

Winter 2016

TALKING TIMES

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

Talking Books Plus

Office of Library and Information Services

TBP website: www.olis.ri.gov/tbp Email: olis.tbplus@olis.ri.gov

2015 Annual Report by Andrew Egan

This report covers October 2014 to September 2015. The audio digital collection has grown to more than 69,000 downloadable titles. The availability of the BARD mobile apps has increased to four vendors- Amazon, Google, Apple, and Humanware. The devices that work with the apps include Android devices, iPhone, iPad, iPod, Kindle Fire, Victor Reader Stream, and Stratus.

Talking Books Plus (TBP) members were mailed 38,620 digital audio books, 3,748 recorded cassettes, and 379 Braille books. 12,611 audio books and 439 Braille books were downloaded from BARD. Other loans included locally produced magazines, DVDs, and locally produced SHELF (Shared Electronic Files) downloads. The total materials loaned was 55,926.

TBP expanded its outreach efforts this past year, contacting all Rhode Island senior centers, nursing homes, assisted living centers, and public libraries about TBP services, a total of 179 institutions. TBP further extended its outreach to librarians and library staff at the RI Library Association Conference and the School Librarians of RI Conference. TBP was also promoted to the public during the Kids Reading Across RI kickoff event for the children's Summer Reading Program at the State House, and to attendees

of the New England Assistive Technology Conference. TBP will continue its outreach efforts to reach the more than 20,000 people living in RI who may be eligible for TBP services. If you know someone who could benefit from our services, please have them call us or visit us online to learn more.

NEWSLINE in Rhode Island

NEWSLINE is a service of the National Federation for the Blind (NFB). In Rhode Island, Services for the Blind & Visually Impaired (SBVI) is the agency that offers NEWSLINE access.

For those who are not acquainted with NEWSLINE, it is a free service for those who cannot read regular newsprint. In 1995, NEWSLINE made it possible for the blind to access daily newspapers. Today, NFB-NEWSLINE has over 300 publications including the Providence Journal and over 40 magazines that can be downloaded to an iPhone, sent to an e-mail inbox, or accessed by a standard touch-tone phone. Of the over 300 publications that NEWSLINE offers, four are Spanish language newspapers.

NFB continually seeks to add new newspapers and magazines to its service. The National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS) and NFB work together to bring more access to magazines for eligible individuals. Recently, NEWSLINE announced the addition of Talking Books Topics (TBT) to its collection of magazines. TBT, a bi-monthly book catalog published by NLS, is accessible to RI TBP members through BARD (Braille Audio and Reading Download), the postal service, and now NEWSLINE.

NEWSLINE's toll-free call-in center (1-866-504-7300) provides service on demand to subscribers of NFB-NEWSLINE. This service makes it possible for the blind or visually impaired to access information in newspapers at the same time as sighted individuals. To apply for NEWSLINE service online, visit

the NFB-NEWSLINE homepage (<http://www.nfbnewslineonline.org>) click the link, Sign Up! You may also contact the Rhode Island NEWSLINE coordinator Robert Pires at SBVI: email robert.pires@ors.ri.gov or call 401-462-7825.

TBP and SBVI are working in partnership to provide quality reading service to Rhode Islanders who are blind or visually impaired. TBP links to the NEWSLINE online application and NEWSLINE information on its homepage, <http://www.olis.ri.gov/tbp>.

2016 Reading Across RI Book

Reading Across RI (RARI) takes place from January to June. The 2016 RARI book is *The Wright Brothers* by David McCullough (DB082175). RARI kicks off on Saturday, January 30, 2016 with a special event, including a keynote address, "Connecting with the Wright Brothers," by Dr. Steven Lubar, professor of American Studies at Brown University, and a preview performance by Living Literature. To register for this event or for more information, visit the TBP website. <http://www.olis.ri.gov/tbp>.

What the Future May Hold

In April 2015, the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS) held its first ever Futures Committee Meeting to discuss the future of the NLS program. NLS Director Karen Keninger provided a report of this meeting in which she listed "emissaries" from the National Federation of the Blind (NFB), the American Council of the Blind (ACB), and the Blinded Veterans Association (BVA) as well as representatives from NLS and network libraries in attendance. The group was asked questions about their future expectations for NLS service.

In the report, those responding thought that text-to-speech would be common, voice recognition would be perfected, and devices would become

less expensive. There would be wireless delivery directly to machines, multiple titles on cartridges, and it would be common to circulate an entire series on one cartridge. NLS might produce more foreign-language materials, especially Spanish, and complete the analog-to-digital conversion project. There were suggestions for best uses of cartridges to include book series, author collections, children's book collections, and newsletters. Talking book machines would become easier to use, have better battery life, and include wireless connectivity. It was suggested that a new talking book machine include text-to-speech, haptic (tactile) feedback, a braille eReader add-on, a simple but enhanced user interface allowing multiple profiles settings, a podcast aggregator, an in-box, and a smaller size.

Thousands of titles are available on BARD but will never be put on cartridge. All BARD titles available on cartridge would cause library shelving problems. A short term solution, duplication on demand, would reduce library shelving needs. Wireless delivery directly to the member's talking book player was considered to be the long term solution. Over time, increasing partnerships with other organizations such as Bookshare, Learning Ally, HathiTrust, and commercial audio producers could provide seamless access for talking book members to a much broader array of materials and services. NLS demonstrated a utility program that downloads books from BARD and copies them to cartridges. This program would simplify BARD usage for patrons.

The to-be-developed NLS plan will cover a 10 to 15 year span. In the 2015 Talking Books Plus Member Survey, TBP members have an opportunity to voice their ideas on the future planning of talking books service here in RI. Members may provide comments in the last question, ***What additional services do you expect TBP library to provide?*** Your opinion counts!

2015 Talking Books Plus Member Survey

Talking Books Plus (TBP) conducts a member survey at least once every three years to establish priorities and identify areas for service improvements. Member input is important to us. The survey results will enable us to better serve the needs of TBP members. We will also use your input in national conversations about TBP service. This survey is anonymous. Please submit a completed survey by February 26, 2016. TBP members or caregivers on behalf of members may complete the survey online at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/TBP2016>. To submit a paper version, fold and mail the survey to the return address postage free, or fax the survey to 401-574-9320. Call 401-574-9310 to complete the survey by phone. TBP staff may provide assistance to callers Monday through Friday 8:30 am to 4:00 pm.

Member Survey

Q.1. How did you learn about TBP?

Friend or family member Healthcare professional SBVI

Social worker or government agency Internet

IN-SIGHT TechAccess Other _____

Q.2. How do you prefer to communicate with TBP?

letter phone email fax

Comment _____

Q.3. What services do you use on the website?

TBP Blog Application Forms Reading Lists

Newsletters Catalog BARD Other None

Comment _____

Q.4. What device(s) do you prefer to use to listen to TBP audio books and magazines?

Digital talking book machine Victor Reader Stream

iOS device (Apple iPhone, iPod, or iPad)

Android devices (tablets, smartphones) Other _____

Comment _____

Q.5 Are your TBP library needs met in a timely manner?

Always Sometimes Never Comment _____

Q.6. How do you rate the helpfulness and courteousness of TBP staff?

Poor Fair Neutral Good Excellent

Q.7. How satisfied are you with Talking Books Plus services?

Very Satisfied Somewhat Satisfied Not Satisfied

Comment _____

Q.8. Do you read the Talking Times newsletter?

Yes No

Comment _____

Q.9. Do you know that TBP loans audio-described videos and DVDs?

Yes No

Comment_____

Q.10. How satisfied are you with the subject matter available in the collection?

Very satisfied Somewhat satisfied Not satisfied

Comment_____

Q.11. Do you use BARD to download books?

Yes No

Comment_____

Q.12. Do you use or visit Facebook on the Internet?

Yes No

Comment_____

Q.13. Do you have access to a computer and the Internet?

Yes No

Comment_____

Q.14. What is your age?

Under 18 18-29 30-50 51-64 65-79 80-99 100+

Q.15. What additional services do you expect TBP library to provide?

Comment_____

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*Free
Matter
For the
Blind*

Return survey to:

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Running Out of Books

Below are four ways to minimize the circumstance of running out of talking books.

1. **Download books.** Use BARD service. There is no wait time through the postal service or a library check-in wait when downloading through BARD.

2. **Load up on BARD books.** Should BARD experience an unexpected outage or is scheduled to be offline for maintenance, download several books on a cartridge for the duration. Once multiple titles are downloaded to a single cartridge, use the Bookshelf feature of the NLS player to find a particular title to listen to on that cartridge.

3. **Check with the mail person.** When audio books have been put in the mail but if you find out they are not checked in at the library and it's been some time, check other delivery points at your residence for delays. Report cartridges suspected lost in the mail.

4. **Mail books back as soon as possible.** Return what you've read or don't want to read within the 6 week loan period. It can take several weeks for books to travel through the postal service before they are checked in at the library.

BARD Updates

Features and differences between the Android 1.0 and iOS apps were discussed in a July 2015 www.BlindBargains.com interview with Don Olson, Acting NLS BARD Operations Supervisor. One operational difference is where tabs are located on the screen. Android tabs are at the top of the screen whereas iOS tabs are located at the bottom. A forthcoming feature to the Android app is a sleep timer with a 15 to 60 minute or end of chapter adjustment. Since this interview with Don, the Android app has been updated

to fix bugs. The Android app is developed in house at NLS, therefore the releases tend to be quicker. For current updates on the BARD mobile app for Android, visit the Google Play Store or check the TBP Blog regularly for announcements. You must be registered for BARD to use the apps.

An upcoming overall feature to BARD is the ability to subscribe to a book series. Once a user is subscribed, BARD will automatically add the next book of the series when it becomes available on BARD. Adjust *Account Settings* from the BARD main page to request email notification when a book gets added to your Wish List. Don qualifies that these features may appear on Web BARD before the app. He added that there is an ongoing project to make the search utility in BARD more robust.

Ordering Locally Produced Books

In the beginning of the *Talking Book Topics* (TBT) book catalog is a section called *In Brief*. In some issues of the catalog, *In Brief* is a brief bibliography. This bibliography is a list of newly added network-produced audio books. Not all issues of Talking Book Topics have this listing but when they do, the codes for ordering these titles are unique. For a sampling, look in the TBT May – June 2015 *Brief bibliography* for these codes.

The letters and the numbers in these codes are important when requesting books. DBC and DBN codes identify locally produced titles whereas DB indicates titles produced by NLS. DBC and DBN books must be special ordered when requesting mail delivery; the letters preceding book numbers alert TBP staff that the request is a locally produced book. For quicker delivery, Talking Books Plus members who are authorized to use BARD service can download DBC and DBN books themselves on to a cartridge.

Cartridge or Player Error Message

If you hear an error message on your player, you may be able to isolate the problem to the cartridge or the player. The player will create an instant message error if the cartridge is removed from the player while it is still in play mode. The error message will not repeat when the cartridge is inserted. Press the stop button before removing a cartridge to avoid this error message.

Cartridges can have file or hardware problems. Neither of these problems can be fixed by the user unless the user downloaded the files incorrectly. In that case, the browser could have been closed too soon or there was a network problem or the flash drive was of poor quality. If the audio book was mailed, report the cartridge error message to Talking Books Plus (TBP) as soon as possible. Since book cartridges are duplicated, the error message may have originated with the master files for that book. For more information about these and other error messages, visit the TBP website.

Donations to Rhode Island Talking Books Plus

Individuals and organizations may make a donation to the Rhode Island Talking Books Plus (TBP) program. All donations are deposited into a special account for Rhode Island TBP. Funds are used exclusively for materials and services for our members. All donations are acknowledged by correspondence. Contact the Regional Librarian for more details at 401-574-9312.

Comfy Headphones

A caregiver of one of our members recommends Skull Candy headsets. She says they are cushiony and her mother loves to wear the pink ones.

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