**Spring 2011** **Newsletter of the Wisconsin Talking Book and Braille Library**

**HAPPY 80TH ANNIVERSARY TO THE NATIONAL LIBRARY SERVICE!**

The Talking Book program traces its beginnings to March 3, 1931, when President Herbert Hoover signed the Pratt-Smoot Act into law. This legislation authorized the distribution of embossed books—a predecessor to Braille—through a network of regional libraries. Two years later, the act was amended to include recorded books.

Today the NLS network includes more than 100 libraries, including the Wisconsin Talking Book and Braille Library, which distribute audiobooks (now in digital format) and Braille books to a readership of more than 850,000. Patrons can choose from more than 320,000 titles in the NLS *International Union Catalog*. Talking Books offer patrons the ability to read independently and strengthen their connections with others and the world around them. "Thank you so much for giving me the ability to read again," one patron recently wrote. "You have opened a beautiful world for me."

**A Talking Book timeline**

**1931** The Pratt-Smoot Act establishes a national library program administered by the Library of Congress—what is known today as NLS Talking Books.

**1935** Twenty-seven book titles—including the four Christian Gospels, historical documents, and a variety of Shakespeare's works—are available through the program on long-playing records. Records in various forms would continue to be used for more than 50 years.

**1952** An amendment to the Pratt-Smoot Act makes children eligible for the service.

**1962** The program broadens again, providing musical scores and other instructional music materials.

**1966** Congress passes legislation extending free library service to physically handicapped readers.

**1968** Audiocassettes are added to the talking-book program and eventually replace the open-reel tapes that had been used since 1959.

**1978** The Library of Congress's Division for the Blind and Physically Handicapped is renamed the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped.

**2009** Digital talking-book players start replacing analog cassette players.

**NEW ADDITIONS TO THE DESCRIPTIVE DVD COLLECTION**

(Please ask us for the DVD catalog if you don't already have one)

**DVD00469**  
Toy Story 3  
(Starring Tom Hanks and Tim Allen, 103 min., 2010)  
From Disney-Pixar. The toys are mistakenly delivered to a day-care center instead of the attic right before Andy leaves for college, and it's up to Woody to convince the other toys that they weren't abandoned and to return home.

**DVD00470**  
Land of the Lost  
(Starring Will Ferrell, 102 min., 2009)  
On his latest expedition, Dr. Rick Marshall is sucked into a space-time vortex alongside his research assistant and a redneck survivalist. In this alternate universe, these three make friends with a primate named Chaka, their only ally in a world full of dinosaurs and other fantastic creatures.

**DVD00471**  
Up!  
(96 min., 2009)  
From Disney-Pixar. By tying thousands of balloons to his home, 78-year-old Carl Fredricksen sets out to fulfill his lifelong dream to see the wilds of South America. Right after lifting off, however, he learns he isn't alone on his journey, since Russell, a wilderness explorer 70 years his junior, has inadvertently become a stowaway on the trip.

**DVD00472**  
Love Happens  
(Starring Aaron Eckhart and Jennifer Aniston, 109 min., 2009)  
A widower whose book about coping with loss turns him into a best-selling self-help guru, falls for the hotel florist where his seminar is given, only to learn that he hasn't yet truly confronted his wife's passing.

**DVD00473**  
The Last Airbender  
(103 min., 2010)  
Experience the thrilling live-action adventure based on the hit Nickelodeon series.

**DVD00474**  
Evan Almighty  
(Starring Steve Carell and Morgan Freeman, 96 min., 2007)  
God contacts Congressman Evan Baxter and tells him to build an ark in preparation for a great flood.

**DVD00475**  
Grown Ups  
(Starring Adam Sandler and Kevin James, 102 min., 2010)  
After their high school basketball coach passes away, five good friends and former teammates reunite for a Fourth of July holiday weekend.

**DVD00476**  
A Christmas Carol  
(Starring Jim Carrey, 96 min., 2009)  
An animated retelling of Charles Dickens' classic novel about a Victorian-era miser taken on a journey of self-redemption, courtesy of several mysterious Christmas apparitions.

**DVD00477**  
How to Train your Dragon  
(98 min., 2010)  
A hapless young Viking who aspires to hunt dragons becomes the unlikely friend of a young dragon himself, and learns there may be more to the creatures than he assumed.

**DVD00478**  
The Vampire's Assistant: Cirque Du Freak  
(Starring John C. Reilly and Salma Hayek, 109 min., 2009)  
A young boy named Darren Shan meets a mysterious man at a freak show who turns out to be a Vampire. After a series of events Darren must leave his normal life and go on the road with the Cirque Du Freak and become a Vampire.

**TAKE YOUR NEW DIGITAL PLAYER WITH YOU ON YOUR VACATION TRIP!**

If you are downloading books from the BARD site, you could download a small library of books onto a single flash drive or purchased cartridge. A 1GB flash drive or cartridge easily holds 3-4 adult books or a few more children's books. To choose the book you want to read from that multi-book flash drive or cartridge, use the "Bookshelf" feature on your Play/Stop button. If you are not downloading from BARD, but need extra books for your vacation, call us and we will send you extra books.

**STUDENTS! SUMMER VACATION IS COMING!**

The Wisconsin Talking Book Library knows that summer is a great time to read for fun! During the school year, you probably were busy with your required textbook reading. How nice to relax with pleasure reading! Call the Library to make sure your Request List is full of your favorite stories and to make sure that your shipping address for the summer is correct. If you are not automatically receiving books, you may choose to switch to that library service and always have a good Talking Book on hand to read.

**USING THE BOOKSHELF FEATURE ON YOUR NEW DIGITAL PLAYER**

If your book cartridge or flash drive has several books loaded on it, you can jump from book to book by using the "Bookshelf" feature on your player. After inserting the book cartridge (or flash drive), hold down the "Play/Stop" button until it says "Bookshelf." It will announce how many books are on the cartridge. The first book will be announced. If that is not the book you want, press the "Forward" button. The second book on the cartridge will be announced. If that is the one you want to read, press the "Play/Stop" button to start up the book. To go back to an earlier announced book, access the "Bookshelf" function again, but use the "Rewind/Reverse" button to back up to the desired book.

**HELP US TO HELP YOU**

When you contact the Wisconsin Talking Book and Braille Library we have a couple of suggestions that can make your communication with us more efficient:

When Calling:

* Please before you call turn off any background noise.
  + Radios, TVs, other people talking, etc. can make it very difficult to hear you.
* Please start the call with your name.
  + Before we can do anything we need to access your records and we cannot do that without your name!
  + Also be prepared to spell your last name. There are numerous ways to spell even the most common last name and we want to get it right the first time.
* When leaving a message, please slowly spell your last name.
  + Often when we get messages there is a lot of information and again the first thing we need to know is who you are so we can access your records.

When Writing:

* Do not put notes in the boxes you are returning to us!
  + The post office does not like this and they often remove the notes so we do not get them.
  + If you want to mail something to us, you can send it without postage. Just put it in an envelope addressed to us, do not seal it and write "Free Matter for the Blind" where you would put the stamp.
* Please print as legibly as possible.
  + If writing is difficult for you, please consider calling us instead.
* Please let us know if you want any of the books you are requesting right away.
  + Otherwise we put everything on your request list.

When Emailing:

* Again, please let us know who you are.
  + We cannot always tell who you are by email address. Also if you have a friend or loved one email us on your behalf, please make sure they tell us who they are contacting us for.

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