

Spring Summer 2011

TALKING TIMES

**REGIONAL LIBRARY FOR THE BLIND &
PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED**

**Office of Library and Information Services
One Capitol Hill, Providence, RI 02908-5803**

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Eighty Years of Service

Happy Anniversary to the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS), a division of Library of Congress! NLS is celebrating 80 years of serving members with talking books. The national collection houses 400,000 plus titles and over 40 magazines in audio format. Each year, 2,500 new titles are added. These titles are published bi-monthly in the Talking Book Topics or Braille Book Review catalogs. Digital audio books, which are the latest format offered, are downloadable. Talking Books Plus (TBP) is the Rhode Island library affiliated with the National Library Service. TBP staff are the direct contact for membership application to Rhode Island's library service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped and the Braille Audio Reading Download (BARD). TBP staff provides readers advisory for TBP members who need assistance ordering materials and want equipment and accessories. BARD service is available to TBP members. For information and assistance, call us at (401) 574-9310 or email tbplus@olis.ri.gov.

Summer Reading Programs for All Ages

Looking for something fun to do this summer? Participate in Rhode Island's statewide summer reading programs at your public library! This year's programs take readers on a multicultural journey around the world. Younger readers may participate in the *One World, Many Stories* program at their local public library while teen readers participate in *You Are Here!* Some libraries around the state are also hosting adult summer reading programs with a similar, multicultural theme.

Participating in any summer reading program is as simple as visiting or calling your local public library. Registration starts in June. Sign up, then record the books you read or the time you spend reading.

Readers can earn coupons for McDonald's, a long time sponsor of RI's summer reading program, or free passes to more than 18 museums and attractions statewide. One lucky reader from each participating library will win 4 tickets to attend the grand finale for this year's summer reading program, a Pawtucket Red Sox baseball game. Out of these readers, one will win a trip to Walt Disney World courtesy of the PawSox, Citizen's Bank and Pepsi.

This summer's reading program also includes performances by artists and educators at libraries around the state, including the library at Meeting Street. Over 300 participatory programs will feature storytellers, musicians and hands-on science programs for children and young adults. All programs are free, though sign up may be required at some libraries.

Don't miss the fun this summer. Sign up for the summer reading program at your local public library. Talking Books Plus (TBP) has audio books to support TBP member participation – it's all free, it's fun, and it's happening at your neighborhood library! For facts about the program, visit www.olis.ri.gov/services/srp. The Summer Reading Program is coordinated by the RI Office of Library and Information Services.

Digital Access Update

Since the beginning of digital player distribution in September 2009, RI Talking Books Plus service has taken additional steps into the digital world. Most members have digital players now, and they are using them as their primary reading device. The old cassette players are slowly being returned as members decide they no longer need older titles only available on cassette or magazines sent through the mail. Members appreciate the ease of use and sound quality of the new digital player.

Over 5,000 digital titles in cartridge form are in the collection. Many of these titles are in high demand and are often not available when wanted. With the download option, BARD (Braille Audio Reading Download), over 20,000 digital titles are available immediately. The benefits to BARD are numerous. Downloading gives members immediate access to audio books and magazines. Downloaded titles have no due date. Members can create their own collection of favorite titles to read on one digital cartridge.

RI Talking Books Plus is working to increase reading opportunities for members who don't have access to computers. RI rehabilitation facilities, public libraries, and schools are encouraged to apply for Institutional membership and BARD service to assist individual members in downloading titles. Eligible Rhode Island institutions can apply for BARD service starting June 6, 2011. They may call (401) 574-9310 or email tbplus@olis.ri.gov for more information.

2010 Talking Books Plus Survey Results

We want to thank every member who responded to the 2010 Talking Books Plus (TBP) Survey. Each question was tallied and each comment was read. Your responses are valuable to us in the operation of Talking Books Plus. In response, a Suspense Books In Series booklist is in this newsletter. After reviewing your answers, we hope that you find many TBP services, including this newsletter, to be more helpful to you. A summary of the survey follows. The complete results are available on our website at www.olis.ri.gov/tbp/

Of the 132 members who responded to the survey, 74% or 97 of 131 find digital talking books the most important. 19.8% or 26 of 131 respondents find the digital download service, Braille Audio Reading Download (BARD), of most importance. In total, a whopping 93.8% or 123 of 132 of the respondents are using the digital service. This is great news for TBP. It is our goal to convince 100% of our members how easy and enjoyable it is to listen to digital talking books, and how important it will be to them in the future.

90.8% or 118 of 130 of respondents feel they received the reading materials they are interested in. In correlation, 115 of 126 members or 91.3% of respondents feel the most important benefit that TBP provides to them is pure enjoyment.

More than three quarters of the respondents or 79.3% or 104 of 131 say they select books from our online and print book catalogs. 59.5% or 78 of 131 use the Talking Book Topics catalog which is available in either large print or cassette format. Another 19.8% or 26 of 131 use the online catalog. The online Catalog has a link at www.olis.ri.gov/tbp. A few members specify the use of the New York Times Book Review, radio and TV reviews, and suggestions made by friends on Facebook.

According to the survey responses, the most popular information that members like to receive in the newsletter are booklists. Statistically, 65% or 81 of 125 individuals responded to this question and asked for bestsellers, mysteries, biographies and books in series. In addition, annotations were asked for and will be provided when possible.

A fraction over 25% of the 127 respondents would like to receive the newsletter in the digital cartridge format. Over 44% or 56 of 127 respondents now like to receive the newsletter in large print. Over a third, that is 35.9% or 46 of the 128 respondents have access to a computer with high speed Internet service. 23% or 30 of 129 respondents have downloaded books to a digital book machine. 31% or 40 of 129 respondents have ordered books from the online catalog.

8% or 11 of 130 respondents have or would use the public access computers at the public library.

75.4% or 86 of 114 respondents did not experience any problems with the digital talking book system. However, one problem was ordering digital books by mail, whereby, 19 of 114 respondents or 16.7% reported experiencing difficulty.

Few respondents reported using assistive technology on computers. However, of those who use assistive technology, 9.4% or 11 use Windows built in features, 4.3% or 5 use Jaws, 1.7% or 2 use Mac built in features, and .9% or 1 use Windows Eyes. Six (6) other respondents wrote in they use ZoomText.

The blog on the TBP website was read online by 13 of 125 or 10.4% of the respondents. The rest of the respondents said they did not read the blog. (The TBP blog includes booklists, reading recommendations and other news of interest for TBP readers.)

On average, 95% or 121 respondents found TBP easy to contact, and TBP staff members are courteous and responsive in a timely manner. Overall, 99.2% or 126 respondents rated the TBP service from excellent to good. 93.8% or 122 respondents are at least 50 years old. 43.8% or 57 respondents are at least 80 years old. 80% or 104 of 130 respondents have been a member for at least 4 years. 38.5% or 50 respondents have been a member for over 10 years.

Many members first learned about Talking Books Plus from Insight, Services for the Blind and other agencies. Talking Books Plus benefits from our partnerships with Insight and Services for the Blind. Over 59% or 77 of 130 respondents received Talking Books Plus services through an agency referral.

In closing, members told us the Talking Books Plus program puts all the daily worries out of mind, has been a lifeline, and provides relaxation. Members said they recommended the program to others. The program provides reading materials that members were not able to get on their own, helps pass the time, and helps ease the loneliness. Members said they can't imagine life without Talking Books Plus.

Suspense Books In Series

Recommended by Db – Review listserv

The books below are dedicated to suspense series that were compiled from reviews posted by subscribers of Db-review in February 2011. All of these books are downloadable. The comments are of those who posted the reviews on Db-Review listserv.

Jim Butcher - Dresden Files Series

These stories are very well done and have enough character development and human relationships to not be overwhelmed by the fantasy. Gregory Gorton does an excellent job with the narration.

Blood rites DB/RC067798

Dead beat DB/RC068025

Death masks DB/RC067763

Fool moon DB/RC067372
Grave peril DB/RC067581
Proven guilty DB/RC068058
Small favor DB/RC068290
Storm front DB/RC067342
Summer knight DB/RC067606

Jayne Ann Krentz (alias: Amanda Quick) - The Arcane Society Series

Stories that involve people with psychic abilities are fascinating, and in this series, the protagonists all have some sort of psychic abilities. The trouble is, the bad guys have psychic abilities too, and each novel is basically a saga of good vs. evil. The protagonists appear likable and intelligent and appear to behave rationally in Krentz's books. They are fun to read.

Amanda Quick

The Perfect Poison DB/RC069343
Second Sight DB/RC062661
The Third circle DB/RC066564

Jayne Ann Krentz

Running Hot DB068796
Sizzle and Burn DB065914
White Lies DB064478

To join this lively group of reviewers to listen and contribute your share of likes and dislikes of BARD (Braille Audio Reading Download)

downloadable titles, subscribe to db-review@emissives.com. To listen to the downloadable titles, apply for BARD at <http://bit.ly/ri-bard>.

Assistive Technology You Can Use

This is the first in a series of newsletter articles about assistive technology of value to blind and visually impaired individuals. This article will focus on accessibility settings in a computer using the Windows operating system. Although blind persons cannot visually read a computer screen, they can still retrieve printed text audibly from computers. For those with restricted vision, screen enlargement software enlarges print and graphics on a computer screen making it possible to read regular print. Assistive technology gives individuals without sight or very limited sight options in retrieving information from the computer. Screen enlargers, screen readers, speech synthesizers and keyboard shortcuts that provide the blind user with increased efficiency over the mouse are some of the assistive technologies that will enhance the computer for blind and visually impaired individuals.

Windows 7, Windows Vista and Windows XP software have built-in accessibility settings and programs called utilities that allow blind and visually impaired computer users to hear, see and use the computer. The Windows computer utilities defined below were built to assist blind and visually impaired computer users.

The following are accessibility features built into Windows and Office. They include magnifier (a utility built into Windows XP, Vista, and

Windows 7), text enlarger, screen resolution adjuster, high contrast selection, narrator, audio descriptions, and keyboard shortcuts.

Screen enlargers or screen magnifiers work like a magnifying glass. They enlarge a portion of the screen as the user moves the focus. This increases legibility for some users. Some screen enlargers allow a user to zoom in and out on a particular area of the screen.

Speech synthesizers works in conjunction with **Screen Readers** to provide text to speech information. The speech synthesizer receives information going to the screen in the form of letters, numbers, and punctuation marks, and then speaks it out loud via the screen reader. A screen reader is used to verbalize or speak everything on the screen including names and descriptions of control buttons, menus, text, and punctuation. **Narrator** is a screen reader that is built into Windows XP, Vista, and Windows 7 to work with Internet explorer, WordPad, notepad, and the control panel. Most users with disabilities will need utility programs with more advanced functionality for daily use.

Gloria Stuart, Assistive Technology Consultant, Blind / Low Vision Technology Specialist at TechACCESS of Rhode Island, provided some language and descriptions in this article useful for the blind and visually impaired. In addition, both Gloria and her intern tested these technologies with the Talking Books Plus online catalog (<http://webopac.klas.com/ribph>) and they worked. For members who want to use the Talking Books Plus catalog to search for titles in the collection and order them online, these technologies can make the online version of the catalog accessible to them.

2011 Hours Open

Monday – Friday 8 AM to 4 PM

Days Closed

May	30	Memorial Day
July	4	Independence Day
August	8	Victory Day
September	5	Labor Day
October	10	Columbus Day
November	11	Veterans' Day
November	24	Thanksgiving
December	26	Christmas

Contact Information

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The Talking Times newsletter is also available on cassette, by email, or in audio and print over the Internet at the Talking Books Plus website www.olis.ri.gov/tbp.

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