



Window to the World

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Newsletter of the Tennessee Library for the Blind & Physically Handicapped

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Future Plans

Many of you have asked when the audio books in our collections will be converted to CD format. The National Library Service/Library of Congress (NLS) has been studying the need to change to another format for audio materials for several years, and is continuing to study this matter. At this time, NLS is hoping to make a change in format by FY 2008.

Beginning this year, NLS is producing all new audio book titles in digital format and plans to have 10,000 new titles available in digital format by 2008. In addition, NLS plans to convert 10,000 existing analog titles into digital format by 2008 and continue to produce an average of 2,000 titles per year during FY 2008 and in future years.

NLS has studied three types of digital media for use in the LBPH program: 1) CD-ROM; 2) magnetic hard drive; and 3) flash memory. At this time, NLS has concluded that a flash memory-based system is the best alternative, if the price continues to decline to where it is economically feasible. NLS does still plan to record all titles using the human voice.

NLS does anticipate that, one day, patrons will be able to download digital reading materials via the Internet, but, until Internet access is more economically available and patrons are more comfortable with this technology, libraries for the blind & physically handicapped will continue mailing a physical object to patrons, which they will load into and play in some type of playback machine.

Cassette books and players will continue to be the backbone of the system through approximately 2007, but in the five years between FY 2007 and FY 2012, digital books and players will be phased in to replace cassette books and players as the primary technology for LBPH materials.

(Material for this article was drawn from Current Strategic Business Plan for the Implementation of Digital Systems, National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, The Library of Congress, December 2003.)

Online Book Discussion

Do you just love to talk with others about books you have loved and learn from them about books they have loved (or hated)? If so, you can now do that online, if you have an internet connection, sound card and speakers. Audio Avenue, sponsored by the Illinois Talking Book Centers and the Maine State Library Outreach are announcing their spring program of online books discussions. If you have a microphone connected with your PC, you can interact via audio; otherwise, you can interact via text chat.

The discussions are led by Tom Peters of TAP Information Services and are for talking book readers and anyone interested in participation. To join the discussion, go to: <http://www.talkingcommunities.com/entrance.pl?31122688174>, input your name, no password is needed, and click on enter. A small applet will download on your computer and you will enter the room. The scheduled programs are listed below. If you have questions, please contact: tapinformation@yahoo.com or lbell927@yahoo.com

Thursday, March 18, 2004 Handling Sin, by Michael Malone (RC 24876) (Fiction)
A madcap road novel of chivalrous heroes and extraordinary events set in the 20th Century South. Recounts the two-week odyssey of Raleigh Whittier Hayes, an upstanding citizen of Thermopylae, North Carolina, and Mingo Sheffield, his humorous sidekick.

Tuesday, April 20, 2004: Theodore Rex, by Edmund Morris (RC 53306) (Biography)
This sequel to The Rise of Theodore Roosevelt (RC 14168) concentrates on Roosevelt's two terms as president following the 1901 assassination of William McKinley. Morris examines Roosevelt's major achievements, including a Nobel Peace Prize, the Panama Canal treaty, and enduring antitrust and conservation legislation.

Wednesday, May 19, 2004: The Last Report on the Miracles of Little No Horse, by Louise Erdrich (RC 53273) (Fiction)
From 1912 to 1996 Agnes De Witt has presented herself to the Ojibwe reservation in North Dakota as a benevolent priest, Father Damien, all the while concealing her female identity. She recalls her life story while debating what to reveal to an envoy from the Vatican investigating a nun's alleged miracles.

Thursday, June 17, 2004: The Seventies: The Great Shift in American Culture, Society, and Politics, by Bruce J. Schulman (RC 54009) (Non-Fiction)
Historian portrays life in the U.S. in the 1970s, and shows how the decade transformed American popular beliefs and cultural attitudes. Analyzes presidential politics, national policies, and the shift of economic power. Describes the many social changes, including racial integration, the graying of America, and the women's movement.

Hooray for Telephone Pioneers!!!

The Telephone Pioneers organization performs a very valuable service for patrons who use talking books. They repair the cassette and record players, free-of-charge!

Organized in Boston, MA, in 1960, the Pioneers are retired telephone company employees who donate their time and talents repairing the players for the talking books we all use so much. There are Pioneer repair groups in every state performing this valuable service. In FY 2002 Telephone Pioneers repaired 142,471 players, nationwide, amounting to \$5.6 million dollars saved in labor costs, nationwide. Obviously, this program would be much more costly to the taxpayers without them.

If you would like to know more about this national organization, ask your reader advisor for the book, Answering the Call: Telephone Pioneer Talking-Book Machine-Repair Program, 1960-1993, RC39220, BR9882, by Ruth A. Nieland and George Thuronyi, of the NLS staff.

In Tennessee, there are two Pioneer workshops, both operating in facilities generously donated by Bell South. One workshop, located on Ambrose Avenue in Nashville, tests and repairs players that are used by the patrons of the Tennessee Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped. The second workshop, located in Gallatin, repairs amplifier boards for Telephone Pioneer groups throughout the United States. Tennessee Telephone Pioneers repaired 2,396 players in FY 2002, saving the taxpayers of Tennessee \$95,840.

If you know a member of the Telephone Pioneers, be sure to thank them for their service!

Upcoming State Holidays

The Tennessee Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, like most state agencies, will be closed on the following days for holidays:

April: Library closed on Friday, April 9, for the Easter holiday, re-opening on Monday, April 12, 2004.

May: Library closed on Monday, May 31, for the Memorial Day holiday, re-opening Tuesday, June 1, 2004.

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**Free Matter for the Blind
and Handicapped**