



# BTBL News

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

New Series no. 26 (Spring 2022)

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## A Message from Mike Marlin, Director

Spring greetings from the Sacramento valley and your NLS Northern California regional library. This is a chock-full issue of *BTBL News*, including information about the modified DB cartridge mail service--Books on Demand--we are rolling out throughout 2022; read more about BoD later in this edition. Technology innovations, library services, and programs continue to unfold for current and prospective BTBL patrons. Please read the article about our three-year Assistive Technology Device Lending Pilot Program, including loans of mobile WiFi Hotspots, Victor Reader Stream WiFi-enabled audio players, and handheld video magnifiers. Additionally, we expect the braille eReader program for California to launch late Summer or Fall 2022.

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And now, drum roll please...Introducing our 2022 patron survey! As we work to improve patron customer service and connectivity, we are asking all our readers to participate in a patron survey consisting of important questions about technology, BARD (Braille and Audio Reading Download) service, and virtual/telephonic program opportunities with BTBL. 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/kfGUgn68bd](https://forms.office.com/g/kfGUgn68bd).

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.

BTBL is partnering with Bookshare.org for an Older Americans/55+ Pilot using the Bookshare service with Amazon smart speakers (i.e., Alexa/Echo). Bookshare.org is an electronic braille and synthetic speech audio book download service. The FREE Older Americans/55+ Bookshare Smart Speaker Pilot will kick off in the summer of 2022, so if you fit the 55 and over age bracket, are a Bookshare user or are interested in becoming one, and would like to provide feedback on using Bookshare with an Alexa-enabled smart speaker, please contact BTBL. For the 55+ Pilot, a portion of participants will be eligible for 50 free smart speakers furnished by Bookshare, first come first served. For more information about the 55+ Pilot, visit [www.bookshare.org/cms/get-started/reader/smart-speaker](https://www.bookshare.org/cms/get-started/reader/smart-speaker).

If you are looking to give back to the library and our extended patron community, consider joining the BTBL User Advisory Council (BUAC) which meets quarterly, for now, in a virtual/telephonic setting. Find by-laws and online application form at: [library.ca.gov/btbl/advisory-council](https://library.ca.gov/btbl/advisory-council).

And finally, I want to welcome two new staff members to BTBL. Rita joins us as part-time Readers Advisory Support Technician and will be helping out with patron account maintenance, data entry, and check-in phone calls to make sure all of our 8,000 readers stay engaged and well-served. And Julie joins us in a new role within BTBL, assuming the position of Assistive Technology Coordinator. We are excited to have these new staff members on board and look forward to having you interact with them in their new roles.

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## Changes Coming To Mailed Talking Books: BoD

New in 2022! Are you tired of waiting to receive popular book titles you have requested? Do you have trouble keeping track of several digital cartridges and inserting them in the correct mailing containers? Would you like to receive an entire series to read at your leisure? If you answered yes to any of these questions, Books on Demand (BoD), might be the solution.

In the coming months, BTBL will be implementing a new Books on Demand service that allows book titles to be copied onto a cartridge directly from your request list or author or subject preferences. You let us know how many titles you would like to receive on a cartridge, whether 1 book, 2, 5, or 20! And each time the cartridge is returned to the library, it is cleared, and new titles are added from your account. You'll still be able to have more than one cartridge checked out at a time, so you can have books at home while BoD cartridges are in transit and being reloaded.

Your BoD talking books arriving in the mail will be exactly what you receive now—a plastic mailing container with one digital cartridge inside. However, you may notice a few visual differences:

- The mailing container will most likely be clear/white—not blue.
- The book title(s) are now printed on a second mailing card. The labels on the outside of the mailing container & cartridge will no longer display the book title.
- To return your BoD cartridge to the library, remove the mailing cards. You used to have to flip over the mailing card to return the book to us, but now a permanent label with our return address is underneath.

These BoD talking books may look a little different, but rest assured we only have one type of cartridge that fits into the library-loaned machine. These are the same great books we have been sending you all along, just with small changes in packaging.

Eventually, everyone who receives talking books in the mail will be switched over to the new BoD service but speak with your Reader Advisor if you are impatient to make the change!

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## Ways to Move between Multiple Titles on a Cartridge

Want to receive more than one book on your next BoD cartridge and wondering how that works? We are expecting to use multi-title cartridges even more as time goes on, so it's important to know how to move between the different books on a cartridge.

You can easily move in sequential order from one book to the next on a multi-title cartridge. When you come to the end of the first book on the multi-title cartridge and you hear the "End of Book" announcement, simply press the Play/Stop button to start playing the next book on the cartridge. That's all there is to it!

An advanced method, the Bookshelf function, allows you to select the order you would like to read the books. If you want to read the third book on the cartridge first, you can enter the Bookshelf mode and select the third book to listen to. Here is a brief summary of how the Bookshelf function works:

1. First, Enter "Bookshelf" mode by pressing and holding down the Play/Stop button until the machine says "Bookshelf" and announces the number of books found on the BoD cartridge. You can then release the Play/Stop button.
2. Next, use the Fast Forward button (the arrow-shaped button to the right of the Play/Stop button) to navigate through the list of available book titles. After each press of the Fast Forward button, the machine will announce a book number and title (for example, "Book 2 Pride and Prejudice"). You can use the Rewind button (the arrow-shaped button to the left of the Play/Stop button) to navigate backwards to a previous book title.
3. Finally, when you hear the book title you want to listen to announced, press the Play/Stop button to begin listening to that book. When your book starts playing, you have exited the "Bookshelf" mode.

You can return to Step 1 at any time if you wish to switch book titles again. The machine will remember your reading position in each title.

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## Changes to Large Print *Talking Book Topics* Catalog

Patrons who subscribe to *Talking Book Topics* (TBT) in large print will not receive the January-February or March-April 2022 issues in paper format due to ongoing supply-chain issues and worldwide paper shortages. These difficulties are expected to affect the U.S. Government Publishing Office for the rest of the year, so it is likely more issues of the large print TBT will be cancelled.

Fortunately, there are other ways to access TBT. Patrons can access current and past issues of the catalog online in HTML and PDF at [www.loc.gov/nls/tbt](http://www.loc.gov/nls/tbt). TBT in HTML contains direct links to BARD for downloading or adding books to wish lists, and TBT in PDF includes printable order forms for mailing. The audio version of TBT will continue to be produced and will be available on cartridge as well as on BARD and BARD Mobile. Once you are set up for Books on Demand, you can also request the catalog be loaded onto a cartridge for you, just like your books are. Bear in mind that we won't be able to send an order form with the BoD cartridge option. There are also several options for accessing TBT from NFB-NEWSLINE®, the free telephonic newspaper service--including a way to email book orders.

If you plan to use the online version of TBT and would like to cancel your subscription to the large print TBT, or if you would like to change your large print subscription to the audio version, please let us know.

## BTBL Assistive Technology Lending Program Forges Ahead

A goal of the Braille and Talking Book Library is to connect patrons unfamiliar or unpracticed with reading technology to practical tools. Such tools can provide additional points of access to downloadable resources. To accomplish this outcome, BTBL has developed a three-year pilot program to bridge the digital divide so That All May Read!

To build the bridge, BTBL has procured funding for the acquisition of Mobile WiFi Hotspots (internet connection hubs), Victor Reader Stream audio players, and Explore 5 handheld video magnifiers. Along with these technology

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acquisitions slated for loan to hundreds of hitherto unconnected patrons, the California State Library has secured two new, permanent positions for BTBL: an Assistive Technology Coordinator and an Assistive Technology Librarian, both of which we expect to hire in 2022. The funding also includes money for training classes and instructional materials, and we hope and expect all these components to come together in late 2022.

If you are interested in borrowing technology and receiving training for any of these devices, we urge you to answer the patron survey via large print tear out, online, or by calling and speaking to your reader advisor. You can also email [btbl@library.ca.gov](mailto:btbl@library.ca.gov) or call 800-952-5666 to put your name on the interest list. Let technology be your friend on a fun and rewarding pathway to information and reading satisfaction!

## **Braille eReaders Arriving at BTBL**

NLS has wrapped up its Braille eReader Pilot at eight network libraries and is beginning implementation in other states to gradually circulate eReaders to all interested patrons. California expects to begin receiving Humanware WiFi-enabled braille eReaders in Summer 2022 for distribution to braille borrowers who desire them. If you are a Northern California braille reader and have yet to notify BTBL, please contact us to put your name on the interest list. We hope to begin reaching out to those on the list in late Summer 2022.

## **Summer Reading Program for Adults and Kids**

BTBL's Summer Reading Program is back once again for Summer 2022.

How it works:

1. Read library books (**any** audio or braille book borrowed or downloaded) between June 1st and August 31st.
2. Let us know what you read by submitting your completed reading log by August 31<sup>st</sup> by email, fax, or mail.
3. Win prizes!

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**For Adult Participants:**

All adult readers 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. Unfortunately, we cannot accept your list of books over the phone.

**For Participants under 18:**

Patrons under 18 years will receive a \$5 gift card for Baskin-Robbins Ice Cream upon completion of the Summer Reading Program AND your choice of a stuffed animal or earbuds. For younger readers, there is no set number of books to read to win. Readers can keep track of their books using a reading log, which will have a place to mark the books you are reading and how much time you spent reading them, or with a Book Bingo card. With the Book Bingo card, you mark off squares that list characteristics of the books you read, like "funny" "sports" "inspirational" until you get 5 in a row. The reading log and Book Bingo card are in large print, but the Book Bingo card also has braille. The Book Bingo cards come with tactile stickers to keep track of your books. There will be a place to mark on the reading log and Book Bingo card what sort of participation prize you would like in addition to your Baskin-Robbins gift card.

**For Everyone:**

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, and for younger readers, a Book Bingo card and tactile stickers, and an envelope addressed to the library to help you easily return your reading log or Book Bingo card.

Schools may request multiple packets for their eligible students. Large print reading logs are not necessary for participation; you can submit your name and books read to the library by email or fax by August 31<sup>st</sup>.

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Return your completed reading log by August 31st to be eligible for your prize. Prizes are sent out in September. Patrons are responsible for keeping track of what they've read and submitting their reading log by the end date of the program. Our Summer Reading Program is only open to active BTBL patrons.

## **Looking to Connect? Try our Conversation Club!**

Are you looking for a way to connect with others? Or do you just want to be a part of a fun conversation? During the pandemic, BTBL and the San Francisco Talking Books & Braille Center launched a new program, Conversation Club.

This has evolved into a lively, small group discussion, and we're looking to add more participants. Past discussions have centered around music, pets, hobbies, seasonal plans, safety in public spaces, and popular culture.

Come join the group! If you just want to listen, that's okay too.

Join us on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of each month, 12-1:00pm.

Call in to 1-888-788-0099 and then enter Meeting ID: 4155574253, or join us on Zoom at [sfpl-org.zoom.us/j/4155574253](https://sfpl-org.zoom.us/j/4155574253) Join Meeting ID: 4155574253.

## **Bookshare Seats Open, Give it a Try!**

[Bookshare.org](https://www.bookshare.org) is an online download service offering electronic braille or text-to-speech synthetic voice books only. They provide access to over a million titles, including titles in over 34 languages. Thanks to grant funding, BTBL and other California libraries for the blind and print disabled are able to provide a total of 500 seat licenses for interested patrons. Recently, BTBL did some housecleaning of inactive accounts in order to open up new seats to Bookshare.

If you have never tried Bookshare and you are interested, please contact your Reader Advisor to sign up. Because Bookshare is an online, download service, patrons who are comfortable and experienced with computers and file management are the ones most encouraged to partake of this ordinarily \$50 per year service. It is very important to note that, unlike NLS talking books, Bookshare books are not narrated by human beings. The books are available in:



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1) electronic braille files that can be read on refreshable braille displays; 2) text-to-speech (TTS) DAISY files; and 3) TTS MP3 audio files that can be played on the NLS digital talking book machine and on several third party commercial players. There is free online DAISY player software to listen to DAISY TTS files on one's computer as well as several apps for listening on mobile devices. Also new for 2022, Bookshare launched a beta program that allows you to use Alexa to download and read books. Please visit [Bookshare.org](https://www.bookshare.org) to learn more about the service.

## **NLS Patron Engagement Section**

NLS announces the newly formed Patron Engagement Section. Over the past five years, the Library of Congress had a total review and reorganization of its systems and resources. The Patron Engagement Section was created as a result of that review. This section is an effort to provide focused resources specifically aimed towards patron needs. In other words, the members of this section are your official representatives at NLS. Thus far, the members of this section include the BARD Supervisor, Overseas Librarian, the acting Braille Development Officer, and the former Consumer Relations Officer currently working as a Retired Annuitant. There are at least two other positions anticipated for this section.

The Patron Engagement Section will be working with all of the NLS sections as well as with the local network libraries to be the patrons' "voice." The section officially came together in October of 2021. Since that time, they have drafted a mission statement to provide clarity for NLS and the network to define the section's goals and direction. It is a work in progress but they are sharing the current iteration with you below. In the next few months, the Section will roll out projects of interest both for patrons and the network. So stay tuned as they endeavor to become a section that you can call your own.

**Patron Engagement Mission Statement:** The mission of the Patron Engagement Section of the National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled (NLS), Library of Congress, is to provide resources, services, and support to the network libraries that are designed specifically to address patron needs. This section will develop model programs in collaboration with network

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libraries that they can use to engage current patrons and increase outreach to new or potential patrons. Further, the section will offer services, resources, and programs that patrons can access directly to enrich their library experience.

## **In Demand Books, On Demand!**

One of the great things about BoD, Books on Demand (described in a previous article), is that you will wait significantly less time for many books. Previously, when the library didn't have a copy of a book, we had to borrow it from out-of-state through interlibrary loan, a process which could take 2-3 weeks. And for new books, there could be a significant waiting period because of the popularity of the book. Now, with BoD, we can download the book you want when you want it.

To give you an idea of some of the great books you could be reading now, here is a sample of some titles with lengthy waitlists. Do any of these titles look like a book for you? Let us know, and we will get it on the way for you, downloaded specifically for you on your own customizable BoD cartridge!

### *The Five People You Meet in Heaven*

by Mitch Albom

DB 57004

Eddie spends his last hours on earth in his usual way, maintaining the Ruby Pier amusement park rides. But something goes wrong, and Eddie dies on his eighty-third birthday while trying to save a little girl. In heaven he meets five people who explain his life to him. Bestseller. 2003.

5 hours, 13 minutes. Narrated by Erik Singer.

### *The President is Missing: A novel*

by Bill Clinton

DB 91164

A threat so huge that it jeopardizes not just Pennsylvania Avenue and Wall Street, but all of America. Uncertainty and fear grip the nation. There are whispers of cyberterrorism and espionage and a traitor in the Cabinet. Even the president himself becomes a suspect, and then he disappears from public view. Some violence and some strong language. Commercial audiobook. 2018.

13 hours, 14 minutes. Narrated by Jeremy Davidson.

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*Camino Winds*

by John Grisham

DB 99615

Bruce of Bruce Cable's Bay Books survives Hurricane Leo hitting Camino Island. One of the dozen apparent victims is Nelson Kerr, a friend of Bruce's and an author of thrillers. But the nature of Nelson's injuries suggests that the storm wasn't the cause of his death. Some violence and some strong language. Commercial audiobook. Bestseller. 2020.  
8 hours, 45 minutes. Narrated by Michael Beck.

*Brave New World*

by Aldous Huxley

DB 47108

A satire set in a future technocratic society in which people are rigidly classified by the state and kept happy by a government-administered drug. When two bureaucrats, Lenina and Bernard, travel to a "savage" reservation, they "rescue" a woman and her adult son, abandoned long ago, and return them to civilization. For senior high and older readers.  
8 hours, 35 minutes. Narrated by James DeLotel.

*Paint Me Rainbows*

by Fern Michaels

DB 50139

After Jill Barton is left standing at the altar, she gets in her car and heads north, ending up at an artists' colony in New England. There she meets Aggie Beaumont, who helps her heal, and Logan Matthews, the owner, who steals her heart. Some descriptions of sex. 1981.  
4 hours, 37 minutes. Narrated by Carol Dines.

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**Remember to take the survey! Contact us to assist you with it if you are listening to this newsletter on cartridge or reading it in braille. You may also complete the survey online at [forms.office.com/g/kfGUgn68bd](https://forms.office.com/g/kfGUgn68bd)**

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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.

**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 March 31 (Cesar Chavez), May 30 (Memorial Day), July 4 (Independence Day), September 5 (Labor Day), Nov. 11 (Veterans 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: [csbfdn.org](http://csbfdn.org). Follow the link to "Join/Donate Online." There is a place to designate BTBL as the recipient.