



# BTBL News

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

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## A Message from Mike Marlin, Director

Breezy summer Delta greetings from the California State Library in Sacramento! I hope you are enjoying a relaxed and sunny season filled with books and magazines to tickle your fancy. And speaking of fancy, BTBL has a new logo which now appears on the *BTBL News* masthead at the top of this page. The new logo can be described as follows: The blue color image shows an open book with "btbl" written in braille dots across its pages. From the top of the book come concentric rings symbolizing sound waves. The outermost ring reads "BRAILLE AND TALKING BOOK LIBRARY." A ribbon banner below the open book reads "BTBL." At bottom reads "CALIFORNIA STATE LIBRARY." We will be rolling out new publications and web pages with our new logo over the coming months.

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I recently attended the 2015 American Library Association (ALA) Annual Conference in San Francisco with my guide dog Vivaldi leading me around the twists and turns of Market Street. As a librarian who happens to be blind I was very proud to help pass a resolution through the ALA Governing Council celebrating the 25th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). A link to the complete resolution can be found at [btbl.ca.gov](http://btbl.ca.gov), but meanwhile I wanted to share the Resolved clauses which state:

"Resolved that the ALA, on behalf of its members:

1. Celebrates 25 years of the ADA and recognizes the progress made affirming and carrying out the principles of accessibility, equality, and inclusion by libraries and library staff throughout the United States as well as within the ALA; and,
2. Reaffirms its commitment to the ADA. "

Speaking of conferences, BTBL recently hosted the 2015 National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS) Western Regional Conference here in Sacramento from May 12-14. Thirty colleagues joined us from other Western states including NLS Network library staff from Arizona, Southern California Regional and San Francisco and Fresno Sub-regionals, Idaho, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Washington, library automation system staff from North Carolina, and NLS staff from Ohio, Illinois, and Washington, D.C. Hot topics discussed included how to handle unrated books donated to NLS by commercial publishers, standards for evaluating NLS Network libraries, and the future of library services to the blind and print disabled. In addition we provided our guests with tours of BTBL, the renovated Library and Courts Building, and an inside look at treasures from the California History vault. I want to thank all of the staff at BTBL who worked tirelessly to make it a highly successful conference.

BTBL's new online catalog for patrons who search and order books directly from the library is here. It has a different look and feel and may require some practice in order to comfortably execute searches. Read about it elsewhere in the newsletter and please provide us with your feedback. The old catalog will be available until August 31.

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For those of you who have been waiting patiently for the BARD Mobile app for Android devices in order to download NLS books and magazines, it is finally here! Read about BARD Mobile for Android in this newsletter.

You will also find an article about the forthcoming Unified English Braille (UEB) code that will comprise all NLS braille beginning in January 2016. All previous braille books and magazines will remain unchanged but UEB will be the norm going forward. Please read about it and feel free to contact us with questions or comments.

NOC (Newsletter on Cartridge) service began in August, 2014 and has been quite successful, although there are still some BTBL patrons who have not yet returned their Winter 2014/15 audio newsletter cartridge. We are unable to send additional audio newsletters after an NOC is overdue, so please return past NOC to us as soon as possible so you remain in good standing to receive the next NOC. Just as with any circulating book, please flip over the mailing card and return it to BTBL. As always, if you would rather receive *BTBL News* via email, or not at all because you read it online, please let us know.

In an exciting new development, we have created a Children's Alcove in our Sacramento reading room. For those families (including young readers and teenagers) who visit us in person, you can now experience braille and tactile games, toys, and books! We also have braille and tactile games for adults, including chess, backgammon, and checkers, and we hope to establish some clubs and/or gaming tournaments in the future. Read the article in this edition of *BTBL News* and feel free to drop in to check out the new Children's Alcove.

BTBL's User Advisory Council has held two meetings in 2015 thus far and the meeting agendas and minutes are now available online at [btbl.ca.gov](http://btbl.ca.gov). We are looking for applicants from all geographical locales and with varying print disabilities -especially U.S. veterans - to join the advisory council in 2016, and applications are due by November 15. Please take a look at the advisory council web page and apply, or feel free to contact me with any questions.

Finally, if you live in an assisted living or skilled nursing facility, or visit someone who does, please talk to the activity director or social worker about BTBL. A significant percentage of our patrons are registered with the help of

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these professionals, but there are undoubtedly some who are not familiar with what we can offer. They are always welcome to call us for more information or application materials and in many cases our staff may be available to give a presentation in your community.

I hope you enjoy this chock full edition of *BTBL News* - a genuine team effort from our dedicated staff. Stay cool!

## Survey Results Summary

We recently conducted a survey, which was included in the last edition of *BTBL News*. Thank you to all who provided their feedback to help us improve our services. Many of our readers have expressed an interest in the results of the survey, so a full version of the results is available at [btbl.ca.gov](http://btbl.ca.gov). Here are some highlights:

We had 681 people respond to our survey in a variety of ways (on the phone, print survey, online survey). Most patrons, 38%, learned about our service through a friend or family member. The second most common referral source, making up 17% of responses, was a blindness center like Lighthouse, Vista Center, or Society for the Blind.

A whopping 59% of our patrons reported that they read 1-3 NLS books and/or magazines a week, and 17% report they read 4-5+ books/magazines a week!

The number of patrons who reported they contact us every few months was 38% while 17% said they contact us one or more times a month.

Most of our patrons, 56%, have contacted us within the last 6 months, mostly to order books, magazines, or descriptive videos; 14% contacted us to report a problem; 11% to ask about their accounts; and 28% reported that they haven't contacted us in the last 6 months. For this question, readers could mark multiple answers, which is why the results are over 100%.

Our service was rated as excellent by 67% of patrons reporting, followed by 23% who felt it was good.

The number of patrons who reported they read our newsletter was 76% while 14% reported that they read it sometimes.

The number of patrons who reported they have access to the internet was 67%, while 33% of patrons reported they do not have easy access to a

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computer or device connected to the internet. In addition, 39% reported they are not comfortable at all using the internet. However, another 22% reported being very comfortable using the internet and 24% as somewhat comfortable using it.

Only 11% of readers reported they use BTBL's online catalog daily or weekly and 15% reported they use the online catalog monthly. Of the people who do use the online catalog, 83% utilize it to search for authors, titles or subjects they want to read and 44% used the catalog links to download books from BARD.

A startling 57% of patrons reported they are not signed up for BARD and do not plan to do so. However, 18% plan to register for BARD and 26% have already registered for BARD.

We thank the 59% of our readers who took the time to provide additional feedback in the comments section. We take your feedback seriously and strive to find ways we can improve our services.

## **New Children's Alcove in the BTBL Reading Room**

We have a whole new section here in the BTBL reading room! A previously under-utilized alcove has been transformed into our children's section in order to provide a unique space for our youngest readers. We have a browsing collection of children's print/braille books, braille board books for younger children, child-sized seating, a comfy tactile rug, tactile toys, games, puzzles, and our fluffy stuffed dog Louis who watches over the books. The reading room is open to the public 9:30am to 4:00pm, Monday through Friday.

BTBL has over 2,000 children's digital audio book titles and over 3,000 children's braille book titles. In addition to serving younger readers with individual library service, schools are also eligible to sign up so they have materials on hand for children who qualify for the service. We are hoping to provide additional activities for our younger readers. Let us know if you have any fun ideas for child-centric events you'd like to see the library implement.

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## A New Way to Search for Books

On May 18<sup>th</sup>, BTBL unveiled our new online catalog. You can find our new catalog at [btbl.library.ca.gov](http://btbl.library.ca.gov). Like the old catalog, you can search our entire collection of materials and, after logging in, you can request titles and check the status of your account with us. If you had a username and password to log into our old catalog they will work with the new one, too. If you need your login information, you can give your Reader Advisor a call at 800-952-5666.

One of the great new features in the catalog is the ability to quickly refine your search results by selecting what you do and don't want to see in them. These options are listed down the left side of the results screen and include categories like Medium, Availability, and even Subject. Are you only interested in seeing digital books in your results? Click "Digital Book" under the Medium heading and only the digital book results of your search will be displayed. Do you want to avoid books written for young children? Click the minus sign next to "Juvenile Book - JU" under the Subject heading and all the juvenile books will be removed from your search results.

In addition to the new search options, there are new features available when looking at your account. For example, under Reading History you can quickly look up the last shipment of books sent to you as well as any books that are getting ready to ship. You can also check your contact information and your reading preferences to make sure we have everything the way you want it.

More new features and improvements are in the works, so if you have any suggestions for features you'd like to see or changes you'd like to make to the new online catalog, let us know and we will pass your suggestions along to the developers.

## *Talking Book Topics in Six Ways*

*Talking Book Topics* (TBT), a free bimonthly catalog from NLS that lists new audio books, is now available in six different ways. You may receive TBT in large print, on digital audio cartridge, read by a mechanical voice through NFB-Newsline®, in braille as part of *Braille Book Review*, downloaded from BARD, and in text on a website at [loc.gov/nls/tbt](http://loc.gov/nls/tbt).

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If you receive TBT in large print, braille, or download it, it is yours to keep. If you receive TBT on audio digital cartridge, it must be returned within seven weeks. You will also receive a small white print booklet sent separately from the cartridge. This booklet is the order form. If TBT is your only magazine from NLS, it will come by itself on the cartridge. If you receive additional magazines, TBT will be included on a cartridge with the others. On your digital machine, use the Bookshelf feature and the fast forward and rewind buttons to find TBT.

The newest way to get TBT is through NFB-Newsline®. This free service lets you access TBT, as well as other newspapers and magazines, on your telephone. You can even create a list of books you want to read and have the list emailed to you so you can send it to us. For more information or to sign up for NFB-Newsline®, please contact your Reader Advisor.

## **Borrow Movies from the Library**

Every spring, BTBL purchases new DVD movies to loan to you! Most recently, we purchased such titles as the Academy Award Best Picture winner *Birdman*, *Gone Girl* from Gillian Flynn's best-selling novel, and the documentary *Blindsight* about a blind mountain climbing group. These are only 3 of the 48 new movie titles purchased this year! Ask your Reader Advisor to send you the catalog of newest videos.

All of our videos include an optional descriptive narration audio track that describes the action and actors when there is no dialogue. Our movies play on ordinary DVD/VHS players, but the library does not loan this equipment—just the videos. To sign up to receive videos, either visit us online at [btbl.ca.gov](http://btbl.ca.gov) or ask your Reader Advisor for a Descriptive Video Service (DVS) Registration Packet.

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## Changes to Braille Code: Transitioning to UEB

On November 2, 2012, the U.S. delegation of the Braille Authority of North America (BANA) voted to adopt Unified English Braille (UEB) and ultimately replace English Braille American Edition (EBAE). UEB's adoption by BANA resulted from extensive dialog and planning that involved more than 30 organizations as well as individual consumers, teachers, and transcribers. BANA established the date of January 4, 2016 (the 207th birthday of Louis Braille) as the UEB implementation date in the U.S. Both BANA and NLS are attempting to make this transition as smooth as possible for braille readers. BANA's website, [brailleauthority.org/ueb.html](http://brailleauthority.org/ueb.html), hosts a wealth of information about the transition. Braille copies of UEB publications are available for free by contacting the UEB Information Line at 617-972-7248.

The Hadley School for the Blind is offering a "Transitioning to UEB" course in large print and braille for both students and sighted professionals/family members. The six-lesson course provides a structured approach to learning the difference between UEB and EBAE. Prerequisites include strong contracted reading and writing skills in EBAE or SEB (Standard English Braille). Thanks to the American Printing House for the Blind, the course for sighted professionals is tuition-free through the end of calendar year 2015. For more information on this Hadley course, please visit [hadley.edu/UEBTransition.asp](http://hadley.edu/UEBTransition.asp), or call 800-323-4238.

NLS braille in UEB will begin to appear in hard copy in a few months. Meanwhile, BARD users can download examples of UEB using the subject heading "Unified English Braille" in the drop-down menu on the BARD main page. The forty-plus items are from outside providers, have a "BRE" number prefix, and are not available from the library in hard copy.

## Searching for the Index in *Talking Book Topics*?

In the past year, the *Talking Book Topics* (TBT) bimonthly catalog from NLS has stopped printing an index of authors and book titles. If you have a favorite author that you used to search for in the TBT index, we suggest you contact your Reader Advisor to add your favorite authors to your preferred author list. Your preferred author list means you will be automatically sent all

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of that author's new books — sometimes even before they are listed in TBT. If you have a specific book title in mind, your Reader Advisor can find it and send it along!

TBT will no longer contain an index of authors and book titles, but the library is here to help you locate and borrow what you want to read. Call, write, email, or fax us with your reading requests and we will happily assist you!

## **Read our Books on your iPad, iPhone, or Android Devices**

Using our free BARD Mobile app, you can read audio books right from your device (iPad, iPhone, Android smartphone or tablet)! You just need to sign up for a BARD account online. Once you have your BARD account username and a permanent password, you can download the free BARD Mobile app from the Apple App Store or the Google Play Store. Log in and you will be ready to download and start listening to books! BARD Mobile also offers magazines for download, and the iOS version supports electronic braille materials. Sign up for BARD at: [nlsbard.loc.gov/CA1A/ApplicationInstructions.html](https://nlsbard.loc.gov/CA1A/ApplicationInstructions.html)

## **Spread the Word!**

In the results of our recent survey, we learned that the majority of respondents first learned about our BTBL services from a friend or family member. So we implore you to help spread the word to friends, family members, acquaintances, and everyone you know! Our service isn't just for the blind; we also serve those who cannot hold a book, turn pages, or focus long enough to read standard print due to disability (permanent or temporary), those with reading disabilities due to organic dysfunction (such as dyslexia), or those who may be experiencing temporary low vision that prevents them from reading standard print. If you know anyone in your life that may be eligible for our services, please let them know about us!

Our service is offered throughout the United States, and to U.S. citizens living abroad. To view videos, browse a catalog of available books, find a local library, or just learn more about the service, visit the website [loc.gov/ThatAllMayRead](https://loc.gov/ThatAllMayRead). For residents of Northern CA, call us at 800-952-5666 or visit us online at [btbl.ca.gov](https://btbl.ca.gov).

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## Staff Picks: Beat the Heat with these COOL Books!

*The Round House* by Louise Erdrich

DB 75641

"A coming of age book (and a lot more) about a young boy who lives on an Indian reservation. Very realistic writing with a story that sucks you in. May be too 'racy' for some folks." - Johanna, Circulation

\*contains descriptions of sex

*WWW Trilogy: WWW Wake, WWW Watch, and WWW Wonder*

by Robert J. Sawyer

DB 69237, BR 18658; DB 71135, BR 18985; DB 73215, BR 19396

"Award winning Canadian novelist Robert Sawyer writes about big ideas.

Although my favorite titles are *The Terminal Experiment* and *Flashforward* (DB 59138 and DB 70029/BR 19254), the WWW books are special because the protagonist is a brilliant blind teenager who becomes the conduit to Web Mind, a sentient being formed from the tendrils of the web encompassing all of the internet. These books are hard to put down even if you're not a science fiction addict like me!" - Mike, BTBL Director

\*contains some strong language and some descriptions of sex

*The Husband's Secret* by Liane Moriarty

DB 77238, BR 20259

"The initial enigma keeps you reading - a wife finds a sealed letter penned by her husband with instructions to only open after his death. Female readers especially will relate to the main characters and the writing style of this prolific, best-selling Australian author. While reading, I often found myself asking 'What would I do in this situation?'" - Sarah, Reader Advisor

\*contains strong language

*The Yoga Store Murder: the Shocking True Account of the Lululemon*

*Athletica Killing* by Dan Morse

DB 77925

"I followed this story in the news when it happened, but to get the inside account was fascinating. It's a surprising story and well-written."

- Joan, Circulation

\*contains violence and some strong language

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*Close Your Eyes/Sight Unseen* by Iris and Roy Johansen

DB 75138/DB 79588

"Part of an ongoing series, these books feature character Kendra Michaels, who was born blind and had surgery at age 20 that gave her sight. Since her other senses became keener after relying on them when she was blind, her observation skills are beyond compare. She uses these heightened senses to help solve crimes the FBI and police are unable to solve."

- Donna, Reader Advisor Supervisor

\*contains strong language and some violence

*The Supernatural Enhancements* by Edgar Cantero DB 81279, BR 20767

"Maybe it's a little creepy, but mostly this cool book is a thrilling mystery that takes place in a haunted house--but with engaging cryptographs, a cute dog, supernatural dreams, and a secret society thrown in! Much of the story is related through letters, documents, recordings of conversations, and descriptions of captured video. This fluid and varied format makes it a quick, fascinating read that real life will have a hard time interrupting."

- Melissa, Reader Advisor

\*contains some strong language.

*Spanish for Dummies* by Susana Wald

DB/RC 57058

"Would you like to speak Spanish? This is the book for you! It is easy to follow with English translations for each Spanish word or phrase given."

-Valerie, Reader Advisor

*Every Day a Friday; How to Be Happier 7 Days a Week* by Joel Osteen

DB 73781, BR 18756

"It's an inspirational book that helped me through some personal hard times. Every day I listened to it, I was cheered up. It makes the whole day more positive because you believe that good things are on the way. "

- Juana, Circulation

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

Free Matter for the Blind and  
Physically Handicapped

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

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*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.

Library Service Hours: 9:30 AM - 4:00 PM, Monday-Friday  
Phone: 916-654-0640; 800-952-5666 (toll-free in CA); 916-654-1119 (fax)  
E-mail for customer requests or contact information: [btbl@library.ca.gov](mailto:btbl@library.ca.gov)  
Website: [btbl.ca.gov](http://btbl.ca.gov); Web Catalog: [btbl.library.ca.gov](http://btbl.library.ca.gov)

Office closures: We will be closed Sep. 7 (Labor Day), Nov. 11 (Veterans Day), Nov. 26-27 (Thanksgiving), Dec. 25 (Christmas Day), Jan. 1 (New Year'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 8<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 345, Sacramento, CA, 95814-4809. Donations can also be made online at: [cslnfdn.org](http://cslnfdn.org). Follow the link to "Join/Donate Online." There is a place to designate BTBL as the recipient.