

DEAR PEARL

August 2013 Volume XLI - Number 2

Answering the Reading Needs of the Blind and Visually Impaired

Lots Happening At BLTS

Summertime, and the livin' is easy. So goes the song from Porgy and Bess, which, in my experience, has never quite come to pass. More likely my summers are noisy (lawn mowers and loud speakers), wet (record rain this year), mosquito and bug-filled (lots of standing water), and hectic (meetings, classes, appointments, etc.). At BLTS we're as busy as ever with exciting new developments. Here's the latest news, hot off the press:

We are super-excited to welcome two new members to the BLTS Board of Directors: Carol Birch and Dawn Stumpner. Carol and Dawn bring more new and creative ideas to our already creative and experienced board and staff. Carol brings with her years of experience in recording books for our blind readers, and Dawn has been a teacher of ESL, using BLTS books along the way. Both have written short bios inside this Dear Pearl, so we can get to know them. Welcome Carol and Dawn!

Our finances are a glass half full/glass half empty situation. Our assets have improved over last year, but our income/expense situation could use some improvement.

Like every other nonprofit organization, our assets and investments have risen with the stock market recovery. While our expenses have remained steady on a year-to-year comparison basis with 2012, our income – both braille and tape receipts and contributions – is a below last year. We started out slowly, and then...

We redoubled our efforts to encourage contributions, and we received some very generous donations from both old and new friends: Foundations such as Epic, Evjue, Stark, Jack De Loss Taylor, Alliant Energy, and MGE; groups such as the Kiwanis and American Legion, and many individual members and friends have sent us contributions this summer, which are beginning to close our income gap. So, many thanks to our members and



In this issue

Meet the New Board Members	2-3
Braille Formats 2011	4
Corporate Sponsors...	4-5
Canvas BLTS Bags Still Available	5
BLTS Library Update	5
Titles Done...	6
Ruth Jackson 101 st	6
Letter from a Patron	7

(Continued on next page.)

friends whose contributions have allowed us to continue our valuable work. Any amount you can donate – of whatever size – is very much appreciated.

Finally, inside this issue of Dear Pearl is a short article by BLTS client Mary Ann Koch, telling us about her life and what BLTS has meant to her. She says it much better than I could, so I won't try to repeat or summarize here. Suffice to say, her heartfelt thanks to BLTS for helping to bring her the joy of books puts a human face on what we do and inspires us to continue to braille and tape books. We exist so that everyone – whether by eyes, ears, or fingers – can enjoy the wonder of books. Whether for enjoyment or education – and it's usually a combination of both – our mission is to bring the wonderful world of reading to everyone.

Whether you are a member of our board, work in the office or library, braille or tape books, or send in contributions whenever you can, you are all essential to that mission. Thank you so much!

Steve Levine
BLTS President

Meet the New Board Members

Carol Birch

I inherited a love of books from my mother and have been known to read three at the same time. When I was able to get cassettes from the library, I often couldn't stop the tape even after I was home. I would sit in the car in the garage before going into the house in order to listen to some more of my book. Guess it's time to upgrade the car in order to get a cd player....

Some years ago I was told about a little boy who saw a television for the first time, and he was asked what he thought of it. He said he preferred books because the pictures are better. I feel the same way, and I am usually disappointed when I see a movie made from a book I have read.

Many years ago when I was a Girl Guide in England, my favorite project was helping a blind and physically disabled lady called Betty Singleton. I can see her now in my mind's eye. It gave me untold pleasure to spend time with her, to read to her and to do little jobs around the house and in the garden. It was really a very small step, therefore, to record books onto tapes in order that other folks can enjoy what I have enjoyed all my life.

BTW I came to Madison from Warwickshire, England, with my then husband and four-year old son in 1986. I have worn many hats in my career. In my "retirement" I am managing an office in a dog day care and training center. I have also set up and run my own business here in Madison, it has been a great place in which to raise a child.

Dawn Stumpner

I grew up in a small town near Dubuque, Iowa, and after visiting a school for the blind, a nearby Catholic school, and our local public Kindergarten, my parents decided on mainstreaming me in public school. My school experience was much like that of my peers, but along with the 3 R's I learned together with my classmates, I learned braille. Although I had always enjoyed listening to books my parents read aloud, I didn't become a good braille reader until fourth grade when I was spurred to read more and thus get more proficient by a braille reading club with prizes. Before that, I found a lot of the books they used to teach us to read in early elementary school boring, with simplistic plots in comparison to what my parents read aloud, and I couldn't see the pictures well. After becoming a faster reader, though, I tackled longer books, and reading became a life-long passion.

Besides reading, another thing I'd always enjoyed was learning languages, which led me to spend a month in France when I was sixteen, visit China with the Friendship Force when I was seventeen, and eventually spend 8 months living in Thailand during my Junior Year Abroad from the University of Wisconsin in Madison. This loving of reading, other cultures, and foreign languages led me to pursue a career in teaching English as a second language when I graduated with my Master's in Linguistics in 1990. I have now been teaching ESL for 23 years, and it is never boring.

BLTS has been immensely helpful along the way in both my professional and private life. It has transcribed textbooks I teach from, recorded books not available to me through my lending library, modified games for me to play with my three kids (who are now ages 12, 14, and 18), provided braille utility bills, lent me cookbooks, novels, and other tomes, and brailled menus at several restaurants I enjoy. I read their wide selection of print-braille books with pictures to my kids when they were small, and taught them to read from them as they grew. The absolute best thing for me about BLTS, though, is just that they have a library where I can BROWSE. Since most of my books come through the mail, I had rarely had the opportunity to walk down aisles and sample what appeared on shelves. If it were closer to my home, I would go there several times a week. It's also great having known several people at BLTS for a large part of the time I've lived in Madison. Reading is a huge part of my working and non-working life, and BLTS has played an important part in allowing me to read what I need and enjoy.

I want to keep meeting new people, enlarging my circle of friends.
I have great friends now... really good people.
But I'm always ready for what comes next.

—Paula Danziger

Braille Formats 2011

Font Attributes

Font attributes is the term Braille Formats 2011 uses for emphasis or distinction in print, such as italics, boldface, colored type, underlining, or shapes around the text. While we still need to make the decision of visual decoration vs. meaningful difference, how we indicate that meaning has been greatly expanded. See Braille Formats 2011, Section 5.

There are two basic methods for indicating emphasis or distinction. The first includes the familiar italic indicators. We still use the single or double italics indicator just as we always have. What has changed is that this is no longer the default for indicating all kinds of emphasis. Italics are now used when we actually mean italics, not boldface or underlining or any other kind of emphasis. However, there are times when italics may be substituted for other types of font attributes.

Bold uses the same symbols as before, but are now used much more frequently. Bold italic symbols are new and work the same way: single indicators for up to three words, double for four or more words.

Color, underlining, and shapes use a second method. A two- or three-cell symbol is used to indicate the font attribute, followed by a space and then the affected text. A spaced termination indicator (dots 6, 3) ends the font attribute.

Julie Sumwalt

.....

Corporate Sponsors, Foundations, and Civic Groups Step Up Big for BLTS

Individual friends and members, who contribute what they can in both time and money, are the heart of BLTS. We couldn't live without you. Thanks so much.

And, we have also been blessed this summer with a number of large contributions from corporate sponsors, foundations, and civic groups without which we couldn't exist. Thanks so much to these civic-minded groups who contribute so much to us and to the entire Dane County community.

Listed on the next page are the generous contributors who have made BLTS possible with their contributions this year. A tip of the hat and a hearty Thank you, Thank You, Thank You, to one and all – friends, members, foundations, civic groups, and corporate sponsors – who help bring the joy of reading to those of us who cannot see.

Steve Levine
BLTS President



BLTS Member Contributors

Sandy Adams	Shirley Johnson	Elnor Reichel
Judith Amacker	Joanne Johnson	Constance & Norman Risjord
Carol Birch	Vonna Johnson-Porter	Shirley Ross
Pat & George Bunders	Mary & Martin Kienitz	Barb Schlinkert
Sue & Ken Clark	Valborg Knudtson	Berneice Schneider
Mary Ann Damm	Aaron Konkol	Julie Schoepp
Mary Daniel	Ron & Debbie Konkol	Judy Sherry
Sue Danz	Steven Levine	Jane Stark
Joel & Jean DeVore	Jane & Louis Maher	Betty Stern
Kathy & Dennis Dorn	Alison McKee	Elizabeth Stoffel
Jill Dumphy	Sue & Tom Nelson	Julie Sumwalt
Kay Goepfert	Betty & Clyde Oakley	Carolyn & Charles Thomas
Lori Hanson	Karen & Richard E. Perzentka	John Toussaint
Barb & Tom Henning	Beverly Pfister	Vickie Warner
Patricia & Mark Herrling	Florence Poole	Barbara & Gary Wegner
Margaret (Maggie) Hutchinson	Patricia & Erik Popp	Helen Wibben

Friends of BLTS

Betty N. Beilefeld	Margaret K. Jensen	Katherine J. Pientka
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Dr. Frederick J. Davis	Jane and Louis Maher	Pastor Jerry D. Webb
Jane Eisner	Dale Nordeen	Lee Elyse C. Weiss

Organizations

Alliant Energy Foundation	Lake Wis. Lions Club
American Legion Post 501	Ladies Auxil., VFW 8216
Ballweg Chevrolet, Inc.	Lange Living Trust
Claremont S. Jackson Fdn	Latta Living Trust (Terry Busby)
Columbus Lions Club	Madison Gas & Electric Foundation
Cross Plains Comm. Chest	Madison-Monona Lioness Club
Epic Systems Corp.	McFarland Lioness Club
Evjue Foundation, Inc.	McFarland Lions Club
Faircrest Ass'n Health Fnd	Mukwonago Lions Club, Inc.
First Business Bank	National Mutual Benefit
Galvin-Struckmeyer Post 248, American Legion	Old Sauk Trails LP
Hallman/Lindsay Paints	Pleasant T. Rowland Foundation
Herbert H. Kohl Charities	Strand Associates, Inc.
Jack Deloss Taylor Charitable Trust	Sub-Zero Foundation, Inc.
Kayser Ford, Inc.	Westmorland Combined Health Fund Drive
Kiwanis Club of Madison West	

BLTS 2013 Fall Frolic

Tuesday, October 15, 2013

Social Time 11:30 in the Library

Lunch 12:00 in the Conference Room

BLTS invites you to attend a "Fall Frolic" on Tuesday, October 15, 2013. Please join us in the BLTS Library for social time at 11:30 with beverages and appetizers provided by the Board. At noon we will move to the conference room for a delicious lunch of Gino's lasagna and salad.

This luncheon will follow the October BLTS board meeting, which everyone is welcome to attend. We look forward to this social as a way of reuniting with old friends, meeting new friends, and thanking everyone for your wonderful support throughout the year. As always, spouses and guests are welcome.

Don't miss catching up with friends and, of course, talking all things BLTS. Put it on your calendar.

Please RSVP by October 4th – 608-233-0222 or office.blts@tds.net. Let us know if you need a ride, and we'll make the arrangements.



Canvas BLTS Bags Still Available

The canvas tote bags with our BLTS logo that we offered as a “premium” for a \$50 donation were a big hit! We’ve received many compliments on both the attractiveness and the quality, and from personal experience, I definitely concur. (I use mine almost every day.) Thank you to everyone who increased their regular yearly donation to get one of these bags.

We still have some left, so if you didn’t get one before, or if you’d like another, we’re only asking \$10 for the first, and \$5 for each additional bag. Just call, e-mail, stop by, or send a check to the office, and you’ll get your bag as soon as possible.



Aaron Konkol

Friendship is born at that moment when
one person says to another:
"What! You too? I thought I was the only one."

— C.S. Lewis

BLTS Library Update

The BLTS Lending Library continues to loan materials to patrons across the United States and Canada at a steadily increasing circulation rate. We frequently get requests for new materials.

Circulation Statistics for May, June and July

May Total circulation: 142

June Total circulation: 121

July Total circulation: 76

The BLTS Library Committee meets several times a year to select new books for transcription in order to keep up to date with our readers suggestions. In fact a project was finished this year which analyzed our clients reading preferences so that we can better match our collection to their needs. Aaron reported that we received \$4,000 from the Jack Taylor DeLoss fund, which we use to pay for proofreading for library books. Our committee meets next in September, 2013 to look over the latest round of additions.

An upcoming project will be the assessment and weeding of the adult book collection. We completed this type of project for the children’s book collection two years ago. We need to do the adult collection to free up space for new additions as well as weed out materials with low use.

Patricia Herrling,
Library Coordinator

Titles Done Since February 2013



THANK YOU, BRAILLISTS!
(page counts follow names)



For children

6 Print/Braille Books (Sue Nelson, 67); 7 Print/Braille Books (Kathy Dorn, 64); 2 Print/Braille Books (Sue Nelson, 21)

For adults

Three Cups of Tea (Joel DeVore, 784); *Now Eat This!* (Kathy Dorn, 442); *The Hunger Games* (Lori Hanson, 532); *The Confession* (Barbara Wegner, 746); *The Casual Vacancy* (Barb Schlinkert, 952); *Grilling* (Judy Amacker, 150); *Remembering You* (Barb Schlinkert, 778); *Main Course Salads* (Sue Nelson, 60); *Diabetic Cooking* (Sue Nelson, 138); *Tea Leaves Cardigan* (Patricia Herrling, 12); *Home Fires Burning* (Julie Schoepp, 680); Low-Carb (Judy Amacker, 100)

For schools, non-profits and businesses

2013 Timesheet Schedule (Sue Nelson, 11); Wisc. Lions Camp Handbook & Waiver (Kathy Dorn, 42); MG&E bills (Kathy Dorn, 20); TDS billing (Barb Schlinkert, 10); MG&E bills (Kathy Dorn, 16); MG&E bills (Kathy Dorn, 16); TDS billing (Barb Schlinkert, 14); Lion King Program (Sue Nelson, 98); TDS billing (Barb Schlinkert, 13); Easter Seals Brochure (Patricia Herrling, 4); Memorial Card (Kathy Dorn, 2); MG&E bills (Kathy Dorn, 11); TDS billing (Barb Schlinkert, 12); MG&E bills (Kathy Dorn, 16); TDS billing and ad (Barb Schlinkert, 33); MG&E bills (Kathy Dorn, 16); TDS billing (Barb Schlinkert, 14)

Special Projects

Selected Maryland Scanner Frequencies (Joel DeVore, 122); Red Chili's Menu (Kathy Dorn, 36); Garden Family Chinese Restaurant (Kathy Dorn, 27); Pizza Village Menu (Kathy Dorn, 30); Miscellaneous Nutrition Information (Barb Schlinkert, 110); Sony Stereo Cassette Deck Operating Instructions (Julie Schoepp, 75); Uniden BC370CRS Owner's Manual (Julie Schoepp, 74); Baseball Digest Mar/Apr 2013 (Bev Pfister, 158); Baseball Digest Jan/Feb 2013 (Bev Pfister, 118); Scanner Frequencies (Joel DeVore, 102); Sony FD TRiniton Operating Instructions (Julie Schoepp, 116); C. Crane VersaCorder Dual Speed Recorder Instruction Manual (Barb Schlinkert, 46); Nakamichi CR-4/CR-3 Discrete Head Cassette Deck Owner's Manual (Sue Nelson, 42); Voice Announcer 9900CW (Bev Pfister, 44); ClearSounds CSC1000 Phone (Bev Pfister, 108)

Happy 101st Birthday, Ruth Jackson



Happy
101st Birthday
Ruth Jackson!

Many good wishes for a
delightful day,
and the next 101 years!

With love,
Your Son

Ruth Jackson was a thermoformer during the time we were known as "VBTI". Several years ago she brought a friend to our office to see the "workings" of our group. Because of Ruth's enthusiasm and encouragement, her friend made a generous contribution.

Ruth celebrated her 101st birthday in June as reported in the Madison Newspapers. Thank you, and Happy Birthday, Ruth!

Letter from a Patron

Greetings to all you readers:

My name is Mary Ann Koch. I am a member of the 30+ age group, residing in West Allis Wisconsin all my life.

I lost my sight when I was six years old, but its loss has never stopped me, slowed me down, or been any more than an inconvenience.

My primary years, high school, and college were all attended in West Allis and in Milwaukee, majoring in music at UWM.

I worked as a Church Minister of Music for over twenty years, serving at two different parishes, directing both children and adult choirs – besides teaching music in the parish schools and playing all of the Masses and other church functions.

Since childhood, I have always enjoyed reading and greedily consumed books, mainly on record or audiocassette. During my working years, my reading time was diminished greatly, but now that I am retired, I spend many relaxing hours in enjoyment of this hobby.

Several years ago, a friend and I were deeply absorbed in a series of a particular author. We hungrily devoured the first three books, only to find out in the end, that no more of her novels had been recorded. My friend phoned the library and asked whether the sequel books would be recorded any time soon. The librarian regrettably informed us that the recording was not under her control. She apologized that she had no good answer for us.

We were desperate to continue this series. My friend and I tried to think of anyone within our acquaintance who would read these books on tape, but we came up empty.

Then, one day, my friend called me with a hopeful suggestion. She said that she had read somewhere about BTLS in Madison, and we agreed that they were our last hope for being able to read the next installments of the book series and find out what happened to the individual characters.

We contacted BTLS and a reader was immediately found to continue the series for us. All we had to do was to send the book we wanted read to Aaron, where- upon he would dispatch it to the reader and within a few weeks, voila! We could follow up our reading, never missing a beat.

I am so grateful to BTLS, for now I know that there is a place where I can go when I need something read, and I cannot find it anywhere else. Remember when I said that, the loss of sight was no more than an inconvenience? Well, one of those big, frustrating inconveniences of life has been made much more convenient by BTLS. Without them, I would have been constantly wondering how things worked out with my book people, never to know the answer... going to my eternal reward never being satisfied of their progress.

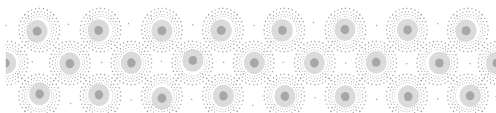
Thank you BTLS for saving me from a dismal and depressing state, and for always being there, ready to open literary doors.

Most Sincerely grateful,
Mary Ann Koch



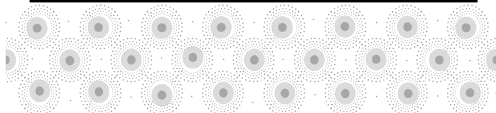
DEAR PEARL

Newsletter of the Braille Library & Transcribing Services, Inc.



We're on the web

<http://bltsinc.org/>



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Answering the Reading Needs of the Blind and Visually Impaired



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