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Ed Byrne, Editor

Newsletter of the Tennessee Library for the Blind & Physically Handicapped

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Our Summer Report Card

We've finally had a chance to tabulate the responses to our last patron survey, and the results were something of surprise. A pleasant surprise, actually.

According to the 166 patrons who replied to our questionnaire, we're doing better than we suspected. Slightly more than two-thirds of our respondents gave our LBPH services an overall rating of "Excellent," and 29% more rated us "Very Good." Only 3% gave us an overall rating of "Fair," and not a single soul checked the dreaded "Poor" space.

We're very grateful to everyone who responded, and happy that so many of you rate us so highly. But there are obviously some places where we need to improve. For instance, more than 90% of respondents said that they "always" or "almost always" receive the help or information they need when they contact the Library. But that means nearly 10% of you don't. And that includes 1.2% who said they "almost never" get the help they are looking for.

Here's another instance. Almost two-thirds of our respondents have their reader advisors select books for them at least part of the time. Nearly 7% of these patrons report that they are seldom or never satisfied with the selections we send.

Let us give you one other example. Roughly one in six of our respondents reported that they sometimes receive unwanted materials,

the most common problem identified on the survey. But the survey responses don't indicate what these unwanted materials are.

To correct these problems, we obviously need direct input from you as individuals. If you feel that you are not getting the information you need when you contact us, or that our book selections are seldom what you want, or that you are receiving materials you don't want or need, please let us know. Contact your reader advisor by phone at 1-800-342-3308 (the preferred method for 71% of our respondents), mail (as 7% of you prefer) or e-mail (also 7%), and tell us exactly what the problem is.

Remember there are things we can't do, like make John Grisham write more books or keep Harry Potter out of trouble. But we'll be very happy to try and change the things we can.

And please do let others in your family, church or community know about us. More than a quarter (27%) of our survey respondents say they first learned about LBPH through word-of-mouth from a friend or relative. That's second only to the 30% who learn about us through social agencies or rehabilitation programs. Obviously, our patrons are among our most important marketing agents. That's another reason we need to keep you satisfied.

Address correction requested

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Free Matter for the Blind
and Handicapped

LBPH RECOMMENDS: Local Angles

By LBPH Assistant Director Donna Cirenza

In our rush to get the latest Danielle Steel and Harry Potter titles, we often overlook some very good fiction set in our own backyards. I'd like to recommend a few titles to correct that oversight. LBPH holds a number of good novels with intriguing Tennessee settings, and we have access to some other Tennessee classics – by authors like Madison Jones and Alfred Leland Crabb – through interlibrary loans.

Among our recent acquisitions, two of my personal favorites are *Widow of the South*, by Robert Hicks (RC 60662), which traces the decades-long aftermath of the bloody Battle of Franklin, and *At Risk* (RC 62949), a new Patricia Cornwell thriller set in Knoxville, which is rapidly becoming the world center for forensic science.

Of course, I don't want West Tennessee readers to feel left out. They can choose between the Nora Roberts "In the Garden" trilogy -- *Blue Dahlia*-(RC 59460, LP 09009); *Black Rose* (RC 60606); and *Red Lilly* (RC 61562, LP 09723) -- or Pulitzer-Prize winner Peter Taylor's *Summons to Memphis* (RC 25807, LP 02447), all set in the Cotton City.

Music has played a major role in Tennessee life from pioneer times down to the present, and readers may enjoy several stories which feature music as a major element. Lee Smith's *The Devil's Dream* (RC 35770) traces the interplay of music, religion and honky-tonking across a half-dozen generations of one Tennessee family. LaVyrle Spencer's

Small Town Girl (RC 43784) tells of a rising country star who must put her Nashville recording sessions on hold while she nurses her mother through hip surgery, back in her small home town. And Music Row turns a bit sinister in Karen Kijewski's *Honky Tonk Kat* (RC 48543), as female Private Investigator Kat Colorado strives to protect an established country music star from threats that may be coming from the star's own family.

The *Sixkiller Chronicles* (RC 23733) also revolves around the family of a Grand Ole Opry star, but author Paul Hemphill moves the focus back to country music's family-centered Appalachian roots. Historical roots are also the matter of historical novels like *Journey to Nashville* and *Dinner at Belmont* (recorded by the Illinois and Kentucky LBPHs, respectively), Alfred Leland Crabb's classic celebrations of Tennessee's early movers and shakers, and *Forests of the Night*, a darker and grittier rendering of life on Tennessee's forest frontier by Madison Jones (recorded by the Alabama LBPH).

Of course, we would be letting our own side down if we didn't put in a word for *Hearts of Hickory* (RC 44089), a fictional account of Andrew Jackson's early military successes by the late John Trotwood Moore, longtime head of our parent institution, the Tennessee State Library and Archives.

For these and other Tennessee titles, including histories and memoirs as well as fiction, don't hesitate to call us. Tennessee's literary traditions are as deep and diverse as our musical heritage. You'll be missing a lot if you don't sample them.

Staff Profile

This month we're doing a different kind of staff profile. It's about one of our mechanical stalwarts, the C1 cassette player.

The C1 has been the mainstay of our talking books program for most of the past three decades. The first Big Blonde Monster rolled off the production line back in 1981. Twenty-six years and more than one million units later, the C1 is gearing down for retirement.

This past February 17, player C1-1248113 rolled off the line. With apologies to Louis L'Amour, it was the last of the breed, the final four-track cassette player to be produced for the National Library Service. From now on the NLS is focusing all its resources on development and production of the new Digital Talking Book (DTB) player.

We've already enjoyed a demonstration of a DTB prototype that visited us briefly this spring, and it's definitely, how shall I put it, *Way Cool*. The problem is that the first production DTB players won't be available until sometime next spring. And it will take at least four years to make a complete transition to the new units. (It may take even longer if Congress continues to skimp on NLS funding.)

If you're reading between the lines here, you will have already guessed that we are facing a lean winter. We won't have a significant number of the digital players for another year. So we'll need to depend on our current inventory of players to bridge the gap.

Obviously, C1 is going to have to postpone its retirement plans for a while. And while it's still looking forward to taking it easy, gardening, and spending more time with the grandkids,

it's willing to keep working as long as it knows it's needed and loved.

The moral of this story should be clear: please do be nice to your current C1 player. When you do need a new player, please return your old player promptly so we can refurbish and repair it for use with other patrons. And please also be patient with us during this extended transition. Our player fleet is definitely showing its age, but then so are the rest of us.

Hot Flashes

The Tennessee Council of the Blind will hold its annual state convention August 24 through August 26 at Comfort Suites, 2521 Elm Hill Pike, Nashville. LBPH patron and TCB President Brenda Dillon promises an exciting, action-packed week-end. To find out more about all the action, contact Brenda at 615-874-1223 or brendan0@bellsouth.net.

Nashville's Frist Center for the Arts is planning an exhibition of works by adult artists with disabilities. It opens next May 16, 2008 in the Frist's Conte Community Arts Gallery, and will run through September 14. The deadline for proposals is October 1, 2007. For details, please contact Susie Elder at 615-744-3351 or selder@fristcenter.org. You can also download the submission guide and entry form at www.fristcenter.org/site/community/aawd.aspx.

NFB-Newsline, the telephone-based audio news service from National Federation of the Blind, now offers local television listings. For more information on Newsline, contact NFB at 1-866-504-7300 or ask your LBPH reader advisor.

Summer Readers: Send your reading logs to Julie Duke ASAP!!