

# Connections

## Talking Book Service News

Winter 2011  
Special Edition

### Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow: A Special Issue to Celebrate the 80th Anniversary of the Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped

#### Yesterday

Idaho's Talking Book Service (TBS) is part of the Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (LBPH) network of libraries loaning materials to those unable to read standard print due to a physical disability.

LBPH was established in 1931 under the Pratt-Smoot Act, a federal law that directed the Library of Congress to produce and loan books in a format usable by blind adults. The law was revised in 1952 to extend service to blind children and again in 1966 to extend eligibility to any person with a disability that makes it difficult to read standard print.

LBPH distributes audio books and players to state library agencies and other state organizations that



1948: Long-playing vinyl records

identify and register eligible users and loan players and materials to them.

In Idaho, eligible persons first received audio books from Multnomah County Library in Portland, Oregon. The Utah State Library Commission provided  
*(continued on page 2)*

**Yesterday** *(continued from page 1)*

Braille service. Idaho began providing direct service to its residents in the 1970s. In 1973, the Talking Book Service found its “permanent” home at the Idaho State Library—today’s Idaho Commission for Libraries (ICfL).

The format of materials available for users of the Talking Book Service has changed over the years, but the collection has always included both fiction and non-fiction in popular genres. The majority of titles are recorded by the Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, with titles of local and regional interest recorded locally.



1970s player and the first cassette tapes

Audio books were first loaned on large records, and then on flexible discs.

Major format changes occurred in 1973 with the transition to cassette tapes and again in 2009 with the transition to digital cartridges. Users receive materials and the equipment to play them, mailed directly to their homes via free postage for the blind and physically handicapped.

Books and magazines continue to be available in Braille.



Volunteers record books of regional interest in the recording booth at the Idaho Commission for Libraries  
*(continued on page 3)*

Email: [talkingbooks@libraries.idaho.gov](mailto:talkingbooks@libraries.idaho.gov)  
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## Today

In the 21st century, TBS uses current technology to meet users' needs. Books are recorded digitally, which improves sound quality and increases the ease of their use. Digital players are lighter and easier to use than previous players; plus, digital books are available for download 24/7 from the Internet.

Books and magazines recorded by LBPH are supplemented by locally recorded titles about Idaho or of regional interest. Both books and magazines are recorded in a studio at ICfL that was created in 1977 and updated to record digitally in 2004.

**Beginning in 2011, newly created titles will be available only on cartridges—no more cassettes!** If you like our locally recorded books but don't have a digital player, be sure to request one. Every day, locally recorded books previously available only on cassette are being produced on digital cartridge. Ask your customer service representative about them.

Other collections include descriptive movies and television shows available in both video and DVD format. TBS partners with the Idaho Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired to promote Newslines, a resource that provides telephone and computer

access to more than 225 daily newspapers and magazines.

The TBS website (<http://libraries.idaho.gov/tbs>) provides convenient links to other resources of interest to users, such as Recording for the Blind and Dyslexic (RFB&D) and Bookshare. As in the past, the TBS service is completely free to registered users.

**Idaho's public libraries** are an important part of the Talking Book Service throughout the state. Library staff members identify eligible users within their communities and certify user eligibility. Libraries promote the service to other community organizations, such as senior centers and care facilities.

Many libraries are participating in the 80th anniversary celebration by hosting TBS displays during the week of February 28—March 4.



**Lewiston City Library volunteer with deliveries to Homebound Service participants**

**ICfL Volunteers** play a vital role in providing quality service. They are involved in all aspects of TBS, including inspection of returned materials, duplication of copies as needed, and processing new players as they are received. Volunteers record 40-45 audio books and five magazines each year in the local studio and are currently converting the older locally produced titles to digital format.

Volunteers contributed to the following impressive Talking Book Service 2010 statistics:

- **New digital machines checked out to TBS patrons: 2,004**
- **Books on tape mailed and then received, inspected, and reshelved: 164,617 (122,459 cassettes, 42,158 digital)**
- **Digital books recorded: 54 titles (417 hours of recording time)**
- **Books converted from cassette to digital: 89**

**The Telecom Pioneers of America** are celebrating **100 years** of service to their communities. The Idaho TBS Telecom Pioneers have helped maintain and repair players for many years.

At the Idaho Commission for Libraries, Telecom Pioneers:

- began with 3 TBS machine repair volunteers: Fred Riddle, Bill Ayers, and Shirley Moss in 1992.

Fred and Shirley are still active.

- now have 14 Pioneers involved in all aspects of ICfL's volunteer program:
  - Machine repair
  - TBS book inspection
  - Local book recording
  - Read to Me projects
  - Summer Reading projects
  - Jumpstart (into kindergarten) packets
  - Anything else we ask of them.

In 2010, ICfL's Telecom Pioneers contributed 1,400 volunteer hours and repaired 823 machines. Since 1992 our Pioneers have given approximately 15,000 volunteer hours and repaired approximately 10,000 machines.

We couldn't provide such quality and diversity of services without the support of our wonderful volunteers.



**Telecom Pioneers enjoy their work at the Commission**

## TBS Awareness Day Celebration



**Come celebrate the 80th anniversary of the Talking Book Service!**

All TBS users are invited to an open house at the Idaho Commission for Libraries on March 3, 2011 from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. The theme is "Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow."

Tour the Talking Book Service, learn to download from BARD, and meet members of the Talking Book Advisory Committee. Let us know what you like about TBS and how we can better meet your needs.

Those unable to attend the Boise celebration can send TBS reminiscences or contact their local public library to thank staff for promoting TBS throughout the community. Users can also write a

letter to the editor of their local newspaper highlighting the Talking Book Service and the difference it has made in their lives.

Check with your local library to see if they are having a TBS display or activities during the week of February 28—March 4 to celebrate the Talking Book Service.

### **Tomorrow**

Change is inevitable, and TBS continues to change to better meet users' needs. Below are a few goals that the Talking Book Advisory Committee would like to achieve in order to reach its vision for TBS by 2015:

1. Assign a digital player to all current TBS users.
2. Increase the number of users downloading from BARD through promotion and training
3. Make all locally recorded titles available for download.
4. Promote TBS statewide so all eligible residents are aware of its existence and how to register for it.
5. Increase user knowledge of other resources that provide access to materials in a format usable by those unable to read standard print.



Idaho Talking Book Service  
325 West State Street  
Boise, Idaho 83702

**FREE MATTER FOR THE  
BLIND OR HANDICAPPED**

This newsletter is available on cassette tape upon request. Call 800-458-3271. For a podcast, PDF, or to subscribe to the newsletter via email, visit <http://libraries.idaho.gov/page/connections-tbs-news>.



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## **TBS Awareness Day Celebration**

**"Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow"**

**Thursday, March 3, 2011**

**1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.**

**Open House at**

**Idaho Commission for Libraries**

**325 West State Street**

**Boise, ID, 83702**



- Tour the Talking Book Service.
- Listen in on a live recording session.
- Learn to download from BARD.
- Meet members of the Talking Book Advisory Committee
- View a timeline of TBS history.
- Let us know how we can better meet your needs.