

# DEAR PEARL

September 2015 Volume XLIII - Number 2

*Answering the Reading Needs of the Blind and Visually Impaired*

## President's Report September 2015

I've now had the honor of being BLTS president for four and one-half years. Board members, volunteers, and our management staff have served that long and longer. All of us are used to the everyday decisions that have to be made to keep BLTS on its goal of producing brailled (and some taped) materials so that everyone can experience the joy of reading. We deal with budgets, try our best at fundraising and make the many business and other decisions that keep the organization on track. The numbers and figures and deadlines sometimes obscure the human side of what we are doing. That all came to an end this past April at our annual meeting and luncheon at the Blackhawk Country Club.

Our usual tradition is to invite a speaker to talk to us about some aspect of living with blindness or visual impairment – and we have had some most interesting presenters. Dennis Helwig of Phoenix Braille spoke to us

some years ago about the Wisconsin Correctional Institution braille program and more recently Mike Helland spoke to us about his life as a blind radio disc jockey and music show host. Our speakers have introduced us to a wide spectrum of experience in dealing with blindness or visual impairment. But no one was more spellbinding and had all of us as emotional as did our speaker this past April, Stacy Grandt. Stacy is the Outreach Director for DPI's Wisconsin Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired as well as its National Instructional Materials Accessibility Standards Coordinator.

When Stacy emailed me the title of her presentation – “The Impact of a Small Organization on a Family and a Profession” – I was puzzled. What could she mean? What did she plan to talk about? How did this involve BLTS? We all soon found out, as Stacy related the very personal story of how two of her daughters – blind due to a hereditary condition – grew up reading books and materials transcribed by BLTS. Successful adults today, they – and Stacy – still remember how the books brailled by BLTS introduced them to the joy of reading and learning. Stacy expressed her appreciation to all of us in a most personal way. By the time she had finished, there wasn't a dry eye in the dining room.

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### In this issue

List of Donors	2
Learning Unified English Braille	2
Betty Oakley Honored Twice	3
Fall Frolic	4
Open House	5
BLTS Library Update	6
Titles Done Since March 2015	7
New Knit and Crochet Guidelines	7

(Thanks from another BLTS reader is contained in Patricia Herrling's Library Update, inside.)

There is a saying that "Whoever saves one life saves the world." So, thanks to all of you who help BLTS save the world – transcribers, tapists, proofreaders, board members, staff, and contributors. Yes, BLTS may be a "small organization," but in our own way we "save the world." And thanks to Stacy for reminding us.

### Lists of Donors so far in 2015

#### *Organizations:*

American Legion Post 501	Madison Monona Lioness	Mukwonago Lions Club
Cross Plains Community Chest	Madison Gas & Electric Foundation	Sub-Zero Wolf Foundation Inc.
Hallman Lindsay	McFarland Lioness Club	Strand Associates
Westmorland Combined Health Fund	McFarland Lions Club	United Way ( <i>in honor of Betty Oakley</i> )
Lake Wisconsin Lions Club	Middleton Lions Club	Woodman's
Lange Living Trust		Herbert H. Kohl Charities

#### *Individuals:*

Charles Cornwell	Bettine Lipman	Barbara Miller	Gerald Ring
Frederick Davis	Abigail A. Loomis	Dale Nordeen	Ronald Thorstad
Jane Eisner			Lee Weiss

### Learning Unified English Braille

Connie Risjord has been meeting with some of you to make the transition from the current English Braille American Edition (EBAE) to Unified English Braille (UEB). Here are some additional resources to reinforce your learning.

The National Federation of the Blind (NFB), under the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS), has completed the *Instruction Manual for Braille Transcribing – UEB Edition, 2015*. It is available in PDF and BRF formats online at <https://nfb.org/braille-certification>. Currently certified transcribers are instructed not to hand in exercises but can self-correct the drills.

WCBVI is offering a "Unified English Braille for Vision Professionals" online course this fall. Registration will be opening soon. This is an intensive 12-session self-study course that will take you through the entire *Rules of Unified English Braille 2013* code book. Each lesson consists of a video and 50 sentences for practice in transcribing and reading the code as well as citing rules. Session videos will be available on YouTube to anyone. (There may be some drills. The assignments are only available to registered participants.)

There is another online opportunity for learning basic UEB at <http://uebonline.org>. This site gives you immediate feedback when you make an error. You can stop at any time and save your place for continuing on later. Ignore the last lesson, it's on formatting... Australian style!

Once you feel comfortable with UEB, you can sign up with NFB to take the exam for obtaining a Letter of Proficiency that is added to your current literary certification. The exam has three parts. Part 1 must be passed before taking Part 2. Part 2 must be passed before taking Part 3. Each part is given two weeks for completion.

## Betty Oakley Honored Twice

At the Annual Meeting of Braille Library and Transcribing Services, Inc. (BLTS) on April 15, 2015, Betty was presented with an engraved floral vase in appreciation of her "35 years of loyal service."

The following month, Betty received a Distinguished Service Award from the United Way of Dane County. The award was presented at the Concourse Hotel and Governors Club May, 1, 2015.

From the nomination sent in by BLTS, the United Way gave this press release:

### Distinguished Service Award

*Betty Oakley has provided services to the Braille Library & Transcribing Services, Inc. for 35 years. Betty takes time to transcribe numerous books of all types so that braille readers can have access to novels, cookbooks, and crafts and other materials. Because of her patience, Betty has been able to train dozens of other students to transcribe as well. Even when the students get frustrated with the material, Betty calmly encourages them to become as successful as they can be. Her nominator Aaron Konkol said, "Betty is one of a few leaders of our group who has the talent, and has taken the time, to teach the Braille course to many aspiring brailleists."*

Hundreds of people were nominated and Betty was one of 64 to receive the Distinguished Service Award. Sue Nelson, who accepted the award in Betty's absence, was in attendance along with President Steven Levine, Kathy Dorn and Aaron Konkol.

What the United Way did not note is that Betty has served on our Board of Directors off and on over the past thirty-five years including Co-Presidency 2001-2003. Her husband Clyde also served on our Advisory Board during the initial years of development of BLTS.

Betty also led a small group of brailleists in producing bookmarks to distribute to libraries and schools. The heavy colored paper bookmarks have the BLTS logo and the alphabet in print that the brailleists transcribe over to show the braille equivalent. This group of dedicated ladies under Betty's leadership are warmly known as the "Bookmark Brigade."

One of her special talents shown within the group was organizing social events and displaying her creative abilities with decorations for holiday social gatherings and serving of delicious desserts.

She has also sponsored our group at Blackhawk Country Club when we needed a place to hold our annual awards luncheons.

## **BLTS 2015 Fall Frolic**

Tuesday, September 29, 2015  
at 3:00 pm in the Library  
followed by the CSCI Open House  
at 4:00 pm throughout the building

BLTS invites you to attend a "Fall Frolic" on Tuesday, September 29, 2015. Please join us in the BLTS Library for desserts and beverages provided by the Board.

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.

Please RSVP by **September 24th** – 608-233-0222 or [office.blts@tds.net](mailto:office.blts@tds.net). Let us know if you need a ride, and we'll make the arrangements.





**Refreshments Will Be Served**

Come join us at an open house. Partners Alzheimer's and Dementia Alliance of Wisconsin, Junior League of Madison, RSVP of Dane County and West Madison Senior Coalition along with Tenants Badger Childhood Cancer Network, Braille Library and Transcribing Services, DaneNet, Green Seal, Theater Bus and Working Capital for Community Needs invite you to visit us. Our building is a community in itself. We work here together every day to provide valuable programs to people who are in need of a little help in their daily lives. Our staff members and volunteers reach out to individuals of all ages. We serve women and children, older adults, persons impacted by any form of dementia and their loved ones, seniors and veterans needing transport to medical and other services. We support individuals wishing to live independently at home, children struggling with cancer treatment, seniors seeking enrichment through outings to the theater, and anyone seeking to read printed material in Braille or via audio. We help community organizations manage data networks and the internet. We promote green and sustainable products, and improve lives through micro-financing and marketing services. We invite you to enjoy our story, see where we work as a part of your neighborhood and the global volunteer network.

Event contact person: Margie Zutter [mzutter@rsvpdane.org](mailto:mzutter@rsvpdane.org) 608-663-7536  
Parking available on Segoe Road

## BLTS Library Update August, 2015

The library often gets feedback and notes from our book borrowers and I thought it would be nice to share one of the comments with you.

*"Just a note to let you know how very much your braille service is appreciated ..... I think braille is a wonderful means of communication and to read a book in braille means so much and is absolutely necessary in my life. Thanks so much for the wonderful service you provide. Keep it available to us, please."*

The BLTS Library Committee met in June, 2015 to review the status of new books for the library. In 2014-2015 fiscal year, we added 7 non-fiction titles, 11 fiction titles and five cookbooks to the collection. Several handicraft books were also added to the collection. We will be meeting again in the fall to select additional books to add to the collection. If you have a suggestion of a book you think our readers would enjoy, please let the office know about it!

We have had a dedicated group of BLTS transcribers learning the new Unified English Braille code, ably taught by Connie Risjord. Since this spring, BLTS has been transcribing children's books in the new UEB code. Wisconsin schools will be teaching this code starting fall 2015 for children in kindergarten through 2<sup>nd</sup> grade. We have had production meetings in July and August and will have another meeting in September. So far 36 UEB print-braille books have been added to the library collection. We will be sending an email to vision teachers a few weeks after the start of classes about the availability of these books for loan.

We have added 16 new library users since January 2015. This is an impressive number of new library users. Many have found us through our website, as well as word of mouth.

Our purchase of 10 new library boxes has helped with our library circulation. Not only has it added much needed boxes to the library, but allowed us to "retire" several old, much used boxes.

Sincerely,  
Patricia Herrling, Library Coordinator

The true secret of happiness lies in taking a genuine interest  
in all the details of daily life.

—William Morris

## Titles Done Since March 2015



THANK YOU, BRAILLISTS!  
(page counts follow names)



### For children

3 UEB P/B books (Sue Nelson, 29), 7 UEB P/B books (Kathy Dorn, 46), 25 UEB P/B books (Barb Schlinkert, 258), 5 UEB P/B books (Kathy Dorn, 39)

### For adults

*Circling Faith* (Sue Nelson, 400), *Hope and Courage Across America* (Julie Schoepp, 498), *I Want That Recipe* (Joel Devore, 270), *Home Cooking* (Julie Schoepp, 226), *Crockpot – Slow Cooker Recipes* (Kathy Dorn, 66), *Dead Lil Hustler* (Judy Amacker, 305), *Mockingjay* (Lori Hanson, 565), *12 Years A Slave* (Joel Devore, 418), *Carpe Diem, Illinois* (Barb Schlinkert, 522), *The Invention of Wings* (Julie Schoepp, 672), *A Dozen 12-Hour Doilies* (Kathy Dorn, 98)

### For schools, non-profits and businesses

*Cover Ltr and Survey* (Patricia Herrling, 11), *Member Centered Plan* (Patricia Herrling, 12)

### Special Projects

Sony Personal Audio System Operating Instructions (Barb Schlinkert, 80), TDS billing (Barb Schlinkert, 16), 3 MG&E bills and 2 flyers (Kathy Dorn, 26) Horticultural Therapy (Patricia Herrling, 16), TDS billing (Barb Schlinkert, 27), 3 MG&E bills and 2 flyers (Kathy Dorn, 25), Genova Diagnostics Assessment and Food Plan (Bev Pfister, 108), MG&E bills and 2 flyers (Kathy Dorn, 31), TDS bill & 1 flyer (Barb Schlinkert, 17) Goodman Theatre Playbill (Patricia Herrling, 40), You're A Shining Star (Kathy Dorn, 24), Easy Crocheted Baby Blankets (Kathy Dorn, 16), Care WI Family Member Handbook (Bev Pfister, 256), MG&E bills & 2 flyers (Kathy Dorn, 25), TDS bill (Barb Schlinkert, 16)

Very little is needed to make a happy life;  
it is all within yourself, in your way of thinking.

—Marcus Aurelius

## New Knit and Crochet Guidelines

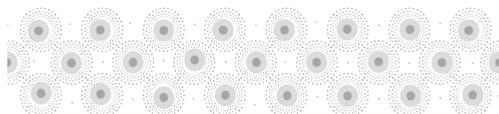
There are new guidelines for Knit and Crochet transcribing from the Braille Authority of North America (BANA). They are available for download in both PDF and BRF formats from their website at <http://www.brailleauthority.org/crafts-hobbies/index.html>. If you need a hard copy (paper braille) version of the guidelines, please email [brailleauthority@gmail.com](mailto:brailleauthority@gmail.com) or call 617-972-7248.



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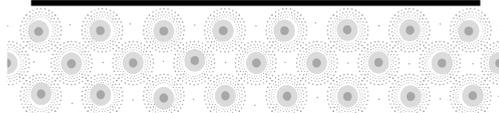


*Newsletter of the Braille Library & Transcribing Services, Inc.*



We're on the web

<http://bltsinc.org/>

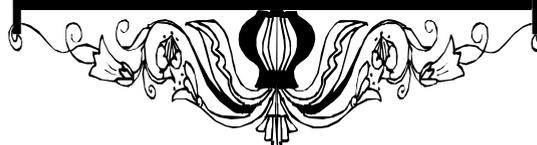


## **Contributors**

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Aaron Konkol  
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Vickie Warner, Editor

Thanks to Michelle Rueckert



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*Answering the Reading Needs of the Blind and Visually Impaired*

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