

DEAR PEARL

September 2019 Volume XLVII - Number 2

Answering the Reading Needs of the Blind and Visually Impaired

President's Report September 2019

This is my first "Dear Pearl" article as the President of BLTS. I chaired my first board meetings this summer and welcomed a new board director, Joan Sholdt. We also had past members in new roles (Connie Risjord as Vice-President and Steve Levine as a board director). I want to take this opportunity to thank Steve Levine for all his years of service as President! He has been an inspiration to me of how to lead an organization and I am so grateful that he is continuing on the board as director so we can continue to benefit from his wisdom.

This has been a busy spring and summer for our organization. It started out with our Annual Meeting in April at Blackhawk Country Club and progressed to the Midwest Braille Conference in Middleton at the end of May. Several people from BLTS were able to attend this conference, which covered topics such as computer tactiles, cartoons and graphic novels, and updates on our braille software, Braille2000. It is always good to connect and learn from fellow braille transcribers across the Midwest.

This summer we had a refresher on print/braille book production, led by Sue Nelson, Kathy Dorn and Barb Schlinkert. We are updating our print/braille collection to UEB books and gradually phasing out some of the older materials. Those new to print/braille production learned our processes and longtime producers of print/braille learned some new tips and tricks of putting these books together as well. Another new endeavor started this summer called "Braille Conversations" (more about that in this newsletter). Suffice it to say that these gatherings allow braille transcribers to come together for community and sharing of problems and solutions. And we also have a lot of fun!

My last bit of news is about our orientation for new braille transcribing students held on Tuesday, September 17th at 10:00am at our offices on Watts Road. If you missed it, don't worry, there is still time to get in on the class if you or someone you know would be interested. But please let us know ASAP so we can plan accordingly. We are looking forward to a new class this fall. Two news articles on BLTS came out in September, one in [The Isthmus](#), as well as a [Middleton Times-Tribune](#) piece, which



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President's Report

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featured our mission and goals at BLTS. We hope these articles will generate a lot of interest in volunteering for our organization. If you know of any friends or acquaintances who might be interested in learning about braille transcribing please pass along the word.

That is it for now. I hope to see many of you around the office or at our Fall Frolic in October.

Patricia Herrling, BLTS President

BLTS COMMITTEES

Looking for an opportunity to get involved in BLTS? (or even more involved than you already are) Below are a listing of our committees and their current chairs, with a brief description of what they do for BLTS. Please contact us at 608-233-0222 or via email at office@bltsinc.org if you want more information about a committee or would like to volunteer.

EDUCATION/INSTRUCTION Chair, Connie Risjord

Responsibilities include training of new braille students for certification, continued education of certified braille transcribers, and fostering of learning and sharing opportunities within BLTS.

FUNDRAISING Chair, Steve Levine/Aaron Konkol

Responsibilities include writing of grants, fundraising outreach, correspondence with members and community, PR and public speaking when requested.

LIBRARY Chair, Patricia Herrling

Organization and maintenance of the braille lending library collection. The Library Advisory Committee participates in the selection of new books and lending material for the library, helps maintain the lending collection including de-selection of older used items, assists with the library inventory database, and helps with unpacking and re-shelving of returned library materials.

NEWSLETTERS/PUBLICATIONS Chairs, Sue Danz, Aaron Konkol

Publication of Dear Pearl newsletter, the BLTS website (including our lending library online database), BLTS brochures, and other materials to be communicated to our members and the general community.

Print/Braille Workshops

As mentioned earlier in the newsletter (President's report), a print/braille production workshop was held in July, led by Sue Nelson, Barb Schlinkert, and Kathy Dorn. On August 6th a second workshop was held to put together the print/braille books that three of our new braillists and a couple of our more established braillists had transcribed. Melody Moore, Joan Sholdt and Lisa Stefl worked hard and learned how many questions can arise when transcribing print/braille books. We had fun and all learned a lot.



We want to get more UEB print/braille books for the library. If you need to clean out some of the picture books that your grandchildren have out grown, please bring the books in and Patricia will sort them and if there are some that we can't use, she will find some good use for them.

Pictured: Joan Sholdt, Lisa Stefl, Sue Danz, Sue Nelson, Barb Schlinkert and Melody Moore

After workshop lunch: sitting-Sue Nelson, Lisa Stefl, Barb Schlinkert, Bev Pfister and Kathy Dorn, standing-Patricia Herrling, Joan Sholdt and Sue Danz



Midwest Regional Braille Conference

Melody Moore

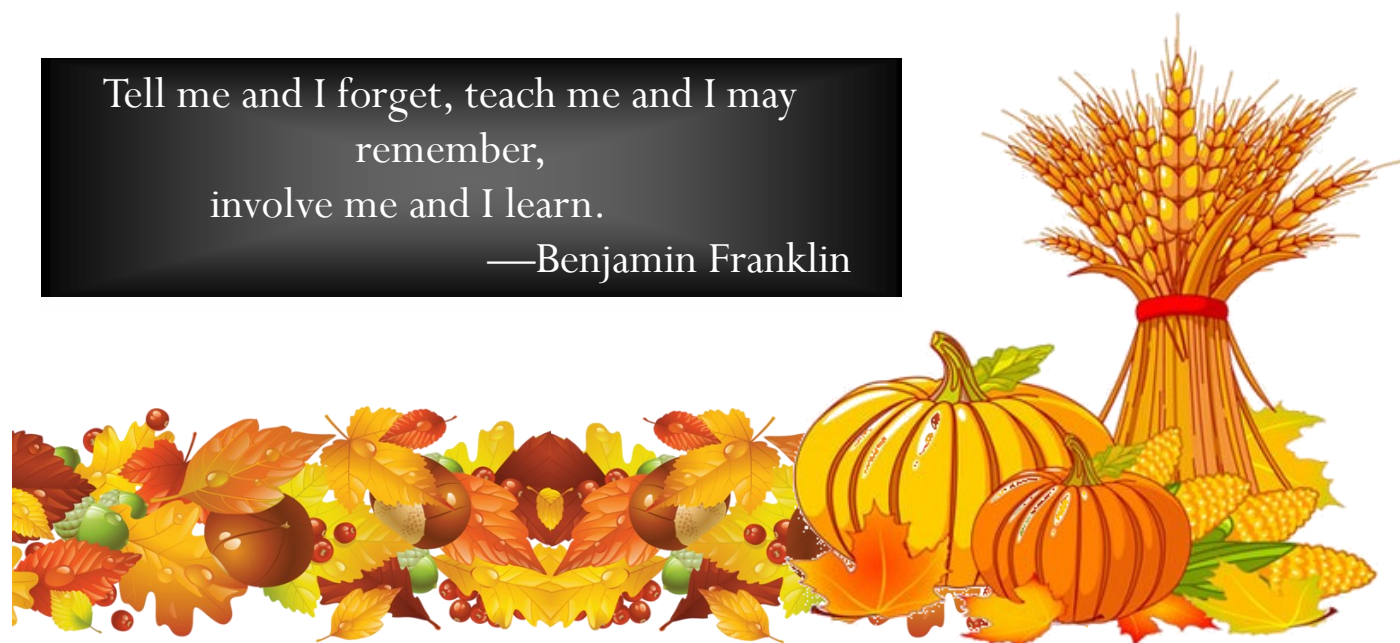
I was certified as a Braille transcriber in the fall of 2018, so attending the Midwest Braille Conference this past May was a first-time experience for me. This day and a half conference, held in Madison, WI this year, was put on by the Wisconsin Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired in the WI Department of Public Instruction. About 100 people attended the conference to hear 16 presentations given by 8 different speakers. Presentations ranged from Beginning and Advanced Braille 2000 classes to a whirlwind tour of Music Braille to several presentations on tactile graphics, as well as other topics. Even though one presenter had to cancel due to health reasons, the substitute presenters did a great job presenting their chosen material.

Since I'm fairly new to all of this, I especially wanted to attend the Braille 2000 sessions to learn any tricks to using this computer program. Bob Stepp didn't disappoint...we got a sneak preview of the next version of Braille 2000, which contains some very useful methods for doing things. Fortunately, there were detailed handouts or I would never have remembered much of it. I'm also fascinated by tactile graphics and how they can be used to make information more clear. What looks pretty to a sighted person may just add confusion to a blind reader.

My favorite part of the conference was lunch on the second day! Not because of the food (though it was good) but because of the chance to meet other attendees and learn how and why they became interested in working or volunteering in this area. I especially enjoyed meeting younger people that have chosen this as their career. Many of us got interested in Braille after retiring from another career so it's great to see those who have their whole career ahead to learn so much more than I ever will. I would definitely recommend attending this conference whenever possible.

Attendees from BLTS were Sue Danz, Kathy Dorn, Patricia Herrling, Melody Moore, Connie Risjord, Barbara Shoemake, Lisa Stefl

Tell me and I forget, teach me and I may
remember,
involve me and I learn.
—Benjamin Franklin



VONNA JOHNSON-PORTER GOODBYE GOOD FRIEND

Steve Levine



The BLTS community and all who knew her lost a dear friend on August 3 with the passing at age 74 of Vonna Johnson-Porter. A visitation, service, and lunch to celebrate her life were held August 12 at Crossroads Church. Although there certainly were tears, there were many more smiles, laughs, and light-hearted stories, as people remembered Vonna's zest for life and her many kindnesses to others. (The Energizer Bunny had nothing on Vonna.) Everyone seemed to have a story and memory of Vonna to share.

Vonna was a pillar of BLTS, both officially and unofficially. She became a certified brailist in 1980 and served as both president and vice president of the organization, as well as being a long-time member of the board of directors. Unofficially, she was the go-to person for whatever needed to be done: making arrangements for our annual meeting and luncheon, finding volunteers to fill out our nomination slate, ordering food for our frolics and other get-togethers. In 2011 Vonna was selected as a "Founding Mother" — BLTS's highest honor. She was a friend to all, kind to everyone she met — the Bible's true definition of a "woman of valor." Our condolences to Alan, her entire family, and everyone whose life she touched.

Goodbye good friend, and thanks.

LET'S TALK BRAILLE!

The first two of BLTS's new "Braille Conversations" sessions have taken place over the summer. It is a great way to see fellow transcribers and talk about particulars that we brailists love to wrap our heads around. The first session was about braille boxes; the second was about braille title pages. Each session begins by viewing a short webinar from the National Braille Association's archives. Discussions during and after the video easily fill our 90 minutes together. The sessions are led by Lindy Walton, BLTS member since 1992 and transcriber of textbooks, classroom materials, technical materials, and pleasure reading. We meet on the third Tuesday of the month, 11 months a year (not December), at 1:30 in the BLTS office. If you have not been receiving the email invitations and would like to join us, please contact Lindy at lindywalton@charter.net. See you next month!

$\sqrt{-1}$ ♥ MATH

Have you ever wondered how to transcribe braille math? There is a document in the BLTS office that you can borrow to get a taste of what the "Nemeth Braille Code for Mathematics and Science" is all about. Ask Sue for NEMETH FOR NOVICES and see if you might want to learn more about this fascinating code.

Titles Done Since March 2019



THANK YOU, BRAILLISTS!
(page counts follow names)



For children

7 P/B books (Sue Nelson, 53), 5 P/B books (Sue Nelson, 44), 3 P/B books (Sue Nelson, 25), 8 P/B books (Sue Nelson, 75)

For adults

Easy Beading (Barb Schlinkert, 150), I've Been Thinking (Joel Devore, 262), Search to Belong (Joel Devore, 626), Ten Things (Joan Sholdt, 152), Kitchen Bright Dishcloths (Kathy Dorn, 44), Terrific Textures for Baby (Kathy Dorn, 29), Where Trust Lies (Julie Schoepp, 532), Mix it Up! (Kathy Dorn, 39), The Wisdom of Sundays (Bev Pfister, 302), Wrapped in Style (Debbie Hanson, 26), Daisy Chains (Bev Pfister, 35), Misc. Mesh Stitch Crochet Patterns (Debbie Hanson, 44), Where Hope Prevails (Debbie Hanson, 520), Keep Calm & Trust God (Sue Nelson, 66), Weight Watchers down to earth (Kathy Dorn, 320), A Quaker Book of Wisdom (Barb Shoemake, 231), Ford County Stories (Bev Pfister, 505), A Brief History of Time (Joel Devore, 391)

For schools, non-profits and businesses

Nasher Sculpture Center Visitor Information (Debbie Hanson, 19), 3 MG&E bills and 2 flyers (Kathy Dorn, 31), Cursillo Movement's Leaders' Manual (Melody Moore, 395), 3 documents for Care Wis. (Sue Nelson, 21), 3 MGE bills and 2 flyers (Kathy Dorn, 51), 2 documents for Care Wis. (Barb Schlinkert, 47), 3 MGE bills and 1 flyer (Kathy Dorn, 33), 3 MGE bills (Kathy Dorn, 26), 3 MGE bills & 2 flyers (Kathy Dorn, 34), 3 MGE bills (Kathy Dorn, 25)

Special Projects

7 P/B books (Barb Schlinkert, 75), LSS Vol 14, Iss 2, Feb 20189 (Joel Devore, 95), P/B Dr Dyslexia Dude (Comic Book) (Sue Danz, 16), LSS Vol 14, Iss 3, Mar 2019 (Joel Devore, 96), LSS Vol 14, Iss 4 Apr 2019 (Joel Devore, 96), Sony Stereo Cassette Deck Oper Inst. (Sue Nelson, 61), LSS Vol 14, Iss 5, May 2019 (Joel Devore, 91), LSS Vol 14, Iss 6, June 2019 (Joel Devore, 96), How Does Weather Affect Joint Pain (Sue Danz, 9), LSS Vol 14, Iss 7, July/August 2019 (Joel Devore, 96), Singer 2263 Instruction Manual (Sue Nelson, 48), 4 P/B books (Bev Pfister, 40), 4 P/B books (Barb Schlinkert, 29)

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No kind action ever stops with itself.

One kind action leads to another.

Good example is followed.

A single act of kindness throws out roots in all directions,
and the roots spring up and make new trees.

The greatest work that kindness does to others
is that it makes them kind themselves.

— Amelia Earhart

BLTS 2019 Fall Frolic

**Tuesday, October 22th, 2019
at 11:30 am in the Library**

BLTS invites you to attend a "Fall Frolic" on Tuesday, October 22th, 2019. Please join us in the BLTS Library for sub sandwiches (donations welcome) as well as 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.

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

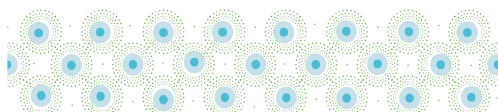
Please RSVP by October 15th – 608-233-0222 or office@bltsinc.org. Let us know if you need a ride, and we'll make the arrangements.





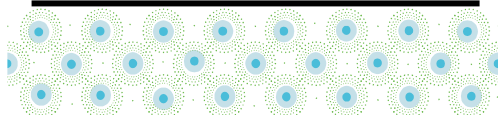
DEAR PEARL

Newsletter of Braille Library & Transcribing Services, Inc.



We're on the web

<http://bltsinc.org/>



Contributors

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Melody Moore
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Sue Danz, Editor



Answering the Reading Needs of the Blind and Visually Impaired



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