



Washington
Secretary of State
SAM REED

Washington Talking Book & Braille Library

Administered by the Washington State Library
and Office of the Secretary of State

Reading Matters

Winter 2010

David Junius, Editor

A Message from Danielle Miller, WTBBL Program Manager

Our winter weather may have been temperate this season, but the impacts of the economic crisis and Washington State budget haven't been. Governor Gregoire's proposed budget in December cut two million dollars from the Washington State Library's budget, which included cuts to WTBBL.

We were directed to take a 19 percent cut in staffing at WTBBL effective February 12, 2010. Five staff members, or the equivalent of 3.7 full-time employees, were laid off and one Secretary of State-funded Information Technology position located at WTBBL was laid off, resulting in us losing six colleagues. The WTBBL-funded positions cut were our Youth Services Librarian, Braille Coordinator, Receptionist, and two Page positions working in Shipping and Audio Book Production.

The impacts of these cuts will be significant. We will produce fewer local materials in braille and audio formats, we will circulate fewer books, and we will have a decrease in outreach and support to children and young adults.

As always, WTBBL staff and volunteers will do everything we can to provide the highest level of service possible to our patrons under increasingly difficult circumstances. Another area where we will save some money is in the physical production of our newsletter, *Reading Matters*. Beginning with the next issue, *Reading Matters* will only be available in Word, PDF, web-braille, and MP3 from our

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website and also in text sent via e-mail to subscribers of our WTBBL e-mail listserv. I hope you will be able to continue to read the newsletter on a quarterly basis as we include important updates about library services, as well as other interesting information.

On a positive note, we have had nothing but success with the ongoing transition to digital talking book machines and digital talking books. We have completed serving our veterans, centenarians, and individual patrons on the waiting list. We are now able to send a digital player to new borrowers and are offering them to all active patrons; please help us spread the word.

The digital players are wonderful and we continually get outstanding feedback from users. One of the best things is that you can sign up to use your own USB flash drive to download books from NLS BARD (Braille and Audio Reading Download) and WTBBL and play them on your digital player. For information on how to start downloading, give us a call at (800) 542-0866.

Also in this issue is a piece by Jan Walsh, our State Librarian, talking about the overall cuts at the Washington State Library (and WTBBL), a piece from Sue Ammeter introducing our amazing new Patron Advisory Council (PAC) members, and articles on new books, the Evergreen Radio Reading Service, and downloading.

As always, please feel free to contact me with your questions and concerns. I can be reached at (206) 615-1588 or danielle.miller@sos.wa.gov. I look forward to hearing from you.

All the best,



Danielle

Washington State Library Budget Update by Jan Walsh, Washington State Librarian



As you may know, the Washington Talking Book & Braille Library is a program of the Washington State Library (WSL) and the Office of the Secretary of State.

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Both the WSL and WTBBL are currently taking significant reductions in staffing due to Governor Gregoire's budget proposal that would cut \$2 million from the State Library. These cuts resulted in the initial layoffs of 31 staff members. As Secretary of State Sam Reed and I wrote in a February 3rd editorial in Tacoma's *News Tribune*, "Over the past decade, in good times and bad, the state library has been put through the budget wringer several times. One governor even proposed abolishing the state library. If Governor Gregoire's proposed cuts become reality, the state library's budget will have been reduced by more than a third, and its staff level slashed by more than half since 1999."

The \$2 million cut translates to a 15 percent cut to the Library. Since this 15 percent cut covers the next two years, the layoff process needed to begin immediately, before the Legislature arrived at a final budget. If management waited for the legislative process to be complete, it was likely even more cuts would be necessary to meet the 15 percent reduction. The round-one layoffs from WSL and WTBBL took effect on February 12.

In the last eight years, demand for services provided by WSL and WTBBL has increased. For example, customer service transactions have increased from 1,155,326 transactions in 2002 to 2,836,797 in 2009. This reflects increases in visitors, books checked out, website use, and the availability of downloadable digital talking books.

The WSL is providing vital resources and services to the state's most vulnerable populations through WTBBL and services such as the Hard Times Resource Guide, Renew Washington Grants, and branches in mental hospitals and correctional facilities. Other resources include Ask-WA virtual reference, summer reading programs, downloadable audio books, Keepers of the Stories listserv for tribal libraries, Autism Awareness training, and early learning projects.

Now is not the time for more cuts to the State Library; our services are needed more than ever. During the Great Depression, government did not ignore history and culture, but supported and increased it. Stewardship of our state's cultural heritage should be more important during tough economic times.

PAC Corner by Sue Ammeter, Chair

Happy New Year from the Patron Advisory Council (PAC)! I hope 2010 is going well for you and yours.

As you have read in Danielle's and Jan's articles above, the economy and resulting state budget are making things challenging at WTBBL, but the staff, volunteers and PAC are determined to maintain the quality of service that has made us a leader among libraries for the blind and physically handicapped around the country. We thank you for your continued support!

Here are some updates from the PAC:

Our new PAC members are on board and have attended their orientation and first meeting at WTBBL. They are a great group and a valued addition to WTBBL's volunteer leadership. They are Karen Johnson of Seattle, Kevin LaRose of Tumwater, Mary Anna Mohrman of Seattle, Janice Squires of Kennewick, and Emily Stevenson of University Place. Welcome new members!

The traveling braille display that was mentioned in the last "PAC Corner" is on display in the Legislative Building in Olympia from March 1-15, and at WTBBL in Seattle from March 17-29. This is a very exciting exhibit that showcases the important role braille plays in the lives and learning of WTBBL patrons and others around the state.

If you get a chance to experience this exhibit, I recommend it wholeheartedly. We will post some photos with descriptions on our website soon, so you will still be able to enjoy it! Special thanks to the National Braille Press, the Ruth Schuman Trust, and the Heritage Center Trust for helping to make Washington a stop on the display's tour schedule.

Members of the Outreach Committee continue to make themselves available for presentations to schools and service clubs around Washington, in addition to being daily spokespeople for our services. If you have a service club or other setting where our PAC members are also located (see the roster below), they may be able to make a presentation to your group. For more information on getting a

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speaker or scheduling a tour of WTBBL for a group, call our Volunteer and Outreach Coordinator David Junius at (206) 615-0417 or (800) 542-0866, or e-mail him at david.junius@sos.wa.gov.

The Advocacy Committee continues to actively support patron concerns and field questions. In addition, they are rallying support for WTBBL in this difficult economic time.

The following individuals are current members of the Patron Advisory Council. As always, please contact the PAC member in your area of the state with any questions or ideas you may have.

Sue Ammeter (Port Hadlock) 360-437-7916
Terry Atwater (Olympia) 360-754-8193
George Basioli (Edmonds) 425-771-6299
John Buckmaster (Spokane) 509-327-1132
Norma Jean Campbell (Richland) 425-802-8662
Maria Edelen (Spokane) 509-928-2405
Karen Johnson (Seattle) 206-632-6160
Kevin Larose (Tumwater) 360-539-7016
Jenny McDaniel-Devens (Keyport) 425-328-9820
Mike Mello (Seattle) 208-301-0565
Mary Anna Mohrman (Seattle) 206-363-0636
Lynette Romero (Olympia) 360-915-9030
Janice Squires (Kennewick) 509-582-4749
Emily Stevenson (University Place) 253-564-1704

Do you have your digital player yet?

In February, the library filled all requests for digital talking book machines for patrons in good standing. If you want a digital player, please call us to place your request. If you are in good standing, we should be able to send you a new digital player in less than a month.

If there are problems with your record that put you not in good standing, we will work with you to resolve any issues. The most common problems with a patron account are:

1. Having 10 or more books out overdue for over 12 weeks.
2. Having 10 or more books reported "lost."

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If you haven't used the library in a while, you may just need to activate your account again.

Remember, the library does not charge overdue fines or replacement costs, so it will not cost you money to clear your record. Please call the library at (800) 542-0866 for details.

Thousands and thousands of books in minutes: Don't forget to download!

Many of our patrons have received their digital talking book machines and are enjoying them immensely. One of the greatest things you can do with the player is play downloaded books with the USB port on the right side of the player. You can download books whenever you want and listen to them right away.

You can also keep these books forever and not worry about returning them, waiting for your mailman, or having them get lost in the mail!

You will need access to a computer with Internet access and purchase a USB drive. USB drives are also called flash drives, thumb drives, etc., and can be purchased almost anywhere now for very little money.

We have heard about problems with the Sandisk brand and other USB drives that come with software already installed, so you'll want to avoid them. Once you have your USB drive, you'll want to sign up with NLS BARD (Braille and Audio Reading Download) at nlsbard.loc.gov. In order to sign up, you will need a working e-mail address. Once you have signed up, we'll verify you are a WTBBL patron and then you will receive your password in your e-mail. Then you are ready to go!

There are almost 18,000 books and a number of magazines currently available for download from BARD and more are added every week. Imagine putting all the books by your favorite author on one USB drive, being able to listen to a series in order, or creating your own sampler of titles to keep and listen to whenever you like!

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If you do not have your own computer with Internet access, you may have a friend or family member who can help you and get you loaded up with books. If you live in the Seattle area, you can use the patron computer station at WTBBL to download books.

WTBBL has also jumped into the downloading trend and we currently have 200 local books available for download and are adding more all the time. You will need a different login and password than you will use for BARD, so give us a call at (800) 542-0866 to sign up. We will be putting detailed instructions for downloading on our website soon, but if you need help, don't hesitate to call us and we can walk you through the process.

Have fun and happy downloading!

New Books at WTBBL by Lara Phillips with Theresa Connolly

WTBBL continues full steam ahead with the transition from cassette books to the new digital format! We are adding new books every week and now have 67 locally produced titles available on digital cartridge. These books, plus 150 more, can also be downloaded from our website and some are available on cassette.

Starting in March, however, we will stop making cassette editions and focus on digital cartridges and downloads. If you enjoy our locally produced books but haven't yet requested a new digital player, call the library today at (800) 542-0866.

Audio: Adult Fiction

The Jump-off Creek by Molly Gloss.

Oregon, 1895. Recent widow Lydia Sanderson travels from Pennsylvania to Oregon, where she homesteads on a sparse mountain. The harshness and difficulty of pioneer life is further complicated by squatters, loneliness and isolation. 1989. Narrated by Camille Blanchette. Cassette Book CBA 7433, Digital Book DBW 7433, and available for download.

The Passion by Donna Boyd.

In a flashback to 1897 Paris, 28-year-old Tessa LeGuerre attempts to

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kill werewolf Alexander Devoncroix to avenge her father's death. Instead, she falls in love with Alexander and learns that the superior werewolf race secretly runs most of the world. Tess becomes enmeshed in a romantic rivalry with Alexander's brother Denis, who would rather destroy humanity than live alongside it. Violence and descriptions of sex. 1998. Narrated by Duane Barr. Cassette Book CBA 7906 and Digital Book DBW 7906.

Guernica by Dave Boling.

Spain, 1937. The three abandoned Ansotegui brothers struggle to survive on the family farm at the end of the 19th century; younger brothers Josepe and Xabier become a fisherman and a priest, respectively, while the eldest, Justo, marries and raises a stunning daughter named Miriam. Miriam attracts the attention of Miguel Navarro, who winds up moving them to ill-fated Guernica after a run-in with the Spanish Civil Guard. Some violence. 2008. Narrated by Rick Sipe. Cassette Book CBA 8086, Digital Book DBW 8086, and available for download.

Audio: Adult Non-Fiction

Pugetopolis: A Mossback Takes on Growth Addicts, Weather Wimps, and the Myth of Seattle Nice by Knute Berger.

The former "Mossback" columnist for the *Seattle Weekly* collects the best of his trenchant commentaries on Seattle politics, culture, enterprise, and odd local behavior. 2009. Narrated by Rick Sipe. Cassette Book CBA 8109, Digital Book DBW 8109, and available for download.

Rodeo Queens and the American Dream by Joan Burbick.

A bittersweet journey into the lives of women who have worked the rodeo circuit from the 1930s to today, written by a Washington State University professor. 2002. Narrated by Chris Galloway. Cassette Book CBA 7499, Digital Book DBW 7499, and available for download.

Finding Life in the Land of Alzheimer's by Lauren Kessler.

After losing her mother to Alzheimer's, Kessler takes an entry-level position at an Alzheimer's care facility in order to better understand the illness. She recounts her experiences as a caregiver and the lessons she learned from patients with the disease. 2007. Also

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known as *Dancing with Rose: Finding Life in the Land of Alzheimer's*. Narrated by Marilyn Mason. Cassette Book CBA 8073 and available for download.

Audio: Fiction for youth

Diary of a Wimpy Kid: The Last Straw [#3, *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*] by Jeff Kinney.

Middle-schooler Greg Heffley nimbly sidesteps his father's attempts to change Greg's wimpy ways until his father threatens to send him to military school. For grades 5-8. 2009. Narrated by Erik Schwab. Cassette Book CBA 8098, Digital Book DBW 8098, and available for download.

Stumptown Kid by Carol Gorman.

Holden, Iowa: 1952. Eleven-year-old Charlie, whose father died in the Korean War, improves his baseball game with the help of Luther Peale, who played in the Negro Leagues. Charlie also learns the meaning of both racism and heroism. Sasquatch Award nominee. Grades 4-7 and older readers. 2005. Narrated by Cynthia Ellis. Cassette Book CBA 8020, Digital Book DBW 8020, and available for download.

The Legend of Captain Crow's Teeth [#2, *Eoin Colfer's Legends*] by Eoin Colfer.

Marty, Will and the rest of the family are spending the summer in a trailer on the beach. Marty makes Will walk home from a local dance, planning to scare him with the ghostly voice of Captain Crow, but Marty's the one who's scared when the rocks light up as described in the local legend. Grades 2-4. 2006. Narrated by Erik Schwab. Cassette Book CBA 8159, Digital Book DBW 8159, and available for download.

Book of a Thousand Days by Shannon Hale.

In medieval Mongolia, Dashti and her mistress escape the tower where they were imprisoned after Lady Saren refused to marry her chosen suitor. Heading for the castle of the man Saren secretly loves, she demands that they switch identities, causing no end of complications. Middle and high school readers. 2007. Narrated by Cecilia LeBlanc. Cassette Book CBA 8117, Digital Book DBW 8117, and available for download.

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Braille : Adult Fiction

Cruel Intent by J. A. Jance.

Former anchorwoman Ali Reynolds is in the midst of renovating her Sedona house for a television show when her contractor, Bryan Forester, is accused of murdering his wife. Ali's rush to prove Bryan's innocence puts her in the path of a serial killer. Some violence and strong language. Bestseller. 2008. 5 volumes. BRW 1289.

Damage Control by J. A. Jance.

Cochise County sheriff Joanna Brady, an exhausted new mother, juggles the investigations of four mysterious deaths. An elderly couple purposefully drives over a cliff, an ill man dies in a mobile home fire, and the remains of a developmentally delayed young woman are found after a flood. Some violence. 2008. 6 volumes. BRW 1287.

Braille : Adult Non-Fiction

Riddle of the Bones: Politics, Science, Race, and the Story of Kennewick Man by Roger Downey.

Kennewick Man refers to an 8,000-year-old skull found along the Columbia River in 1996 that proved to be of Caucasian origin, countering the theory that the earliest humans in North America came from Asia. After the discovery, a legal battle between anthropologists, archaeologists, Native American groups and the U.S. government raged concerning the ownership and rightful place of the remains. 2000. 5 volumes. BRW 1293.

The House of Hope and Fear: Life in a Big City Hospital by Audrey Young.

Memoir of an idealistic, young doctor entering her first post-graduate job at Harborview County Hospital in Seattle. Examines the personal experiences of hospital staff, patients and their families, as well as the health care system as a whole. 2009. 4 volumes. BRW 1298.

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Braille : Fiction for youth

The Return of the Killer Cat by Anne Fine.

Ellie's cat, Tuffy, always claims innocence, or at least justification, in all his actions. This time a vacation caretaker seems to think dried-out food is edible and a neighbor girl manages to waylay him for a humiliating game of dress-up. Grades 2-4. 2003. 1 volume. BRW 1300.

The Trolls by Polly Horvath.

Melissa, Amanda and Pee Wee love having their Aunt Sally babysit. Her stories can even make eating vegetables fun! She also tells family stories about growing up on Vancouver Island that they never hear from their dad – especially the tale of the trolls. Grades 3-6. 1999. 2 volumes. BRW 1297.

The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-time Indian by Sherman Alexie. Spokane Indian Reservation. Fourteen-year-old Junior, beset with physical problems caused by brain damage, transfers to an all-white town school. Called a traitor by his best friend and Tonto by his new classmates, Junior uses humor and wit to bridge the cultural divide. Some strong language. For junior and senior high readers. 2007. 3 volumes. BRW 1271.

Braille Class Takes Shape by Ed Godfrey

The 2010 Wednesday evening Braille Transcription Class began on January 6, and will end in June. At that first class, 22 new students first received an orientation to the library, and then were introduced to the braille alphabet, braille numbers, and the Braille2000 software.

Following each weekly class, students study new braille symbols and transcription rules, practice braille transcription and proofreading, and prepare a transcription exercise as homework. Students submit the homework via e-mail, and often receive feedback the same day. I look forward to reporting on the progress of the class in the next issue of *Reading Matters*.

Our volunteer braille transcribers have completed the following

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books over the past few months: *Cruel Intent*, by J. A. Jance; *Damage Control*, by J. A. Jance; *Riddle of the Bones: Politics, Science, Race, and the Story of Kennewick Man*, by Roger Downey; and *The House of Hope and Fear: Life in a Big City Hospital*, by Audrey Young.

These are described in the “New Books” article above, and all of the transcribers and proofreaders who worked on the transcription of these books into braille deserve a big “Thank You!”

The Braille Department is always looking for new braille proofreading teams – a tactile braille reader reading aloud to a sighted partner, who follows along in the print copy. Proofreading teams make sure that WTBBL’s braille is the best it can be! For more information on volunteering in the Braille Department, please contact David Junius at (206) 615-0417 or david.junius@sos.wa.gov.

On the Air with John Pai and Gregg Porter

While the weather has been milder outside this winter, it’s been wilder than ever inside the studios of the Evergreen Radio Reading Service (ERRS). We’re still trying out a number of new programs to replace the ones lost when In-Touch Networks of New York ceased operation last fall. Meanwhile, staff members from that former service are working on developing the new Radio Reading Project of New York, which has already begun to offer programming to us.

We had more authors come through our doors for interviews in 2009 than ever before – 72 scribes paid us visits. You can hear their conversations with volunteers on the weekly “Literary News” broadcasts (Tuesdays at 10 a.m. and Thursdays at 6 a.m.), as well as the audio archives on our website at www.wtbbl.org.

Speaking of the archives, we continue to add episodes of our weekly “Talk Show” there from time to time, and by year’s end, those archives had received more than 3,000 online visits. Look for other special programs to appear there as well, such as episodes of “Kitchen Corner.”

Speaking of good things developing, at the start of this year,

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Darryl Thixton (one of our hosts for the “Talk Show”) went to California to begin training with his first guide dog, Burgess. Burgess is quite a big fella – one of the staff at the training facility says he’s the biggest dog she had seen there in 13 years – he is five-foot-ten when he stands vertically! Part quarter-horse, perhaps? Darryl is writing a blog about his experiences at darrylsdogblog.blogspot.com.

If you have any comments about what you hear on ERRS, we sincerely hope you’ll let us know. Our e-mail address is radio@sos.wa.gov. We look forward to hearing from you!

Meet Our Staff: Eura Ryan

Eura Ryan is WTBBL’s administrative assistant. Originally from Los Angeles, California, she spent her formative years in the beautiful city of Kirkland, Washington. After graduating from Lake Washington High School in 2000, Eura moved to the Midwest to study at Knox College and then on to the University of Kansas (Rock Chalk!), where she completed her Master of Arts in Classical Studies. In August of 2010, Eura will complete her Masters in Library and Information Management with Emporia State University’s distance program.



As WTBBL’s administrative assistant, Eura wears many hats, including assistant to the program manager, safety chair and the facilities manager for the building. As assistant to the program manager, she assists with budget concerns, helps in major event planning, and acts as the purchasing agent.

In addition to these duties, Eura is WTBBL’s donations manager. In this role, she handles all donations for calendars, in memory of patrons who have passed away, and as part of the 2009 Fundraising Campaign. If you have more questions about donating to WTBBL, feel free to contact Eura directly at (206) 386-1254 or (800) 542-0866, or by e-mail at aura.ryan@sos.wa.gov.

Join the WTBBL Legacy Society

When you establish a bequest to benefit WTBBL in your will, you help assure for years to come that patrons have access to an extensive library that meets their needs for recreational and educational reading.

To honor your commitment to this important service, you will be inducted into the WTBBL Legacy Society. As a member of the Legacy Society, you will inspire others to join you in supporting WTBBL. You will also receive advance notice of WTBBL special events and new programs.

For more information on making a bequest or about the Legacy Society, please contact Carleen Jackson at (360) 902-4126 or by e-mail at giving@sos.wa.gov.



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