

DEAR PEARL

February 2020 Volume XLVIII - Number 1

Answering the Reading Needs of the Blind and Visually Impaired

Annual Meeting and Awards Luncheon

Wednesday April 15, 2020

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

Blackhawk Country Club

3606 Blackhawk Drive, Madison, WI

Followed by Program and Brief Meeting

BLTS invites you to attend its annual meeting and luncheon on Wednesday, April 15, 2020. 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, the always popular chicken and mushroom crepes or a veggie selection (Cost: \$16; see choices below). The luncheon will be followed by an interesting program, after which there will be a brief meeting.

This year's speaker will be Judy Sherry, a transcriber for Low-Incidence Consulting Services (LINCS), an agency that provides itinerant vision teachers in Wis. Her job is to provide braille support for our TVIs who are working with braille readers. Judy was motivated to learn braille when she was a special education aid in a grade school and met her first braille reader, an enthusiastic kindergartener who appeared to be having a very good time learning to decipher all those dots. Judy's braille instruction was through BLTS, back in the days when they were VBTI. 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 10th by emailing office@bltsinc.org or calling 608-233-0222, & remember to include your meal choice. No advance payment necessary, just bring a check or cash to the event. Let us know if you need a ride, and we'll make the arrangements.



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Menu Selections

Chicken and Mushroom Crepes with Wild Rice and Fresh Fruit Garnish

Fettuccine Alfredo with Grilled Vegetables Primavera (vegetarian)

both options include rolls, coffee, tea, iced tea, or milk, & dessert

All selections are \$16 - Cash Bar Available

***RSVP – Please email or call by **April 10, 2020** ***

and remember to include your meal choice.

Any questions? Contact BLTS at 608-233-0222 or office@bltsinc.org

President's Report February 2020

The year 2020. I like the sound of that. It is a nice round number. It reminds me of the old movie "2001: A Space Odyssey". When I saw that, oh so long ago, it was hard to think about what life would be like that far into the future. We should be flying around in space cars by now and having our food delivered completely prepared into our kitchens and having robots do all of our housework. Well, some of those things are already possible and probably the rest are not far off.



For the blind and visually impaired technology is also moving forward. We now have all sorts of devices to assist in everyday living, such as walking sticks that sense boundaries and obstacles, audio books, screen readers for computers and smart phones, etc. As nice as all of this technology can be, it does not replace the need to be fully literate, to be able to both read and write. We sighted folks use technology but we still like to curl up with a good paperback or stick up post-it reminders on the refrigerator. Like so much in life it is a case of and/both, not either/or. BLTS's mission of "transcribing reading materials into braille" is still as necessary as ever. As it states in our Statement of Purpose, "our organization is based on our belief that all people have the right to the opportunity to read."

To that end, BLTS has been busy providing that opportunity to the blind and visually impaired community. The demand for braille transcription for clients increased in 2019, and we also increased the number of library borrowers for our braille reading materials. Our Education Committee has also been busy sponsoring a new initiative, led by Lindy Walton, of holding monthly "Library Conversations" to provide a forum for our transcribers to learn and share information, as well as build community. We have also started a new class of potential braille transcribers. They are a lively group and we hope to increase our roster of transcribers to meet the demand for braille materials in the coming year.

Making sure people know about our organization and services has been a goal for the past year. We have increased communication to vision teachers and parents groups, as well as participated in Midwest Braille conferences. We have joined forces with local organizations such as WisBraille, to publicize our joint services at forums and public speaking opportunities, and optimized the use of our website and social media to make sure our services can be found by those who need them.

In October 2019 we celebrated our first full year at our new location at Watts Road. These new facilities have made it easier for us to do our daily work and host the student classes, continuing education and social events that help make BLTS maintain its excellence in braille transcribing and remain an energetic, forward moving organization meeting the reading needs of the visually impaired.

I look forward to a great year for BLTS in 2020. Spread the word about BLTS to anyone looking for meaningful volunteer work or who might use our services!

Patricia Herrling



SIX-YEAR-OLD TEACHES BRAILLE CLASS

The braille class is moving along with Patricia Herrling teaching a lesson one week and Connie Risjord conducting a study session the next. The study sessions are designed to review, do exercises, and bring in visitors who will introduce the students to the broader world of vision impairment and braille readers.

In October a visitor to the session was a six-year old boy named Donovan, who came with his mother and his special education assistant Lisa Stefl. Donovan was born blind, is in first grade, and already reads braille. Lisa, who is a certified brailist, is his braille teacher. Lisa says that he has been learning braille for a few years and does a great job. He reads mostly uncontracted braille at this time along with alphabetic contractions.

Since at the time of the visit Donovan's reading ability was better than our students, Connie asked if he would like to be teacher for the day. Donovan is a boy full of fun and enthusiasm, and he leapt at the chance. He had everyone entranced. It was a day to be remembered.



Volunteers Needed!

We are in need of volunteers to help assemble books for our library and clients. If you have an hour or two to spare on Tuesday or Thursday mornings, your help would be greatly appreciated. Thanks!

Volunteers are the only human beings on the face of the earth
who reflect this nation's compassion, unselfish caring, patience,
and just plain loving one another.

Lists of Community Donors

Individuals:

Member donations not listed. See [annual report](#) for complete donor list.

Norman & Barbara Berven	Betty Bielefeld	C.D. Cornwell
Jane Eisner	Charlie Jammer	Barbara Dillon Kehrein
Burton Kushner	Abigail Loomis	Dale Nordeen
Carl Rasmussen	Gerald Ring	Ronald Thorstad

Organizations:

Claremont S. Jackman Foundation	Columbus Lions Club	Epic Systems Corp
Evjue Foundation	Faber Moore Family Fund	Faircrest Association Health Fund
Hallman/Lindsay Paints	Herb Kohl Philanthropies	Jack Deloss Taylor Charitable Trust
Johnson & Johnson	Ladies Auxiliary VFW	Lake Wisconsin Lions Club
Madison Community Fdn.	Madison Gas & Electric Fund	Madison-Monona Lioness Club
McFarland Lioness Club	McFarland Lions Club	Middleton Lions Club
Pleasant T. Rowland Foundation	Westmorland Combined Health Fund Drive	Woodman's Food Market, Inc.

BLTS in the News

This fall BLTS was featured in two articles, one in Madison's Isthmus Newspaper written by Steven Potter, and another in the Middleton Times-Tribune by Katherine Perreth. Head on over to our website www.bltsinc.org to read the articles, and share the links with your friends and family!



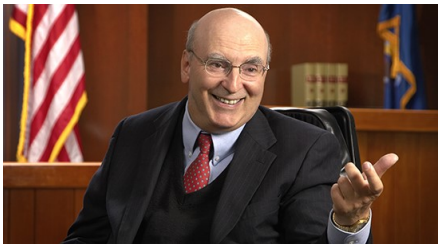
Founders Remembered (by Sue Nelson)



Sue Clark - When I first came to BLTS (VBTI) everyone made me feel welcome, but Sue Clark was the one who made me feel like a long-lost friend even though we had never met. She added happiness and good feelings whenever she joined us for events and never said a negative word about anyone. As one of our original Founders, she has been held in high regard by all of us but didn't seem aware of the great contribution she made to our group. We will all miss Sue but will never forget her.



Shirley Ross - Like Sue, Shirley was another of our early Founders and worked hard to make us the organization we are today. She was friendly and quick witted and volunteered since 1972. While many of you are too new to BLTS to have known Shirley, she was a hard worker and spent many hours setting the high standards that we try to live up to.



Steve Levine - All of you knew Steve who died early in January. We have all been shaken up by his passing. He started taping for BLTS in the early 1980's and was very pleasant to work with. He always accepted any book, no matter how boring, to put onto tape. Over the past 10 years he served on our Board of Directors and was an excellent

President of the Board for most of that time. He received the Founders Award last year and no one deserved it more. He is missed. In his own words:

"Peace. Love. Be well.

Steve

P.S. Think of me as you dine on Blackhawk's chicken crepes."

Why "Dear Pearl"

A burning question in all of your minds is why do we call our newsletter "Dear Pearl." Here is the answer. Those of us who were certified 15 to 20 years ago had to transcribe a letter, the salutation of which was "Dear Pearl." We did this before we did our manuscript and the letter contained all sorts of difficult transcribing situations. It was very challenging to do but was part of our agency's teaching method. (pre-Braille 2000) Also, it is my understanding that in the late 1950's or 60's the braille code was changed and the ar contraction was elevated as a higher level contraction than ea so that words like "dear" and "pearl" would be transcribed differently than they had been and the "Dear Pearl" letter was used to get transcribers used to the change.

Braille Library & Transcribing Services, Inc. Annual Meeting, April 15 2020 NOMINATING SLATE

Officers:

President	Patricia Herrling	2019-2021
Vice President	Constance Risjord	2020-2022
Secretary	Karen Perzentka	2019-2021
Treasurer	Sue Nelson	2020-2022

Board Members:

Joan Sholdt	2019-2021
Sandy Adams	2020-2022
Melody Moore	2020-2022
Kathy Dorn	2020-2022

Office Staff:

Aaron Konkol — Office Manager
Sue Danz — Braille Coordinator



BLTS Lending Library Report 2019

	<u>Year</u>	<u>Adults</u>	<u>Children</u>	<u>Total</u>
Loaned	2019	485	590	1,077

Borrowers

Active: 200 (20 schools total)

New : 15 (7 children's borrowers/5 new schools)

Collection

Total new books added to collection

36 new adult books

70 new children's or print/braille books

10 books removed from collection

Total Inventory: 2,640 items

Observations

A priority goal for 2019 was to look at ways of increasing our communication to schools and potential library users. We have analyzed our website, looked at social media and other websites listing braille lending libraries to make sure we are included and looked at communication with Wisconsin schools and parents of blind students. During 2019 we held a print/braille workshop to introduce/refresh transcribers to the print/braille process. This resulted in 70 new children's books becoming available for borrowing from our library. **A priority goal for 2020** will be to continue to capitalize on our communication with library borrowers, as well as a major look at our braille library collection to make room for new additions and remove unused/poor condition books.

Titles Done Since September 2019



THANK YOU, BRAILLISTS!
(page counts follow names)



For children

Polar, The Titanic Bear (Bev Pfister, 42), 4 P//B books (Bev Pfister, 29), 4 P/B books (Lisa Stefl, 24), 4 P/B books (Joan Sholdt, 24), 4 P/B books (Melody Moore, 23), 4 P/B books (Bev Pfister, 11)

For adults

Story of Arthur Truluv, The (Bev Pfister, 377), Stars Are Fire, The (Julie Schoepp, 464), weightwatchers soups and stews (Melody Moore, 270), Astrophysics for People in a Hurry (Bev Pfister, 249), Delights & Shadows (Kathy Dorn, 76), Easy Gluten-Free Cookbook (Barb Schlinkert, 348), Fish and Seafood (Sue Nelson, 121), simply Better easy potlucks (Sue Nelson, 91), A Stitch in Time (Julie Schoepp, 419), Pampered Chef, The All The Best (Barb Schlinkert, 266), Embroidered Truths (Julie Schoepp, 427), The Blessing Way (Joan Sholdt, 334), A Simple Singing (Debbie Hanson, 580), Sidney Chambers & the Perils of the Night (Lisa Stefl, 584), No Comebacks (Bev Pfister, 520)

For schools, non-profits and businesses

3 MG&E bills (Kathy Dorn, 25), Gundersen (Patient Rights & Responsibilities) (Sue Nelson, 10), Gundersen (Speech Test Battery) (Sue Danz, 9), Gundersen (Pure Tones) (Sue Danz, 2), Food Fight Rest. Group-Luigis Pizza (Sue Nelson, 21), Gundersen (Cochlear Implant Counseling) (Barb Schlinkert, 4), 3 MG&E bills & 1 flyer (Kathy Dorn, 36), Straight No Chaser (playbill) (Kathy Dorn, 12), 3 MG&E bills (Kathy Dorn, 25), TX Riogrande Legal Aid (Sue Danz, 5), Music (Lindy Walton, 1), Phantom of the Opera Program (Sue Nelson, 77), 3 MG&E bills (Kathy Dorn, 25), Music (Lindy Walton, 7), 2 MG&E bills (Kathy Dorn, 25), Blue Man Group Program (Kathy Dorn, 48)

Special Projects

LSS Vol 14, Iss 8 September 2019 (Joel DeVore, 94), Isthmus Article (Sue Nelson, 10), LSS Vol 14, Iss 9 October 2019 (Joel DeVore, 90), Dear Pearl (Kathy Dorn, 19), LSS Vol 14, Iss 10, November 2019 (Joel DeVore, 102), LSS Vol 14, Iss 11, December 2019 (Joel DeVore, 94), LSS Vol 15, Iss 1, January 2020 (Joel DeVore, 102)

I do hope that our spring will be starting shortly and we will all be
able to enjoy some sunshine again.

—Lesley Garrett



DEAR PEARL

Newsletter of the Braille Library & Transcribing Services, Inc.



We're on the web

<http://bltsinc.org/>

Contributors

Sue Danz
Patricia Herrling
Aaron Konkol
Sue Nelson
Constance Risjord

Sue Danz, Editor

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@bltsinc.org
Fax: 608-233-0249
Phone: 608-233-0222
Madison, WI 53719
6501 Watts Rd. Ste. 149

Braille Library & Transcribing Services, Inc.