

DEAR PEARL

April 2021 Volume XLVIII - Number 1

Answering the Reading Needs of the Blind and Visually Impaired

Virtual Annual Meeting

Wednesday April 14, 2021

Social Time: 11:30 a.m.

Meeting and Program/Speaker 12:00 p.m.

BLTS invites you to attend its annual meeting on Wednesday, April 14, 2021. This meeting will be held via Zoom. The link for the meeting will be sent to all members the day before the meeting.

11:30 a.m.: Meet and Greet

Please join us to meet and greet old and new BLTS friends. Zoom allows us to see each other without masks!

12:00 p.m.: Election of Officers

The nominating slate will be in the Dear Pearl, which you will all receive before this meeting. For those of you who cannot make this Zoom meeting your "Aye" will be assumed unless you email us specifically otherwise.

12:15 p.m.: Program

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 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!



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

President's Report April 2021



Welcome to the celebration! 2021 is the year in which we will be celebrating 50 years as an organization serving the needs of the blind and visually impaired community. We have an anniversary committee busily planning activities throughout the year, which we hope will include an in-person event in the fall.

We will also be holding an annual meeting this year via Zoom. We will have a speaker and time to greet and chat with people you may not have seen for a while. You will also hear about fun events celebrating our anniversary, so you can mark your calendars. Details about that are inside this newsletter.

Our office and volunteers have continued to transcribe and lend books throughout this pandemic. Thanks in large part to two new embossers, one of which was a donation, things are humming along.

Our last class for new braille transcribers is coming to a close, with two newly certified transcribers to welcome to BLTS (see information about them inside), as well as two transcribers in the process of certification.

Thanks to our volunteers the braille library is making room for new materials while making sure any usable older materials find a good home. This summer will be a major reorganizing of the library. We are also researching ways we can improve our library database to make it easier for people to find the materials they need. Technology is constantly changing and we want to make sure we are as efficient and effective as possible.

That is it for now. We hope to see many of you at one of our anniversary celebrations this year. I look forward to visiting with all of you and hear stories of VBI, VBTI and BLTS from years past!

Patricia Herrling,
BLTS President



Welcome To Our Newest Braille Transcribers!

BLTS welcomes two new braille transcribers. After completing the braille transcribing course through BLTS both Giso Broman and Lynn Mack submitted their manuscripts and were certified by the Library of Congress. Both of them are continuing work on their projects and we look forward to working with them in the coming years. I have asked them both to share a little about what motivated them to become braille transcribers.

Giso Broman



I enrolled in the Braille class in fall of 2019 because I wanted to learn something new and give back to the community. I have always been interested in languages and codes. I majored in Portuguese at UW and went on to earn my Masters' in Library Science. I work as a technology consultant at CUNA Mutual Group.

Lynn Mack

I was definitely most inspired by my sister. If it wasn't for her I never would have known that there was such a thing as a braille transcriber. It took a little bit of a nudge but as soon as I started learning I was hooked. I enjoy doing it for the same reason she does, and probably most people. We are doing something that engages our minds and we can do in the comfort of our home, to name just a few, but most importantly we're doing something of value that helps others.

Thrivent Choice Dollars

If you are a member of Thrivent Financial you may have Thrivent Choice Dollars to direct to a charitable organization.

BLTS is an approved recipient of Thrivent Choice Dollars. If you are a Thrivent member and are not sure if you have dollars to direct, or how to direct your dollars, contact your financial representative or Thrivent's Home Office. The deadline for directing your 2020 dollars is March 31, 2021.

Thank you for considering BLTS as the recipient of your Thrivent Choice Dollars.

A big thank you to one of our newest BLTS members and recently certified brailist, Lynn Mack for taking the initiative to get BLTS on the list of approved charitable organizations! We are lucky to have her!

Music comes from an icicle as it melts, to live again as spring water.
—Henry Williamson

Lists of Community Donors

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

Individuals:

Jane Ayer	Norman & Barbara Berven	C.D. Cornwell
Jane Eisner	Mary Hoepfinger	Barbara Kehrein
Burton Kushner	Betty Lipman	Abigail Loomis
Helen & Jeffrey Mattox	Mary Nelson	Gerald Ring
Elizabeth Stoffel	Ronald Thorstad	Valerie Weiner

Organizations:

Amazon Smile	American Legion Post 501	Claremont S. Jackman Foundation
Epic	Faircrest Association Health Fund	Herb Kohl Philanthropies
Jack Deloss Taylor Trust	Johnson & Johnson	Ladies Auxiliary VFW 8216
Madison-Monona Lioness Club	McFarland Lioness Club	McFarland Lions Club
Middleton Lions Club	PayPal Giving Fund	Pleasant T. Rowland
Strand Associates	Sub-Zero Wolf Foundation, Inc.	Thrivent Choice Financial
Wis. Council of the Blind and Visually Impaired	Westmorland Combined Health Fund	



Embosser Donated by Madison Metropolitan School District

Since early 2020 we've had only one working Index Basic-D braille embosser. In July our only working Basic-D embosser went down. We quickly purchased a refurbished Basic-D V5 as a replacement but it was expensive. That put us back into production but didn't completely solve our problem. We need a second embosser on hand as a backup, plus we often have enough work to utilize both embossers at the same time.

Lindy Walton suggested that we check with the Madison Metropolitan School District. Lindy thought they may be willing to part with one of their two Basic-D's because it was not being used. We reached out to Lindy's former supervisor, Joanne Grassman. After checking with others, Joanne was able to authorize the donation of their Basic-D V3 to BLTS. The V3 is the same model we used previously and we are quite comfortable using it.

Thanks to Lindy for her suggestion. Special thanks to Traci McDonald & Joanne Grassman for coordinating the donation. As of NYE 2020, we are back to 100% embossing efficiency!

In Memory of



Shirley Mae Haase of Middleton , WI made hundreds of lives brighter by her lifetime of volunteering, including over three thousand hours with the Attic Angel Community. Shirley learned to transcribe for VBTI (now BLTS) books into braille in 1972 and followed that up with swim lessons for the sight impaired.

Every spring is the only spring, a perpetual astonishment.

—Ellis Peters

Braille Library & Transcribing Services, Inc.
Annual Meeting, April 14, 2021
NOMINATING SLATE

Officers:

President	Patricia Herrling	2021-2023
Vice President	Constance Risjord	2020-2022
Secretary	Karen Perzentka	2021-2023
Treasurer	Sue Nelson	2020-2022

Board Members:

Joan Sholdt	2021-2023
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 2020

	<u>Year</u>	<u>Adults</u>	<u>Children</u>	<u>Total</u>
Loaned	2020	617	468	1,085

Borrowers

Active: 192 (21 schools) New : 17 borrowers

Collection

Total new books added to collection

49 new adult books

40 new children's or print/braille books

Total Inventory: **2,613** items

Observations

Circulation is up slightly from last year. Our Library Committee held three meetings, selecting new books for the library based on our clientele's reading preferences. During this COVID pandemic year we received many thanks from our library users! They appreciated that our library was still open for business during this challenging time. A priority goal for 2020 was to look at our braille library collection to make room for new additions and remove unused/poor condition books. With the help of Kathy Dorn and other volunteers we were able to weed our cookbook collection, resulting in sales of many still useable books to happy clientele. We did the same for the children's book collection. **Goals for 2021** include exploring alternative library database options to our current Works database, which would allow for easier access to our collection, as well as completing the weeding of the adult fiction/nonfiction collection .

Titles Done Since November 2020



THANK YOU, BRAILLISTS!
(page counts follow names)



For adults

Our Better Angels (Julie Schoepp, 318), ten poems to change your life (Sue Danz, 209), Contentment (Joel DeVore, 148), Art of Racing in the Rain, The (Melody Moore, 420), Book of Lost Friends, The (Julie Schoepp, 743), Man I Never Met, The (Joan Sholdt, 278), Crockpot Holiday Recipes (Kathy Dorn, 93), So Cute Scrubbies (Sue Nelson, 78), Cave of Bones (Debbie Hanson, 568), How to Live a Christian Life (Barb Schlinkert, 113), Why Suffering (Debbie Hanson, 382), Mug Shots (Debbie Hanson, 54), Robert B Parker's The Hangman's Sonnet (Bev Pfister, 557), Sing To It (Bev Pfister, 166), New Jersey Wool Walk Squares (Sue Danz, 157)

For schools, non-profits and businesses

3 MGE bills (Kathy Dorn, 35), 3 MGE Bill (Kathy Dorn, 28), 3 MGE bills (Kathy Dorn, 32)

Special Projects

LSS Vol 15 Iss 9 Oct 2020 (Joel Devore, 110), LSS Vol 15 Iss 10 Nov 2020 (Joel Devore, 119), CD inserts (Debbie Hanson, 329), LSS Vol 15 Iss 11 Dec 2020 (Joel Devore, 107), LSS Vol 16 Iss 1 Jan 2021 (Joel Devore, 106), WW Zero Points List (Sue Nelson, 12), TExES 231 Study Guide (Bev Pfister, 663), 23 Print/Braille Books (Barb Schlinkert, 164), 9 Print/Braille Books (Bev Pfister, 79)

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

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Patricia Herrling
Aaron Konkol

Sue Danz, Editor

Answering the Reading Needs of the Blind and Visually Impaired



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