



indow to the World

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Newsletter of the Tennessee Library for the Blind & Physically Handicapped

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Reading a Series with READS

One problem that LBPH patrons commonly encounter is getting the books in a series to come in proper sequence. From the patron's point of view, this task should be a no-brainer. But for READS, the central computer system we rely on to send you books, getting a series in proper order can create major electronic-brain strain.

READS is programmed to pick books according to very specific rules. First, it looks for books that you have specifically requested, as opposed to any selections we have made for you. Then it looks for the request with the earliest date, the book you've been waiting for the longest. If that book is available, that's the book READS sends. If there are no copies of this title on the shelf, READS immediately moves on to the next oldest request. If two books that you requested on the same date are both available, the system picks the book with the lowest catalogue number first.

When we're dealing with books in a series, these selection rules can create complications. Say you've requested all the books in Jan Karon's *Mitford* series. You've read the first volume and are ready for the second. What happens if all our copies of this second volume are

already in circulation? READS chugs merrily on and picks another book to send. You may get a later volume in the *Mitford* series or an entirely unrelated title.

These selection rules are programmed into READS. We can't change them, and getting the system provider to change them would require some very expensive reprogramming.

Given the limitations of our computer system, the only sure way to get a series in proper sequence is to wait until you have one volume in hand, and then order the next book in the series before you begin reading the volume you have.

Meanwhile, we are always pushing to get new capabilities added to READS. Someday we may have the ability to specify your priorities exactly and change them at will. Then we will be able to send you every series in proper sequence automatically. Until then, we'll need your understanding and – most importantly – your patience.

Survey 2006

Keep an eye on your mail box for a special issue of *Windows to the World*, coming to you over the next few weeks. This special issue will serve as the questionnaire for our 2006 Patron Satisfaction survey. We need to know how we're doing, and you're the only ones who can tell us. So please take a few minutes to read and complete this questionnaire, fold it over so our return address shows, and drop it back in the mail.

If you'd prefer to complete this survey by telephone, or want to know more about it, please contact your reader advisor at 1-800-342-3308. Or you can download the WTTW special issue at www.tennessee.gov/TSLA/lbph as soon as it is available and mail, e-mail or phone your responses back to us.

LBPH Recommends

For serious mystery lovers, LBPH's resident mystery connoisseur, Janie Murphree, recommends English novelist P. D. James and her poet/detective Adam Dalgliesh. In particular, Janie recommends the recent best-seller, *Death in Holy Orders* (RC 51889, LP 07979, BR13402), "for superior characterization and depth." LBPH has a dozen titles featuring this detective available in cassette, braille and large-print formats.

For those who have already enjoyed the James series, Janie recommends Colin Dexter's Inspector Morse,

famously portrayed for PBS viewers by the late British actor John Thaw.

Intriguing New Services

We probably shouldn't promote a competitor, but **Bookshare.org** looks like a service that many LBPH patrons might like. It's a cooperative, non-profit organization that allows members to download books in digital form to their computers, then read them *via* "talking software" programs (included with membership), braille printers, or refreshable braille devices.

Bookshare.org does require an annual \$50 membership fee and a one-time \$25 registration fee. But members can download an unlimited number of books or newspapers from a library of more than 25,000 titles. These include recent selections from the *New York Times* best-seller lists as well as some textbooks and professional/technical titles that LBPH doesn't offer. Membership is only available to visually- or physically-handicapped individuals, but applicants may use current membership in LBPH as proof of eligibility. Check them out at www.bookshare.org.

For readers who prefer their technology a little lower, Cobro Publishing offers **In-Sight**, a monthly news journal printed in 16-point type and tabloid format. Our sample copy presents articles on a diverse range of topics, from a business report on GM's cost-cutting plans to a history of potato pancakes. It also includes political columns from both left

and right, along with blown-up versions of four current comic strips. *In-Sight* costs \$12 per year. You can learn more at www.insightlargeprint.com or at 1-800-755-6111.

STAFF Profile

LBPH reader advisors may take your requests, but to fulfill them we rely on co-workers like **Ronald Peaks II** (“Ron”) and his colleagues in our Circulation Group, informally known as “the Seventh Floor”. As a Librarian Assistant in this Group, Ron performs such critical tasks as order fulfillment, inventory maintenance and quality control.

Every day Ron and his colleagues pull approximately 1000 cassette, braille and large-print books off our shelves, attach mail cards for every one, and deliver these volumes to the first floor for checkout and mailing. Circulation Group members also check in, inspect and reshelve roughly the same number of returned books every day.

In addition to his Group duties, Ron’s individual responsibilities include receiving all new braille, cassette books and recorded magazines shipped to us from NLS. As part of this task, he checks actual titles and quantities against invoices, enters required inventory information into our READS computer system, and follows up with Circulation Group supervisor Larry Conner and LBPH assistant director Janie Murphree to resolve any discrepancies. He also serves

informally as LBPH’s in-house computer guru and problem solver.

The son of a career USAF airman, Ron spent much of his childhood in Alaska and Florida before coming to Nashville. After graduating from Maplewood High School here, he began his career as postal clerk at Tennessee State University, then spent four years as a USPS mail clerk before joining LBPH in early 2001. (He celebrates five years with the Library this Feb. 15.)

When he’s not pulling requests or debugging LBPH Director Ruth Hemphill’s computer, Ron enjoys writing fiction and poetry, playing keyboards, and spending time with his wife Kiwana and their two children, 14 year-old Carlisha and 13 year-old Carlos. He says his greatest ambition is to star in a film autobiography of himself directed by one of his favorite directors: Steven Spielberg, Quentin Tarantino or Ron Howard. A pretty lofty goal, perhaps, but – hey – you gotta have a dream.

Coming Attractions

Beyond Sight: African Art Touch Gallery
January 27–April 30, 2006
Frist Center Education Gallery,
Nashville

Visitors with visual impairments will have the opportunity to discover how the sense of touch can enrich their appreciation of art through *Beyond Sight: African Art Touch Gallery*, on display in the Frist Center’s Education Gallery from January 27 through April 30, 2006.

In order to protect artworks from damage, visitors are not normally permitted to touch paintings and sculptures in museums. This exhibition will provide eleven African art objects that visitors are encouraged to touch so that they can experience through touch the expressions and materials of the works as well as their forms, scales, and textures. So please do touch the objects in this exhibition!

For visitors who are blind or have low vision, each object is accompanied by information in braille and large type. In addition, visual description tours are available for both *African Steps*, *African Voices: Long Steps Never Broke Back* and *Beyond Sight: African Art Touch Gallery*. Please call (615) 744-3247 at least three weeks in advance to schedule a tour.

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Administration and Staff

The Honorable Riley C. Darnell, Secretary of State; Jeanne Sugg, State Librarian & Archivist; Ruth Hemphill, Director; Janie Murphree, Assistant Director; Carmelita Esaw, Computer

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