

*Fall/Winter 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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**Andrew Egan, Regional Librarian**

**Ann Piascik, Writer/Editor**

This edition of the newsletter was printed with a member survey which is available online at <http://bit.ly/tbpsurvey>. Our member feedback is very important so we hope that you will take the time to answer the survey. If you prefer a paper copy or need assistance, please call us at (401)574-9310.

## **A SWELL BUNCH OF BOOKS**

An economic cycle flows like the ebb and tide of the ocean. High and sometimes swift and powerful waves can swallow precious commodities. The embracing currents are often indiscriminating. Buffers exist to try and hold on to what is important. Likewise at Talking Books Plus (TBP), staff work hard to protect and strengthen valuable member services year in and year out.

As the surge of hard times hits us and in the wake of tightening budgets, TBP staff are busy actively promoting, distributing, and

discussing the nuances of the new digital machine and the online digital resource for TBP members. Valid questions and explanations about this new service line continue to be exchanged between TBP members and staff. In tandem with this flow of activity are the day to day tasks of verifying and approving new applications for both Talking Books Plus and BARD (Braille and Audio Reading Download). Staff respond to book and magazine requests. Reader's Advisory covers a sea of TBP services which includes the development and posting of reading lists on the TBP Blog as well as helping members customize selection and shipment of their books. The challenge for the TBP library is to fulfill these responsibilities while maintaining quality service. To keep members informed and well served, this newsletter is dedicated to the role that members can play in enhancing their own book delivery. TBP staff will help members fine tune their Patron Profiles and Preferences, thereby empowering all to receive the best TBP has to offer.

## **PATRON PROFILE**

Each Talking Books Plus member has a Profile that determines when and how many books will be shipped to them. Those who use the online Catalog are familiar with Patron Profile as an option in Basic Search that limits their search results to appropriate reading materials. Patron Profile will computer generate book searches based on certain criteria. This makes the Patron Profile for each member unique. Our automation system allows us to send books on a regular cycle including nightly and

weekly. We can also limit the shipment size so as not to overwhelm your mail box.

When a member wants to read books that they've read before from the Talking Books Plus library, Reader's Advisors can set their profile to send Has Had books. A member can choose to read all Has Had books or to restrict the kinds of Has Had books they want to read. Reading Has Had books can be set by a starting date, a range of dates, RC or DB number, cassette or digital talking book type, or by a subject or an author.

## **SERVICE CHOICES**

**Autoselect** is a service choice that is customized for each member. This service choice frees members to do nothing but read the books sent. Of all service choices, Autoselect is the only service type that can select books from a predetermined subject list and send them automatically. Members are not required to request specific titles. However, members can still make specific requests even if they opted for the Autoselect option.

**Request List** is another service type that will reserve specific titles that a member has requested and send them out in accordance with the cutoff number unless otherwise requested. See explanation of cutoff later in the newsletter. These books will remain on the Request List for future delivery if they are not available for delivery at the time of the request. Calendar Request does not select books from Subject Preferences.

**On Demand** is a third service. This service requires a member to initiate each book order. If a book cannot be found on the shelf for immediate delivery at the time of the request then the book is never sent. Originally, digital books were exclusively ON DEMAND. If you are not receiving enough digital books, ask us to check your service type.

## **SHIPMENT**

TBP staff can work individually with members in setting up how many books may be in a member's name at one time. That number is called the **Cutoff** number. Members can decide how many books they want at one time. The Cutoff will count a book from the moment it is assigned for delivery to when the book is returned and checked in at the library. Until a title is removed from the member's record, a book is counted in the Cutoff number. Therefore, it is best to return a book as soon as the member who borrowed the book has finished reading it.

Members may designate the number of cassette and digital titles they want sent to them in each shipment. This is called the **Shipment Size**. Books will be sent as long as the Cutoff number and Service Type allow it. Reader's Advisors are able to check the status of book orders especially when members are expecting books that have not been delivered.

## **PREFERENCES**

Author and subject lists are at the heart of computer generated book selection. When applying for Talking Books Plus, every

member has the opportunity to add authors, series, and subjects as Preferences. At any time, members can add a favorite author or delete a subject from their Preference list, for example. On the Talking Books Plus blog, members can find authors in book lists by topic. Author Read-alikes of favorite authors can be searched for by Reader's Advisors. These authors can be added to a member's author list. Exclusions to offensive language can be a Preference as well. All of this can be initially determined in the Reading Preferences section of the application form.

Members who opt for Autoselect have a Preference List. Provided that the Preferences selected will produce enough matching titles from among those sitting on the shelf, members should get a regular supply of books to read. The Preference list may be setup so that stronger preferences are expressed for certain authors or subjects. Autoselect can then send Preference selections in a certain order. Titles by a well liked author or subject may be sent several times before a title from the next subject or author in the Preference List is sent.

## **AUTHOR PREFERENCE**

Members may have one or several authors they like to read. But when they have read the entire TBP collection of books by their favorite authors, Reader's Advisors may be able to help a member find other authors who write books that are similar to their favorite author. These authors are called Author Read-alikes. Once an Author Read-alike is tried, the member may wish to have that author added to their Preference list.

Autoselect and Request List will identify and reserve titles by a preferred author as they are added to the collection. Members who have Autoselect or Request List as a Service Type do not need to ask if or when any unread titles by a favorite author are available. The computer automatically sends these titles when they become available.

### **SERIES PREFERENCE**

Once a member has read a book from a series, it is not unusual for the member to want to read all the books in that series. When series are published in sequential order, they can be requested to be sent in that order. However, only those books in the series that are cataloged can be sent. Ordinarily, Autoselect will not send a book that a member has already read unless the member requests that all books be sent whether they had already read the titles or not. The Has Had setting has to be adjusted for a member to receive every book in the series that is in the collection.

### **SUBJECT PREFERENCE**

Reader's Advisors are able to help members select titles generated from a subject list. With Autoselect, the computer selects titles by subject. Reader's Advisors can help members refine subject categories to better suit a member's need. Bestseller as a subject can be refined to either fictional bestsellers or nonfictional bestsellers, for example.

## **LANGUAGE PREFERENCES**

Books are generally sent in the English language but a limited collection of Spanish language materials are available as well in all service types. A limited selection of other foreign languages is available as well. Please call for more information.

## **READING LEVEL PREFERENCE**

A member's reading level is established at the time a TBP application is accepted. Should circumstances change the reading ability of a member, Reading Level should be reviewed and adjusted. It is particularly important to keep track of a child's progress in learning to read. The reading level of students is best monitored at least yearly as students advance from grade to grade. Overall, whenever changes in reading level do occur, it is important to update the Reading Level Preference.

## **EXCLUSIONS**

The Talking Books Plus application is the first opportunity for members to request exclusion of strong language or violence or explicit description of sex from titles sent them. Members can also exclude female or male narrator voices and foreign voices such as those with British accents. The computer will warn a member when a title that is requested meets any of the exclusions included as preferences. Members who elect to use Autoselect and who request exclusions will get only titles that meet the exclusions. Any titles ordered by staff for members can bypass the exclusion preference.

## **CHANGING PREFERENCES**

Once Preferences are established, these choices determine what a member receives until they want to change them or TBP changes circulation policies. Preferences can be changed at any time by calling TBP; for example, preference for authors, series and subjects can be changed to fit new reading interests. As the digital book collection grows, TBP policy may change the maximum cutoff number allowed which in turn could affect shipment size.

## **ONLINE CATALOG**

Members can order their own books online 24/7 once a password is given to them by staff. Cassettes, digital cartridges and downloadable titles are listed in the online Catalog. Rush Service is an option when ordering online. The Rush This Item box found in the Book Basket must be checked in order for any book on the shelf to be sent right away. Up to 5 items may be ordered for rush delivery during each visit made to the online Catalog. Only titles on the shelf will be sent. Rush delivery requests that are not on the shelf become reserves.

## **LET THE COMPUTER DO THE WORK**

If Autoselect is the preferred service type, the computer automatically searches and sends titles fitting the member profile. With Request List, the member selects the books but the computer systematically sends titles according to the member profile. Books that are not on the shelf at the time of the request are put on a Request List. With both service types, requested

books are automatically sent as soon as they are available.

Automated selection of titles by subject can introduce a member to new authors from which favorites can be built into the author profile.

Once a profile is set up, all of the work in Autoselect is done by the computer. Changes are made only when a member wants to make a change or library policy requires the change. Autoselect members may still want to talk to the staff at TBP but they shouldn't have to simply because in a particular week a member ran out of books to read.

I hope you have weathered this voyage and flood of information so that you can order with confidence and receive the books you like in the future!

# 2011 Hours Open

**Monday – Friday 8 AM to 4 PM**

## Days Closed

|           |    |                    |
|-----------|----|--------------------|
| January   | 3  | New Year's         |
| January   | 17 | Martin Luther King |
| 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          |

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# SEASONS GREETINGS

*From Talking Books Plus Staff,*

*Andy Egan, Regional Librarian*

*Ann Piascik*

*Neshmayda Calderon*

**R.I. TALKING BOOKS PLUS LIBRARY  
OFFICE OF LIBRARY & INFORMATION SERVICES  
ONE CAPITOL HILL  
PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND 02908-5803**

**FREE  
MATTER FOR THE BLIND  
OR HANDICAPPED**



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