

DOTS and DECI BELS DOTS AND DECI BELS

The Newsletter of the Perkins Braille & Talking Book Library

Winter 2011

Newsline® Offers Even More!

Through the Newsline program offered by the Perkins Library, individuals can listen to national newspapers, magazines, job and television listings via touch-tone phone, over a text-only website, or by download to a digital talking book player.

Massachusetts newspapers on Newsline include the *Berkshire Eagle*, *Boston Globe*, *Boston Herald*, *Cape Cod Times*, *Christian Science Monitor*, *Worcester Telegram & Gazette*, and many more.

New! Job Listings

With content from Career Builder, a national job classifieds provider, patrons can independently search hundreds of thousands of job listings that match their education, skills, and interests. Listings can be searched by category or keyword, saved for later reference, or sent to your own email account. The email will contain the listing and an application form.

Profile information and search

preferences can be customized and saved. Listings are pulled fresh each time you call to provide the newest search results.

Newspapers in your Inbox

Content can be emailed to your inbox in DAISY format to be read on a computer or portable device.

Television Listings

Newsline provides local TV listings. Customize the channel lineup to discover what is on your favorite stations.

Magazines

Newsline recently added several magazines. Available magazines include: *AARP Bulletin*, *Diabetes Self Management*, *The Economist*, *Glamour*, *Mac World*, *Men's Journal*, *The New Yorker*, *Parade*, *Popular Science*, *Rolling Stone*, *Smithsonian*, *Time*, and *US Weekly*.

Contact the Library to get started with the revolutionary job listings feature and other aspects of Newsline.

Call

617.972.7240
800.852.3133

TTY

617.972.7690

Email

Library@Perkins.org

Library Hours

Monday-Friday
8:30 to 5:00

Getting the Word Out about the Library

The Perkins Library currently serves over 24,000 people with print disabilities throughout Massachusetts. There are 150,000 additional individuals and agencies eligible for our service, but haven't yet heard of the program. In addition to serving people who are blind or visually impaired, the Library serves anyone with a physical disability making it difficult to hold a book or turn pages (i.e. arthritis, stroke, Parkinson's disease) or a reading disability such as dyslexia.

To spread the word, we have welcomed Debby Smith as the Library Outreach Coordinator. She identifies groups and service providers who interact with potential patrons and informs them about the Library's services. Smith has worked in the blindness field for thirty years as an administrator and as a rehabilitation specialist.

Smith exhibits at statewide conventions, including conferences for councils on aging staff and occupational therapists. She visits commissions on disabilities and speaks to support groups for people with low vision and for people who have had strokes or other physical conditions. These outreach efforts help grow the number of patrons who use the Library, expand current

patrons' use, and increase Library awareness.

"It is so rewarding to share this wonderful service with people who never knew it was available to them!" says Smith. Current patrons have expressed to her how the Library positively impacts their daily lives and how they enjoy the new easy-to-use digital player.

You, too, can be an ambassador for the Library. Please tell those you know who have difficulty reading print about the Library and have them contact us for information and applications. We send materials to doctors, optometrists, physical therapists, and other professionals who work with eligible patrons. Every effort helps those who cannot use traditional print reconnect with reading.

For more information or to schedule a visit for your group or workplace, please contact Debby Smith at 617-972-7376 or Debby.Smith@Perkins.org.

Dots & Decibels is also available on cassette, in braille, and via email. Contact the library if you wish to change the format you are receiving.

End of an Era

October 1, 2010 marked the end of an era for the talking book program. The last cassette books were produced for the library network. New books will be produced in the digital format only.

If you have not yet received your free digital player, contact us so we can get you started. Patrons can't say enough about how easy it is to use, and it provides listeners with superior sound quality. Currently our digital book collection contains 4,000 titles, with more arriving every day! Don't be left out of the buzz - get your new digital player now!

BARD Update

Once you receive your digital machine, don't forget to sign up for BARD (Braille and Audio Reading Download). In addition to the digital cartridges you will get in the mail from the Library, you can download unlimited books and magazines. Sign up for BARD at nlsbard.loc.gov/MA.

Listen to your downloads on your new player by transferring them using a thumb drive or by putting them on a blank cartridge. To purchase blank cartridges, visit www.perkinsproducts.org. The cost of a 2GB cartridge is \$11.99.

Perkins Products Demo Center

The Perkins Products Assistive Technology Demo Center and Store has opened next door to the Library. Adaptive Technology, a division of Perkins Products, opened this center with high and low-tech assistive devices for people who are visually impaired. You can see and touch the products and, with the assistance of highly experienced staff, determine which products best meet your needs. The staff can introduce you to devices to help you read printed material, access the internet or organize your living space. Training, technology evaluations and the most current devices to increase your independence are available for purchase.

Please visit to check out slates and styluses, the latest computer access software, or to see which handheld magnifier suits you best. Call 617-972-7308 to schedule an appointment.

MaryBeth Wise Visits Perkins

On December 2, 2010, over forty studio volunteer narrators and reviewers attended a training led by MaryBeth Wise, former narrator for the Library of Congress, National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS). Wise shared techniques, strategies and solutions to issues that arise for talking book narrators.

Wise previously served as an NLS Quality Assurance Specialist and talking book narrator. She is now an NLS Network Consultant. As a narrator, Wise recorded over 80 titles, including D.H. Lawrence's *Women in Love* (DB/RC 61435), Donna Tart's *The Little Friend* (DB/RC 55856), and Patricia Highsmith's *The Talented Mr. Ripley* (DB/RC 50315).

Wise played various samples of narration styles: suspense, passion, irony, kids stories, sadness, sarcasm, and humor. She then opened the floor for questions and lively discussion. Participants also received narration feedback from a panel of Library patrons. Library Director Kim Charlson moderated as panelists Paul Saner, Brian Charlson, and Judi Cannon shared their experiences of what they find most appealing

and which styles of reading are less enjoyable. In the afternoon, Wise held one-on-one reading and training sessions for twenty narrators.

Wise took time out of her busy schedule to narrate the preschool title *Lemon the Duck* (DBM 1192) in the studio. She was also honored at a reception sponsored by the Friends of the Perkins Library. Please contact the Library to borrow any books narrated by Wise, locally produced books, or any other books!



MaryBeth Wise with narrators Bette Lavery and David Curtis

The Library has several eNewsletters to keep you connected between issues of *Dots & Decibels*. The *General List*, *PerKIDS List*, *Recommended Reads List*, *Studio Releases*, and *Perkins Insight List* target specific topics.

Email the Library to subscribe to the eNewsletters that interest you!

Farewell to Unabridged, Hello to Overdrive

Since November 2005, patrons downloaded digital audio books from Overdrive through the Unabridged Project. Unabridged provided a transition to a downloadable digital audio book collection while BARD (the Braille and Audio Reading Download) was being developed by the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped.

Unabridged was discontinued on December 31, 2010 due to budget constraints at the seven participating talking book libraries and declining usage of the service.

Perkins is now collaborating with the Boston Public Library to allow patrons to access the same Overdrive downloadable collection. Thousands of current fiction and nonfiction audio books can be downloaded with a Perkins ecard number.

This collaboration will make more materials accessible to interested patrons. Access to Overdrive content is an additional complementary service to the NLS BARD download program.

Overdrive materials will not play on the NLS player. Your own accessible player will need to be able to play books in the protected Windows Media Audio (WMA)

format. Contact the Library for your ecard to download Overdrive books.

New Digital Routine

Sometimes it takes a while to learn a new routine. This checklist will help you review the digital mailing procedure:

- Before mailing the case, confirm that the book or magazine cartridge is inside.
- Check that the latches are firmly closed.
- If you find a cartridge after you mailed the container, contact the Library.
- We return the empty containers we receive in case you forgot to put the cartridge in the container.
- Wrap a rubber band around the cartridge if there is a problem with the book.
- Please do not return two cartridges in one mailing case.

We want to keep our cartridges and their containers together, and we want to be able to send you more reading material! Thank you for making certain that your book goes in the mail correctly so others can enjoy reading it as well.

Described Movie News

DVD Catalog

The Library offers descriptive DVDs. Described videos have a second audio track with a narrator's voice describing the action on the screen during the breaks in the dialog and sound effects. Contact the Library to receive the latest DVD catalog with over 200 described titles.

Described Movies in Theaters

Thanks to Attorney General Martha Coakley and her accessibility team, accessible movie theaters are being added across Massachusetts. All National Amusements, AMC and Regal Entertainment Group theaters will have at least one accessible auditorium. The total number of accessible auditoriums will increase 450% from 14 to 63.

To sign up for the *Bay State Council of the Blind* weekly list of described movies playing in these theaters, send your request to the Library.

Contact the Library for a complete list of these movie theater locations that show described movies (where you can borrow headphones from customer service and listen to the description).

21st Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act

On October 8, 2010, President Obama signed the *21st Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act*. The legislation requires smart phones, television programs and other communications technologies to be accessible to people with vision or hearing loss.

Perkins President Steven Rothstein and Library Director Kim Charlson were at the White House signing ceremony, along with music legend Stevie Wonder. The signing marked one of the most significant victories for the disability community since the *Americans with Disabilities Act* was signed twenty years ago.



Rothstein, Representative Markey, Kim and Brian Charlson at the White House

Congressman's Special Message for Patrons

Congressman Barney Frank visited the Library recording studio in February 2010 to record a special message for his own biography. *Barney Frank: The Story of America's Only Left-Handed, Gay, Jewish Congressman* by Stuart Weisberg is being narrated in our studio.

Studio Director Robert Pierson asked Frank what he would like to say to Library patrons. Frank replied, "That democracy works better than people think. Politics is essentially people trying to do the right thing. Yes, there's a kind of messiness to it, but I think messiness is better for people to see than an inaccurate simplicity."

Biographer Weisberg had recorded the book's introduction in a previous session. The book is narrated by volunteer Greg Massing. Massing works as General Counsel for Massachusetts' Executive Office of Public Safety and Security. The 584-page biography will run more than 12 hours.

"We're incredibly lucky that Stuart

Weisberg agreed to record the intro to the book and even more fortunate that Congressman Frank himself was willing to add the special message to our patrons," said Library Director Kim Charlson. "It says so much about the importance of Perkins Library services to our representatives in Congress."

The majority of network talking book library books are produced and distributed by the Library of Congress. Books of New England interest, such as Weisberg's, are recorded at Perkins.

This was Frank's first visit to Perkins. He offered this parting message, "There is federal government involvement in making these books available. I'm proud of that... I am very pleased to be doing this at Perkins. It's an institution that I have a great deal of respect for and I'm honored that I was given a chance to participate in the great work that you do."

Contact the Library to reserve Frank's biography (DBM 1167), which will be available later this year.



Representative Frank in the Studio



Perkins Braille & Talking Book Library
Perkins School for the Blind
175 N. Beacon Street
Watertown, MA 02472

Free Matter for
the Blind
or Handicapped

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Digital Magazine Update

We are transitioning towards both digital books and magazines. These locally produced magazines are now available on digital cartridge, and must be returned to the library when you have finished.

- *Audubon*
- *Boston Magazine*
- *Disability Issues*
- *Humpty Dumpty*
- *The Lantern*
- *National Geographic (Spanish)*
- *National Geographic Traveler*
- *Parents*
- *Vital Speeches of the Day*
- *Voter Information Guide*

- *Women's Day*
- *Yankee*
- *Your Dog – Tufts Veterinary Newsletter*

Contact the Library to sign up for these, or any other magazines, or if you have not yet received your digital talking book player.

Choice Magazine Listening is also available as a digital subscription. It contains unabridged works from publications such as *National Geographic*, *Smithsonian*, *Sports Illustrated*, and the *New Yorker*. Download directly from BARD, or visit www.choicemagazinelistening.org to subscribe.