

DEAR PEARL

March 2015 Volume XLIII - Number 1

Answering the Reading Needs of the Blind and Visually Impaired

President's Report March, 2015

NEW DEVELOPMENTS AT BLTS

Spring is here at last. Whew! What a long, cold winter. (So much for global warming.) The winter that began last November is finally over and visions of the beautiful spring view from the Blackhawk Country Clubhouse have been filling my head. I hope many of you will be able to join us there on April 15 for the BLTS Annual Meeting and Awards Luncheon. As usual, there will be the delicious Blackhawk food, harpist Peter Feneht – who has provided us with beautiful music for the past three years – and a super-interesting program. Our speaker, Stacy Grandt – Wisconsin Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired Outreach Director and National Instructional Materials Accessibility Standard Coordinator – will speak to us about

“The Impact of a Small Organization on a Family and a Profession.” It should be an enjoyable and informative afternoon. Hope to see you there.

We were blessed with a good year in 2014 from a financial standpoint. Total contributions were just slightly lower compared to 2013, including substantial grants from the Evjue Foundation and Jack DeLoss Taylor Charitable Trust, as well as a very nice bequest from the estate of Priscilla White. The many generous contributions from foundations, individual members and friends of BLTS are much appreciated. Financial support like this is the foundation for the personal efforts of our braillists, tapists, the people who run our office and library, board members, and everyone who makes BLTS work. Thank you all so much.

BLTS was fortunate to begin and end last year with some very nice media exposure. On January 3, 2014, WKOW-TV visited our offices to film what we do and to interview former Board member Karen Perzentka. The segment ran a week later on both the morning and evening programs and hopefully conveyed to the public a bit of what we do and how we do it. On



In this issue

Nominating Slate	2
Annual Meeting... Invitation	3
New Carpet, Computers, & Member Letters	3
Monday Mornings at the Office	4
Titles Done Since September 2014	5
News from the BLTS Library	5

(Continued on next page.)

November 15th, BLTS received a "Community Partnership Award" from the Wisconsin Council of the Blind & Visually Impaired at its awards luncheon in DeForest. Then, on December 29, 2014, Wisconsin State Journal columnist Doug Moe wrote a very nice piece about BLTS — also after visiting our office to speak with staff and volunteers, including Barb Schlinkert, Patricia Herrling, and Carol Birch, who was instrumental in arranging both the WKOW-TV and Doug Moe visits. Thanks Carol. Doug Moe's article also gave the public an excellent understanding of BLTS' operations and history.

Nothing is as certain as change. Last year BLTS welcomed long-time friend Sandy Adams as a new member of our Board of Directors. Sandy's experience, wisdom, and smile have added much to our board. Thanks and welcome Sandy. In April, we will be saying goodbye to board member and long-time friend and supporter Betty Oakley, as she leaves our Board of Directors. Betty, to say we will miss you does not say enough. Thank you for so many years of contributions and service to BLTS!

As the Beatles sang, "It's been a long, cold, lonely winter." But, "here comes the sun, and I say it's alright." A great year to everyone. See you April 15th.

Steve Levine
President

Braille Library & Transcribing Services, Inc.
Annual Meeting, April 15, 2015
NOMINATING SLATE

Returning Officers

President	Steve Levine	2015-2017
Vice President	Vonna Johnson-Porter	2014-2016
Secretary	Patricia Herrling	2015-2017
Treasurer	Sue Nelson	2014-2016

Returning Board Members

Constance Risjord	2014-2016
Sandy Adams	2014-2016
Carol Birch	2015-2017

New Board Members

Karen Perzentka	2015-2017
Barb Schlinkert	2015-2017

Leaving Board

Bette Oakley	2013-2015
Dawn Delgado	2013-2014

Office Staff

Office Coordinator	Aaron Konkol
Braille Coordinator	Sue Danz





Annual Meeting and Awards Luncheon

Wednesday April 15, 2015

Social Time: 11:30 a.m. Lunch: 12:00 p.m.

Blackhawk Country Club, 3606 Blackhawk Drive, Madison, WI

Followed by Program, Presentations, and Brief Meeting

BLTS invites you to attend its annual meeting and luncheon on Wednesday, April 15, 2015. Please join us at the beautiful Blackhawk County Club, 3606 Blackhawk Drive, at 11:30 a.m. to meet and greet old and new BLTS friends. The noon luncheon offers two choices of chicken and a veggie selection. (Cost: \$16; see choices below.) Entertainment will be provided by harpist Peter Feneht who will soothe us with beautiful music, as he has for the past three years.

The luncheon will be followed by an interesting program after which there will be a brief meeting and award presentations. Our featured speaker will be Stacy Grandt, Wisconsin Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired Outreach Director and National Instructional Materials Accessibility Standard Coordinator, who will speak about "The Impact of a Small Organization on a Family and a Profession." It should be an enjoyable afternoon. We encourage all members of the BLTS family to attend. We would love to see you!

Don't miss catching up with friends and, of course, talking all things BLTS. So, put it on your calendar. We guarantee beautiful weather. Please RSVP by April 1st by calling 608 233-0222. Checks may be mailed to BLTS at 517 N. Segoe Road, Suite 200 -B, Madison, WI 53705. Let us know if you need a ride, and we'll make the arrangements. Yes, Spring is here at last!



Names of those attending (spouses, friends, all guests are welcome):

Menu Selections

- _____ Chicken St. Croix stuffed with mushrooms, spinach, craisins, and wild rice served with natural sauce, fresh fruit, and fresh vegetable
- _____ Chicken and Mushroom Crepes with wild rice and fresh fruit garnish
- _____ Asparagus Stuffed Ravioli with Roasted Garlic Spaghetti Puttanesca (vegetarian)

All selections are \$16

and include rolls, coffee, tea, iced tea, or milk, and dessert

Cash Bar Available

Please make your meal selection(s) and return to BLTS with your check made payable to BLTS: 517 North Segoe Road, #200-B, Madison, Wisconsin 53705

*****RSVP – Please return or call by April 1, 2015**

Any questions? Need a ride? Contact BLTS at 608 233-0222 or office.blts@tds.net

New Carpet, Computers, & Member Letters

The past few months have seen a lot of activity in the office, so we've got a few exciting developments that I'd like to report.

New Carpeting

The carpeting in the front office, back office, and the front hallway was in pretty bad shape. We alerted our landlords, CSCI (Community Service Center Inc.), to the problem and they generously offered to split the cost of the new carpet and installation.

In early February the back office and front hallway got brand new carpet and the snag in the front office was repaired. As you can imagine, taking the shelving out and moving everything out of the back office was quite the endeavor; but, Coyle Carpet did a great job and we're extremely happy with the results. Feel free to stop on by the office to see the upgrade.

New Computers

As of April 2014 Microsoft discontinued their support of Windows XP, their most popular operating system. Almost all of the computers in the office were running XP and, therefore, had become obsolete. We needed newer, faster computers to run their current operating systems (Windows 7 or 8), so in January the BLTS Board of Directors decided that it was finally time to get new computers.

I did some research and found out that Epic, a large, successful company located just outside of Madison, donates their "old" computers to non-profits. Sue Nelson's daughter works at Epic, so she was able to secure three newer, faster computers for absolutely no cost. Thank you Epic and Sue for the new computers!

Though the computers were free, upgrading all of our software, operating systems, and paying Dane Net to perform the migration did incur significant costs, as did the new carpet... which leads me to:

Member Letters

To save on postage we will have the member letters at the Annual Meeting on April 15th. For those who aren't able to make the meeting, the rest of them will be going out in the mail in mid-April. Your annual membership dues, as well as any extra donation, will be greatly appreciated. Thank you for the ongoing support of our organization, both monetarily and in service. I hope to see you at the Annual Meeting!

Aaron Konkol

Office Manager

Monday Mornings at the Office

A group of seven transcribers is joining Connie Risjord on most Monday mornings to learn the new code, Unified English Braille (UEB). The object of the group meetings is not only to learn the new code; but, also to use that knowledge to transcribe many of our children's library books into the new code. We hope that we will be able to provide teachers with a list of supplemental reading books by September when all braille-reading children in kindergarten and grades 1 and 2 will be learning the new code in school.

If you would like to join the group or just drop in to see what is going on, give Connie a call (233-2526) beforehand to see if the group is meeting. The schedule, at this point, is somewhat irregular.

Titles Done Since September 2014



THANK YOU, BRAILLISTS!
(page counts follow names)



For children

The Blue Day Book for kids (Kathy Dorn, 13), *Mouse Soup* (Sue Nelson, 24)

For adults

Jesus Calling (Julie Schoepp, 346), *In the Company of Others* (Julie Schoepp, 766), *The Inn at Rose Harbor* (Judy Amacker, 589), *Chemo Caps and Wraps* (Sue Nelson, 163), *Betty Crocker Gluten-Free Cooking* (Barb Schlinkert, 526), *Crochet Ultimate Book of Pineapples* (Kathy Dorn, 378), *Nutribullet Natural Healing Foods* (Barb Schlinkert, 300), *Nutribullet User Guide & Recipe Book* (Barb Schlinkert, 194), *Nutribullet Pocket Nutritionist* (Barb Schlinkert, 38), *Pure Praise* (Barb Schlinkert, 392), *Tablecloths in 1/2 the time* (Julie Schoepp, 94), *Special Shapes & Stitches Doilies & Table Toppers* (Julie Schoepp, 88), *Dick Francis's Bloodline* (Bev Pfister, 560)

For schools, non-profits and businesses

TDS billing and invite (Barb Schlinkert, 30), 3 MG&E bills (Kathy Dorn, 15), TDS billing and invite (Barb Schlinkert, 16), WI Council for the Blind (Sue Nelson, 12), TDS billing (Barb Schlinkert, 11), SDC Program (Patricia Herrling, 94), 3 MG&E bills & flyer (Kathy Dorn, 27), TDS billing (Barb Schlinkert, 17), 4 MG&E bills and 2 flyers (Kathy Dorn, 34), TDS billing and Privacy Notice (Barb Schlinkert, 20), TDS bill (Barb Schlinkert, 19), 4 MG&E bills and 2 flyers (Kathy Dorn, 42)

Special Projects

3 knitting patterns (Barb Schlinkert, 50), Lionel Train Catalog (Sue Nelson, 124), Songs lyrics and other materials (Patricia Herrling, 31), What is the Church? (Kathy Dorn, 34), NAXA Personal MP3/CD Player Instructions (Kathy Dorn, 37), 3 Print Braille Books (Kathy Dorn, 13), 3 Print Braille Books (Sue Nelson, 10), Our Daily Bread (Sue Nelson, 142)

News from the BLTS Library

This Spring the major news for the library is the implementation of Unified English Braille (UEB) and its impact on library books and borrowing. The BLTS Library Committee met three times in 2014 and one of the Library Committee meetings was a special expanded member meeting to discuss how the BLTS Library was going to implement this new format. Currently the BLTS Library is collecting children's books suitable for K-2nd grade. Wisconsin has chosen to start the new UEB braille format for these children in Fall of 2015 and we want to provide materials for the schools and parent/children in Wisconsin. Connie Risjord has started UEB training for several braillists, augmented by the training materials from Julie Sumwalt's online classes. Our children's books, kindly donated in large part from the Middleton Public Library via Jean DeVore (wife of our BLTS braillist Joel DeVore), are being used as part of our training and brailled in the UEB format.

On another note, the BLTS Library solicited homes for discarded books from our weeding project of adult fiction/nonfiction books this year and sold 17 titles out of the 40 titles weeded. The remainder of these titles will be donated to various agencies requesting braille books.

Patricia Herrling
BLTS Library Coordinator

DEAR PEARL

Newsletter of the Braille Library & Transcribing Services, Inc.

We're on the web

<http://bltsinc.org/>

Contributors

Sue Danz
Patricia Herring
Vonna Johnson-Porter
Aaron Konkol
Steve Levine
Constance Risjord

Vickie Warner, Editor

Thanks to Michelle Rueckert

Answering the Reading Needs of the Blind and Visually Impaired



Office Hours:
Tuesday - Friday, 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Email: office.blts@tlds.net

Fax: 608-233-0249

Phone: 608-233-0222

Madison, WI 53705

517 N. Segoe Rd. #200

Braille Library & Transcribing Services, Inc.