

Idaho Talking Book Advisory Committee Meeting Notes
Wednesday, December 3, 2014
Teleconference

Meeting Purpose: To remain current with Talking Book Service items

Desired outcomes: By the end of the meeting, participants will:

1. Review FY2014 projects:
 - Postal carrier of the Year
 - TBS locally recorded titles in BARD
2. Review FY2014 statistics
3. Discuss the process for 2015 discontinuation of circulating cassettes
4. Share member updates
5. Agree on 2015 meeting schedule

Meeting leader: Sue Walker

Facilitator/Recorder: Stephanie Bailey-White

Other Attendees: Josh Barnes, Valerie Duffy, Sue Sebranek, Nancy Wise, Mary Ellen Halverson, Mike Gibson, Sue Robinson, Judy Mooney, Steven Bailey, Terri King, Pam Bradshaw and Sheila Winther.

Two new attendees were introduced. Sue Robinson is a new Customer Service Representative at the Commission and Josh Barnes is the Assistant Director at the Portneuf District Library in Chubbuck. Josh has been at the library for five years.

Sue Sebranek shared that the Postal Carrier of the Year recognition event for Gretchen Young at the Overland Post Office in Boise was a success. Gretchen received a banner, award and cake. The nominator and TBS patron, Betty Jordan, was able to attend. The Boise Postmaster as well as the regional Postmaster were also in the building and submitted an article in their regional newsletter and then received some national attention in the form of a USPS Podcast and transcript (available at yourpostalpodcast.com). Sue Walker was interviewed for the podcast. This was a nice way to recognize the important role postal services provides to keep this a free service. Due to the success of this program during the past two years, the Postal Carrier of the Year will be offered again next year. It will be announced in the January/February newsletter.

ICfL Volunteer Coordinator Sheila Winther presented information about TBS titles in BARD. They have added 13 locally-produced books on BARD now along with converting 12 previously released books that can now be accessed online. The conversion from analog to digital formats for books is moving ahead with 212 books now available online. Over half are converted and 200 more need to be processed. There are three volunteers working on this project and they hope to be done within 18 months.

Staff are also researching how to search for Idaho-produced books. Currently patrons can search for Idaho + DBC, but not all of the available titles produced here come up using those search terms.

Sue Walker reviewed the fiscal year 2014 statistics covering July 1, 2013 – June 30, 2014. During that time period there were 3147 adults, 44 juveniles, and 254 institutions actively using the TBS service. That's a slight increase over the last fiscal year. 72 people read Braille books and 854 borrowed books on cassette. 170,000 materials were sent from ICfL and 36,429 books or magazines were downloaded from BARD. This is down slightly from last fiscal year. 604 people established new service and 527 discontinued service.

Ten to 15 people download books from the SHELF project each month. The SHELF project allows people to download over 4,000 state-recorded books and magazines. At some point this service will not be necessary as those titles will be available on BARD.

BARD downloads are about 2,000 fewer than last fiscal year. About 84% of the TBS circulation was in cartridge format and 11% was in cassette – a drop of about 7-8% from the previous year. The IOS app has been a popular addition with 126 Apple apps downloaded recently.

The group discussed the process for discontinuing circulating cassettes in July, 2015. Many cassette titles have been converted to digital formats, but about 22,000 unique titles still need to be switched over. Most patrons have a digital machine, but are hanging on to their cassette players and getting books while they can. Fewer than 35 patrons only get cassettes and some of them have indicated they aren't interested in trying to figure out a new machine. TBS staff plan on calling these folks to see if they can convince them to try a digital machine this summer. TBS might be able to work with the Blind Commission to go to people's homes to demonstrate the digital players. Josh recommended sending a cassette with a tutorial on how to use the new player as well as including some of that information in the newsletter. It was also suggested that perhaps some of those patrons could receive some of the weeded cassettes until they are no longer able to use the service.

Getting rid of the cassettes will allow TBS staff to shift their workload to other priority areas and free up needed space. The quality of the digital books is also much better. To have 89% of patrons reading digital books over the past five years is quite successful.

TBS staff also plan on completely phasing out the descriptive videos and DVDs as the collection has dwindled and only a handful of patrons request them. They will announce these changes in the next three newsletters.

Advisory members shared updates.

- Mike said Boise State University is starting to produce tactile graphics for students. An example is a tactile picture of cell meiosis for a biology class. They use special capsule paper that creates a

slight swell in the paper when it “reads” the color black, kind of like an “over-glorified laminator.” Converting pictures into black and white images can be challenging, but Mike is excited about this new service.

- Val said the Blind Veterans Association recently distributed TBS materials at Fred Meyers and at a College of Southern Idaho health fair along with white cane safety awareness literature.
- Mary Ellen said the National Federation for the Blind will be hosting their conference in Boise in May, 2015. They will not be hosting a legislative dinner this year. She also said they were sponsoring their Braille Readers are Leaders contest January 4 – March 4 to see how many pages of Braille people can read in that time frame. Sue Walker said TBS could also recognize the winners in their spring or summer newsletter.
- Nancy said they would continue to promote TBS services at low vision clinics.
- Josh said he was interested in learning how to download digital books.
- Sue Walker explained how the agency is finding Braille books for My First Books families with visual impairments.
- TBS staff reported on outreach efforts at the annual Idaho Optometric Conference and the Nampa Health Fair.

Advisory members agreed on the following 2015 meeting schedule:

- Wednesday, March 4, 2015, 9:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. at ICfL
- Wednesday, June 3, 2015, 9:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. at ICfL
- Wednesday, September 9, 2015, 9:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. at ICfL
- Wednesday, December 2, 2015 – conference call from 10 a.m. to noon