



Window to the World

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Newsletter of the Tennessee Library for the Blind & Physically Handicapped

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Hostage Standoff Continues...

(A "Window to the World" dramatization. But just barely.)

As a tense hostage drama entered another month, more than two hundred and fifty patrons of the Tennessee Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (TLBPH) remain barricaded in their homes, refusing to return overdue NLS magazine cartridges.

Authorities in Washington are taking a hard line, vowing that they won't send another magazine cartridge to patrons who currently hold two or more overdue magazine cartridges. "They may have some old cartridges," snapped a steely-voiced senior librarian for the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS). "But we've got all the new ones. We're just going to starve these hostage-takers out."

TLBPH director and chief hostage negotiator Ruth Hemphill is following a more conciliatory line, making hundreds of direct calls to the holdouts. "We just don't have enough cartridges to send out new magazine issues before we get the old cartridges back," Hemphill reports telling the kidnappers. "We're offering the hostage takers absolute immunity. Just send back their overdue cartridges, and no one has to get hurt."

Audio magazine subscribers who want to take advantage of Hemphill's amnesty offer can contact Hemphill or their reader advisors directly to arrange for a "no questions asked" cartridge swap.

This article is tongue-in-cheek, of course. We hope a little humor may help resolve the serious problem of unreturned magazine cartridges.

Unrated Talking Books

In an effort to bring you more books, more quickly, NLS recently negotiated distribution agreement with Hachette, a major distributor of commercial audio books. These titles are already starting to appear in our collection, and you will find a number of them listed in recent issues of *Talking Book Topics*.

Because NLS has not produced these audio editions, and because these new titles are being added in such large numbers, the service is currently unable to provide the content alerts that indicate these books may have explicit descriptions of sex, strong language, or excessive violence. So the entries in our catalog materials identify these titles as: "Unrated. Commercial Audiobook."

The absence of content alerts might not be so critical to readers of regular print books, who can rely on book jacket illustrations and back cover squibs to judge content. After all, lurid images of scantily-clad women and/or zombie attacks are intended to alert readers that they will find sex and violence lurking between a book's covers.

Blind and visually impaired library patrons can't rely on those early warning signs. Our audio books don't come with lurid cover art, nor do they include tell-tale cover excerpts – such as "sizzling hot romance" or "gritty streetwise realism" -- to tip readers off to unwelcome content.

We're hoping that NLS can find the resources required to rate these commercial titles in the same way that it rates its own productions. In the meantime, we want to encourage our patrons to use caution and common sense in their book selections.

If the annotation at the start of a book suggests that the book may have explicit sex or excessive violence, then it probably does. Descriptions like "irresistible passion" or "battle to the death" are probably giveaways. Listen further at your own risk!

If you decide that you don't want to risk getting objectionable content, please let your reader advisor know that you don't want us to select any "unrated" books for you. Our circulation system now enables us to exclude these titles from your request list.

If we do slip up and send you an "unrated" audio title with objectionable content, please don't judge us too harshly. Just send the book back to us unread, and let us know that this particular title includes strong language, explicit sex, or excessive violence. We'll use your comments to update our bibliographic information as soon as we can.

Titles by Local Authors Now Available

Thanks to our colleagues at Nashville Public Library's "Talking Library" service, we have begun to add books by local authors to our audio collection.

For many years volunteers at the Talking Library have been reading newspapers, magazines and books to blind and visually impaired listeners over its special radio service. We recently learned that the Talking Library has begun to record selected titles in digital format. These programs can be converted to MP3 files, which will play on our NLS digital talking book machines (DTBMs).

The Talking Library has now agreed to provide us with its recordings of books by local authors, along with permission to circulate these recordings to our patrons. So far we've added three titles to our collection:

- *Broken Eyes, Unbroken Spirit* (TND02001), by David Meador, a memoir by Nashville's own national blind golf champion. (Unrated)
- *They Gotta Sleep Sometime* (TND02002), by James C. Paavola, from his *Murder in Memphis* series. ((Unrated)
- *Which One Dies Today?* (TND02003), another volume in Paavola's *Murder in Memphis* sequence. (Unrated)

We hope to add other works by Tennessee authors to our Tennessee digital book (TND) collection as digital recordings of them become available to us.

If you'd like to read one of these books, please let your reader advisor know.

Talking Book Cartridge Cables

We were pleasantly surprised to receive the following announcement from NLS a few weeks ago.

“NLS is introducing a new accessory—the digital talking book (DTB) cartridge cable —to facilitate the use of DTB cartridges with a personal computer (PC). The accessory connects a digital talking-book cartridge to a universal serial bus (USB) port on a personal computer (PC).

“The cable is three feet long with a standard USB type A plug on one end and a USB type A socket and plastic molding—conforming to the ‘D’ shape of the cartridge—on the other. This molding assists in the alignment of the cartridge with the USB socket upon insertion.

“When connected to the PC, the cartridge will be available as a removable storage device. (A Microsoft Windows PC user will find this under “My Computer”). A user may then transfer DTB files from the PC to the cartridge for playback on the digital talking-book machine. Network libraries may find the cables useful when duplicating files downloaded from BARD onto cartridges.”

By the time you read this newsletter, we will have a small supply of the new cables in stock for distribution to our BARD patrons. Please contact your reader advisor to request one.

Limits to BARD Mobile Downloads

We like to advertise the fact that our BARD download service allows you to download as many books as you want. If you are using the new BARD Mobile app, however, you may encounter a catch.

To listen to one of our books on your iOS mobile device -- be it an iPhone, iPad or iPod Touch – you need to have two pieces of software. The first is the set of files that constitute the talking book’s content; the second is a “read authorization object.” The read authorization object, or “AO,” is a security file that gives you permission to listen to the book you have downloaded.

Here’s the catch. For reasons that have to do with protecting our books from unauthorized distribution, the BARD server will only issue 100 read authorizations to any one BARD Mobile patron in any 30-day period. If you exceed this limit, you’ll get a message that says “you are not authorized to read this book.”

Currently the only cure for this block is to wait until the next day in hopes that your rolling 30-day total of “AOs” requested will drop back below 100.

Of course, the way to avoid the problem is to not listen to more than 100 titles on your mobile device in a 30-day period. Since this quantity averages out to about 3.3 books a day, we don’t believe it’s totally unreasonable.

This limit does not apply to the number of books you download on your personal computer and listen to on your digital talking book machine; only the number of books you ***listen to on your mobile device***.

Tax Return Help

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) provides online tax products and services for taxpayers with disabilities. Individuals may visit the [IRS Accessibility](http://www.irs.gov/uac/IRS.gov-Accessibility) page (www.irs.gov/uac/IRS.gov-Accessibility) to download forms, publications, and other products and to access tax-related videos in English and American Sign Language. The IRS recommends checking its website often as it is continuously adding more products to assist persons with disabilities.

GPO Announces First Audio Book

In what we hope is the start of a new and long-lived trend, the U.S. Government Printing Office (GPO) has made an audio book available for the first time on the agency's Federal Digital System (FDsys).

Published by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), the audio book, [Getting to Know the President: Intelligence Briefings of Presidential Candidates, 1952-2004](#), is a historical account of the information sharing process between the intelligence community and presidential candidates and presidents-elect during campaigns and administration transitions.

This audio book is available in an .mp3 format on [FDsys](#), a "one-stop site for authentic, published Government information." TLBPH patrons who can't wait for the movie version can listen to this book on their digital talking book players. Just paste the downloaded MP3 file into a folder labeled "Audio+Podcasts" on a blank digital talking book cartridge or USB drive; then insert this storage device into our player.

Alternative Reads

For readers looking for something more appetizing, your editor recommends *Hot Diggity Dog; The History of the Hot Dog*, by Adrienne Sylver (DB 75228). While it's aimed at readers in grades two-four, it will warm the tummy of your inner child regardless of your age.

More serious foodies may opt for *Breakfast: A History* (DB 77407), in which author Heather Arndt Anderson "explores the social and gastronomic history of breakfast and discusses common categories of breakfast foods such as dairy, grains, and drinks."

Educational Resources for Children with Disabilities

We recently learned about a series of videos that feature children and teenagers with disabilities and the ways these kids are using assistive technologies to help themselves learn. Each video is about five minutes long, and you can watch or listen to all eight on the website of the Family Center on Technology and Disability (FCTD), at www.fctd.info.

To view the videos, go to the FCTD website above and click on the “Videos” link in the left sidebar. You’ll meet kids like Brody, Mason and Isabel, who aren’t letting disabilities keep them down. If you prefer to enjoy these short videos on YouTube, you will find them on the FCTD video channel at <http://www.youtube.com/user/FCTDvideo>.

FCTD is a resource designed to support organizations and programs that work with families of children and teenagers with disabilities. The organization offers a range of information and services on the subject of assistive and instructional technologies. Organizations, parents, educators, and interested friends may all find information that supports them in their efforts to bring the highest quality education to children with disabilities.

The FCTD web site provides thousands of assistive and instructional technology resources of interest to families of children with disabilities. The website offers access to fact sheets, Power Point presentations, monthly newsletters, online discussion and summer institute transcripts, a database of more than 3,500 organizations, a resource review database with hundreds of reviews of AT resources, and more. Through the site users can also access FCTD family information guides as well as resources in Spanish.

DBs *sans* Beeps

TLBPH patron Allen Justice of Loudon has reported a phenomenon that may be throwing some readers off stride. It concerns older titles that were originally recorded as cassette books (RCs) and have been subsequently copied onto digital cartridges (DBs).

The cassette versions of these titles include a nice feature. When a reader holds the fast forward key of the NLS cassette player down, the player emits a beep for the end of each chapter. Savvy patrons could navigate through the book by counting the number of beeps as they advanced or rewound the cassette tape.

Unfortunately, this feature was not preserved when the audio files were converted from the analog cassette format to the digital cartridge format. The fast forward and rewind arrows on our digital players do read out the

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