazon Alexa-enabled smart speakers. Patrons who wish to register for the open beta should fill out the Patron Registration Form at www.surveymonkey.com/r/mtb-open-beta.

Top Five BARD Downloads

Audiobooks - Fiction

[DB 121769](#) Eruption by James Patterson and Michael Crichton

[DB 121568](#) Camino Ghosts by John Grisham

[DB 120798](#) A Calamity of Souls by David Baldacci

[DB 120802](#) Murder Inn by James Patterson

[DB 121247](#) Think Twice by Harlan Coben

Audiobooks - Nonfiction

[DB 85796](#) Hillbilly Elegy by J.D. Vance

[DB 120671](#) Life Unseen: A Story of Blindness by Selina Mills

[DB 119576](#) A Dirty Guide to a Clean Home: Housekeeping Hacks
by Melissa Pateras

[DB 120207](#) Hiding in Plain Sight: The Secret Life of Raymond Burr
by Michael Starr

[DB 120757](#) Simply AI: Facts Made Fast by Claire Quigley

Braille - Fiction

[BR 25244](#) Hello Stranger by Katherine Center

[BR 24939](#) The Five-Star Weekend by Elin Hilderbrand

[BR 25088](#) Palazzo by Danielle Steel

[BR 24989](#) 8 Sandpiper Way by Debbie Macomber

[BR 25222](#) Catch Me by Lisa Gardner

Braille - Nonfiction

[BR 25220](#) Prairie Fires: The American Dreams of Laura Ingalls Wilder
by Caroline Fraser

[BR 24259](#) How to Cook Everything: The Basics by Mark Bittman

[BR 25219](#) The Daughter of Auschwitz by Tova Friedman

[BR 24714](#) The Fiber Fueled Cookbook: Inspiring Plant-Based Recipes
by Will Bulsiewicz

[BR 24354](#) Feast: Food of the Islamic World by Anissa Helo

Braille On Demand Success

Braille on Demand, which launched as a pilot program in 2022, has been a roaring success with 9,302 titles fulfilled for a total of 19,415 volumes. Braille on Demand provides patrons an opportunity to request, receive, and permanently retain up to five hard copy braille books of their choice per month from braille titles that are currently available on BARD.

The most popular title so far? *A Treasury of Knitting Patterns*, a classic 1960s guide, with seven copies requested. Crossword, Sudoku and cooking books are also popular, but *The Fellowship of the Ring* and *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* are leading the pack after the knitting book.

Everyone has a favorite book they revisit regularly. Maybe it's a collection of poems or fairytales, a literary classic or beloved children's story. Or something practical, like a cookbook or crochet instruction manual. If you're an NLS patron and braille reader, NLS can help you have your favorites at your fingertips with Braille on Demand.

Any NLS patron can request hardcopy braille books using the form found online at www.surveymonkey.com/r/NLSbrailleondemand.

New Patron Program: That All May eRead

Are you a patron who is using a braille eReader provided by the Braille and Talking Book Library? Would you like to learn more about how to use your eReader? Or do you have specific questions in regard to using all of the features and functions of your eReader?

On the last Tuesday of every month at 4pm PT, NLS will be offering a new patron-focused program: That All May eRead. The program will focus specifically on how to use an NLS Braille eReader. Each session will begin with a brief demonstration of a particular feature of the eReader, and the rest of the hour will be dedicated to answering patron questions about any aspect of the Zoomax or HumanWare Braille eReader.

Ready to join? Access the Zoom meeting via the following link:

<https://loc.zoomgov.com/j/1614539282?pwd=vVKnyVjiG8x91SGk7RN6lgxhb9XyLz.1>

Braille Calendars

NLS provides braille and print/braille calendars to its patrons free of charge. Calendars are available in two sizes. The larger wall calendar is print/braille. The smaller pocket-sized calendar is braille only. To obtain calendars, please contact your Reader Advisor to subscribe. Once patrons are subscribed, they will receive a calendar each year unless they stop their subscription.

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:

Water to the Angels: William Mulholland, His Monumental Aqueduct, and the Rise of Los Angeles

by Les Standiford

[DBC 27718](#)

In 1907, Irish immigrant William Mulholland conceived of what would become one of the greatest engineering feats in modern history: an aqueduct that would carry water over two hundred miles from the Sierra Nevada mountains to Los Angeles, thus allowing a small desert city to grow into a global metropolis. Based on new research, this *Gilded Age* tale captures the larger-than-life engineer and the breathtaking scope of his six-year, \$23-million project that built a new future for Southern California. Unrated. Commercial audio book.

9 hours, 11 minutes. Narrated by: Robert Fass.

Midnight at the Wandering Vineyard: A Novel

by Jamie Raintree

[DBC 27712](#)

After ten years away, Mallory returns home to her family's Southern California vineyard to recover from a breakup and reconnect with her best friend, Kelly. Mallory and Kelly did everything together until high school graduation, when Mallory ran off to New York City to be with her boyfriend, Sam. But just as Mallory begins to heal her friendship with Kelly, Sam wants her back, forcing Mallory to decide where her heart really lies. Unrated. Commercial audio book.

11 hours, 6 minutes. Narrated by: Jorjeana Marie.

What We Keep

by Elizabeth Berg

[DBC 27734](#)

Ginny Young is on a plane, en route to see her mother, whom she hasn't seen or spoken to for thirty-five years. She thinks back to the summer of 1958, when she and her sister, Sharla, were young girls. Moving back and forth in

time between the girl she once was and the woman she's become, Ginny at last confronts painful choices that occur in almost any woman's life, and learns surprising truths about the people she thought she knew best. Unrated. Commercial audio book.

6 hours, 18 minutes. Narrated by: Stephanie Roberts.

A Dedicated Life: Journalism, Justice, and a Chance for Every Child

by David Lawrence, Jr.

[DBC 27714](#)

David Lawrence, Jr., a newspaper editor with a three-decade-long career in journalism, retired in 1999 at the age of 56 and found himself looking for a new cause to which he might devote his time and energy. Concerned about the state of early childhood education, David launched the Children's Movement of Florida, a citizen-led, non-partisan effort to educate political and civil leaders on the need to improve education, literacy, and health care for Florida's children. Unrated. Commercial audio book.

7 hours, 31 minutes. Narrated by: Richard Ferrone.

Alice: Memoirs of a Barbary Coast Prostitute

by Alice Smith

[DBC 27715](#)

In 1913, the San Francisco Bulletin published the serialized memoir of a prostitute named Alice Smith. Having come from humble roots, Alice shared her struggle to find respectable work and wrote about the difficulties facing prostitutes, such as abortion, police corruption, and social shunning from respectable society. In response, thousands of letters written by other prostitutes poured into the offices of the Bulletin, inspiring the first sex-worker-rights protest in modern history. Unrated. Commercial audio book.

9 hours, 54 minutes. Narrated by: Marguerite Gavin.

The Other California: The Central Valley in Life and Letters

by Gerald W. Haslam

[DBC 19528](#)

Haslam's essays on the landscape, literature and life in the Central Valley of California offer a rich portrait of this little-known part of the state.

4 hours, 0 minutes. Narrated by: Bill Rosenfeld.

Great California Stories by A. Grove Day

[DBC 19550](#)

Collection of twenty-one short stories reflecting a variety of historical periods, diverse characters, and California locales. Includes well-known authors such as Mark Twain, Jack London, John Steinbeck, Raymond Chandler, and Wallace Stegner.

10 hours, 4 minutes. Narrated by: David Michener.

Death Valley: Geology, Ecology, Archaeology

by Charles B. Hunt

[DBC 25118](#)

A comprehensive overview of Death Valley, a desert valley in Eastern California and one of the hottest places on Earth. Covers the landscape, sources of water, geology, mines, as well as the plants, animals, and people that live in Death Valley. Includes a chapter on Native American history in Death Valley; the area served as a base and trading camp for the migrating tribes of Shoshone, Southern Paiute, and Kawaiisu.

5 hours, 26 minutes. Narrated by: Sandra Swafford.

The Natural World of the California Indians

by Robert F. Heizer

[DBC 25117](#)

A history of Native American cultures in California. Describes the different tribes, their territories, languages, food sources, and religious beliefs. Explores the ways in which geography influenced a tribe's diet, tools, trading abilities, and migration patterns.

9 hours, 11 minutes. Narrated by: Mary McGeorge.

Enterprising Lady

by Eva Rutland

[DBC 25112](#)

Lydia Crenshaw, the daughter of a baron, appears to be part of the British elite and ready to make an advantageous marriage. But Lydia has a shocking secret: her family is destitute, and the only way that they are continuing to keep up appearances is through Lydia's secret candy making business. When the wealthy Duke of Canfield discovers Lydia's secret, he offers to marry her, but will such an enterprising lady give up her business for love?

5 hours, 29 minutes. Narrated by: Sandra Swafford.

The Shooting Doc: A Gold Rush Doctor in Hangtown

by Franklin MacDonald

[DBC 26677](#)

In 1849, three men begin new lives in Sacramento. A Scottish physician, Ned Willis, wants to establish his own business as a camp doctor. Welsh miner Jonathan Owen hopes to strike it rich in gold. Reverend "Brimstone" Jared Jones plans to start a new church. Together, these three friends navigate the challenges and opportunities presented by the Gold Rush.

7 hours, 43 minutes. Narrated by: Dorothy Miller.

To Fly and Fight: Memoirs of a Triple Ace

by Clarence E. Anderson

[DBC 25131](#)

An action-packed biography of the fighter pilot Bud Anderson. Anderson describes his childhood growing up in a sleepy town just outside of Sacramento, which led to a longing for adventure and a career in the Army Air Corps. He began his flying career during World War II, escorting bomber planes behind enemy lines. Over the course of his career he became one of the military's most successful combat pilots, flying one hundred and sixteen missions without ever being hit by enemy fire, and was decorated twenty five times. Violence.

13 hours, 58 minutes. Narrated by: Thomas Perkins.

West Coast Journeys, 1865-1879: The Travelogue of a Remarkable Woman

by Caroline C. Leighton

[DBC 19538](#)

A first-person account written by a gentlewoman traveling leisurely through post-Civil War America. In 1865, Caroline Leighton left New York for San Francisco and traveled throughout the Pacific Northwest with her husband for the next fourteen years. She describes such sights as the California missions, the Rocky Mountains, and Puget Sound, as well as her observations on other cultures, such as the Native Americans, the Chinese, and the Spanish.

5 hours, 40 minutes. Narrated by: Pam Ryan.

The Turquoise Dragon: A Mystery

by David Rains Wallace

[DBC 25135](#)

When forest ranger George Kilgore stumbles over the scene of a murder in California's Klamath Mountains, he uncovers an astonishing secret: a colony of turquoise dragons, one of the rarest salamanders in the world. Soon he is being hunted by a dangerous enemy who has made millions in the illegal endangered species trade. George must enlist the help of Carla Shreve, a beautiful but guarded herpetologist, to save not only the turquoise dragons, but himself. For high school and adult readers.

7 hours, 3 minutes. Narrated by: Jack Kreiger.

Recapitulation

by Wallace Stegner

[DBC 25136](#)

Bruce Mason is a successful diplomat, enjoying prestigious international assignments and the respect of world leaders. But for all of his accomplishments, Bruce feels disconnected from others and cannot shake his bitterness over a painful childhood. When Bruce returns home for an aunt's funeral after forty-five years away, he revisits the people and places that shaped his life path, trying to reconcile the experiences of his formative years with the man that he is today.

10 hours, 14 minutes. Narrated by: Jan Schwartz.

Tales of San Francisco

by Samuel Dickson

[DBC 25126](#)

Seventy-two colorful stories about San Francisco and its well-known inhabitants, such as Jack London, Robert Louis Stevenson, Ambrose Bierce, and Black Bart. Includes stories of lesser figures who were made famous by their eccentricities: a saloonkeeper who became the city's first rags-to-riches story, acquiring millions of dollars before losing it all and dying penniless, a doctor who bathed in gold dust, a madman who believed himself to be an emperor, and two stray dogs who were officially declared the guardians of the city.

20 hours, 58 minutes. Narrated by: Diana Hemme.

Braille and Talking Book Library
California State Library
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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: November 11 (Veteran's Day), November 28-29 (Thanksgiving), December 25 (Christmas), January 1 (New Year's), January 20 (MLK), February 17 (President's Day).

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.