



# BTBL News

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

New Series no. 15 (Spring/Summer 2016)

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## A Message from Mike Marlin, Director

It's spring again in Northern California and that means the flowers are blooming and so is the descriptive video movie collection. Check out the selection of new DVD titles in the Spring 2016 DVS catalog on our web site at [library.ca.gov/services/btbl-dvd/descriptivevideos.html](http://library.ca.gov/services/btbl-dvd/descriptivevideos.html) or contact your Reader Advisor to receive the newest catalog.

Next time you visit the BTBL reading room in Sacramento you'll find a new display about talking book machines, past and present. To celebrate this year's National Library Week (April 10-16) BTBL staff put together a display of machines, including National Library Service for the Blind & Physically Handicapped (NLS) turntables with accompanying recorded discs, various models and colors of cassette book machines from the 1970s through the '90s including the fabled combo player, and a variety of accessories including

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finger extenders, pillow speakers, and headphones, plus newer fare from the digital era. This hands-on display should be around for the next 6 months so please come visit and bring your friends and family.

NLS has introduced a new High Volume Player (HVP) that replaces the previously loaned amplified headset for patrons with severe hearing loss. The HVP requires a separate application that must be filled out and signed by a doctor or audiologist. The application is then sent to NLS headquarters and, once approved, the HVP will be sent directly from NLS to a qualified patron along with a request for the patron to return her/his regular-volume digital machine back to the library here in Sacramento. The new HVP closely resembles the current digital player, except it has a rugged plastic label and comes with a uniquely modified headset. If you require the HVP you may contact your Reader Advisor to request an application. CAUTION: the HVP is intended for patrons with severe hearing loss only and can cause serious hearing impairment and/or deafness if used by persons with normal hearing.

On January 25th and 26th, BTBL hosted 15 representatives from the California Assembly and Senate, California Department of Education, and Sacramento Mayor's office in a legislative open house. Members of BTBL's User Advisory Council (BUAC) demonstrated braille and talking books, playback equipment, the BARD Mobile app, braille embosser, and computers with assistive technology to legislators and their staff. Many visitors knew about the program already but were surprised and enthused by the hands-on opportunity to experience our materials and reading room and especially to meet their constituents who read the same kinds of books they do. Next year we hope to take the show "on the road" to the State Capitol and bring awareness to even more legislators.

The BUAC consists of patrons and other stakeholders who advise us on a number of service, programming, and operational issues. Please consider applying any time prior to the November 15 application deadline. We welcome all interested applicants, and are keenly interested in U.S. veterans, patrons with physical and organic reading disabilities, and patrons living outside of the Capitol corridor (north, south, and east of the Greater Metropolitan Sacramento Valley /Bay Area.) All expenses for quarterly meetings are

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reimbursed. For more information about the advisory council or to apply call us or see our web page: [library.ca.gov/services/council.html](http://library.ca.gov/services/council.html).

In late February, President Obama formally sent to the U.S. Senate the Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons Who Are Blind, Visually Impaired, or Otherwise Print Disabled. It is expected that the Senate will take up ratification deliberations before the end of Obama's term, although no date has been set. The treaty will go into effect after 20 ratifications, and thus far 16 countries have ratified it. For those who are not aware, the treaty — adopted by the United Nations World Intellectual Property Organization in 2013 — allows for cross border sharing of works in protected alternate formats (such as braille and narrated audio books) between countries with copyright exceptions for blind and/or otherwise print-disabled citizens. To find out more about the treaty visit [wipo.int/treaties/en/ip/marrakesh](http://wipo.int/treaties/en/ip/marrakesh), or contact your U.S. Senators' offices if you have questions about the ratification process.

Finally, at its recent 2016 National Conference held in San Francisco, NLS previewed plans for infrastructure and technology improvements over the next 3-7 years. While we do not have enough space to go into full detail in these pages, highlights include: For the short term 1) BARD Express — software that will enable BARD patrons who have problems downloading and unzipping books to bypass that process (expected to be released summer or fall of 2016), and 2) Duplication for Demand (D4D) — hardware that, when coupled with a library's circulation system, will enable libraries to readily duplicate titles for their patrons. For long term development 1) depending on authorization from Congress, NLS will pursue acquisition of refreshable braille displays to loan to braille readers 2) NLS will research the possibility of providing eBooks as text-to-speech (non-human voice) 3) NLS will begin development of the next generation of talking book machines to incorporate wireless internet delivery in addition to books on physical cartridges.

Have a great summer!

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## New Audio Magazines Available

As announced in the recent March-April 2016 *Talking Book Topics* catalog, fifteen new digital audio magazines are now available. They are *AARP (Magazine and Bulletin)*; *Audubon*; *Cowboys and Indians*; *Humpty Dumpty*; *Missouri Conservationist*; *National Geographic Traveler*; *The New Yorker* (selected material only; not complete contents); *O, The Oprah Magazine*; *Oklahoma Today*; *Playboy*; *Rolling Stone*; *Seventeen*; *Smithsonian*; *Southern Living*; and *Vital Speeches of the Day*. A complete listing of all available magazine subscriptions appears in every issue of *Talking Book Topics*. To subscribe to magazines, contact your Reader Advisor.

## Unified English Braille is Here!

The occasion of the 207th birthday of Louis Braille on January 4, 2016 marked the date when Unified English Braille, or UEB, became the official format adopted by the Braille Authority of North America (BANA). It replaced English Braille American Edition (EBAE).

NLS notified us that beginning with book number BR 21266, all NLS-produced braille will be transcribed in UEB. There are also a few braille books with numbers lower than BR 21266 that were issued in UEB, as some of the braille contractors working for NLS produced them a bit ahead of the start date. Except for these few items, books with BR numbers below 21266 will remain available only in EBAE — NLS will **\*NOT\*** be re-transcribing them into the UEB format.

We would like our braille readers to know that there is a publication to help them make the transition from EBAE to UEB. If you would like a copy, please contact your Reader Advisor and ask for "Frequently Used UEB Symbols" which is a four-page braille document. This braille document lists the most commonly used UEB symbols, arranged by category. If you prefer, you may download an electronic braille file of this document at: [loc.gov/nls/bds](http://loc.gov/nls/bds).

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## Online Catalog: How to Add Requests by Book Number

Last year, we reported to you about the new interface for BTBL's Online Catalog. The online catalog allows users to browse our entire collection of books and (with your login information) add books to your request list to be sent in the mail. Learning to use the new interface has been challenging in some situations, therefore we'd like to provide a quick tip on a particularly troublesome aspect of the online catalog for many of our patrons: adding books to the request list by book number.

A book number is the unique code attached to each book. Usually, you'll see DB followed by 5 numbers for a digital book, BR and five numbers for a braille book, and RC and five numbers for a cassette book. These book numbers are listed in *Talking Book Topics* to help expedite the ordering process.

When you already have the book numbers for the books you'd like to add to your request list, you don't have to search one at a time for each book in the online catalog and add it individually. Instead, you can select the tab "Quick Request" from the catalog's homepage. This will bring you to a page with a large blank edit field. Type the book numbers into this field, hitting the return key after each book number so that each book is on its own line. This field is not case sensitive but you must have the media initials (e.g. DB) followed by 5 numbers.

When you have typed all your books into the field, select the button under the field that also says "Quick Request." This will bring you to your book basket which provides a summary showing the books being added to your request list. Review this information for accuracy and confirm the order by selecting the option "Proceed to Checkout" at the bottom of the page. You will then get a confirmation that the books have been added to your request list.

You must be logged into your online catalog account in order for those books to be placed on your request list. If you need your login information for the online catalog, contact your Reader Advisor.

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## Post Office Problems? Here's What to Do!

On occasion you may find the need to send materials to us but lack one of our pre-addressed mailing cards or Free Matter stamp on an item. We hope that all of our readers know that any of the library's books, machines, or equipment sent to the library via U.S. mail should ship postage free. Simply write "Free Matter for the Blind and Physically Handicapped" in the upper right-hand corner, where postage would normally go. Any book order forms or typed large-print correspondence (not handwritten) sent to the library through the U.S. mail also ships as "Free Matter for the Blind."

This service is available in every city, county, state, and territory in the U.S. There is no such thing as a city or U.S. Post Office that does not participate in the program. The U.S. Postal Service is paid annually by the U.S. government to continue this program. And all of our patrons, because you were certified to enroll in our service, qualify to use the "Free Matter for the Blind" service.

Here are some things you can do to expedite your post office experience:

- Make sure materials are addressed to us at the "Braille and Talking Book Library". Your post office should be very familiar with handling our materials.
- Remember to leave paper letters unsealed to comply with postal regulations.
- Make sure you're at a U.S. Postal Service Office. FedEx and UPS do **\*not\*** participate in the "Free Matter for the Blind" program.

It seems no matter how well we might know the rules, individual postal employees might not! Here are some things to do if you encounter any hardships when trying to return library materials to us:

- Keep cool and explain again that you are sending back library materials for the blind and print disabled and that you are a member of the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped.
- Ask to speak to the Postmaster and have her/him explain specifically **WHY** they won't accept the material as free matter.

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- Remember with which post office you had the problem and the names of any employees with whom you spoke. Many cities have more than one post office, and we will want to know specifically where the trouble happened. Then, contact us! We have a USPS postal liaison in Sacramento, and we will bring the matter to the liaison on your behalf.
  - Save any receipts! If you were misled into paying postage, we may ask you to send us a copy of your receipt.

## **BTBL by the Numbers**

The following statistical information is compiled at the request of several readers who have petitioned for more numbers in addition to all the letters found in the pages of *BTBL News*! In the future we hope to compile more comprehensive statistics to be posted on our web site.

In the 12 months ending March 2016:

254	BARD subscribers added (for total of 2,754 users)
1,433	new patrons added
4,000	visitors
5,000	volunteer hours
61,985	phone calls
153,350	total BARD downloads
409,339	total physical items circulated

## **How Do Individuals Who Are Blind Use A Computer?**

You may think computers, smartphones, and tablets are beyond the use of those who cannot see because these devices rely on visual images on a screen.

Many of our patrons, and even our own Library Director, are able to use computer devices by utilizing a tool called a "screen reader." Screen readers are special programs installed on the computer that will speak aloud a description of items on the screen. Through this human-sounding, synthesized speech, individuals who are blind can access text and graphics, and interact with programs on the screen.

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But what about clicking a mouse? How does a person who is blind see where to click? Screen readers don't just describe what is on the screen. They also help a user control the computer using only the keyboard (no mouse). Keyboard commands (combinations of keystrokes) can take some getting used to, but most tasks on a computer can be performed using a screen reader and keyboard together.

Now, what about touch-screen devices like a tablet or smartphone? How do you see where to touch? On touch-screen devices, screen readers will allow the user to read and interact with the items on the screen through finger swipes and taps. Touching or swiping the screen in different ways allows the user to move the "focus." The screen reader will read aloud the item on the screen that is currently in focus, while allowing the user the option of interacting with that item through taps or other gestures. Although not all apps for touch-screen devices are usable with a screen reader, many apps (like our own BARD Mobile) are.

There are many types of screen readers available — some free and some for purchase. Screen readers even come pre-installed on some devices (e.g. iOS and Android mobile devices). All screen readers help individuals who are blind to participate in our wonderful world of technology by allowing access to the wealth of information and resources computer devices provide.

## **BTBL Patron Spotlight**

### **Harry Cordellos: Athlete, Author, Motivational Speaker**

Harry Cordellos is only now finding time to reimmerge himself in the talking book service because he is no longer consumed with publishing his own works. Harry is the author of three books: his autobiography, his biography (co-author), and an instructional manual on aquatic sports for the blind. He wrote his autobiography, *No Limits*, when a runner's magazine editor encouraged him to work on a book about running. Harry thought that there was an overabundance of runner's books and so penned his autobiography instead. He decided to share his life story to help motivate people and hopes that anyone can come away from the book with something useful and inspiring. The library has two of his books on cassette: *No Limits* (RC 37752) and *Breaking Through*



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(RC 20843, BR 05865). (They have not yet been converted to digital cartridge format.)

Harry has run 154 marathon races — a record for a blind runner. He ran the Boston Marathon in under three hours in 1975 — a national record for a blind runner. In 1981 he was the first blind person to enter and complete Hawaii's Ironman Triathlon. He has carried the Olympic flame twice: for the 1984 Summer Olympics and the 2002 Winter Olympics. He has run the Bay-to-Breakers race in San Francisco for 47 consecutive years. Yet despite his records and participation on the world stage, Harry prefers small town events such as the original Long Beach and Dallas White Rock marathons. He feels the Avenue of the Giants in Humboldt Redwoods State Park is the most beautiful and scenic marathon he has run.

Of all the different sports and athletic activities in which he participates, water-skiing is one of his favorites but bowling is a close second. Harry is active in the American Blind Bowling Association. He feels that water-skiing is the most physically challenging sport to learn without sight, but bowling is just plain difficult because of the very small margin of error. In addition, Harry is a golfer, ping-pong enthusiast, and snow-skier and has even tried hang gliding.

Harry is also an avid rollercoaster fan. He has ridden the Giant Dipper at the Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk more than 34 times. In fact, he enjoys riding rollercoasters all over the country. But his favorite carnival ride is the Tilt-A-Whirl. He wishes he could purchase his own Tilt-A-Whirl and ride all day. Harry's favorite books to read are ones recommended to him by his friends.

## **Government Documents in Accessible Formats**

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services now has a phone number for blind and visually impaired individuals to call and request accessible Medicare communications — including their quarterly Medicare summary. The number is 1-844-ALT-FORM (258-3676).

Similarly, FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) has a phone number for requesting accessible publications about Disaster Preparedness —

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including brochures directed towards individuals with disabilities. The number is 1-800-480-2520.

The California Secretary of State's office provides Voter Information Guides in alternate formats. Contact the Elections Division at (800) 345-VOTE (8683) or visit: [voterguide.sos.ca.gov/en/alt-versions](http://voterguide.sos.ca.gov/en/alt-versions).

These are just a few examples. Under Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, all public entities are required to ensure equally effective communication and to provide "auxiliary aids and services" to individuals with disabilities. Auxiliary aids and services can include such things as accessible (or alternate) formats — large print, braille, audio, or accessible electronic documents.

## **BTBL Staff Picks: Spring Reading (better than cleaning)**

*Orphan Train* by Christina Baker Kline DB 76746, BR 21369

"I loved it because it is a great study of human nature and interpersonal relationships. It spans from the great depression to modern times through the eyes of two very different women."

-Valerie, Reader Advisor

\*Contains violence, strong language, and some explicit descriptions of sex

*Fangirl* by Rainbow Rowell DB 77545

"This novel is cataloged as young adult but it's a great book for anyone looking for a well-written, cute, and quirky book. Cather and twin sister Wren are heading off to college, but Wren decides they can't be roommates because of their overdependence on one another. Socially inept Cather (Cath for short) must now navigate the new world of college without her twin by her side. But she has the fantasy world of Simon Snow — think Harry Potter but without the copyright infringement — to keep her company. Trying to hide her super-nerd self from her friends, peers, and teachers, maintain her high GPA, and balance a tumultuous family life might just be too much for Cath to handle on her own. The hilarious and realistic portrayals of fan culture make this book shine."

-Melissa, Reader Advisor

\*Contains some strong language and some descriptions of sex

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*My Brilliant Friend* by Elena Ferrante

DB 80509

"My new favorite book and author. It tells the story of two childhood friends who grow up in an Italian neighborhood. The author's skill in telling Elena and Lila's stories and the road of their friendship is such that I didn't want the book to end."

-Johanna, Circulation

\*Contains some strong language and some explicit descriptions of sex.

*Devoted In Death* by J.D. Robb

DB 82729

"Part of the 'In Death' series by J.D. Robb. Lieutenant Eve Dallas is on the case as two young lovers go on a torture and killing spree that stretches from Oklahoma to New York. I enjoyed watching them put the pieces together to find and save the victims before it was too late."

-Donna, Reader Advisor Supervisor

\* Contains violence, strong language, and some explicit descriptions of sex

*MaddAddam Trilogy*, by Margaret Atwood

including:

*Oryx and Crake*

(DB 56234/BR 14805)

*The Year of the Flood*

(DB 69893/BR 18706)

*MaddAddam*

(DB 77487/BR 20284)

"From the beginning of this dystopian myth, from Snowman the Jimmy's interactions with the genetically engineered blue tribe (Crakers) and pigeons to the machinations of eco-activist Zeb's father, the leader of the Church of Petroleum, clandestine activities of God's Gardeners and the future of the mutated society through the knowledge passed to young genetically altered Blackbeard, I simply could not put this series down! This trilogy's reimagining of present circumstances may contain outlandish elements but is never too far from the truth."

- Mike, Director

\*Contains violence, strong language, and descriptions of sex

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Free Matter for the Blind and  
Physically Handicapped

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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.

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

Email: [btbl@library.ca.gov](mailto:btbl@library.ca.gov) Website: [btbl.ca.gov](http://btbl.ca.gov) Catalog: [btbl.library.ca.gov](http://btbl.library.ca.gov)

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

Office closures: We will be closed May 30 (Memorial Day), July 4 (Independence Day), September 5 (Labor Day), November 11 (Veterans Day), November 24 & 25 (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 8<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 345, Sacramento, CA, 95814-4809. Donations can also be made online at: [cslfdn.org](http://cslfdn.org). Follow the link to "Join/Donate Online." There is a place to designate BTBL as the recipient.