# OLBPD DIMENSIONS NEWSLETTER

**Ohio Library for the Blind & Physically Disabled at Cleveland Public Library**

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# The Year in Review, and Moving Forward to 2022

**As 2021 comes to an end, the Ohio Library for the Blind and Physically Disabled (OLBPD) has enjoyed another busy and productive year. OLBPD circulated approximately 383,979 items to 10,718 active readers. Patrons using BARD downloaded 198,332 books and magazines, and nearly 200 patrons registered for BARD. OLBPD inspected over 359,000 returned books, and less than 1% were damaged or missing media. OLBPD added nearly 16,000 copies of high-demand digital talking books to meet patron reading needs. OLBPD answered close to 20,000 patron phone calls requesting service and over 4,800 mail and email requests.**

**This year OLBPD has been preparing to circulate multiple books on personalized cartridges to patrons, produced on-demand for mail delivery. On-demand circulation eliminates the need for network libraries to house shelves and shelves of cartridges waiting to circulate, and it frees up supplies needed to potentially expand library service to include a broader range of disability types that could benefit from it. Originally, we planned to launch on-demand duplication in mid-to-late 2021. Yet delays affecting national and international supply chains across multiple industries have pushed it into 2022. The switch to on-demand circulation is also a prelude to the new talking book player. The new player will be capable of receiving materials directly rather than being delivered through the mail. In fact, once the new talking book players become available, this new on-demand circulation should be used only for those patrons unable to receive their talking books wirelessly.**

**Next year will be a milestone year for OLBPD as it celebrates its 125th anniversary here at Cleveland Public Library. The history of OLBPD will be featured throughout next year’s newsletters. OLBPD will also be revising its name to the “Ohio Library for the Blind and Print Disabled” in 2022. The term 'print disabled’ is a more appropriate description of the eligible populations and patrons we provide service to now and in the future. As the National Library Service (NLS) for the Blind and Print Disabled explores expansion of disability types, the term 'print' disabled better positions OLBPD to accommodate this growth, and the new name associates OLBPD more closely with NLS – its federal parent. Thank you for a great 2021 and for all your continued support, and we will all be working hard for an even better 2022.**

## Spotlighting NLS’ 90th Anniversary: Analog to Digital

**In celebration and recognition of the 90th anniversary of the National Library Service (NLS) for the Blind and Print Disabled, here is part three of a three-part series acquainting readers with NLS, highlighting their accomplishments through the years.**

**By 1968, the Philips-Norelco-type cassette-tape system, developed commercially, was recognized as the industry standard. The potential for using this system in the NLS program was quickly recognized. By the summer of 1969, the Library of Congress had initiated measures to distribute cassette tapes and players throughout the regional library network as a supplement to the talking-book program. The first cassette machines and titles produced according to program specifications were contracted for delivery in January 1971. The first cassette title recorded on four tracks was sent to regional libraries for circulation in March 1977. This first title – “Roots” by Alex Haley – required five cassettes. Each four-track tape cassette held six hours of playing time, about the equivalent of 200 pages of print.**

**In 1981, the standard cassette machine, the C-1, began production and continued in production until 2007. Several years in development, the E-1 cassette machine began production in 1986. Called the “Easy Machine,” it had only two main controls: a sliding switch to start, play, and stop the machine, as well as to control the volume; and a push button to rewind tape. At the end of each side, the motor reversed, switching cassette tracks so patrons never needed to turn the cassette over to receive six hours of listening. A machine combining the best features of the standard cassette and record playing talking-book models – appropriately named the combination machine (CT-1) – began production in 1991 after years in development.**

**NLS knew by the early 1990s that analog technology was becoming obsolete. It began a project to determine how books could be recorded digitally and what format would be the most satisfactory. Flash memory showed more promise and with the price dropping due to technological advances, it became affordable in time for digital books (DBs) to be introduced to network libraries and patrons in 2009.**

**The precursor to BARD was Web-Braille, a download site for braille titles that was implemented in 1999. In 2006, NLS launched a download site for audio magazines with 100 patrons. This proved both popular and successful and NLS began to add audiobook titles as well. When they opened this site to all patrons who had received an NLS digital player in 2009, the site already had 5,000 users. Web-Braille and the audio download site (already called BARD) were merged in 2013, making it a single source for both audio and braille books and magazines. Apps were developed for BARD that enabled Apple devices to be used first, and later Android devices. NLS also developed BARD Express, which provides a simpler method of downloading and transferring recorded books and magazines to a cartridge for playback on the NLS digital player.**

# NLS News and Updates

**Mr. Jason Broughton was selected as the new Director of the National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled (NLS) at the Library of Congress following the retirement of Director Karen Keninger. In September 2021, he became the 11th director in the 90-year history of the National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled, coming to Washington after serving as Vermont’s State Librarian.**

**At the start of each federal fiscal year, NLS reviews its short and mid-range goals. Here is a summary of what NLS – with the help of network libraries – wants to achieve in the year ahead. First, NLS would like to increase the number of active patrons served by 2.5 percent, taking advantage of the expanded list of certifying authorities that has made it easier for applicants with print or reading disabilities to sign up for service. Next, NLS plans to continue work to make BARD more scalable, user-friendly, and flexible, with a goal of having 25 percent of patrons using BARD by the end of September 2022. NLS also plans to pilot test a self-service dashboard for BARD users that tries to reduce the number of service requests to their support line (nlsdownload@loc.gov).**

**Along with these goals, NLS plans to continue pilot tests of the new braille eReaders in preparation to acquire devices for distribution to patrons. They intend to continue to pilot test next-generation digital talking-book machines. NLS wants to continue to implement their Modernization Plan, including improvements to BARD’s infrastructure to expand its capacity. NLS is preparing to create and implement an operating model that ensures higher levels of reliable braille service for patrons, including support for newly deployed braille eReaders once they become available. NLS intends to continue conducting research to better understand the needs and preferences of current and potential patrons and integrate those findings into the design and implementation of new products and services.**

**For patrons receiving magazines on cartridge (MOC), NLS is aware of the current delays with delivery. They have identified the issue as supply chain related and are working with the magazine producer to identify additional resources to return MOC delivery to normal levels.**

**Winter Library Closings**

**OLBPD will be closed this winter season for Christmas Eve on December 24th; Martin Luther King, Jr. Day on January 17th; and Presidents’ Day on February 21st. Please remember to place requests early to ensure enough books through the holiday season. Patrons residing outside Ohio through the winter can arrange to have their items sent to another address. OLBPD may need to close due to inclement weather. During emergency closings, OLBPD will alert patrons on our voice mail greeting when the library is closed.**

# OLBPD Holiday Reading List

**Here are some holiday and seasonal titles for readers to enjoy during the chilly months ahead. Please remember that these titles may contain descriptions of sex, strong language, or violence.**

**“Jingle Bones” by Carolyn Haines – DB 98719 – Short Cozy Holiday Mystery  
“The Mistletoe Secret” by Richard Paul Evans – DB 86630 – Holiday Romance**

**“The Christmas Star” by Donna VanLiere – DB 92624 – Holiday Romance**

**“Winter Street” by Elin Hilderbrand – DB 79830 – Holiday Family Fiction**

**“A Big Sky Christmas” by William Johnstone – DB 77883 – Holiday Western**

**“A Christmas Prayer” by Kimberla Lawson Roby – DB 80061 – Holiday Romance**

**Go Paperless!**

**Electronic versions of the OLBPD Dimensions newsletter are available from our website in audio, braille, and large print. Patrons can be added to our email list to receive notice when the next edition is available.**

**Season's Greetings**

Wishing all our readers a happy holiday season, and peace, good health and good reading in the New Year.

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FREE MATTER FOR THE BLIND OR HANDICAPPED

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