

Winter 2014

TALKING TIMES

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

Office of Library and Information Services

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Return Cartridges

Talking Books Plus members who subscribe to the audio digital cartridge edition of the Talking Times newsletter are reminded to return the cartridge in its grey container. If the digital cartridge is not returned in time, you will be sent a Large Print edition of the next issue instead. Please read the newsletter and return the cartridge as soon as possible. Talking books, magazines, catalogs and the newsletter in cartridge format are on loan for six weeks.

Add [tbplus](mailto:tbplus@olis.ri.gov) to Address Book

Electronic subscribers of the Talking Times newsletter are asked to add tbplus@olis.ri.gov to their address book so your email service will accept email from Talking Books Plus. This increases the chance of successful electronic delivery of the link to the newsletter and other TBP messages. The online version of the newsletter can be listened to and read on the computer screen and downloaded to a cartridge with no loan period.

TBP 2013 Annual Report

October 1, 2012 – September 30, 2013

By Andrew Egan

In 2013, Talking Books Plus (TBP) members had access to digital books and magazines in preloaded and downloadable format. Cassette books continued to be available but in lesser quantity and title choices. In November 2012, Braille books, magazines and music scores became available on BARD. The BARD collection grew to more than 50,000 materials. In March 2013, TBP members who were subscribed to magazines and Talking Book Topics (TBT) in cassette format began receiving these materials in digital format on a customized cartridge. The customized cartridge began to be offered in two versions, weekly and monthly. The monthly mailing was designed for monthly/bimonthly/quarterly issues of magazines and to include sometimes weekly issues. A six week loan and return policy was instituted for magazines on cartridge sent through the mail. Web-Braille, once a separate service for members, became part of BARD in April 2013. In September 2013, BARD users who have access to iPhone, iPad, or iPod Touch devices were able to start downloading from BARD with the newly available BARD Mobile App.

This past year, the TBP Regional Librarian visited the RI Veterans Medical Center, the RI Veterans Home, and several local nursing homes. In November 2012, TBP exhibited at the ATAP/TechACCESS conference. In 2013, 24,297 digital books, 14,351 cassette books and 225 braille books and described DVDs were mailed and 11,570 books were downloaded. The Winter 2012 and Summer 2013 issues of the

Talking Times newsletter were printed and posted on the web. In total, 2,366 large print and 293 cartridge copies were mailed in 2013.

Reading Across Rhode Island

The 2014 selection is *Mr. Penumbra's 24-Hour Bookstore* (DB075599) by Robin Sloan. Reading Across Rhode Island launches in January. Look for more details online at www.olis.ri.gov/tbp.

First Braille Summit

The NLS Braille Summit: The Future of Braille took place June 19 - 21, 2013 at Perkins School for the Blind in Watertown, Massachusetts. This event was presented by the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS) and the Perkins School for the Blind. The purpose of the summit was to shape the future of Braille. Librarians, Braille literacy professionals, Braille readers, Braille producers, technology specialists and government officials were invited to participate. TBP's Regional Librarian Andrew Egan attended the Summit.

Several presenters set the tone of the summit with their perspectives on Braille. "Refreshable Braille is created in minutes, equal to fast food," said Peter Osborne, Keynote Speaker. Michael Yudin said "Braille is a literacy tool. It is for life skills such as label reading." Deborah Kendrick said, "Braille is not a language but a system."

Braille is different from digital talking books in many ways. Braille words can be read aloud from storybooks, song books, hymnals, and

plays. Financial reports, cookbooks and instructional books and manuals that require attention to details are better read in Braille. Reference books, dictionaries, atlases, maps and science and math textbooks with pictures, drawings and diagrams are also more suitable to Braille with its raised characters and surfaces.

From the Braille Production panel, Beth Hirst said that Braille should be taught to all children while Betsy Beaumon said that Braille creates accessible graphics that affect literacy and quality of life accomplishments. Overall, images and graphics are a huge issue and expensive to produce.

From the Promotion Panel, Kim Charlson, said all products should have Braille labels. Reference was made to the book by Judi Dixon, Acting Braille Development Officer at NLS, entitled, Label It (DB67704.) Kim referenced the term "wild text" which implies that print and Braille is everywhere. In the end, the primary focus should be the message rather than the medium, Braille.

Diane Wormsley, Professor of Special Education in Visual Impairment at the North Carolina Central University said, "Create a desirable literacy environment by having high expectations for adults and kids. Promote Braille as a written language." Diane invited persons with blindness to become writers as well as readers of Braille. She said "Make it easy to become literate in Braille. All children should be taught the Braille alphabet." She encouraged all to become "Braille explorers" and put their fingers on Braille rather than just looking at it.

Diane suggested that the uses of refreshable Braille be modeled for young kids. The end goal is to make Braille ubiquitous.

The Summit was broadcast on the Perkins official YouTube channel. The five panels were live streamed and then recorded. To listen to the entire three day Summit, visit www.perkins.org/braillesummit.

Mobile App for BARD

It is finally here, a mobile app for reading Braille and digital talking books on iPads, iPhones and the iPod Touch. In late September 2013, the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS) announced this app for Talking Books Plus members.

Known as BARD Mobile, this app will work on any iOS device running iOS 4.3.3 or later. The term, iOS (formerly iPhone OS), represents a mobile operating system developed by Apple Computers. The iOS devices that work with the app include iPhone 3GS and all later iPhones, all iPads, and fourth generation or later iPod touches. The BARD Mobile app allows TBP members registered for BARD service to download items from the "Recently Added Books" and "Recently Added Magazines" sections of the BARD site and from the member's "Wish List" on BARD. This app is available as a free download from the Apple App Store; Talking Books Plus members registered as BARD (Braille and Audio Reading Download) users will have access to BARD content on iOS devices just as they do on the computer.

The BARD app contains a mobile manual found in the Help section of the BARD Mobile bookshelf. The user guide is also online at nlsbard.loc.gov/apidocs/BARDMobile.userguide.iOS.current.html.

The BARD Mobile app utilizes Voiceover and Zoom, two accessibility functions available on iOS devices. These functions enhance a TBP member's ability to read audio digital downloadable books from the TBP collection with iOS devices.

VoiceOver is an advanced screen reader that allows people with blindness to interact and read on their devices using multi-touch screen gestures and helping them navigate by touch. Sliding a finger on the iPhone's surface will read aloud applications. Swiping two fingers down the screen prompts the phone to read text aloud. There is a menu to change VoiceOver's rate of speech or language. A free VoiceOver training application can be installed and is accessed from the user's iOS device at www.looktel.com/vo-tutorial.

Zoom is a built-in magnifier that works on applications on iOS devices. To enhance use of the BARD Mobile app for people with visual impairment, the Apple devices can increase the font size in iOS apps up to 56 points and invert colors onscreen for systemwide settings.

For Braille readers, more than 40 Bluetooth wireless Braille displays work with the devices. A Braille display is needed to read Braille books with BARD Mobile. Section 7 of the app user guide explains how to configure display and provides keystrokes to make reading Braille

easier. Read more about the wide range of assistive features of iOS devices and how Talking Books Plus BARD members can benefit from the Mobile app at www.apple.com/accessibility/ios/. Send your comments about the app to tbplus@olis.ri.gov.

Health Information at the Library

RI public libraries can assist individuals with the online application process for health insurance available under the Affordable Care Act. Libraries can also help connect you with Center for Medicare and Medicaid Navigators and RI certified application counselors. Navigators are trained to provide accurate and complete health coverage information. The RI counselors are specially trained to help people with health insurance enrollment through the marketplace.

The state-based marketplace is HealthSourceRI. It is the most direct source for local health care resources and support. Visit www.healthsourceri.com to sign up for a free newsletter to learn about free resources and get the latest news. You can also sign up for email or text updates that will help you get ready to apply for health insurance.

Additional health care information for Rhode Islanders is available on AskRI.org. Look for the *Health and Nutrition Center* www.askri.org/resources-index/health-and-nutrition/ and the *Consumer Health Complete* resource in EBSCO on AskRI.org.

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