

W indow to the World

Spring, 2012 Vol. 15, No. 1

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@tn.gov

WHAT YOU TOLD US

The Tennessee State Library and Archives (TSLA), our parent institution, recently conducted a telephone survey of Tennessee Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (TLBPH) patrons. To make sure that the TLBPH staff did not influence your responses, the survey was conducted by the staff of the Blue Grass Regional Library in Columbia, Tennessee. None of us at TLBPH know who was interviewed or the specific answers respondents gave.

Our colleagues surveyed a total of 256 patrons selected at random. In general, you gave us high marks. When the survey asked you to rate our services overall, almost 72% of you rated them as "Excellent." An additional 26% rated our service as "Very Good." Only 2.4 % of you rated us as "Fair," and nobody rated us as downright "Poor."

We're grateful that most of you have good opinions of us, and we want to work even harder to earn them. The survey gave us a listing of the most common problems that you face, and told us how often you face them.

Common Problems

Some of the problems you reported, such as difficulty in having mail picked up by your local mail carrier (about 14% of you), are beyond our control. All we can suggest here is that you contact your local postmaster and request his or her help in getting materials picked up. (Your editor also suggests -- and we are not being entirely facetious -- that you occasionally

leave a couple of home-made cookies in your mailbox.)

The most common problem you reported is that you receive unwanted materials (nearly 36% reported experiencing this problem within the past year). Another problem (reported by about 32% of you) was that some materials arrived damaged or with tapes/cartridges missing. And, as we feared, almost 30% of you told us that you had experienced problems with our ancient cassette players.

What We Are Doing About the Problems You Reported

We're going to take a number of steps to reduce these problems. Starting this month, for example, we are going to be inventorying our collection on a monthly basis. More frequent inventories will allow us to identify missing books, books that have not been checked in correctly, and books that have been misplaced on our shelves or fallen – quite literally – between the cracks.

It's a big job, as we have more than 90,000 titles in our collection, and it will take us some time to complete it. **So, on the first Wednesday of each month, from 9 AM until 3 PM**, all of us -- including your editor and your reader advisors -- will be hard at work in the book stacks on the seventh floor of the TSLA Building. Consequently, ***we won't be available to take your calls directly during these hours.***

We'll still have someone answering the phones and taking messages, but all the rest of us will be in our scruffiest clothes, crawling through the stacks and inhaling a lot of dust. So it may take us until the next day to clear our throats and call you back. Unless you have an emergency situation, like a failed player, we suggest that you get your calls in before the first Wednesday of the month or wait until the next day to contact us.

What You Can Do to Help...

We know the ability to call us directly is important to you, as 86% of our survey respondents indicate that the telephone is the primary way you contact us. And that brings up another suggestion.

We're ready and willing to take your call any time between 8:00 AM and 4:30 PM Monday through Friday. Now many of you choose to call us between 11:30 and 1:30, when our four reader advisors are rotating

through their lunch hours and our ranks are thinnest. During these hours it's more likely that you'll have to be on hold or wait for a call back.

Here's a tip: when you can, call us between 8:30 and 11 in the mornings or 1:30 to 3:30 in the afternoons. And call during the middle of the week rather than on Mondays or Fridays. You will have a better chance of reaching your reader advisors directly and getting our undivided and unhurried attention.

(By the way, consumer agencies say that this tip is a good one for contacting any organization, public or private, whatever your needs.)

Talking directly with your advisor is a good way to cut down on the unwanted materials that many of you reported. With four reader advisors to serve almost 7,000 patrons, we're often relying on guesswork and the whims of our computer to select books for you. The more information you give us about the books you do want, the better our choices will be.

The very best way to eliminate unwanted materials, of course, is to spend some quality time with each new issue of *Talking Book Topics* or *Braille Book Review*. If you pick out lots and lots of titles you do want, and send us your specific requests, then you'll help us outsmart our computer. It will be so busy sending the books you do want that it won't have time to send books you don't want.

New Reader Advisor

Speaking of reader advisors, we want to introduce you to our newest reader advisor, Laura Sheets, who joins us as reader advisor for our patrons in the A-D group of the alphabet.

Like many Tennesseans, Laura grew up on a farm. The only difference is that her family farm was in Delaware, Ohio, where her father and grandfather raised corn, wheat and soy beans a few miles north of Columbus.

Laura attended Delaware Christian School through high school, and then majored in Music Business at Anderson College in Anderson, Indiana. She played flute in her high school and college orchestras, and sang in their choruses.

With her first bachelor's degree in hand, Laura came to a Nashville to do a music business internship at Essential Records. Her internship over, Laura went to work at Nashville's Tower Records and then at Barnes and Noble, the big bookseller, where she served as lead bookseller in the children's, magazines, and non-fiction departments for the next nine years.

Not one to waste her spare time, Laura went back to MTSU to pick up a B.A. in English Literature and Women's Studies. After graduation, she enrolled in the online program of the prestigious University of Illinois Library School, and expects to receive her Master of Library Studies degree this May.

Laura primarily reads serious fiction by writers like Ian McEwan and Jeffrey Eugenides, but admits to a secret fondness for Diana Gabaldon's historical romances. She also knits, sees lots of movies, and likes music.

We think Laura's substantial experience in the book trade and her wide range of interests will enable her to serve our patrons exceptionally well.

LEAPing to Bookshare

If you are looking for another source for books, here's one you may want to check out. Many public libraries in Tennessee participate in the R.E.A.D.S. consortium, which offers access to the Overdrive Book Download service. Now this service has teamed up with Bookshare.org to offer a new program called LEAP, the Library Ebook Accessibility Program. Print-disabled people who are patrons of libraries that use the Overdrive service can register for a year's free membership in Bookshare. They will be allowed to download up to twenty books a month from Bookshare's large collection of accessible books. For more information, you can access a brochure on LEAP at <http://overdrive.com/Files/LEAP.pdf>. Better still, check this program out with the librarians at your local public library branch. They are ready, willing and eager to help.

NLS Appoints Blind Director

Karen Keninger has become the first director of the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped who is herself blind. Ms. Keninger, whose appointment as NLS director took effect on March 26, 2012, had previously served as director of the Iowa Department for the Blind and, before that, as director of Iowa's Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped. She is a graduate of both Drake University and of

Iowa State University. Ms. Keninger replaces Frank Kurt Cylke, who retired last year.

Library Closures

May 28

Memorial Day

This publication was supported in whole or in part by the Institute of Museum and Library Services under the provisions of the Library Services and Technology Act as administered by the State of Tennessee.

Window to the World is published quarterly by the Tennessee Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, Tennessee State Library and Archives, Department of State. It is available in audio, braille, and on the web at www.tn.gov/TSLA/lbph. Please call the Library at (800) 342-3308 to request alternate formats.

Administration and Staff

The Honorable Tre Hargett, Secretary of State; Chuck Sherrill, State Librarian & Archivist; Ruth Hemphill, Director; Ed Byrne Assistant Director; Carmelita Esaw, Computer Specialist; Deborah Puckett, Administrative Assistant; Terry Corn, Library Assistant.

Circulation and Repair Staff: Larry Conner, Materials Manager; Jerry Clinard, Dwight Davis, Ron Gross, Bill Kirby.

Reader Advisors: Laura Sheets, Annette Hadley, Amy Tangerstrom, and Chris Jaco.

In providing information to readers, the announcement of products and services should not be considered an endorsement or recommendation by the Library.

Department of State, Authorization No. 305224, 6700 copies, April 2012. This public document was promulgated at a cost of \$.11 per copy.

Narrated by Brooks Crowell at the Tennessee State Library & Archives, April, 2012.