
Library Honored for Visionary Use of Technology

The Perkins Braille & Talking Book Library was recently named a 2004 Computerworld Honors Finalist in recognition of innovative use of information technology. Perkins was one of five finalists in the Education & Academia category.

Joseph W. Alsop, President of Progress Software Corporation, nominated Perkins for inclusion in the 2004 awards program.

“While the concept of a library automation system isn’t new, the design concept of Keystone Library Automation System (KLAS) is fundamental to its uniqueness in the library field—that is the commitment to universal design and accessibility,” said Kim Charlson, Perkins Library Director. “The combination of Keystone’s experienced programmers

and Progress software makes KLAS an easy-to-use library automation system for both our patrons and staff.”

A case study on Perkins Braille & Talking Book Library, where “Reading is for Everyone,” became part of the Computerworld Honors Global Archives. It is available at <http://www.cwheroes.org>, the official site of the Computerworld Honors Foundation. This online resource will benefit libraries, museums, academic and research institutions around the world, and serve as reference material for scholars and a resource for individuals who hope to use information technology to create technology solutions to address society’s challenges.

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

Phone: 1-800-852-3133 or 617-972-7240 **Fax:** 617-972-7363

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

Attorney General Reilly Visits Perkins

On June 9, 2004, Attorney General Tom Reilly visited the Braille & Talking Book Library to announce the availability of nearly 1,000 music compact discs (CDs). The Perkins Library was one of the Massachusetts libraries to receive CDs as a result of a multi-million dollar antitrust settlement with the music industry.

“Every day the Perkins Library connects thousands of people, who cannot read traditional print, with a wealth of accessible information and entertainment,” Reilly said. “I hope that these CDs will be enjoyed by the patrons of this library and the entire Perkins School community.”

Approximately 124,000 CDs were shipped to libraries across the Commonwealth as part of a national settlement reached by 38 states, including Massachusetts, and three territories. The multi-state lawsuit alleged a conspiracy to prevent discount retailers from selling CDs to consumers at reduced prices. As a result, CD prices nationwide began to rise, causing consumers to pay more for music CDs than they otherwise would have.

Attorney General Reilly chose to distribute the CDs – which include more than 1,900 different titles and

represent a variety of types of music – to public libraries across the state, as well as to libraries in public schools and colleges.

Destination Perkins

When returning your Talking Books, here’s how you can be sure they will reach Watertown and not reappear in your mailbox:

The Perkins address is on the teal colored side of the card with the Perkins logo on the left. If you can’t see the color of the card, there is a feature to help you.

All of our address cards have a hole punched in one corner. If the hole is on the upper right-hand corner, then the Perkins address is showing, and the container will be returned to us without any problem.

Library Offers Special Gift – Free Audiobook or CD

The Perkins Braille & Talking Book Library has a special gift to offer to our borrowers! Through the generosity of numerous donors who have given the Library commercial audio books and the special CD settlement from Attorney General Reilly, the

Perkins Library is pleased to offer each of our library borrowers a choice of either a free music CD or audio book. This gift from our library will be yours to keep!

Just decide which you would like – the audio book or the music CD. Then select the category of your choice; categories are listed on the coupon on the back of this newsletter. We will send you a selection from that general category. This offer is on a “first come, first served” basis, with only one item per borrower.

To let us know your audio book or CD preference, you can either call our main number: 617-972-7240 or 800-852-3133, or fill out the clip-out coupon on the back page and send it back to us:

**Perkins Braille & Talking
Book Library
175 North Beacon Street
Watertown, MA 02472**

Happy reading and listening to all!

Special "Thank You" to Mail Carriers

Three outstanding mail carriers from Massachusetts received special recognition for dedicated service from the Perkins Braille & Talking Book Library (BTBL) and its patrons on

February 11th in a ceremony held in the Library's shipping area.

The Perkins Library wanted to acknowledge the cooperation of the U.S. Postal Service in delivering the materials and equipment to borrowers' homes without charge. “The Post Office really is a vital partner in the successful operation of our Library, and it just seemed natural to recognize them for this contribution,” Kim Charlson, Library Director, said.

Dozens of nominations were received from all across New England. Input was then sought from staff and volunteers, and the final decision was made by Perkins Library administration in collaboration with the Boston area U.S. Postal Service.

Phillip Lenzi, Billy Proctor and Denise Duffy were each recognized at the awards ceremony. One of the most compelling letters came from Andrea Bloch of Winchester. She nominated Phillip Lenzi, who delivers materials to her son, Jack.

“At nine months of age, Jack was diagnosed with cancer, and at ten months he was completely blind,” she wrote. “It has been a long three years, but Jack has won his battle with cancer. Now as a very curious 3 ½ year old, he is eager to learn about his world. In order to help Jack understand what a mail carrier looks

like and how mail is delivered, I remember one day Phil took the time to show Jack his truck, mail bag, and how mail is bundled together with a rubber band. Just the other day, Jack had a rubber band in his hand and asked me, ‘Is this from Postman Phil?’”

At the February event, a plaque engraved in both print and braille was presented to each of the three outstanding postal carriers.

In a letter nominating mail carrier Billy Proctor, Edith Rockwell of Lexington, wrote: “He brings in my tapes and typically shakes his head with a sad ‘no Danielle Steel today,’ but then sometimes he arrives with a bright smile waving a new tape by my favorite author...I hope Bill knows how much his visits mean to me and how important my audio tapes are to me. My macular degeneration has created serious limitations in my activities, and my audio tapes and their ‘messenger’ bring great pleasure to me.”

“I really depend on books on tape and listen to them every day, all day,” said Matilda Nelson, a senior citizen from West Newton, who nominated mail carrier Denise Duffy. “Denise deserves this special award because she is special! She brings my talking books to my door, rings my bell and makes sure that I

have taken them inside. She is always ready to take my returns and any outgoing mail...Her pleasant and courteous manner make for a cheerful day.”

“We’re enormously grateful to the Perkins Braille & Talking Book Library for recognizing in so special a way the role Postal Service employees play in providing such a crucial service to the Library’s constituents,” said Charles Lynch, U.S Postal Service Boston District Manager.

Every mail carrier nominated for the award received a certificate of appreciation that was presented in his or her local branch post office. Every patron who took the time to send in a nomination was also notified that his or her carrier received a certificate and a thank you letter from the library and the Public Affairs Division of the U.S. Postal Service.

**Dots & Decibels is also available
on cassette and in braille.
To change the format you receive,
give us a call at
1-800-852-3133 or email
library@Perkins.org**

MLA Inducts Charlson to the Hall of Fame in 2004

Perkins Library Director, Kim Charlson, was inducted into the Massachusetts Library Association (MLA) Hall of Fame in April, 2004 at a ceremony in Falmouth. She joins a prestigious group of only 14 other outstanding librarians who have been honored. Those recognized have all made a substantial, sustained contribution to advancing the cause of Massachusetts libraries and/or librarianship over a career of at least ten years.

When MLA discussed Charlson's nomination, it was clear that in her library career of some 25 years, she has been a champion of providing the printed word for people with all types of disabilities. She has also worked tirelessly with Massachusetts libraries to provide consultation and technical assistance on how they can become more accessible – not just to improve physical accessibility with ramps and accessible parking spaces, but to increase programmatic access. She has shared her in-depth knowledge of outreach, website design, adaptive technology, and creating accessible collections with numerous libraries and has trained staff on disability sensitivity and awareness. She is recognized nationally and internationally for her expertise in

library services to people with disabilities, especially in the areas of braille literacy, adaptive technology in libraries, and information access. Congratulations, Kim Charlson, on your well-earned award.

InfoEyes: New Reference Program Launched

A new service for Library borrowers now offers a whole new way to interact with librarians through a pilot project called InfoEyes, launched in 2004. All you need is your curiosity and access to a computer to participate! The Perkins Braille & Talking Book Library is one of 11 libraries in 8 different states that are collaborating to offer this new virtual reference service.

With InfoEyes, you now have access via the internet to librarians who can help you find information about absolutely anything. From locating a list of symptoms for common eye diseases to finding a gingerbread cookie recipe, our expert librarians can help you find the information you need when you need it.

You can ask virtual reference questions using live audio chat, live text chat, or email. With live audio chat, you'll actually hear the librarian's voice while he/she

co-browses the internet with you—you'll both see the same web page on your computer screen. The librarian can then send information, resources and answers directly to your computer.

If you have a microphone on your computer, you can use it to talk directly with a librarian via live audio chat; if not, you can type your questions via text chat. Even after hours or in the middle of the night, you can still email your question.

The Illinois State Library and the Illinois Talking Book and Braille Service are coordinating the pilot project. A well-known library vendor, OCLC (Online Computer Library Center, Inc.), an Ohio-based company, is providing software for the project.

If you want to know more about the InfoEyes project or ask a question, just go to the website www.infoeyes.org and use the link for audio chat, text chat or email service. If you have questions about InfoEyes, or you don't have a computer and want to ask a question, you can contact:

Linda Rossman, Reference Services Librarian 617-972-7245, or email linda.rossman@perkins.org

New Perkins Panda Project

After several years in development and nationwide testing, Perkins School for

the Blind has launched the *Perkins Panda Early Literacy Program* – a collection of materials designed both to teach fundamental literacy skills to children with visual impairments and to help parents and other caregivers support children's literacy development.

The kit consists of three interrelated storybooks, activity guides and cassettes; a resource guide; a story box; a Gund plush panda with a backpack that can hold a walkman-type dual-speed tape player; and carry bags. All the storybooks have attractive high-contrast illustrations, large print and braille text. Odds Bodkin, a well-known storyteller and songwriter, worked with Perkins to write the books, stories and songs on the cassettes.

The primary audience is families of children with visual impairments, ages birth to 8. In addition, the materials are valuable in program settings, to families with older children with multiple disabilities and to parents and grandparents with visual impairments for use with sighted children or grandchildren.

All components are available as a kit or separately. For more information, call 800-972-7671, email Perkins.Panda@Perkins.org or visit www.Perkins.org.

Museum of Science Passes Now Available

Many public libraries have programs enabling their borrowers to reserve tickets or passes to a variety of museums. The Perkins Braille and Talking Book Library is pleased to announce that patrons can borrow passes to two museums. In addition to Mystic Seaport in Connecticut, patrons may now borrow passes to the Boston Museum of Science. These passes are available on a first come, first served basis and can be reserved by calling our Reference Librarian, Linda Rossman, at 1-800-852-3133/617-972-7245. You can also email her at linda.rossman@perkins.org.

Reservations for the Science Museum must be made 2 weeks in advance and are limited to 4 people per coupon. All passes are for “general admission” and do not include admission to special exhibits, the planetarium, or the Omni Theater at the Museum of Science.

KLAS Users Conference

The 2004 KLAS (Keystone Library Automation System) Users Conference was held at Perkins from April 21-24, 2004. Seventy-five participants attended sessions at the Carroll Center

Technology Building in Newton. Attendees received hands-on training in the use of KLAS Version 7 features, as well as adaptive technology instruction for Web-OPAC. On Wednesday evening, Perkins hosted a special Welcome Dinner featuring a performance by local actress, Kate Carney, who portrayed Anne Sullivan.

Other conference sessions were held in Dwight Hall at Perkins, covering a wide range of KLAS applications, and specialized activities of KLAS-user libraries across the country.

Feedback from attendees was extremely positive – with comments ranging from how helpful and supportive the Library staff were to conference attendees to commendations on the beauty of the Perkins campus and the facilities. All staff really pulled together to assist – from driving vans to setting up equipment and handling meal and other meeting logistics – to make the conference a tremendous success.

Library Adds TTY Service

Thanks to a generous gift from the Friends of the Perkins Library, a TTY (teletypewriter) has been installed for the use of patrons with hearing and/or speech impairments. To use the TTY call 617-972-7690.

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PERKINS BRAILLE & TALKING BOOK LIBRARY NEWSLETTER

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