



indow to the World

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Newsletter of the Tennessee Library for the Blind & Physically Handicapped

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Use the Search Engine the Pros Use

One of our patrons called us a while ago. He had just gotten a cockatiel and wanted to teach the bird to talk. Could we find any books that could help? Turns out we could. Our reader advisor called up the online catalog of the National Library Service for the Blind (NLS), searched on the keyword "birds," and in minutes had two books on the way.

The NLS search engine isn't restricted to library professionals. If you have a PC with an Internet connection, you can access it directly at nlscatalog.loc.gov or through our new website at www.tennessee.gov/TSLA/lbph.

Once you're on the NLS catalog homepage, simply scroll down the page and pick the Voyager interface or a simpler text-based option. Click on your choice and you're ready to go.

You can search for books by author, title, keyword, subject or NLS catalog number. If you search by title, for example, the search engine will return hits for all NLS versions of a book, including braille. Search by author and you'll get a listing of every NLS offering by that writer. (Author searches are great when you've found a book you

really like and want more by the same writer.)

Keyword searches are useful when you want to find books on a topic but don't know specific titles or authors. Say you want to find some healthy new recipes. Just enter keywords like "cooking" and "low-fat;" the search engine will give everything NLS offers on that topic.

Even if you don't have your own PC, you can still access the NLS search engine. Many public libraries now offer PCs with assistive technology to make the Internet accessible to the blind.

The NLS online search engine puts the entire NLS collection at your fingertips, around the clock, from any location. So take advantage of this great online offering. It's a terrific resource, and it's absolutely free.

LBPH Recommends

For summer enjoyment, LBPH reader advisor Clara Ledbetter recommends the spellbinding adventure/espionage novels of writer and underwater explorer Clive Cussler. LBPH has 24 of these suspenseful titles available on cassette, including 18 volumes in the Dirk Pitt

series. LP and braille editions are also available.

Dr. Edwin Gleaves Retires

Technically, he wasn't a member of our staff, but over the years LBPH has enjoyed no greater advocate than Dr. Edwin Gleaves, Tennessee's State Librarian and Archivist for the past 18 years. So we think it's only fair to feature him in this issue's Staff Profile.

A scholar who holds both the Ph.D. and M.L.S. degrees from Emory University, Dr. Gleaves served as Director of the Peabody/Vanderbilt Library School for 20 years before Riley Darnell, then State Senator and now Tennessee's Secretary of State, drafted him to revitalize the State Library and Archives. Dr. Gleaves fulfilled this charge admirably, building the institution into a premier center for genealogical research and the authoritative repository of our state's legislative history. Along the way, he somehow found time to serve on the National Advisory Committee for the Library of Congress Network of Libraries for the Blind and Physically Handicapped. Indeed, he once confessed that he considered the post of LBPH Reader Advisor as his idea of the perfect job, and that he regretted the fact that he never had the opportunity to serve in this role.

Perhaps he'll get the chance. Dr. Gleaves retired on June 30, turning over the leadership of TSLA to Jeanne Sugg, our Assistant State Librarian and Archivist for the past 10 years. So if he finds retired life too boring -- working as a docent at the Warner Park Nature

Center, serving on the boards of historical and conservation societies, and visiting children from Florida to Colorado to New Zealand with his wife Jeannie -- he could probably use his influence with the new State Librarian to return to the Library. "In the meantime," said LBPH Director Ruth Hemphill, "we'll remain thankful for almost two decades of his calm, low-key leadership, his unfailing courtesy and good manners, and his wholehearted support for the LBPH and our mission."

School Is Just Around the Corner

In the good old days of the imagination, summer vacation lasted forever. In reality, it's over before it really begins. Sooner than you can shake the beach sand out of your sandals, school will be back in session. And we all know what that means: book reports, term papers, and required reading lists.

Whether you're in the fourth grade or your fourth year of college, you'll find many required and recommended titles in your LBPH catalogs. But, as the shopping channels warn us, supplies are limited. If you want to get that assignment in on time, you'll need to request your talking book, braille or large print copy well in advance. So be mindful of the agonies of the up-all-nighter and the Cliff Notes cram. Don't wait until the last minute, or even the last two weeks. Check out those reading lists in advance and get your requests to us as soon as possible. It's the only way to guarantee you'll have

the books you need, in the formats you want, in plenty of time for those mid-term and end-of-term deadlines.

And Don't Forget Your Name

A couple of months ago we received a request list with 23 RC catalog numbers on it. It was printed in pencil on a piece of lined, three-hole notebook paper. It was clear and legible and hadn't been ripped up by a hungry mail sorter. But we still couldn't enter the requests. The patron who mailed it had forgotten to include his or her name, and there was no return address on the envelope.

None of our reader advisers could identify the handwriting, so we haven't been able to locate the patron in question. Our only real clue is the envelope, which was sealed with a rectangular stamp from the Cooking Club of America.

If these details sound familiar, then please contact your reader adviser as soon as possible so we can get these requests posted to your file. And even if they don't sound familiar, please take note of our dilemma. We're helpless without your name and return address, so please be sure to include both items on anything you send us. We want to do a good job of keeping your request lists up-to-date, and we need your help to do it.

Coming Attractions at LBPH

As many of you may have heard, NLS is developing a new technology for your talking books. It's called flash memory, and it promises to deliver improved

sound quality, simpler operation, and lighter, more portable players. NLS has already commissioned Battelle Science & Technology to develop the new media and players. The current objective is to have at least 20,000 talking book titles available on the new media by 2008, with new players going out as fast as they can be supplied.

Patrons will receive talking books on flash memory chips as small as a pack of chewing gum. Slip one of these chips into a player and you can listen to an entire book. No cassettes to change; no side switches to operate; no fragile tape to jam during the final pages of a thriller. The designs for new players aren't final yet, but at least one *may* be small enough to slip into a coat pocket and light enough to carry on an evening stroll.

Of course, it won't all happen overnight. NLS will continue to produce talking books on cassette, and we'll continue to provide them along with our current cassette players. The most significant near-term changes will probably come in the ways we store, control and distribute our collections. As we migrate to the new technology, an increasing percentage of our books may be stored at NLS multi-state distribution centers, and less popular volumes may only be available "on demand." (That is, we may wait until we have a request for a book before we actually produce the physical copy).

If changes like these do materialize, then we at the Tennessee LBPH will have to become much stricter about **overdue books**. We'll probably start

notifying you by mailcard or e-mail as soon as a book is overdue, and we may have to limit circulation privileges for those who keep too many books out too long.

So please bear with us as we make the transition to these new technologies and new practices. Take a few minutes to check your shelves and drawers for any titles you have overlooked or just haven't yet gotten around to mailing. Then send them back. Don't hesitate to call your reader advisor if you have any questions. If you discover that some titles are lost and missing, please let us know in writing or braille so that we can clear them off your records. We will need your patience and cooperation to realize all the benefits that our new technology promises, and we'll be grateful for your help.

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