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Window to the World

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Ed Byrne, Editor

Newsletter of the Tennessee Library for the Blind & Physically Handicapped

403 Seventh Avenue North, Nashville TN 37243-0313

Phone: (615) 741-3915 or (800) 342-3308 Fax: (615) 532-8856

E-mail: tlbph.tsla@state.tn.us

Joyless in Mudville

We'd like to present this item as a Good News/Bad News story, but the good news angle seems a little thin. Due to budget wrangles in Washington and subsequent reductions in National Library Service funding, the new NLS Digital Talking Book players didn't go into production this winter as planned. As a result, we can't start sending them out this spring as we had promised. We apologize.

The latest word we have is that the new digital players will go into production later this year, and we should begin receiving a limited number of new players in early 2009. The only good side to this announcement is for patrons who want to stick with cassette books. Because of the delay, we and the NLS will continue to support cassette books for at least two years longer than we originally planned.

Since the delay of the new players puts even more pressure on our aging fleet of cassette players, please be careful with the ones you currently hold. Be sure to send back malfunctioning players as quickly as possible, preferably with the colored form telling us what's wrong. And please do check around to see if you still have any extra players you need to return. We need to get unused players back, in order to get them repaired and back into service quickly.

A Material Guy

The Tennessee LBPH sends out an average of 1100 DVs, large print, braille, and cassette books a day. Each day, on average, we get 1100 back. That's 1100 items that have to be scanned in, opened and checked, often rearranged or repaired, frequently rewound, and always re-shelved.

It's a big job, and doing it is the work of LBPH Material Handlers like Dwight Davis, the subject of this month's Staff Profile. In addition to these duties, which he shares with our four other Material Handlers, Dwight also acts as our Magazine Czar, duplicating and distributing the *Readers Digest* and *Guideposts* issues that come from American Printing House for the Blind.

A Nashville native who attended North High School here, Dwight joined LBPH five years ago. Prior to joining us, he worked seven years as a long-haul driver for Red Ball Express and then for 16 years as a driver for Overton Distributors.

Dwight is married to Frances Davis, who also works for TSLA in our Library Technical Services department. He has one daughter and three grandchildren. He describes himself as a "simple, easy-going man" who enjoys listening to fantasy novels like the *Hunter's Blades* series by R. A. Salvatore.

Address correction requested

Tennessee Library for the Blind
and Physically Handicapped
403 Seventh Avenue North
Nashville TN 37243-0313

Free Matter for the Blind
and Handicapped

Dwight currently plans to continue working for LBPH until age 62, and then retire. He says that he plans to devote his retirement to fishing every day and playing a few hands of Spades with his friends on the weekends. To be honest, it sounds like a pretty good plan to this editor.

Nashville History Buffs

If you've ever wondered about the provisions of Nashville's first Vermin Law, circa 1797, or what Granny White did to get a Pike named after her, you need to check out the new website for the *Nashville Historical Newsletter* at nashvillehistoricalnewsletter.googlepages.com/home. It's a good one.

Kathy Lauder, our colleague in the Archival Technical Services Section of TSLA, is one of the editors of the website, which is well designed and easy to read. For those of you who want to view it in larger type, remember that Microsoft Windows offers a screen magnifier. Just go to the "Programs" menu and click the folder labeled "Accessories." Choose the "Accessibility" folder and then click on "Magnifier." This utility can enlarge characters and images on the screen up to nine times.

Tech-notices

Those of you who would prefer listening to your computer rather than straining to view a monitor can check out a number of options for screen readers, programs that literally read the information on a computer monitor aloud. Screen readers allow the blind to navigate the visually-oriented Windows interface. The two most popular are Window-Eyes from GW Micro (on the Internet at Gwmicro.com) and JAWS from Freedom Scientific at freedomscientific.com).

Both of the programs cost hundreds of dollars. For the adventurous, however, LBPH assistant director Donna Cirenza has uncovered another option. It's called NVDA, and it is a free, open-source screen reader for Windows-based computers that one can download at nvda-project.org. Installing open-source software generally isn't a game for computer novices, but the low cost factor may tempt the more expert.

You can get a demonstration of a screen reader in action at any of Tennessee's five Technology Access Centers. Visit ataccess.org/community/centers.lasso for locations and contact information.

LBPH Recommends:

Romances are Being Revamped, By Reader Advisor Sarah Kanervo

Everyone is familiar with the boy-next-door heartthrob but what about the vampire-next-door? Paranormal romance is one of the most popular and fastest growing subgenres in romance today. Most people probably think of Dracula and evil, bloodsucking, murderous creatures when they think of vampires. But in today's romances they are the strong, handsome, sensual—and bloodsucking—heroes that make the heroine go weak in the knees.

Author Charlaine Harris writes the *Southern Vampire* series, which follows Sookie Stackhouse, a small town waitress who can read minds. Mind-reading is sort of a problem for her because it makes her an outcast. People are wary of her "disability." Then one day vampire Bill Compton walks into her bar and Sookie's life turns upside down.

Vampires have been "out of the coffin" for two years and most are living off of a synthetic blood formula, True Blood. Since Sookie cannot read vampires' minds, she likes being in their company and ends up falling for Bill. She also gets pulled into their sometimes creepy crowd of acquaintances and their complicated political environment. Sookie finds herself in several very sticky and sometimes frightening situations. It's always her vampire friends that she can count on, and too often it's the humans who are to blame for the dangers and destruction.

The series starts with *Dead Until Dark* [Ms-BPH (RCX00849)], *Living Dead in Dallas* [Ms-BPH (RCX00871)], and *Dead To The World* [Ms-BPH (RCX00986)}, available through interlibrary loans. It continues with *Dead As A Doornail* (RC 64117), *Definitely Dead* (RC 63483), and *All Together Dead* (RC 64954).

People of all ages will be able to enjoy and laugh at the situations in which 25-year-old Sookie finds herself, especially as she tries to deflect advances from Sheriff Eric Northman, an 1100-year old Viking vampire. Ask for the *Southern Vampire* series to get a taste of this new wave of fun, adventurous—and mostly harmless—paranormal romances.

TSB Student Garners International Award

Tennessee School for the Blind (TSB) has announced that TSB student and LBPH patron Brittney Luna recently earned a *Yes I Can* award from the Council for Exceptional Children. The Council recognizes just 27 students worldwide each year in nine categories: Arts, Academics, Community Service, Employment, Athletics, Extracurricular Activities, Independent Living Skills, Technology, and Self-Advocacy.

Ms. Luna has been recognized in the Arts category for her achievements in music.

Ms. Luna, a member of the celebrated TSB Chorale, is completely blind and must memorize every note she sings. Ms. Georgette Seay, her voice instructor, and Ms. Judy Denning, TSB's choral director, have been instrumental in helping Ms. Luna develop her talents.

Ms. Luna and her parents will travel to Boston in April to officially receive the award. Congratulations, Brittney!

Presidential Proclamations

For those who want to read what the leading presidential candidates have to say for themselves, LBPH can provide the following titles.

By Senator Hillary Clinton, we have *Living History* in both English (BR 14703, LP 07961, RC 55882) and Spanish (RC 60983) editions. We also have *It Takes a Village* in large print (LP 05690) and can obtain a cassette version on interlibrary loan.

By Senator Barack Obama, we have *Dreams from My Father* (RC 43877) and *The Audacity of Hope* in both English (BR 16808, RC 63126) and Spanish (RC 62990).

By Senator John McCain, we have *Faith of My Fathers* (RC 48807), *Worth the Fighting For* (LP 09369, RC 56852), *Why Courage Matters* (LP 08176, RC 58324), *Character is Destiny* (RC 60907) and *Hard Call* (RC 65557).

Holiday Closures

LBPH will be closed on these dates:

Good Friday – March 21

Memorial Day – May 26