



Kentucky Talking Book Library Newsletter March 2021

Happy Birthday NLS!

This year marks the 90th anniversary of the National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled, of which the Kentucky Talking Book Library is a part. All year long NLS will highlight its history and the array of services provided to patrons. Programming will include online events, recognitions, and digital content which will be shared throughout various channels, including social media and the NLS website.

Prior to 1931 there were few resources for reading material for people who were blind. Representative Ruth Pratt (New York) and Senator Reed Smoot (Utah) introduced identical bills to Congress, and the Pratt-Smoot Act became law on March 3, 1931. It appropriated \$100,000 to the Library of Congress to provide braille books for blind adults. The first order was for Woodrow Wilson's book, *George Washington*, to meet a demand created by the bicentennial of Washington's birth. Talking Books on 33- $\frac{1}{3}$ RPM records were developed in 1934. The service was expanded to include children in 1962, and again in 1966 to include those with physical disabilities.

The 90th anniversary celebration kicked off on March 3 with a very special virtual concert featuring jazz pianist Matthew Whitaker, marking the day that founding legislation was signed by President Hoover. The concert can be viewed on the Library of Congress's YouTube channel at:

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4X5NhVwLzM4>). Whitaker, who has been blind since birth, is an NLS patron who has used the Music Section's accessible scores and reading materials – the largest collection of its kind in the world – on his rise to fame. Although he is only 19, Whitaker has been featured on stages around the world, including Carnegie Hall, the Kennedy Center, and the Lincoln Center. His original compositions have garnered him accolades across the jazz world, including the ASCAP Foundation Herb Alpert Young Jazz Composer Awards for 2019 and 2020.

For more on the history of NLS, check out *Talking Books: Pioneering and Beyond* by Marilyn Lundell Majeska, 1988 (DB 27607 or BR 07378) or *The Untold Story of the Talking Book* by Matthew Rubery, 2016 (DB 87099 or BR 21875). You may also visit the NLS website at <https://www.loc.gov/nls/about/organization/history/> .

KTBL Update

Whew, what a year we have had! We are looking forward to 2021 being much better after everyone gets vaccinated. The Talking Book Library continues to have limited staff in the building, but we can access phone messages and email while working from home, so please leave a message if we are unable to answer your call. Gary continues to send out books every day, and Michael comes in when needed to repair and ship players.

The KTBL studio remains closed until it is safe for our volunteers to return and resume recording. Meanwhile, Studio Manager Brian has begun working as a librarian to help take your calls. While he is new to working directly with patrons, Brian holds a degree in Library Science, so is fully qualified to assist you. He also continues to work on making old cassette recordings available as digital books.

Everything Old is New Again

As mentioned earlier, Talking Books started on heavy vinyl 33- $\frac{1}{3}$ RPM records. A typical book contained 20 record discs, and users remember the postman delivering them in a large sack like Santa Claus. Over the years the records were recorded at slower speeds, creating smaller, longer playing discs until NLS began using inexpensive flexible discs in the 70s. Next came the 4-track cassette tapes many of you remember well. The current digital talking books and the BARD download website were introduced in late 2008-2009, and BARD Mobile in 2013. Now you can practically carry a whole library in your pocket!

But what about all those old books? NLS has converted most of the recorded cassette (RC) collection to digital format. KTBL is doing the same with the Kentucky books we have recorded since 1977. Michael starts the process by baking the original reel tapes in a toaster oven to remove humidity and stabilize the emulsion. Next he runs the tapes through a duplicator/computer to transfer the sound into digital files. He then spends days editing the sound and removing the old tape side announcements. Brian takes over from there by creating metadata (digital information that accompanies the files), inserting all the navigation points, and converting the files to the official Talking Book format that meets NLS guidelines. Finally, we submit the converted book to BARD, where it can be downloaded by Talking Book libraries and users around the country. So far approximately 308 books have been completed with 1000 yet to go!

Now Hear This

This newsletter is the best way for KTBL to communicate information to you, our patrons. Information may include important changes to our service, our annual survey, a list of new Kentucky books, services or products that may be of interest to you, and staff or volunteer highlights. The newsletter is available in large print, braille, email, and audio formats.

We have tried several methods to circulate the audio version on cartridges. First, we tried sending the newsletter alone on its own cartridge, but so many were not returned that it was not economically feasible. Next we tried circulating the newsletter just like a book, adding it to book cartridges of those who have indicated they prefer the audio format. However, that required librarians to spend hours manually adding the book request to accounts, and for some technical reason our automation system did not add the newsletter to everyone's cartridges.

We are trying something new with this edition. The newsletter will be added to all book cartridges, and will be the first thing you hear when you insert a cartridge into your player. The advantage is that everyone who receives Talking Books will get the latest version of the newsletter. The disadvantage is that it will be on every cartridge you receive. However, you do not have to listen to it every time. Simply hold down the Fast Forward button on your player to move past it to the first book, or use the Bookshelf feature to navigate to the next book. These instructions will appear at the end of the newsletter for those who are unfamiliar with them. This process will be no different than skipping the user instructions that come on every cartridge--but we hope you will listen long enough to hear when a new issue has replaced the previous one.

All patrons who get Talking Books will receive the audio version. All patrons who have an email address on file with us will get the email version. The large print and braille formats are only sent to those who have requested them. Please contact KTBL to start or cancel a braille or large print subscription. You can also find the newsletter on our website at <https://kdla.ky.gov/librarians/talkingbook/Pages/default.aspx> and on NFB Newsline®.

Accessible Tax Info

Did you know that the Internal Revenue Service offers common forms in a variety of formats to accommodate people who use assistive technology such as screen reading software, refreshable Braille displays, and voice recognition software? The IRS has prepared hundreds of tax forms and publications that can be downloaded or viewed online in text-only, Braille ready files, browser-friendly HTML, accessible PDF, and large print. They also provide online videos that discuss various topics and include captions, audio description, American Sign Language, and text transcripts.

For more information, visit <https://www.irs.gov/forms-pubs/accessible-irs-tax-products>. To request paper tax forms, instructions, or publications in Braille or large print, call the tax form telephone number at 800-829-3676. For a copy of your tax notice in Braille or large print, call the tax assistance telephone number at 800-829-1040. Note: the IRS does not advise filling out forms on mobile devices.

E-Reader Update

The NLS eReader is a new refreshable braille device that allows users to receive braille books on a digital cartridge or by downloading them from BARD. KTBL launched its braille eReader pilot program in September, and for the most part it has been a great success. KTBL has loaned out 118 eReaders and circulated 285 cartridges with a total of 1105 braille books on them. A few participants found the device too challenging to use, but those who are more comfortable with technology are loving it—especially those who use it with BARD. Before the eReader, patrons downloaded an average of 195 braille books a month. Since the eReader pilot began, patrons have downloaded an average of 800 braille books a month!

Some patron comments:

- The only reason I don't read braille normally is it takes up too much space.
- This pairs beautifully with Bluetooth to an iPhone.
- I love the way the dots feel. They are so sharp and clear to read.
- I really like this little gadget. Not only is it a great reader, but it is the best device for accessing my iPhone.
- I love this thing and how very easy it is to download and read with. And it's so light and portable. Even shaped like a book. (With the included case.)
- I find myself reading all sorts of braille books and magazines, materials which I wouldn't have downloaded in the audio format. I didn't realize I missed braille that much.
- This device has really gotten me reading again, and reading braille again.

Contact KTBL if you can read braille and want to try the eReader. A special note for those who already have an eReader: a software update is coming soon. A fix will allow you to transfer new books to your device without deleting existing titles.

The More the Merrier

As you well know, the Kentucky Talking Book Library lends audio and braille books and magazines, free of charge, to people who are blind, have low vision, or have a physical disability that makes it difficult to read standard print. But did you know we can also provide service to people with reading disabilities like dyslexia?

Until very recently, a doctor of medicine or osteopathy was required to certify that an applicant's reading disability was "the result of organic dysfunction" in order for the person to be eligible for service. This requirement was often difficult for potential patrons and NLS urged Congress to loosen that restriction. The change was made official just a few months ago and NLS has updated eligibility requirements on its applications. The list of professionals who can certify the eligibility of applicants with reading disabilities has recently been expanded to include reading specialists, educators, librarians, and school psychologists in hopes of easing access to our services.

Those with reading disabilities will be encouraged to use BARD and BARD Mobile with their own devices because the legislation still gives lending preference to people who are blind or have low vision, and to honorably discharged veterans of the US Armed Forces.

To BARD or Not to BARD...

Speaking of BARD, if you are not already using it, please consider giving it a try. The US Postal Service has done a great job over the years delivering braille and Talking Books to our patrons, but between the Covid-19 pandemic, budget cuts, weather, and holidays, its ability to get books to you quickly has been affected. With BARD you have instant access to every book in the NLS collection at any time. Plus, there are no due dates, so you can keep downloaded books for as long as you like.

The easiest way to try BARD is by using your iPhone, iPad, or Android smartphone or tablet. You will need an email address and WIFI internet access. Go to the Apple App Store or Google Play Store to download the BARD Mobile app. Once you have done that KTBL librarians can help you apply for BARD and set a password. You must use your user ID and password the first time you log into BARD Mobile, but it will remember them after that.

The Get Books tab allows you to browse descriptions of books and magazines recently added to BARD or a list of the most popular books. You can also search the BARD website for a particular title or author. If there is a series you enjoy, you can "subscribe" to it so new books will automatically be added to your BARD Wish List.

While there are many advantages to using BARD Mobile, the volume on smartphones and tablets may not get loud enough for you, although you can use earbuds or headphones. If this is the case, you have the option of using your computer to access the BARD website and download books onto a USB flash drive to play in your Talking Book player. A friend or family member can help if you are not comfortable using a computer. Keep in mind that you can use BARD in addition to getting books by mail, so why not give it a try?

Donations

KTBL extends its thanks to everyone who donated to KTBL in 2020! We especially want to thank the Louisville Downtown Lion's Club for sponsoring this and previous issues of our newsletter. (Learn more about Lion's Club International at www.lionsclubs.org .)

KTBL happily accepts donations from those who wish to show how much they appreciate braille and Talking Books. We use these funds to purchase supplies, equipment, books for our recording studio, and to produce our newsletter. Wish you could make a donation but cannot afford it? Break it up and send a little at a time. Don't need any more Christmas, birthday, or anniversary gifts? Name KTBL as a recipient of donations in lieu of gifts. You can even make donations in memory of a loved one or include us in your estate planning. No amount is too small—just don't send cash in the mail. We will send a letter of thanks and acknowledgement that you can use for tax reporting.

To contribute, make checks payable to the Kentucky Talking Book Library and mail to:

Kentucky Talking Book Library
PO Box 537
Frankfort KY 40602

March Celebrations

There are many things to celebrate in March. In addition to Saint Patrick's Day, it is National Craft Month and Women's History Month. Here is a sampling of titles on these topics. Contact KTBL for more.

DB 58484 St. Patrick of Ireland: A Biography by Philip Freeman

Life of St. Patrick based on his two surviving letters: one a defense of his work in Ireland, the other condemning a slave-raiding king and his pirates. Recounts Patrick's kidnapping by Irish pirates, years of slavery, escape, and eventual return to minister to the Irish people. Debunks many myths. 2004. 6 h 44m.

DB 72592 A Pot O' Gold: A Treasury of Irish Stories, Poetry, Folklore, and (of Course) Blarney selected and adapted by Kathleen Krull

Limericks, ballads, poetry by Joyce and Yeats, and retellings of legends about mermaids, fairies, and leprechauns. Selections from the cultural heritage of Ireland balance child-friendly material with original sources. For grades 4-7 and older readers. 2004. 2h 39m.

DB 86035 Knitting Ephemera: A Compendium of Articles, Useful and Otherwise, for the Edification and Amusement of the Handknitter by Carol J. Sulcoski
Collection of articles, tidbits, and factoids of interest to knitters and crocheters. Includes entries about the patron saint of knitting--currently not assigned--a description of a nineteenth-century spinning bee, a history of the sizing of knitting needles and crochet hooks, a quiz on slogans for fiber-related companies, and more. 2015. 5h 3m.

DB 47555 Making Scrapbooks: Complete Guide to Preserving Your Treasured Memories by Vanessa-Ann
Presents more than seventy ideas for creating a personal scrapbook. Offers suggestions for various themes around which to create a book and ideas for making covers and bindings. Describes various techniques and necessary tools. 3h 55m.

DB 71524 The Handmade Marketplace by Kari Chapin
Guide to marketing handicrafts. Discusses business basics, such as record keeping and pricing. Covers selling goods online, in stores, and at craft shows; creating and updating a blog; and advertising in print and on the Web. Features success and failure stories by experienced artisans. 2010. 6h 55m.

DB 101163 Why They Marched: Untold Stories of the Women Who Fought for the Right to Vote by Susan Ware
A feminist historian and biographer moves beyond the national leadership of the suffrage movement in America to profile the many women from varied backgrounds, races, and religions who made up the movement. Unrated. Commercial audiobook. 2019. 9h 14m.

DB 99278 Outsiders: Five Women Writers Who Changed the World by Lyndall Gordon
An examination of the lives and work of five classic female novelists--Mary Shelley, Emily Bronte, George Eliot, Olive Schreiner, and Virginia Woolf. The author discusses how each writer formed her own identity, what they all had in common, and how that connects with readers throughout time. 2019. 13h 27m.

DB 99932 No Man's Land: The Trailblazing Women Who Ran Britain's Most Extraordinary Military Hospital During World War I by Wendy Moore
An account of the work and accomplishments of doctors Flora Murray and Louisa Garrett Anderson, who served the war effort in a Paris hospital. Describes how, due to their successful work, they were asked to open a hospital in London nicknamed the Suffragettes' Hospital and known for its life saving treatments. Unrated. Commercial audiobook. 2020. 12h 16m.



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PO Box 537
Frankfort KY 40602

Free Matter for the Blind
and Physically Handicapped
DMM 703.5