



# indow to the World

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Ed Byrne, Editor

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Newsletter of the Tennessee Library for the Blind & Physically Handicapped

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403 Seventh Avenue North, Nashville TN 37243

**Phone:** (615) 741-3915 or (800) 342-3308

**Fax:** (615) 532-8856 **E-mail:** [tlbph.tsla@tn.gov](mailto:tlbph.tsla@tn.gov)

## The Great Magazine Conversion

You've asked for this many times. Now it's happening as you read these very lines. Our parent organization, the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS), is converting audio magazines to digital book cartridges.

When this transition is completed, hopefully by this summer, all of your audio magazine issues will arrive as digital book cartridges. The audio cassette versions will stop.

Here's how the digital magazine conversion will affect you:

- You will have to have a digital book player to listen to your audio magazines.
  - **If you don't have a digital talking book player, please contact your reader advisor to request one ASAP.**
- If you receive more than one audio magazine, your magazine cartridge will contain the current issues for all of your audio magazines. Each cartridge will start with instructions telling you how to navigate among the issues included.
- Magazine cartridges will be a light blue color and come in dark red containers with distinctive logos. Each cartridge will have a reversible, postage-free return mail card in a slot of the back of the mail case, just like a DB book.
- **You must return your magazine cartridges just as you return digital book cartridges. If you don't return your cartridges, you won't get any more magazines.**

## The Great Magazine Conversion (continued)

- o Cartridges cost the NLS about \$8 each, so we can't afford to send you a new one for every magazine issue, or even every month.
- The audio edition of *Talking Book Topics* (TBT) will come on a cartridge with your other magazines. Order forms for TBT will be mailed to you in a separate envelope.
  - o You must return the cartridge with the audio edition of TBT, even if there are no other magazine issues on the cartridge.
- There is currently no defined check-out period for magazine cartridges. You can keep your magazine cartridges as long as you like. You just won't get any new issues until you return them.

Remember that current issues of all audio magazines are posted to our BARD download service as soon as they become available. You'll get your magazines faster if you download them. And you don't have to return downloaded issues.

## Another Great Idea

Your editor is famous for thinking up great ideas for other people to work out. We're happy to let you do all the work and have all the fun, as long as we get all the credit.

So here's our latest. Many of you don't have the computers, computer skills, or high-speed Internet connections required to download books. In the past, we have suggested that you put your relatives – especially the grandkids – to work downloading books for you. For those who don't have family nearby, we have another suggestion.

Why not promote a volunteer downloading service in your community? It could be done through the youth ministry of your church, a local school, a service group, your book club, or another community organization.

NLS and the Tennessee Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (TLBPH) do not object to your having a trusted friend, relative or caregiver download books for you. All we ask is that these helpers observe the BARD Pledge and do not make downloaded books available to anyone who isn't a certified patron of our library network.

So why not check with your pastor, local Lion's Club chapter, or other community volunteer groups? You'll be surprised how many people are willing to volunteer help, espe-

## **Another Great Idea (continued)**

cially when it's an activity they can do in their own homes or parish halls, at no cost to themselves. You can provide the blank NLS cartridges or USB drives, and the volunteers can copy downloaded books onto them for you to read at your leisure.

Your editor will be happy to talk with representatives of these groups and explain how the BARD download service works.

Just a thought you're free to consider. (As long as your editor gets all the credit.)

## **Other Sources for Scripture**

Over the past several years we've given Aurora Ministries a number of plugs because many patrons have reported that this organization is reputable and reliable. There are, however, a number of other organizations that make the Bible and other sacred writings available in audio, braille and large-print formats.

For a listing of these sources, contact your reader advisor and ask for a copy of the NLS Reference Circular, "Bibles and Other Sacred Writings in Special Media." Or you may visit this document online at <http://www.loc.gov/nls/reference/circulars/bibles.html>.

## **Correction**

In last issue's "Getting a Copy to Keep" article, we listed an erroneous phone number for Aurora Ministries. The correct number is (941) 748-3031. (We had the exchange listed as "738.")

We apologize to our readers and to Aurora Ministries.

## **Living with Your Digital Player**

### *Dialing Down the Backchat*

As almost all of you are aware, our digital players talk back to you. Every time you touch a control button or arrow, the player announces the name of the control you've just pressed.

This feature is a great help when you are learning how to use the player. But some readers find that over time it gets to be a bit of a bore. You know you've hit the **Volume Up** arrow, and you don't want to waste an extra second every time you tap it.

## Living with Your Digital Player (continued)

There is a very simple way to change this routine. Turn the player on and make sure you do not have a book cartridge or USB drive plugged in. Press the **Fast Forward** and **Speed Down** arrows simultaneously, and hold them down until the player says “Reduced Verbosity.”

The Reduced Verbosity command turns off all but the essential announcements. The player will still tell you which book you are playing, how far you are in that book, and how much time you have left on the battery. But it won't repeat every control name every time you touch one.

If you find you miss the chattier version, it's easy to switch back. With the player turned on, remove your cartridge or thumb drive, and hold the **Fast Forward** and **Speed Up** arrows keys down until you hear the player say, “Normal Verbosity.” Your player returns to its original, loquacious but well-intended self. Kind of like your editor.

Do be aware that advanced players, those with serial numbers beginning with “DA1,” are set to “reduced verbosity” when they arrive. If you want the enhanced audio feedback on your DA1 Player, just press the **Fast Forward** and **Speed Up** arrows down simultaneously. You'll hear the “Normal Verbosity” message.

### *Dialing Up Battery Life*

Some of our digital players have been having battery “issues,” to use a currently fashionable term. Ideally, the batteries on these players should charge up enough to give you 29 hours of playing time on a standard digital cartridge.

As the battery ages, a player may offer considerable less playing time after a recharge. In some cases, it may not recharge at all. If you experience either of these problems, here are some options to consider.

-Try a “Hard Reset”

Plug the player into a working outlet. Remove the cartridge or USB drive you have been using.

Press the red On/Off button and hold it down for seven seconds. The player will beep once and say “Player On.”

Turn the player off and leave it connected to a live power outlet for at least three hours before you turn it back on.

## Living with Your Digital Player (continued)

Press the On/Off button twice to see if the player has recharged successfully.

-Try the “Create New Profile” Command (The “Three Up Arrows” Trick)

*Warning: This command will erase the current position markers on the books you are reading, along with any book marks you have created.*

Plug the player into a working outlet. Turn the player off and remove the cartridge or USB drive.

Press the Volume Up, Speed Up and Tone Up arrows simultaneously and hold them down.

Press the ON/OFF button. The player will announce “Creating New Profile.”

Turn the player off and leave it connected to a power outlet for at least three hours before you turn it back on.

Press the On/Off button twice to see if the player has recharged successfully.

If neither trick works, then contact your reader advisor to request a replacement player.

### *Preventing Battery Failure*

- When you are listening to your player on battery power, **never let it run all the way down!** If the battery runs down below a certain minimal charge, it will not recharge.

When the battery gets down to less than one hour of playing time, the player should announce “Battery Low” and turn itself off. When you hear this announcement, plug the player into a working power outlet and allow it to recharge for at least three hours before you turn it back on.

Sometimes the Hard Reset or Create New Profile tricks will fool a player with a depleted battery into recharging properly. But not always.

- If you plan to read a book while you are going to sleep, use the Sleep control.

Hitting the crescent moon Sleep control will allow the player to play for 15 minutes be-

## Living with Your Digital Player (continued)

fore it turns itself off. You can hit the Sleep button up to four times in a row, which will give you a maximum time of one hour before the player turns itself off.

If you don't use the Sleep button, you may fall asleep and have the player run all night. You could well miss the "Battery Low" announcement and end up with an un-rechargeable battery.

- Keep your firmware updated.

"Firmware" is computer code in your player that, among other things, controls the battery charging process. Newer versions of firmware correct the bugs in older versions.

To find out what version you have, press the Sleep button ten times in a row, all within one minute. The player will announce the serial number of your player and then the version number of the currently installed firmware: "Version 2.1. ..." The latest version of firmware now available is Version 2.1.7.

If your version number is 2.1.6 or lower, you can update your firmware by going to the following web page: <http://www.loc.gov/nls/DTBM/> . The site will tell you how to download and install the latest version.

It's probably a good idea to check this site every three or four months to see if a new version has been released.

If you don't have Internet access, you can still keep your firmware up-to-date. NLS is including firmware updates on many new book cartridges. These cartridges will automatically check your player's firmware and, if necessary, update your player.

If you have questions or concerns about your player's firmware, please contact your reader advisor.

*Remember that commercial USB drives use considerable more electrical power than NLS digital talking book cartridges.*

If you are using a commercial USB drive for your downloaded BARD books, you will reduce the battery's playing time by as much as ten hours. The player may tell you it has "more than 29 hours" of battery charge remaining, but may only give you about 18 or 19 hours of actual reading time.

## **Free Computer Screen Readers**

We've recently learned about two open-source computer screen readers that patrons can download for use with Windows computers. As many of you probably know, "screen readers" are programs that translate the words on a computer display screen into speech, so that blind and visually handicapped people can operate their computers by ear. "Open Source" usually means that these products are free to the user.

The two products are Non-Visual Desktop Access (NVDA), a program produced by NV Access Limited of Australia, and Thunder, a program produced by Screenreader.net, a subsidiary of Great Britain's Communication for Blind and Disabled People.

You can find out more about these two products and the organizations that produced them by visiting the organizations' websites at <http://www.nvaccess.org/> and <http://www.screenreader.net/>.

Both these programs have been available for about two years now. At the request of the Royal National Institute of Blind People, *AccessWorld*, the online magazine of the American Foundation for the Blind (AFB), compared the two products back in August, 2011. You can read the group's report at <http://www.afb.org/afbpress/pub.asp?DocID=aw120803>.

The price of commercial screen reading programs like Window-Eyes and JAWS has discouraged many visually-impaired patrons from learning to use personal computers. These patrons are effectively cut off from online library services like the NLS online catalogue, the BARD download program, and the R.E.A.D.S. download service available through many Tennessee public libraries.

If you decide to give one of these open source screen readers a try, we'll be eager to hear about your experience. Give us a call and let us know. You'd be helping us and your fellow patrons in the bargain.

## **Scholarship Opportunity**

To recognize achievement by blind scholars, the National Federation of the Blind (NFB) annually offers blind college students in the United States and Puerto Rico the opportunity to win one of thirty national scholarships worth \$3,000 to \$12,000.

The deadline for applications is March 31, 2013. For more information, please visit <https://nfb.org/scholarships>.

**The Library Will Be Closed on Good Friday, March 29.**

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**Tennessee Library for the Blind  
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403 Seventh Avenue North  
Nashville, TN 37243-0313**

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