



BTBL News

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

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A Message from Mike Marlin, Director

Spectacular spring-into-summer greetings from the accessible literature laboratory here in your state capital. As always, there is much to report since our last newsletter in the fall.

First of all, I want to convey our deepest sympathies to all those in our Northern California geographical area who were displaced or lost their homes due to the devastating wild fires in 2018. Please let us know if you need assistance with any address changes, holds on accounts, or new equipment and books.

At the close of 2018, we bid a fond farewell to retiring Reader Advisor, Peggy. Many of you ordered books from her and conversed on a variety of subjects. We all wish Peggy the best in her well-deserved retirement! Peggy

was assigned to patrons whose last names begin with the letters A and B. We are in the midst of hiring a new Reader Advisor and this could mean that patron alphabetical assignments will shift when we are again fully staffed. For now, our current roster of expert Reader Advisors are handling A and B patron service needs, but this is fair warning that your assigned Reader Advisor may change in the near future.

I want to take this opportunity to salute all of BTBL's volunteers who assist us with a variety of tasks, including but not limited to: book inspection, machine cleaning and repair, audio production, advisory council participation, *NFB Newslines* local channel administration, and so much more. On December 13 in our annual holiday celebration we honored 35 of the more than 100 BTBL volunteers with a catered lunch here at the library. In our most recent fiscal year our volunteers completed 5,000 service hours! We are indebted to all of you for your time and talent.

There is still time to sign up for a free Bookshare download service membership as part of a 2017-2019 pilot that we are looking to extend for an additional year. If you did not participate in year one or two and would like to sign up for the remainder of year two or possibly year three, please contact your Reader Advisor. Bookshare.org is an online download service offering electronic braille or text-to-speech synthetic voice books only.

Finally, after ratification and executive branch signing in September 2018, the U.S. deposited Marrakesh Treaty documents with the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) on February 8. This means that the Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for the Blind, Visually Impaired, and Otherwise Print Disabled officially becomes law and can be implemented on May 9, 2019. The National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS) and its network libraries are presently working out the real-world logistics of how to share accessible works to and from other countries. Stay tuned via this newsletter, our web site, and social media channels.

The Library of Congress Wants to Hear from You!

Beginning in early March 2019, a sample of 10,000 patrons across the country who currently use services provided by the Library of Congress's NLS will be invited to participate in a nationwide survey. The information collected from this survey will guide NLS as they move forward on a variety of projects to enhance and expand the braille and talking book program. As a part of NLS's cooperating network of libraries, BTBL encourages invited patrons to respond to the survey at their earliest convenience. Insights gathered from this survey will help us better understand the needs of all of our patrons. You may receive an invitation by mail, email or phone. In order to ensure ease of use, readers selected for the survey will be given the option of responding in a number of ways to their invitation. Once you've received your invitation, if you have questions, please feel free to contact Gallup Support at galluppoll@gallupmail.com or call 1-888-297-8999.

BTBL's Third Annual Summer Reading Program

BTBL is pleased to announce that we are continuing our Summer Reading Program. How it works: read library books between June 1 and August 31 and win a prize! Any book, audio or braille, which you borrow or download from the library can be reported towards your summer reading goal. Just let us know what you read, and you'll be sent your prize in the fall.

All adult patrons who complete the Summer Reading Program will receive a \$5 Starbucks gift card. Adult participants must read at least 10 books for the Summer Reading Program to qualify for their participation prize. You can let us know what you read several ways: filling out your large print reading log and sending it to us in the mail, emailing us a list of the books you read, or faxing that information to us.

Patrons 18 years or under will receive a \$5 gift card for Baskin-Robbins Ice Cream upon completion of the Summer Reading Program. There is no set number of books to read in order to win. Your Summer Reading Program packet includes a large print Book Bingo card (braille available upon request)

and some tactile stickers. Use the included stickers to cover spaces that describe the books you've read. One book may count for multiple spaces. There are no wrong answers. If the book you read was scary, featured cute dogs, taught you something new, and made you laugh, cover all those spaces! Try to fill a full horizontal, vertical, or diagonal row to win. Youth patrons may also submit the titles of the books they read through email or fax in lieu of completing the Book Bingo card.

If you'd like to participate, contact us and request a large print Summer Reading Program packet for either an adult or younger patron. Each packet will include a summary of the event, some recommended reading lists, a reading log for adults or Book Bingo card for kids to help keep track of your books, and an envelope addressed to the library to help you easily return your reading log or Book Bingo card. Schools can request multiple packets for their eligible students.

Return your completed reading log or Book Bingo card by August 31st to be eligible for your prize. Patrons are responsible for keeping track of what they read and submitting their reading log by the end date of the program. Our Summer Reading Program is only open to active BTBL patrons.

Need help finding the perfect summer read? Dozens of bibliographies and other tools to help you find the books that interest you the most can be found on our Ravenous Readers' Corner website at library.ca.gov/btbl/ravenous-readers. Your Reader Advisor is also a great source to help you find new books for your reading pleasure.

Spotlight: BTBL's Longest Active Studio Volunteer

As an English major with a new Bachelor's Degree in hand from a small college in North Dakota, Sandra Swafford wasn't looking to do anything else but teach. So that's what she did--quite inexpertly as she puts it, for a year in Powell, Wyoming in the 1950s. After marrying, Sandra and her family spent some years in North Carolina, San Francisco, and North Dakota before Sandra spotted an ad from an agency in Pennsylvania looking for someone to record a medical magazine for visually impaired readers. She volunteered to do so and

went out and bought an analog reel-to-reel machine and some tape. Much to Sandra's surprise, she was accepted. Thinking back, she's mortified how poorly she had prepared the materials she read and by the low quality of the recording. But nevertheless, determined to learn her craft, she continued volunteering there for three years.

After moving to Sacramento in the early 1980s, Sandra was interested in finding a new challenge and spotted a notice in the *Sacramento Bee* indicating that BTBL was recruiting studio volunteers. She wasted no time in acting on this opportunity. She was soon interviewed, made an audio sample and was accepted into the program.

BTBL was then located in a building on Broadway near 5th Street. The recording "studio" was an old x-ray cubicle with a window so the narrator and the monitor could see each other. Sandra and her partner quickly learned to manage an analog reel-to-reel machine to make edits and corrections. They continued recording books for a fair number of years until the State of California had a budget crisis and the studio manager was reassigned to other duties. There was worry that the recording studio would be shut down much to the disappointment of the hardworking volunteers. But Sandra stepped in and volunteered to supervise the studio — as a volunteer — which she did until BTBL moved into the new and current facility on N Street in the 1990s.

Sandra was absent from the program in the early 2000s for about three years. During this time, she and her son turned a closet in their house into a satisfactory recording studio where they produced recordings of books on political subjects. However, most political books were written by men, so she did very little recording and too many other "business" duties until they let the project go.

In recent years, California's state budget once again made it possible to hire a studio manager. Sandra returned to BTBL's recording studio; but with analog technology on the way out and the digital age reigning supreme, volunteers had to relearn the ropes and embrace the digital format. No more analog reel-to-reel machines, all recordings are now done digitally through the computer.

Sandra is grateful for all the wonderful narrators, reviewers and monitors that she has been able to work with, the books she has reviewed or been lucky enough to narrate, and the thoughtful assistance of caring staff members. She continues to take delight from every minute spent in the studio — no matter what job she is doing. Sandra is particularly pleased that the analog books from her and her colleagues' past efforts will be converted to a digital format, ensuring they live on. In addition to being BTBL's longest active studio volunteer, Sandra is also BTBL's most prolific narrator, having narrated close to 50 books and countless newsletters and announcements over the years. Sandra remains one of the true studio recording pioneers here at BTBL.

Moving? Don't Forget to Tell Your Library

There's a lot to worry about when moving, but when you've settled into your new location please remember to update your current mailing address with BTBL. When we receive returned mail (books, letters, catalogs, etc.) that cannot be delivered and we are unable to contact the recipient, the account is temporarily placed on hold. To keep your books arriving smoothly, let us know your new mailing address as soon as possible. Even if you primarily download your books, we need your current address on file. Even if you have put in a forwarding address with the post office, that information is not consistently transferred to us. Thus, it is always a good idea to double-check with us to make sure we received your updated information.

If you are permanently moving out of our service area, we will transfer your braille and talking book service to your new library. You may keep your equipment with you — no need to return it to us.

Reader's Digest Magazine Changes

In October 2018, the American Printing House for the Blind (APH) suspended production of *Reader's Digest* magazine. In response, NLS added *Reader's Digest* to its magazine collection in November. Patrons may now receive *Reader's Digest* through the mail as part of the Magazine on Cartridge (MOC) program or download it from BARD. There are 10 issues per year. *Reader's Digest* includes short stories, political commentary and other general interest topics. It also contains anecdotes, humor and a condensed book. To subscribe to *Reader's Digest* or any other NLS audio magazines, please contact your Reader Advisor.

NLS Media Campaign

Adapted from Oregon Talking Book and Braille Library Spring 2018 newsletter

Over the past few months NLS has been running a national media campaign promoting the talking book program. The campaign includes TV and radio commercials encouraging people with print impairments to connect with their regional library. Some of you may have already seen or heard these commercials, featured on channels like the Hallmark Channel, History & Biography Channel, and PBS.

The campaign must be working, because we have seen an uptick in the number of people contacting our library wanting information about how to sign up.

If you would like to watch the commercial yourself, you can find it on YouTube by searching for "NLS Magical Moments" or at youtu.be/dnM_ZwMtC-8.

Feel free to share the video with friends and family on social media!

CalABLE Tax-Free Savings Accounts Up and Running

Millions of Americans with disabilities and their families depend on a wide variety of public benefits for income, health care, and food or housing assistance. Eligibility for these public benefits (SSI, Medicaid, SNAP, etc.) can require meeting a means or resource test that limits eligibility to

individuals with less than \$2,000 in cash savings, retirement funds, and other items of significant value. To remain eligible for public benefits, an individual must consistently remain poor.

For the first time in public policy, the *Stephen Beck Jr., Achieving a Better Life Experience Act of 2014* (ABLE Act) recognizes the extra and significant costs of living with a disability and provides a savings tool to address them. Eligible individuals and their families can establish ABLE savings accounts — letting them save emergency funds to help stay independent and productive while protecting eligibility for public benefits.

ABLE accounts are tax-advantaged savings similar to a Section 529 qualified tuition program. Funds in an ABLE account can be used for many different disability-related expenses, ranging from education, employment support, housing, transportation, assistive technology and healthcare. Eligible individuals, family, friends and employers can contribute up to \$15,000 a year (and save up to \$100,000) without affecting the account beneficiary's public disability benefits.

Eligibility for ABLE accounts is limited to individuals who are blind or disabled, with a medical disability that began before the age of 26. If you meet this age requirement and already receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Income (SSDI) benefits, you are automatically eligible for an ABLE account.

CalABLE is California's ABLE Plan, and is administered by the California State Treasurer's Office at calable.ca.gov. The plan is managed by TIAA-CREF Tuition Financing, Inc. Eligible individuals can sign up for a CalABLE account and manage their money right on the website (some fees apply). Learn more about the CalABLE program at calable.ca.gov or toll-free at 833-225-2253. Note that you do not have to use CalABLE; many other states have launched ABLE plans. ABLE account participants may open an account in any participating state they choose.

Hadley's Tech it Out

Adapted from Colorado Talking Book Library Winter 2019 newsletter

The Hadley Institute for the Blind and Visually Impaired has started a new discussion group: "Tech It Out." These regularly scheduled discussions will offer a chance to learn a few tips from a technology expert, ask your questions, and share your experiences.

They held their first discussion group, "Technology and Food Delivery Services," in September of last year. The call was so popular they were only able to discuss grocery delivery services and had to host a second call to cover restaurant and meal kit delivery options. A third session covering "Using Digital Assistants: Siri, Alexa, Google" was followed by one on "Audio Identification and Visual Interpreter Services." More sessions are planned.

The discussions are recorded and posted on Hadley's YouTube Channel at youtube.com/user/HadleySchool.

If you want to receive email notifications on what the topic will be and when the next discussion group will meet, go to hadley.edu/eNewsletter.asp to join the Hadley mailing list.

Hadley's channel also contains some great instructional videos on technology in the kitchen and using Apple products among other things. A list of all their instructional videos can be found at hadley.edu/InstructionalVideos.asp.

Newest Californiana Studio Books

Volunteers and staff of our Californiana Studio have been hard at work recording local books — California authors and subjects not covered by the national NLS talking book collection. Here are the recently completed talking books:

A Winter Walk by Tolbert McCarroll

DBC 07157

Thirty-two essays by Brother Toby, a monk in the Starcross community in Sonoma County, California, lead the reader through the short days and long

nights of winter. Selections include "Santa Lucia," "Ramadan," "Advent Wreath," and "Chanukah Stories" which are all on winter themes. 2006. 4 hours, 19 minutes. Narrated by: Walter Phelps.

Fire and Ice by Janet Dailey

DBC 07163

Alisa has no time for romance and she doesn't like or trust men. Yet if she is to be granted custody of her 7-year-old half-sister — something she very much desires — she must be married at least one year. At a baccarat table in Las Vegas she meets Zachary Stuart, a Napa Valley wine maker whom she has heard needs money to expand his winery. She offers him that money in exchange for a year of marriage in name only. And then their life in California takes a surprising turn. This book is one of the Harlequin Americana series. 1975.

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

Frisco Pigeon Mambo by C.D. Payne

DBC 16151

Lab experiment pigeons who think themselves human — or at least not pigeons — are kidnapped from their Berkeley laboratory and released into San Francisco. Hooked on their lab-induced addictions these swashbuckling outlaw refugees descend on bars, stick up liquor stores, spy on socialites, dodge murder raps and pull a miracle out of their hats while attempting to return home. Some strong language and some violence. 2000.

5 hours, 44 minutes. Narrated by: Phil Torres.

Sallie Fox: the Story of a Pioneer Girl by Dorothy Kupcha Leland

DBC 07162

Describes in vivid detail the excitement, tragedy, and searing heat faced by 12-year-old Sallie and her family as they traveled by wagon train from Iowa to California along the Santa Fe Trail in 1858. Based on a true story. For grades 3-6. 1995.

4 hours, 20 minutes. Narrated by: Alice Corley.

Patty Reed's Doll: The Story of the Donner Party by Rachel K. Laurgaard

DBC 16156

Based on actual happenings in the fateful Donner Party crossing in 1846, this is the story told through the eyes of a small wooden doll who traveled from Illinois to California in young Patty Reed's pocket. The doll recounts the life

aboard a Conestoga wagon train as the party's first successful weeks out of Independence are followed later by mishaps, violence, and tragedy on the journey to Sutter's Fort in Sacramento. For grades 4-7. 1984.

2 hours, 41 minutes. Narrated by: Elinor Bell.

Mark Twain in Virginia City, Nevada by Mark Twain DBC 07165

Reprints selections from Twain's *Roughing It* describing 1860s characters and events in Nevada during what Twain calls "the silver mining fever." Includes a fire he inadvertently set in Lake Tahoe, an excursion by boat on Mono Lake, and how difficult it was to write an editorial every day while he substituted as editor of the *Virginia City Territorial Enterprise*. 1985.

5 hours, 41 minutes. Narrated by: Walter Phelps.

The Bakersfield Sound: How a Generation of Displaced Okies Revolutionized American Music by Robert E. Price DBC 16152

Journalist Price reveals rich stories of the personalities that populated the dustbowl town of Bakersfield, California, a stop north of Los Angeles that developed a twangier, rockier, stylistic counterweight to Nashville's sweet, string-laden pop country music in the 1950s, '60s and '70s. Through the lives of hit makers such as Buck Owens and Merle Haggard, the author discusses the history of America from the early 1900s to today, highlighting the crossroads of commerce and culture that sparked the alternative country music scene. 2015.

9 hours, 10 minutes. Narrated by: Phil Torres.

America and Americans, and Selected Nonfiction by John Steinbeck

DBC 16461

Celebrating John Steinbeck's centennial, this book brings together representative nonfiction articles, essays and columns from his role as journalist and commentator, in addition to a previously unpublished chapter of "Travels with Charley" ("L'Envoi") and the title book "America and Americans." 2003.

18 hours, 17 minutes. Narrated by: Bill Rosenfeld.

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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.

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Office closures: We will be closed April 1 (Cesar Chavez Day), May 27 (Memorial Day), July 4 (Independence Day), September 2 (Labor Day), November 11 (Veteran'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: cslfdn.org. Follow the link to "Join/Donate Online." There is a place to designate BTBL as the recipient.