

DEAR PEARL

December 2020 Volume XLVIII - Number 2

Answering the Reading Needs of the Blind and Visually Impaired

President's Report December 2020

The last few months during this COVID crisis have been a time of challenges and adjustments for BLTS, which reflects many of the same concerns our general society has had to face. But we are very fortunate that we have been able to continue with our work and service to the blind and visually impaired. Social distancing and face masks have allowed BLTS to continue loaning braille books to our readers. Many of them have expressed joy at having this service during these times when many of their other sources of reading materials are not accessible. I know I have certainly taken comfort in escaping into the world of fiction.

Sue Danz (braille coordinator) and Aaron Konkol (office manager) have been able to keep our office and transcribing services running smoothly and efficiently. Luckily our braille transcribers are able to work from home, with only short visits to the office for necessities. Those short visits gave us all a sense of connecting as a community when those opportunities are few and far between lately. A bonus was enjoying the wide variety of colors and patterns in face masks! We have also been able to connect virtually via Zoom for continuing education, board meetings, and teaching new braille students. We have all become more technically savvy than we ever imagined:-)

BLTS has also been able to use this time to explore some new projects. We now have volunteers who help us prepare embossed materials in a way that maintains the quality of the braille raised dots. Kathy Dorn helped us look at our braille cookbook collection and we offered for sale those materials which were either less frequently used or supplanted by newer materials. This resulted in money for BLTS, good homes for old books and much needed shelf space for new additions. We also explored new braille translation software. While Braille2000 remains our mainstay, we purchased four Duxbury licenses. This allowed us to explore a software which may be more user-friendly for Macintosh computer users and keep our options open for any future developments in the use of computer programs for braille transcribing.

As we look toward celebrating 50 years as an organization in 2021, we celebrate the strength of our organization in these trying times. We are truly blessed.

Patricia Herrling, BLTS President



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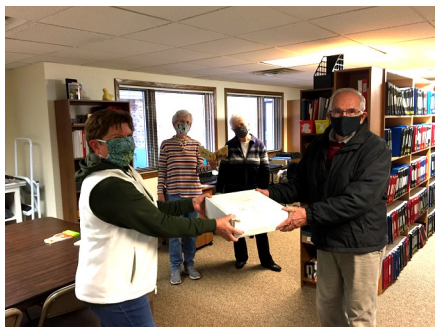
Looking for Fundraising Committee Chair & Members (Aaron Konkol)

Since I started working here in 2007, our fundraising committee has always been myself & Steve Levine. Since he passed away in January, I have taken on all of the fundraising responsibilities. Frankly, there isn't much to the committee, but I could use some more eyeballs and people with which to brainstorm fundraising ideas. If any of you out there who would either be interested in volunteering a small amount of time to chair or join the committee, or know someone else who may have some fundraising/philanthropic experience, you/they would be welcomed with open arms! For more information email me at: office@bltsinc.org

Training (Constance Risjord/Patricia Herrling)

Training braille transcribers has been an important part of our organization since its beginning nearly fifty years ago. With only a few years off when we were moving offices, autumn always brought the beginning of a new braille class. It is with regret that Patricia and Connie announce that due to the covid pandemic there will be no class starting this fall.

Last year's class is finishing up. Two students have sent their manuscripts in for grading and others are ready to do so.



Working thru COVID



Aaron working remotely

Cookbook Re-Sale (Patricia Herrling)



This fall Kathy Dorn helped BLTS evaluate their cookbook collection. As libraries always have to do, we looked at those books seldom used as a way to free up shelf space for new cookbooks. While these books have been replaced by newer ones they were still usable. We decided to do a re-sale of those books to our current braille cookbook readers, offering them at a very reduced price. It was a success! We sold 82 cookbooks for a total of \$410. We will use that money towards producing new braille cookbooks and all of those older books have found new and appreciative homes.

Braille Conversations (Constance Risjord)

Lindy Walton continues her "Braille Conversations" on zoom. These sessions meet the third Tuesday of each month and cover a wide variety of subjects from how to format tables and charts to the meaning of "symbols-sequence" and "standing alone." Attendees are encouraged to bring their braille problems to the group where lively discussions ensue.

Recent Contributions (in alphabetical order)

Member contributions not listed. See annual report for complete list.

If you have any suggestions of organizations or individuals that you don't see on this list, but you think may be interested in donating to BLTS, please contact us and we will reach out to them: of

Non-member Individual Contributors:

Jane Ayer	Charlie Jammer	Mary Nelson
Norman & Barbara Berven	Barbara Dillon Kehrein	Dale Nordeen
Betty N. Bielefeld	Burton J. Kushner	Carl J. Rasmussen
C. D. Cornwell	Abigail Loomis	Gerald Ring
Jane Eisner	Helen & Jeffrey Mattox	Ronald C. Thorstad

Community Organizations:

Claremont S. Jackman Foundation	Jack Deloss Taylor Charitable Trust	McFarland Lions Club
Columbus Lions Club	Johnson & Johnson	Middleton Lions Club
Epic Systems Corp	Ladies Auxiliary VFW 8216	Pleasant T. Rowland Found.
Evjue Foundation, Inc.	Lake Wisconsin Lions Club	Strand Associates, Inc.
Faber Moore Family Fund	Madison Gas & Electric Fnd	Sub-Zero Wolf Found. Inc
Faircrest Assn. Health Fund	Madison-Monona Lioness Club	Westmorland Combined Health Fund Drive
Hallman/Lindsay Paints	McFarland Lioness Club	Woodmans Food Market, Inc.
Herb Kohl Philanthropies		

A Special Thank You to Epic Systems Corp

Over the last several years Epic Systems Corp has not only donated 10's of thousands of dollars (easily our largest community contributor), but they have also donated all 3 desktop computers that we use in the office on a regular basis, and this summer donated 3 lightning fast Lenova laptops.



Braille2000, the computer software we use to transcribe all of our projects, is not available for Apple computers without jumping through a lot of hoops, so the board decided to seek out some new laptops for the students to borrow while they go through the braille transcribing course. Mary Nelson (Treasurer Sue Nelson's daughter) has been working at Epic for many years, and was able to submit our request. Almost immediately Sue had 3 amazing laptops, and we are all set to go for the next round of students!

Thank you, Epic Systems Corp for your continued support of our small but impactful organization!

Titles Done Since February 2020



THANK YOU, BRAILLISTS!
(page counts follow names)



For children

Max Einstein The Genius Experiment (Melody Moore, 360), 5 Print/Braille Books (Bev Pfister, 107), Look Both Ways (Barb Schlinkert, 198), 6 Print/Braille Books (Barb Schlinkert, 69), Beep and Bob (Barb Schlinkert, 80), Changes for Felicity (Barb Schlinkert, 64)

For adults

Born A Crime (Bev Pfister, 486), How Happiness Happens (Julie Schoepp, 299), Days Gone By (Barb Schlinkert, 88), Dead Firefly (Kathy Dorn, 299), Nanaville (Barb Schlinkert, 184), Farmer's Market Vegetarian (Kathy Dorn, 225), A Hard Man to Forget (Joan Scholdt, 240), House of Unexpected Sisters (Joel Devore, 394), Quakers of New Garden, The (Melody Moore, 528), Turning Point (Julie Schoepp, 427), Amish Front Porch Stories (Julie Schoepp, 540), Wisdom for Each Day (Julie Schoepp, 517), Cookbooks: Can't Believe It's Not Butter, Oreo, Skippy, Ragu, Lipton & Hellmann's (Barb Schlinkert, 474), Crochet Car Seat Blankets (Barb Schlinkert, 68), Easy Breads (Barb Schlinkert, 166), A Faithful Gathering (Julie Schoepp, 564), Little Paris Bookshop, The (Bev Pfister, 574), Notre Dame (Kathy Dorn, 65), Evvie Drake Starts Over (Barb Schlinkert, 504), My First Ladies (Debbie Hanson, 334), Dead Big Dawg (Debbie Hanson, 274), Let Your Heart Be Light (Lori Hanson, 250), Where the Crawdads Sing (Joel Devore, 584), The Rooster Bar (Debbie Hanson, 591), Rumpole and the Angel of Death (Bev Pfister, 555), The Guardians (Julie Schoepp, 586), Chinese Favorites (Sue Nelson, 90), Irish Cooking (Barb Schlinkert, 90), Call the Nurse (Patricia Herrling, 507), Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine (Debbie Hanson, 582), The Instant Pot (Sue Nelson, 423), A Book of Comfort for Those in Sickness (Julie Schoepp, 119), Becoming (Debbie Hanson, 890)

For schools, non-profits and business

Hearing Therapy Manual (Kathy Dorn, 98), MD Transition Resource Guide (Sue Nelson, 61), 3 MGE bills (Kathy Dorn, 25), DoubleTree Bistro 525 Menu (Sue Nelson, 13) 3 MGE bills (Kathy Dorn, 25), 2 MGE bills (Kathy Dorn, 20), 3 MGE bills (Kathy Dorn, 26), 3 MGE bills (Kathy Dorn, 35), 3 MGE bills (Kathy Dorn, 27), 3 MGE bills (Kathy Dorn, 29), 3 MGE bills (Kathy Dorn, 34)

Special Projects

Wedding Invitation (Sue Danz, 1), Music Reference Guide (Lindy Walton, 6), Blindshell Cell Phone (Sue Nelson, 13), LSS Vol 15, Iss 2, Feb 2020 (Joel DeVore, 102), LSS Vol 15, Iss 3, March 2020 (Joel DeVore, 108), LSS Vol 15, Iss 4, April 2020 (Joel DeVore, 110), LSS Vol 15, Iss 5, May 2020 (Joel DeVore, 110), LSS Vol 15, Iss 6, June 2020 (Joel DeVore, 110) LSS Vol 15, Iss 7, July/Aug 2020 (Joel DeVore, 108), Exercises (Sue Nelson, 12), Music (Lindy Walton, 13), Music (Lindy Walton, 3), Gary Wright CD (Sue Danz, 24), LSS Vol 15, Iss 8, Sept 2020 (Joel DeVore, 108), Staff Action Plan (Barb Schlinkert, 24), Thru the Bible (Sue Nelson, 24), iRobot Roomba (Sue Nelson, 33), Analog Talking Watch (Sue Danz, 10), Amazon Echo DOT (Sue Nelson, 13), EBL Charger (Barb Schlinkert, 11), Letter from NABA (Sue Danz, 9), My Choice Card (Sue Danz, 1), Patient Visit Information (Melody Moore, 29), Clarity Talking Phone and Quick Guide (Sue Nelson, 52)

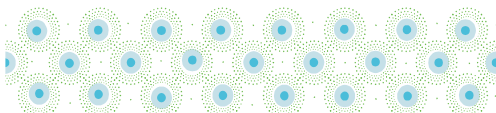
“Ultimately, the greatest lesson that COVID-19 can teach humanity is that we are in this together.

—Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw



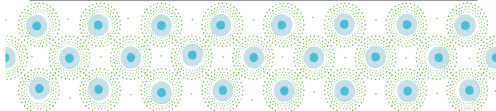
DEAR PEARL

Newsletter of Braille Library & Transcribing Services, Inc.



We're on the web

<http://bltsinc.org/>



Contributors

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Constance Risjord

Sue Danz, Editor

Answering the Reading Needs of the Blind and Visually Impaired



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