



BTBL News

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

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A Message from Mike Marlin, Director

Greetings and salutations! This is yet another brimming issue of *BTBL News*, including continuing information about the DB cartridge circulation service - Books on Demand -- we have been rolling out in 2022. Please read updates about BoD elsewhere in this issue. And if you are eagerly awaiting new reading devices to borrow, please read the article about our 3-year Pilot Assistive Technology Device Lending Program, including loans of Wi-Fi hotspot, Victor Reader Stream 2, and handheld video magnifier devices.

In our Spring newsletter we asked our readers to participate in a patron survey consisting of eight questions about technology, the BARD (Braille and Audio Reading Download) service, and virtual/telephonic program

opportunities with BTBL. Check out the survey results in the Survey Summary article.

In June, BTBL began circulating Humanware braille eReaders otherwise known as refreshable braille displays to braille reading patrons. We encourage new, current, as well as formerly inactive braille readers to contact us if interested in the 20-cell refreshable braille display device.

Congratulations are in order for our 2022 Summer Reading Program participants--who by now will have received their Starbucks or Baskin Robbins gift cards, and for some a BTBL stuffed animal puppy! This year 38 participants read 576 books! We salute the myriad children, teens, and adults who read many great fiction and nonfiction selections to beat the summer heat.

A gentle reminder: if you are interested in synthetic voice audio, electronic braille, and now some human-narrated books, consider a free Bookshare membership through BTBL. Presently there are a total of 500 free Bookshare memberships for California National Library Service for the Blind & Print Disabled (NLS) network library patrons and there are still some slots available. Please see the separate article about Bookshare in this issue.

As we are always seeking great minds who do not necessarily think alike, if you are looking to give back to the library and especially our extended patron community, consider joining the BTBL User Advisory Council (BUAC). The BUAC meets quarterly in a virtual/telephonic setting. The BUAC desires a strong representation of the richly diverse range of ethnic, cultural, and print disability demographics in all reaches of Northern California. Patrons who are U.S. Veterans, bilingual Spanish speakers, persons of color, LGBTQ+, persons with reading disabilities such as dyslexia, young adults, parents of minors with print disabilities, and patrons who possess other physical disabilities that prevent them from reading conventional print are strongly encouraged to apply. Prospective applicants are encouraged to explore the Council by-laws and online application form on our web page: library.ca.gov/btbl/advisory-council. We have often brought new members on mid-year so please feel free to apply now or any time.

And finally, I want to welcome a new staff member to BTBL. Morgan joins us in fulfilling a new BTBL position: Assistive Technology Librarian. She brings experience in outreach, communications, and adult literacy services at several public library systems around Northern California. She will be a great asset to our team and especially for patrons exploring modernized technology tools.

Books on Demand Service is Here!

Our new service model, Books on Demand (BoD), which we began utilizing earlier this year, is picking up steam. More than half of our patrons are receiving their talking books through the mail on BoD cartridges.

What is Books on Demand, you ask? BoD is a service that allows book titles to be copied onto a cartridge directly from your request list or from your author or subject preferences. You let us know how many titles you would like to receive on a cartridge, whether that's 1 book, 2, 5, or 10! 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 cartridges 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 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 digital talking book machine. These are the same great books we have been sending you all along, just with small changes in packaging.

Why get Books on Demand? Books on Demand have several huge advantages. With BoD, you don't have to languish on a waitlist for popular titles, we can make you a copy of any new releases the library has recorded. You no longer have to make sure each cartridge goes back in its own mailing container; you can send back any cartridge in any container. The ability to receive multiple books on each cartridge is one of the greatest advantages of BoD. You can have an entire series of books, in order, on one cartridge. BoD is also a space saver; you can have a huge selection of books to read with only a few cartridges taking up space. Multibook cartridges are also a great way to combat slow mail delivery times; each cartridge you do receive in the mail will contain many more hours of reading enjoyment.

We are in the process of switching all BTBL patrons who receive audio books in the mail over to the BoD system. Speak with your Reader Advisor if you want to start right away!

Assistive Technology Lending Program Launches in Fall

As we firmly implant ourselves in the 21st century, a goal of California NLS network libraries 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 cross this bridge, BTBL has procured funding for the acquisition of Orbic Speed Mobile Hotspots, Victor Reader Stream 2 audio players, and Humanware Explore 5 handheld video magnifiers. Along with these technology acquisitions slated for loan to hundreds of hitherto marginally unconnected patrons, BTBL has secured two new, permanent positions: an Assistive Technology Coordinator (who began her tenure in April) and a recently hired Assistive Technology Librarian. The funding also supports training classes and instructional materials, and BTBL expects all these components to come together in late 2022. For BTBL, beta testing of devices began in August 2022 with expansion to the library's general membership planned for November 2022.

If you are interested in borrowing assistive technology and/or receiving training for any of these devices, please contact btbl@library.ca.gov or call us toll free (800) 952-5666 and follow the telephone prompts to the BARD and Assistive Technology support desk (from the Main Menu press 2 for Staff in Other Departments, then press 3 for Tech Support/Information) to put your name on the interest list. You can also put in a request with your Reader Advisor.

If you are a patron of the Fresno Talking Book Library for the Blind or San Francisco Talking Books and Braille Center, opportunities to borrow assistive technology through interlibrary loan will be forthcoming, so please stay tuned to your NLS Northern California Subregional Library media channels.

Embrace technology as an extension of your love of reading and let BTBL connect you!

Survey Summary

Thanks to all who participated in the 2022 Spring Survey. The survey was open from April 1 through May 31, 2022. There were 8 questions to answer and a total of 313 responses. Here are survey highlights:

- When asked their preferred form of being contacted by BTBL staff, 41% of respondents indicated email contact, 37% prefer by phone, and 22% preferred large print letter.
- Regarding popularity of interest toward BTBL's three types of assistive technology loans, the Victor Reader Stream yielded 38%, Wi-Fi hotspots received 37%, and the Explore 5 magnifier came in at 24%. It is worth noting that there were dozens of overlapping requests for combinations of multiple devices as well.
- When surveyed about BARD usage, 51% of respondents are not BARD users, whereas 49% do use BARD. BARD use in Northern California is above the national average, however, at roughly 27%.
- The overwhelming majority of patrons surveyed would like more personalized help navigating and understanding BARD. Technical support for BARD, braille eReaders, and the three aforementioned assistive technology devices is available by phone, email, electronic

resources, and beginning in early 2023 via live and prerecorded audio, video, and live Zoom instructional sessions.

- 43% of survey respondents would like to participate in an online or telephonic book club.
- Just under half of patrons surveyed said they are interested in participating in library programs remotely.

BTBL is constantly working to improve the patron experience and all feedback is welcome. We are always delighted to hear from patrons! When asked how BTBL can improve the library to make the service work better for patrons, responses included:

"I would love to be able to see magazines about Computers, New Technology, Cars, Airplanes, Motorcycles, Helicopters, Wheelchair-Accessible Housing, and New Wheelchairs."

"BTBL has been a found miracle for my husband. Our Reader Advisor takes really good care of us. She is excellent! We really appreciate her and love BTBL. Thank you all so much!"

"I love my books. My Reader Advisor has done a great job choosing books for me. I miss Talking Book Topics. Please return it in Large Print."

"Add more current categories/topics to the library. I'm especially interested in cookbooks related to Air Fryers. Would love to be able to have online access to air frying cookbook."

"I think the book club and chat are good ideas. The technology and training you are offering are also wonderful for those in need. I have access to Wi-Fi, a Victor Reader, and various magnification devices already. I am fortunate."

"I am very involved promoting the library and its services. I think you are doing a wonderful job and I am thankful every day for the service."

TBT Catalog: Large-Print Permanently Cancelled

You may have already heard that the bimonthly catalog, *Talking Book Topics* (TBT), is no longer available in large print format as of December 2021. Never

fear, there are two main ways to access your *TBT* catalog now: in audio or online.

Talking Book Topics in audio is a magazine on cartridge subscription that will be mailed to you regularly. Just like the books from the library, you would return the magazine on cartridge to receive the next issue. *TBT* in audio will initially arrive in a container that includes the audio cartridge container with a small half-sheet paper order form for your convenience. You can still call, snail-mail, fax, email or order books online with the library. Let your Reader Advisor know if you'd like to sign up for the audio subscription of *TBT*.

Talking Book Topics in audio is also available as a download from BARD and the BARD Mobile app, just one of the online options for reading *TBT*. Other online options include HTML and PDF formats at the website loc.gov/nls/tbt. You can also download order forms from that website. *TBT* is also offered as a publication on the NFB-NEWSLINE service, the free text-to-speech newspaper telephonic reading program.

The cancellation of the large-print format of *TBT* is due to worldwide paper and ink shortages. We hope you will enjoy these alternate formats of *TBT*.

New Braille on Demand Program

Are you a braille reader who has a favorite book that you would like to read over and over again? Or is there a reference book that you would like to keep on hand, like a cookbook, handbook, or craft book?

You can now order your own personal copy of a braille book through the Braille on Demand program! Choose from any of the 16,000+ eBraille titles currently available on BARD - any book, any subject! Just fill out this short form here: surveymonkey.com/r/NLSbrailleondemand, or ask your Reader Advisor for assistance. You may also email the NLS reference department for assistance at: nlsref@loc.gov After your request has processed, you will receive a hardcopy of your chosen braille book, bound with a soft cover and comb binding, through the mail. Requests are limited to one book per month.

Human-Narrated Audiobooks Added to Bookshare

For the first time ever, Bookshare members can listen to over 5,000 audiobooks read by actors, authors, and celebrities. From *The House at Pooh Corner* and *Harry Potter* to *The No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency* and *The Keeper of Lost Things*, enjoy stories for every age and interest read by professional narrators. Download books in either MP3 or DAISY Audio format and listen on almost any device.

BTBL continues to offer free subscriptions to Bookshare for our patrons. If you would like to receive a free Bookshare subscription, please send an email to btbl@library.ca.gov.

Upcoming Sacramento Events

BTBL is participating in some exciting events this Fall. We hope that you can join us!

On Thursday, October 13th from 10am-2pm, you can visit our booth at the Disability Employment Awareness Fair on the West Lawn of the Capitol in downtown Sacramento (1315 10th Street Sacramento, CA 95814.) This event is intended to raise awareness to the public of disability-related issues, as well as present hiring opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

On Saturday, November 5th from 10am-2pm, join us at the Assistive Technology Fair at the Sacramento Society for the Blind (1238 S Street Sacramento, CA 95811.) Enjoy workshops, demonstrations of assistive technology, and visit booths from a variety of vendors.

In early 2023, be on the lookout for the return of the Sacramento Superfest Disability Film Festival! For the past several years, BTBL and the Sacramento Public Library have partnered with Superfest to present a sampling of films, documentaries, and shorts that portray disability through a diverse, complex, and engaging lens.

To learn more about future events, please sign up for email updates at: library.ca.gov/mailling-lists or visit our Facebook page at: facebook.com/BTBLSacramento.

Patron Corner Virtual Event

As part of the NLS Patron Engagement Section's (PES) mission to offer services, resources, and programs to enrich the library experience for patrons, PES will host a quarterly Patron Corner virtual event where patrons can learn more about various services directly from NLS staff. The first session was in June 2022. The quarterly Patron Corner will occur on the second Monday of the third month of each quarter at 4:00pm Pacific Time. The next two sessions will be December 12, 2022 and March 13, 2023.

The quarterly Patron Corner for December will be called "Do You Hear What I Hear: Why NLS's Music Section Is Not Just For Musicians." It will feature Juliette Appold, Head of the Music Section and members of her team. The topic will cover music material that is available on BARD other than music scores.

Bring your questions and your thoughts and join us at loc.zoomgov.com/j/1600983343. To join by telephone, dial 1-669-254-5252 or 1-646-828-7666. The Meeting ID is 160 098 3343, and the passcode is 164674.

More information about the program, as well as full Zoom invitation information, can be found at loc.gov/nls/about/services/patron-corner.

Many Faces of BARD Program

Beginning August 11, 2022, NLS began a monthly program called The Many Faces of BARD. This program will occur on the second Thursday of every month at 4:00pm Pacific Time. Each program will be an hour long and will cover one aspect of BARD usage. Each program will start with a brief presentation. The remainder of the time will be spent answering questions about the presentation or other questions related to BARD usage. NLS will announce the topic for the next presentation at the end of each program. The first presentation provided an overview of all of the available BARD products and had nearly 200 participants!

These sessions are open to all patrons. They can be joined by going to loc.zoomgov.com/j/1611161911 or calling 1-669-245-5252. The Meeting ID is 161 116 1911 and the passcode is 489758.

More information about the program, as well as full Zoom invitation information, can be found at loc.gov/nls/about/services/many-faces-of-bard.

Newest Titles from the Californiana Collection

Wondering what to read next? Consider these selections from the Californiana Collection, which is growing every day. Staff of our narration studio have been preparing local books—California authors and subjects not covered by the NLS talking book collection. For a complete catalog of our Californiana Collection, ask your Reader Advisor. Here are the recently completed talking books:

Slow medicine: The way to healing

By Victoria Sweet

[DBC 19019](#)

The author of *God's Hotel* (DBC 16160) expands upon her life and career with further stories that reveal the fallacies of modern healthcare, which she calls Fast Medicine. Throughout the text, she develops her ideas of what personalized and meaningful medicine should be.

11 hours, 49 minutes. Narrated by: Sandra Swafford.

Only what we could carry: The Japanese American internment experience

By Lawson Fusao Inada

[DBC 19010](#)

Edited by poet laureate and internee Lawson Fusao Inada, this anthology captures the experience of Japanese Americans interned during World War II. The variety of personal firsthand accounts and historical documents provides a picture of the atmosphere of distrust and xenophobia that afflicted the United States.

20 hours, 53 minutes. Narrated by: Cathy Carlson.

Badges, bears, and eagles: The true-life adventures of a California fish and game warden

by Steven T. Callan

[DBC 16463](#)

True crime tales with tails. Long-time wildlife conservation warden with California Department of Fish and Game shares cases from his career. Bears and eagles, along with salmon, catfish, doves, snakes, deer, elk and swans come under the watchful eyes of the author and his partner Dave Szody as they aim to stop poachers. Some violence and some strong language.

11 hours. Narrated by: Vance McCausland.

More than petticoats. Remarkable California women

by Erin H. Turner

[DBC 16153](#)

Ten women, each with California ties and born before 1900, who are examples of women performing work and supporting causes that were not typical for women of the day, are given short historical biographies. Individual chapters cover a diverse group including early film actress Mary Pickford, Florence Hutchings for whom Mount Florence in Yosemite National Park is named, and Tye Leung Schulze, the first Chinese-American woman to vote in an election.

4 hours, 9 minutes. Narrated by: Cathy Carlson.

Colony and empire: The capitalist transformation of the American West

by William G. Robbins

[DBC 16469](#)

A series of discrete essays, each addressing questions that are important to understanding the process and direction of change in the American West during the last century and a half. Explores effects of mining, lumbering, ranching, railroading, and water management on the economy and culture.

11 hours, 4 minutes. Narrated by: Sandra Swafford

Pacific homicide: A mystery

by Patricia Smiley

[DBC 19020](#)

LAPD Detective Davie Richards is placed under formal investigation for shooting a suspect during a routine police call. While her case is being decided, she's called to investigate a gruesome homicide. Solving the murder will take Detective Richards into some of the darkest corners of Los Angeles, until it's not only her job that's at risk, but her life.

9 hours, 30 minutes. Narrated by: Phil Torres

An Afghanistan picture show, or, How I saved the world

by William T. Vollmann

[DBC 20199](#)

An American's account of the Soviet war in Afghanistan. In 1982, the author purchased a camera and traveled to Afghanistan, by way of Pakistan, to learn more about the war and offer aid. His memoir, written in the third person and in which he refers to himself as 'Young Man' to convey his naivety, explores his experiences in refugee camps, his burgeoning friendships, his growing political awareness, and his feelings of helplessness in the face of so much suffering.

8 hours, 15 minutes. Narrated by: Sam Schwartz.

Bitter melon: Stories from the last rural Chinese town in America

by Jeff Gillenkirk

[DBC 25111](#)

Locke, a rural town nestled against the Sacramento River, was inhabited exclusively by a Chinese population before the passage of the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882. Presented are thirteen oral histories from modern descendants that occupy the houses and businesses of this all-Chinese town.

6 hours, 12 minutes. Narrated by: John Cherry.

The balloon boy of San Francisco

by Dorothy Kupcha Leland

[DBC 07160](#)

1853, San Francisco. Newsboy Ready Gates is ready for anything whether it's shouting the latest headlines from a street corner, sneaking onto a river boat to avoid paying the fare, or tracking down a missing miner. But when he crosses the bay to watch a balloon ascension, his adventures suddenly take an unexpected turn. Based on a true story, this book paints a colorful picture of daily life in San Francisco five years after the discovery of gold in California. It's drawn from newspapers, letters, and diaries and many other historical documents. Award winner. For grades 3-6. 2005.

3 hours, 21 minutes. Narrated by: Sandra Swafford.

Almost Americans: A quest for dignity

by Patricia Justiniani McReynolds

[DBC 16468](#)

A memoir on race in the early twentieth century, written by the daughter of immigrants. Born in 1926 to a Filipino father and a Norwegian mother, the author recounts how her parents struggled with anti-Asian laws, were denied citizenship, and could only work as domestic servants. As an adult, the author searches for acceptance but encounters discrimination at college and anti-miscegenation laws that prevent her from marrying in California.

11 hours, 25 minutes. Narrated by: Barbara Reider.

Garbage: The saga of a boss scavenger in San Francisco

by Leonard Dominic Stefanell

[DBC 16733](#)

Memoir of Lenny Stefanelli, one of San Francisco's "scavengers," as he works his way up from hauling trash in barrels to being the president of a major waste management corporation. The complexity of San Francisco's unique environmental challenges is revealed along with background on the life of a third-generation Italian-American in a close-knit family business. Strong language.

9 hours, 45 minutes. Narrated by: Caro Marks.

The anatomy of dreams: A novel

by Chloe Benjamin

[DBC 16470](#)

Classmate lovers Silvie and Gabe embark on an experiment that changes their lives and takes them across the country as they follow researcher Dr. Keller and help with his work on the therapeutic potential of lucid dreaming, but things are not always what they seem. Some descriptions of sex. Some strong language.

10 hours, 49 minutes. Narrated by: Caro Marks.

An ordinary woman: A dramatized biography of Nancy Kelsey

by Cecelia Holland

[DBC 07161](#)

A fictional rendering of the story of 18-year-old Nancy Kelsey who traveled to California in 1841 by wagon and horseback with her young husband, infant daughter and small group of friends and family. They accomplished this seemingly impossible feat crossing trackless wilderness, a desert and two mountain ranges without maps, guides or even a trail. 1999.

7 hours, 41 minutes. Narrated by: Sandra Swafford.

Fool's paradise: a Carey McWilliams reader

by Carey McWilliams

[DBC 16467](#)

With a sampling of the historian journalist's writings dating from the late 1930s to the early 1960s, this book features California's political and labor history. Contains accounts from a Progressive viewpoint of the Wobblies union efforts, Japanese internment during WWII and essays on candidates for governor including Nixon and Reagan. Some violence and strong language. 2001.

11 hours, 26 minutes. Narrated by: Walter Phelps.

California gold rush glimpses II: Amazing tales of people, life & times

by Craig MacDonald

[DBC 07164](#)

In this collection of 23 short articles originally published in Sierra Heritage Magazine, the authors recount true stories, both historical and humorous, about life in the mining camps and towns during California's Gold Rush in the 1840s and 1850s.

2 hours, 40 minutes. Narrated by: Alice Corley.

Highly respectable families: the Cornish of Grass Valley, California, 1854-1954

by Shirley Ewart

[DBC 16737](#)

Emigrating from Cornwall to the United States, Cornish miners formed a tight-knit community in Grass Valley, California. Interviews with several founding families detail their community leadership, work ethic, religious devotion, musical prowess, life histories and their favorite foods. Several recipes included.

5 hours, 45 minutes. Narrated by: Walter Phelps.

Badge and buckshot: Lawlessness in old California

by John Boessenecker

[DBC 19536](#)

A historical account of notorious California outlaws and sheriffs spanning from the Gold Rush to early 1900's. Featuring stories of feuds, vendettas, manhunts, holdups, and shoot-outs, this book tells original stories of famous characters such as The Gates Boys, Kid Thompson, Bill Miner, and Doc Standley.

11 hours, 27 minutes. Narrated by: David Michener.

Braille and Talking Book Library
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Free Matter for the
Blind or Handicapped

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Library Service Hours: 9:30 AM - 4:00 PM, Monday-Friday, Reading Room by appointment

Office closures: We will be closed Nov 11 (Veterans Day), November 24-25

(Thanksgiving), December 26 (Christmas), Jan. 2 (New Years), Jan. 17 (MLK 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.