

Look Again

Fall/Winter 2018

Oakland Talking Book Service at RHPL

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'Tis the Season

If you are having a hard time coming up with a holiday gift for friends or family consider recognizing them with a contribution to OTBS. Such a donation is also one of the most satisfying ways of recognizing special occasion, honor a relative or friend's birthday, anniversary or other event or could be used as a thank-you gift for your enjoyment in using OTBS. You might want to invest in tomorrow by designating a gift from your current assets or a portion of your estate to OTBS. By participating, you will help us continue to improve and enrich the lives of people with low vision. There are a variety of ways you can contribute. If you want to make a bequest the library has sample legal forms that you can use as you plan your estate. Gifts to OTBS are deductible on your federal and state income tax forms to the extent allowable by the law. If you would like more information about how to support OTBS, we invite you to contact us so we can explain the many benefits and strategies for making donations. We wish to thank the following people for their generous gifts to OTBS in the past:

Dr. Rose Marie Schmidt

Grace Brickner

Teresa McMahan

David & Ruth Henke

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NLS on the Move

Just as it has provided audio playback equipment since the 1930s, the National Library Service (NLS) has long been interested in providing an affordable, easy-to-use braille eReader to its patrons. In the summer of 2017, NLS took the first step toward achieving that goal when it partnered with Perkins Library to test the effectiveness of distributing digital braille files for use on eReaders. Now we are ready for the next step.

NLS will soon have a contract to purchase eReaders designed specifically to read NLS materials. Initially, NLS will purchase enough devices to conduct a pilot project with a few network libraries. The pilot will cover all aspects of acquisition, quality assurance, distribution, cleaning and maintenance, technical support, training, media distribution, and other relevant topics. We expect the pilot to last two years.

NLS is able to move ahead with this exciting project thanks to a 2016 amendment to the 1931 Pratt-Smoot Act that now allows it to provide playback equipment in all formats, not just audio. A report by the Government Accountability Office recommended that Congress make that change.

Recently, the House of Representatives passed the Marrakesh Treaty Implementation Act, which makes changes to U.S. copyright law that would bring the United States into compliance with the terms of the Marrakesh Treaty.

The treaty, which so far has been ratified by 43 countries, facilitates the reproduction and cross-border distribution of books in accessible formats. Once the implementing legislation is signed by the president and the State Department has formally notified the World Intellectual Property Organization—the treaty’s administrator—of its ratification, we will provide guidance on how it will impact NLS and its network libraries.

OTBS Reaches Out to Its Community

If you are planning a low vision or senior event and would like OTBS to participate, or if you would like us to conduct a training session with your consumer group, agency or clients, please contact us as we are delighted to be involved. Over the last few months, OTBS staff participated in senior information fairs and shared information on our services at local Rotary groups. Contact OTBS at 800-744-4542.

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Computer Help is Close at Hand

If you have any questions about your phone or computer, here are some great resources! The Apple support number is 877- 204- 3930 and the Microsoft help number is 800- 936- 5900. If you have a blind or visually impaired child, Seedlings braille books gives two free books a year. You can reach Seedlings at 734-427-8552.

There is one more program we would like to tell you about called Computers for the Blind. Upon request, they will send you a computer with a screen reader for a small fee of \$100. They can be reached at 214-340-6328.

Of course, please call Marsha at 248-650-5682 for all of your assistive technology questions.

NLS Music Notes

NLS Music Notes is a blog for and about those who want, need or provide the special format music of braille, audio, and large print offered by the NLS Music Section.

NLS will showcase this collection, which covers both classical and popular music, with posts of new titles added, along with interviews of and articles about blind and low vision musicians, music braille transcribers, as well as features about current music events and activities.

You can find the blog at: <https://blogs.loc.gov/nls-music-notes/>

OTBS Book Discussion Groups

If you are looking for an opportunity to discuss great books and network with other Talking Book Service patrons, please consider joining one of these stimulating book discussion groups.

OTBS Book Friends

The group meets monthly at the Good Samaritan Lutheran Church, 517 W. Walton Blvd. in Pontiac. The Church is accessible by the SMART bus system. Visit otbs.rhpl.org for the upcoming schedule of discussions. For digital copies of the discussion books, contact Marsha at 248-650-5682.

Phoney Friends: Only a Phone Call Away

If you prefer not to travel, join our virtual book group that requires only a phone call. Every month, the group will discuss books via a conference call. To learn more about this group, visit otbs.rhpl.org or contact Michelle at 248-650-5681.

Follow OTBS on Facebook! • Connect with other members of the OTBS community and stay up to date with OTBS happenings by liking on FB at facebook.com/OTBS-at-RHPL.

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Thoughts from Our OTBS Patrons

We have come to know Ilah through her participation in the Phoney Friends virtual book group. Her insights and open mind have always impressed the book group members, and she has agreed to share some thoughts with you today.

Ilah continues to live in the home she purchased when she was 80 years old and appreciates all the wonderful support of her neighbors here in Oakland County and at her vacation home in Bois Blanc. Ilah first told us about her island home during a Phoney Friends discussion of a book about Drummond Island.

This past summer, Ilah contacted OTBS for one of her favorite Mrs. Pollifax digital books. She wanted to listen to it with a childhood friend on the island who was not doing well. Upon her arrival on Bois Blanc, Ilah learned that her friend was in rehabilitation due to a recent injury. Not deterred, Ilah shared the book in segments over the phone with her childhood friend.

A lifelong reader, Ilah began using the OTBS talking book service when her vision deteriorated due to macular degeneration. She enjoys using the NLS headphones provided so that she does not disturb her son when he is visiting. In addition, the sleep function on the digital player is very helpful and she often falls peacefully into a snooze while listening.

Passionate for reading and lifelong learning, Ilah loves her island home. She has spent summers on Bois Blanc since she was five-years-old and still visits today although she's now in her late 90s. Over the years, Ilah has developed fast and lasting friendships and recounts wonderful stories about moonlit walks at night, fishing without bait, and finally leaving their weekly grocery list with a blank check in the mailbox which was taken to Cheboygan and returned with the requested items and never a penny was overcharged.

Ilah's advice is to just put one foot ahead of the other, follow your curiosity and be a good neighbor.

Metro Blind Bowlers

Although the Metro Blind Bowlers began bowling on Saturday, September 8, 2018, it is not too late to participate. Bowling begins at 3:30 p.m. and the cost for bowling is \$12. Bowlers are placed on a three man team and play three games. Ideally, there is one sighted bowler, one partially sighted bowler, and a totally blind bowler on each team. The league bowls at Merri-Bowl Lanes, located at 30950 Five Mile Road in Livonia.

For more information about other blind bowling leagues please contact Walter at 248-227-7094 or at walmquist15@icloud.com

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BARD Security Updates

NLS initiated a change to BARD user accounts in an effort to enhance security and prevent misuse. Each day the BARD system checks patron accounts to see when a book was last downloaded. Any accounts that haven't been used in over a year are placed in an inactive/suspended status.

If you are unable to log into BARD, your account may have been suspended. You will need to call OTBS staff at 1-800-774-4542 to have your account reactivated.

A portion of the process of enabling your BARD account requires the password to be reset. Once you receive your temporary password, it needs to be used within 24 hours. Once you have logged into BARD and create a new password, you will need to download a book immediately or the system will automatically suspend your account again.

BARD Application Updated

New versions of BARD Mobile apps for iOS and Android are available. The Get Books screen now includes: My Previous Downloads, Browse Magazines and Most Popular, which shows the most popular downloads on BARD for the last thirty days.

The new iOS version requires iOS 8 or later. Its user guide has been updated and can be found at:

<https://nlsbard.loc.gov/apidocs/BARDMobile.userguide.iOS.1.2.html>

The new Android version requires Android 4.2 or later. Its user guide is available at:

https://nlsbardpractice.loc.gov/LOC_02/BARDAndroidUserGuide.html.

Please call Marsha at 248-650-5682 with any questions.

Closed Circuit Television Magnifiers (CCTV)

If you have a gently-used CCTV that is in good working order, please consider donating it to OTBS. We do have a few people waiting to borrow this type of equipment.

If you would like to borrow a used CCTV, please give OTBS a call. We will do our very best to match your needs with donated equipment in our inventory. We cannot transport the equipment to your home so

arrangements will have to be made for pick-up at the Library. For more information on borrowing or lending CCTV's and other magnification devices, please call OTBS at 1-800-774-4542.

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Our OTBS Patrons Always Inspire

By Anne G.

Hi! My name is Anne, and I have been blind for 14 years due to Usher's Syndrome, which can cause retinitis pigmentosa and hearing loss. Although I have worn hearing aids since I was six-years-old, I did not learn about my RP until I was 33. Losing my vision was gradual over the years, so along the way I have adapted my life with the help of my family, friends, and my faith.

I am a wife, mother, grandmother, sister, aunt and friend. I was a registered nurse for many years and loved it. My husband and I have been married for 41 years. We are blessed with three daughters and two sons. We have five grandchildren, three girls and two boys! Our children, with the exception of our youngest daughter, all live far away...Chicago, Maryland, New York and Georgia so we do travel a lot to see them! In the past few years I have traveled by myself with the help of airline assistance.

I love to stay healthy both mentally and physically. I walk on a treadmill frequently and enjoy cooking healthy meals for my family. I enjoy gardening, home decorating and participating in church events that give me great joy.

I have learned so much over the years on how to live blind. The Detroit Agency for The Blind and Visually Impaired introduced me to The Oakland Library Services for the Blind in Rochester where I began reading by listening to digital books and eventually downloading books via BARD to my iPhone.

Marsha, the OTBS assistive technology trainer, has worked with me on a variety of assistive technology including Jaws which reads text out loud. Marsha has also put me in touch with a variety of other agencies that service the blind community. Both OTBS and the Detroit Agency for the Blind have taught me so much about the wonderful technology now available for the blind. Through Hadley School for The Blind's online school I am learning Braille, and cane training through Leader Dogs in Rochester. My cane is now considered my friend. I hope to have a guide dog someday soon which will be yet another milestone.

I really appreciate all the emotional support that I have received along my journey. My goal is to continue to be the best I can be as a blind person. I am very thankful for the many blessings in my life. Thank you for letting me share some of my story. God Bless!

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Bingo for the Visually Impaired

The Pontiac Lions Club is once again hosting the 2018- 2019 Bingo for the Blind with Lion, Sandy Roach, at the helm.

Roach brings to Blind Bingo over ten years experience which is instrumental in making this event a success. As chairperson for this event and the Blind Picnic, she works with Pontiac Lions to make these events an enjoyable activity for all participants.

Eight games are played with winners for first, second and third place and it is possible to have multiple winners. Anyone that does not bingo also receives a small prize. After the games are played, snacks and drinks are provided to the players.

To help solve transportation issues, a limited number of volunteer drivers assist in transportation while other players benefit from public transportation. Players that have personal drivers are welcome to stay and observe and assist in helping things run smoothly and their help is always appreciated.

This event takes place the third Tuesday of the month beginning in October and ending in May, from 7-9 p.m. at Oakland Schools Technical Campus Northeast, 1371 North Perry Street, Pontiac, Michigan 48340.

For reservations and details contact Sandy Roach via email: sandy0601@att.net or call OTBS (248) 650-5681

The VA and Blind Veterans

What services does the VA provide for blind veterans?

Blind veterans may be eligible for services at a VA Medical Center or for admission to a VA blind rehabilitation center or clinic. Services are available at all VA medical facilities through the Visual Impairment Services (VIST) Coordinator.

Aids and services for blind veterans include:

- A total health and benefits review by a VA Visual Impairment services team
- Adjustment to Blindness Training
- Home improvements and structural alterations to homes
- Specially adapted housing and adaptations
- Low vision aids and training in their use
- Electronic and mechanical aids for the blind, including adaptive computers and computer-assisted devices such as reading machines and electronic travel aids
- Talking books, tapes and Braille literature
- Supporting veterans in identifying sources for guide dogs and in completing the application process to obtain a guide dog, and to assist with expenses of training the veteran to use the dog and the cost of the dog's medical care as provided for in VHA policy and regulation

Look Again Online

This newsletter is available in several formats via otbs.rhpl.org. You can listen to an audio version, scan the text-only version using screen reading software or print off the PDF version. We can send you a Braille version of the newsletter upon your request.

OTBS Hours

Monday -Thursday..... 9 a.m.-9 p.m.

Friday & Saturday..... 9 a.m. -6 p.m.

Sunday..... 1-6 p.m.

OTBS Closings

Nov. 23-24 Thanksgiving

December 24-25 Christmas

Dec. 31- Jan. 1 New Year

1-800-774-4542 or 248-650-7150

outreach@rhpl.org

Visit us at: otbs.rhpl.org