

Patron Survey Results Rank Library Excellent

During the summer of 2006, Perkins Library borrowers received a survey asking for input on how well the Library is providing services and materials. With more than 2,700 responses received in large print or braille through the mail, and online responses received via the survey website, a significant amount of data was collected to assist us in our planning process for future improvements and growth.

Survey takers were overwhelmingly satisfied with the quality of services they received from the Library. Over 90% of those responding said the quality of services was excellent or very good, with 8% rating services as good. Borrowers gave high marks to the courtesy and helpfulness of the Library staff with 90% indicating that courtesy and helpfulness were excellent or very good.

Over 80% of users were satisfied with the number of books they receive. The speed of delivery rated high with nearly 90% rating it as "just right" to "very fast." The quality of loaned equipment and materials also rated over 90% user satisfaction.

Over 70% of borrowers responding

to the survey were satisfied or very satisfied with the subject matter available in the collection and shipped to them. Roughly one-third were not completely satisfied with the books they receive when the library makes their selections. Through follow-up, Library staff have been successful in making adjustments in borrower preference information to reflect more accurately readers' likes and dislikes.

Nearly 45% of those responding had specific suggestions for improving the Library's services. Of these, the most common suggestion was that the Library offer downloadable audio books (10%). The Unabridged Project was launched by the Perkins Library in May 2006, offering borrowers downloadable audio books.

When answering the question about their primary use of the Library, 84% said that pleasure reading is their primary reason for using the Perkins Library. Cassette books are the most commonly accessed format (used by 86% of respondents). The second most popular program is magazine services (used by 19%).

Continued on 7

Library Hours: Monday through Friday 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Phone: 800-852-3133 or 617-972-7240 **Fax:** 617-972-7363

TTY: 617-972-7690 **Website:** www.perkinslibrary.org



Is it Time to Try Downloadable Audio Books?

If you have a computer and can download information from the internet, accessing downloadable audio books has never been easier! The Perkins Library, with 8 other talking book libraries across the country, offers our readers free membership to the Unabridged Downloadable Book Project.

Digital audio books can be enjoyed on any PC equipped with the easily downloadable Windows Media Player, or transferred to a portable CD, MP3, or other WMA (Windows Media Audio Format) enabled device. If you do not already own one of these devices, we recommend the small MuVo Mix player (available for \$54.99 from the Perkins Store at 1-877-473-7546 or www.perkinsstore.org).

Patrons have checked out over 1,165 audio books since the program's launch in May 2006. As of December 2006, there are 323 registered Unabridged users. A useful feature of downloadable audio books is that you won't have to physically return the books to the library by the due date! After the checkout time period has expired, the titles will disappear from your electronic bookshelf, or you can delete them when your computer prompts you. If you have transferred the titles to your portable device, you can keep them as long as you like depending on its storage capacity.

The system works on computers running the Microsoft Windows operating system. New Macintosh systems may be able to run Windows, but older Mac

systems will not support Unabridged.

Each month new titles are added to the Unabridged collection, and there are now more than 1700 downloadable titles in the collection. This past month *The Da Vinci Code* and *Devil Wears Prada* became available along with other popular titles by authors such as Elizabeth Berg, Gilbert Morris, and Suzanne Brockmann. Many juvenile and young adult titles are also available, as well as books in Spanish.

Even if you have never downloaded an audiobook before or do not consider yourself "computer savvy," the process has become much easier thanks to the latest upgrade made by the Overdrive Company, which creates the downloading software. A detailed user guide is available in braille and large print to help get you started. Contact the Library if you would like to sign up for the Unabridged Program.

Public Access Computer

With all the talk about downloadable audio books and ordering books online, are you wondering if there is a way to try these services out yourself? The Library offers a public access computer with full internet access and many types of assistive technology, such as Zoomtext, Kurzweil, and JAWS. The computer is available by pre-scheduled appointment. For more information, please call James Gleason at 617-972-7468 or email James.Gleason@Perkins.org.



To contact the Perkins Braille & Talking Book Library, call 617-972-7240 or 800-852-3133, or email Library@Perkins.org.

Se Habla Español

Did you know that we now have a Reader Advisor who speaks fluent Spanish? His name is James Gleason, and he will be pleased to take your book orders in Spanish. As always, the library continues to offer Spanish language titles in braille, on cassette and in large print.

The four Spanish language newspapers available through our Newline service, *El Nuevo Herald*, *La Opinión*, *La Prensa*, and *El Sentinel*, report news and issues from all over the Spanish speaking world and include local news as well. In addition to the items available on Newline, the library offers four magazines on cassette: *Buenhogar*, *Selecciones del Reader's Digest*, *National Geographic en Español*, and *People en Español*.

The Unabridged downloadable book service offers titles such as *El Lazarillo De Tormes*, *El Mandarin* and classics like *El Extraño Caso Del Dr. Jekyll Y Mr Hyde* and *Rinconete Y Cortadillo*. The titles available through Unabridged can easily be downloaded and transferred to a portable playing device, and some can be burned onto compact disc.

If you have any questions about our foreign language services, please contact James Gleason at 617-972-7468 or email James.Gleason@Perkins.org. Para hacer una cita para visitarnos, o si tiene preguntas por favor llame a James Gleason al 617-972-7468 o contáctelo por correo electrónico James.Gleason@Perkins.org.



The Library receives over 2,000 tapes and videos daily that we mail on to other readers.

Please remember to rewind your cassettes and videos and return them in the correct containers. Thank you for your help!



New Cantonese Magazines

Library borrower James Luo recognized a need in the Chinese community for accessible audio magazines in the Chinese language. Working together with Library Director Kim Charlson, they discovered two magazines produced on tape by the Hong Kong Society for the Blind.

Now, Cantonese-speaking borrowers can receive *Chinese Talking Magazine* and *Chinese Talking Digest*. Both publications are produced in Cantonese Chinese. Contact the Library if you are interested in subscribing to either title.

使用廣東話的借書者，我們有一則好消息：柏金斯圖書館現在多提供了兩份粵語的語音新聞雜誌供您選擇。



To contact the Perkins Braille & Talking Book Library, call 617-972-7240 or 800-852-3133, or email Library@Perkins.org.

Newsline Now Offers TV Listings

Now, Newsline subscribers can independently access their local TV listings in an extremely interactive manner, all in one place, only a telephone call away.

By simply entering your zip code, your source of TV reception (Comcast, Dish Network, etc.), and your time zone, you will have quick and easy access to local TV listings. The listings are interactive, and you can navigate and choose between date, time, and/or channel listings. After entering your zip code, you are presented with a list of cable and satellite providers in your area. The TV Listings feature of Newsline uses the Zap2it television listings, a product of Tribune Media Services and the leading source of entertainment listings in the country.

Anyone who is unable to read print due to a disability can sign up for Newsline and the free TV Listings. Contact the Library to register or for more information.

Break a Reading Record Event

On December 13, 2006, at exactly 12:00 noon Eastern Standard Time, staff and patrons of the Perkins Braille & Talking Book Library and Perkins School for the Blind staff and students gathered at Dwight Hall to help triple the previously held record for the "Most People Reading Aloud Simultaneously in Multiple Locations."

547,826 readers in 50 states and 28 countries read aloud a passage from E.B White's **Charlotte's Web**, more than tripling the standing record of 155,528 students reading aloud William Wordsworth's poem "Daffodils" on March 19, 2004.

Perkins readers demonstrated there are many ways to read as they shared the story together. Participants read the passage in large print, in braille, from their computers, and on cassette tape. They retold the story of Charlotte and Wilbur out loud or through sign language.

Everyone counted down to noon with the official United States atomic clock. Lead readers Kim Charlson, Library Director, and Kerryne Ohlson, Perkins student, both reading in braille, began the passage with "Salutations!" -- the first word in the passage where Wilbur the pig meets Charlotte the spider.

"Salu-what?" the rest of the readers continued, paving the way to the 2007 **Guinness Book of World Records**.

Representatives from corporate sponsor Walden Media attended the fun event. They passed out Wilbur the Pig Beanie Babies to everyone who participated.

Perkins participants demonstrated that "Reading is for Everyone" as they joined together to read this incredible story. **Charlotte's Web** is available from the Library on cassette (**RC 46839**), in braille (**BR 9405**), and in large print (**JL 90**).



To contact the Perkins Braille & Talking Book Library, call 617-972-7240 or 800-852-3133, or email Library@Perkins.org.

Want to Order Books On Your Own? Web OPAC is for You!

As many more of you now have access to computers, you might want to try our internet-based online public access catalog (OPAC). Our OPAC offers you a way to search through all of the titles in our collection. Whether you are looking for cassettes, braille, large-print or described videos, all of our materials are searchable online.

You can use our OPAC to search by title, author, subject or keyword in the annotation. You can also use our online catalog to find books in a particular format, limit your search to fiction or nonfiction, and find books at a specific reading level. Instead of marking off order forms manually and sending them in to us by mail, you can simply type your book requests directly into the OPAC system and can request that up to five available selections be sent out the next day.

You can search the catalog without logging in, but when you want to place an order, you will need to have your User ID and Password. Your User ID is on the library mailing card which the library sends you with your books and consists of the first five letters of your last name, the first initial of your first name and 2 digits. An individual's password is his or her birth year. Institutional users can call the library to obtain their passwords.

If you would like to learn more about how the OPAC works and get some additional training, you can check out our online training tutorial created by the Carroll Center for the Blind. The weblink for the training program is: www.carrolltech.org/classes/opac.

Contact the Library if you need any assistance with passwords or IDs.

Elders Enjoy Book Discussion Group

Massachusetts is one of the best books I've ever read. It absolutely blew me away. I'm recommending it to friends, and I may read it again." These words are from Charlotte Shrier, a library patron and regular participant in the Perkins Elders Book Group. Her enthusiasm conveys the mood of everyone involved in the monthly book discussions. Patricia Ahern, Group Coordinator and Reader Advisor, says that "when a group of people come together over the same book, wonders happen. We become acquainted with new people, places, and ideas, and we learn about ourselves and one another by sharing our own thoughts, experiences and stories. We laugh about things we never thought we could laugh about and go to places we never thought we'd go."

Some recent favorites have been ***My Path Leads to Tibet*** by Sabriye Tenberken (RC 55975, BR 14654), ***The Bookshop*** by Penelope Fitzgerald (RC 45665), ***A Bend in the River*** by V. S. Naipaul (RC 48487), ***Comfort Me with Apples*** by Ruth
Continued on 6



To contact the Perkins Braille & Talking Book Library, call 617-972-7240 or 800-852-3133, or email Library@Perkins.org.

Continued from 5

Reichl (RC 52508, LT 2437), *The Boys of Summer* by Roger Kahn (RC 16430), and *Snow Flower and the Secret Fan* by Lisa See (RC 60738). Occasionally the group combines the book discussion with an activity, such as reading *Massachusetts* by Nancy Zaroulis (RC 36523) with visiting local historical sites.

The Elders Book Group is co-sponsored by the Library and the Perkins Outreach Services to Elders. Through its Elder Learning Center on the campus of the Perkins School for the Blind, this program offers skills training and recreational activities to persons with vision impairment aged sixty and over. For information about the book group or the elders program, contact Debby Smith at Perkins Outreach Services to Elders at 617-972-7643 or Debby.Smith@Perkins.org.

Spotlight on Teens and “Tweens”

The Library has opened new avenues of communication and is using technology to connect with younger borrowers. Rachel Gould, Children’s Services Specialist, is working hard to connect with our teenage patrons.

The Library’s new publication, the *Perkins Braille & Talking Book Library PerKIDS Newsletter*, circulates biannually to our younger patrons. It features library announcements, book lists, jokes, and games, and is available in large print, braille, cassette, and via email.

The Library is using technology to connect with teens as well. Teenagers are enjoying the growing collection of young adult audio books in our Unabridged Program, our web-based library of narrated downloadable digital audio books. The new BTBL PerKIDS webpage features information about our services for teenagers and lists of recommended books. Visit www.perkinslibrary.org and follow the link to

explore the BTBL PerKIDS website.

Teens, as well as all other patrons, can submit book requests and communicate with the library using a variety of technologies. To contact Rachel, send an email or Windows Messenger message to Rachel.Gould@Perkins.org or send an AOL instant message to BTBLRachel.

In addition, the Library is collaborating with Our Space Our Place, a non-profit after-school program for elementary, middle, and high school students who are legally blind, by coordinating a monthly book club and storytime. Rachel visits monthly and reads a story, leads a discussion, and conducts related accessible activities. Our Space Our Place provides a respectful, accessible and fun environment for participation in team sports, the arts, community service and mentoring. Visit their website, www.ourspaceourplace.org, for more information.



To contact the Perkins Braille & Talking Book Library, call 617-972-7240 or 800-852-3133, or email Library@Perkins.org.

Survey Results Continued from 1

When asked, users indicated an interest in seeing titles added to the collection that relate to the region. One quarter want more New England travel/history titles, 23% want more Massachusetts interest titles and 21% want more local personalities/biographies titles.

The majority of those responding (73%) learned about the Perkins Library from health care providers or a friend or family member. Of these, 24% learned about the Library from a social worker, 20% from a rehabilitation counselor, 13% from a doctor or health professional, and 16% learned about the service from a friend or family member.

When contacting the Library, most borrowers use the phone (75%). The second most commonly utilized contact method is via mail (14%). More than half of those responding to the survey do not have access to a computer. Of the 43% who do have computer access, 16% use Web-OPAC or email to contact the Library on a regular basis.

Nearly two-thirds (64%) of those answering the survey were female. The majority of patrons responding to the survey were over the age of 50. More than three-quarters (82%) were between the ages of 51 and 90. More than half (60%) were between the ages of 71 and 90. A notable 8% (206 respondents) were between the ages of 91 and 100.

Nearly two thirds of those answering the survey came from Eastern Massachusetts. Of these, 25% were

from the Greater Boston area, 11% were from Southeastern Massachusetts, 13% were from the North Shore, 15% were from the South Shore, and 11% were from Western Massachusetts.

Slightly more than one-third of those responding to the survey have completed college or graduate studies. About one out of five had completed some college and another nearly 28% had graduated from high school.

The Library's overall goal in gathering this information is to provide you, our borrowers, with more responsive service. We have learned where our services are strong and where we can improve on service delivery; we have learned the types of books and magazines you would like to see added to the collection and that you are interested in new and innovative services such as downloadable audio books.

Thank you to everyone who took the time to answer the survey and gave us your feedback. Your input will make a difference in our services for all borrowers of the Perkins Library.

Dots & Decibels is also available on cassette, in braille, and via email.

To change the format you receive, call 800-852-3133 or email Library@Perkins.org.



To contact the Perkins Braille & Talking Book Library, call 617-972-7240 or 800-852-3133, or email Library@Perkins.org.

Cape Cod Times Now Available on Newsline

The Perkins Braille & Talking Book Library is pleased to announce the addition of the **Cape Cod Times** to the Newsline Program. Now, listeners have access to another reputable source for local and daily news. Newsline allows those who cannot read conventional newsprint due to a disability to listen to the newspaper over a telephone. This free service currently delivers the newspaper in audio format to over 2,000 subscribers in Massachusetts.

“The daily newspaper remains the primary information source for all individuals, enhancing their lives as professionals, students, parents, and community members. This need for information is the same for everyone, including people who have disabilities,” said Kim Charlson, Library Director.

Helen Hayes, a Falmouth resident and an active Newsline listener, said, “It is so important that people with visual impairments have access to their local community newspaper. The addition of the **Cape Cod Times** offers more options to listeners in Massachusetts than ever before.”

The **Cape Cod Times** joins over 250 other participating newspapers and magazines available to its subscribers every day. This includes 8 daily Massachusetts newspapers, such as: the **Boston Globe**, the **Berkshire Eagle**, the **Springfield Republican**, the **Lowell Sun**, and the **Worcester Telegram & Gazette**.

Content is acquired electronically through a direct feed from each newspaper. Subscribers have access twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, through a local or toll-free telephone number. Contact the Library if you are interested in signing up for Newsline.

Dots & Decibels

PERKINS BRAILLE & TALKING BOOK LIBRARY NEWSLETTER

Free Matter for the Blind or Handicapped



Perkins School for the Blind

175 North Beacon Street

Watertown, MA

02472-2790

All we see is **possibility**.