

Montana Talking Book Library (MTBL)

November 14, 2009 through January 22, 2010

Prepared for February 17, 2010 Commission meeting by Christie Briggs, Regional Librarian. This report represents accomplishments of Briggs, Gunderson, Madison, Meier, and Stanton, as well as 100 volunteers.

Goal One – Content – *Montana State Library (MSL)/MTBL acquires and manages relevant quality content that meets the needs of Montana library partners and patrons.*

November 14 – January 22, five books and one issue of *The Montana Magazine of Western History* and one issue of the *Montana Outdoors Magazine* were completed at both MTBL recording studios: *Grace Stone Coates: Her Life in Letters* by Lee Rostad; *The Hope Within* by Tracie Peterson. Heirs of Montana Series #4; *Yellowstone Trivia* by Janet Spencer; *The Watershed Years: A Novel* by Russell Rowland and *Meet Me at Tamerlane's Tomb* by Barbara Corcoran.

Montana Author, Jim Medicine Tree continues to record his book "*The Way of the Scared Pipe*".

Montana Author, Matt Pavelich who wrote "*Our Savage, A Novel*" is monitoring for his son, Nick, who is recording his book.

Goal Two—Access – *MSL/MTBL provides libraries, agencies, and its partners and patrons with convenient, high quality, and cost-effective access to library content and services.*

The Bits of Gold newsletter went out to 2,070 patrons in mid-January with follow-up information (from previous newsletters) explaining the distribution process of digital players and books as well as the BARD downloadable book service.

Digital players were distributed from mid November through mid-January to 238 Veterans, Centenarians and other patrons. Volunteers and employees were trained to contact patrons by phone or e-mail, explain the digital services, assist in choosing the appropriate player and a Reader Advisor checked out two digital books to start the patron on digital services. We assure each patron understands what the digital services offer them and how it operates.

Digital book titles totaling 896 were circulated from mid November through mid-January.

Goal Three—Consultation and Leadership – *MSL/MTBL provides consultation and leadership to enable its patrons and partners to reach their goals.*

Clerical volunteers and temporary staff were trained on fielding digital questions from patrons and transferring calls to employees and specific volunteers trained to assist staff in answering digital questions.

Circulation volunteers were trained on the entire process of handling new digital cartridge books from inspecting, labeling, proper filing, pulling, shipping and inspecting returned books. As the National Library Service policies changed, our staff and volunteer training changed with it.

Machine volunteers (Telecom Pioneers and others) were given an overview of how the new digital machines operate and a repair kit was received, acknowledged and sent on to the next Regional Library's Machine Lending Agency. We will have our own repair kit by the time the one year warranty ends on the first shipments.

Talking Book Library employees, volunteers and assistance from other departments are to be commended on their flexibility and adaptability during this major transition. The National Library Service' Training Manual is not yet complete but is a "work in progress", including the posting of necessary "upgrades" to digital players and changes in patron instructions. These have been met with patience and a great spirit of excitement and cooperation between patrons and the Talking Book Library staff and volunteers.

Goal Four—Collaboration – *MSL/MTBL promotes partnerships and encourages collaboration among its partners and patrons so that their information needs can be met.*

A part time temporary employee was hired to launch the initial distribution of digital players and books to Centenarians and Veterans on the original waiting list.

By the end of November, we partnered with Experience Works Program to train a new individual in the Talking Book Library's circulation program. We moved an existing Experience Works Program trainee to the digital service distribution process and rained him to continue digital distribution to patrons.

In December, we partnered with the Career Training Institute to train a new individual in the Talking Book Library's receptionist and clerical program.

Goal Five— Sustainable Success – *MSL/MTBL is a well-run organization and a sought-after employer; it is efficient and effective (measured against partner and patron outcomes), and successfully engaged in its ongoing mission.*

December -We hosted the Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon to recognize our 100 volunteers. It was held at the SS. Cyril & Methodius Church Social Center in East Helena. "Let the Good Times Roll!" was the theme with Mardi Gras decorations. Special and individual awards were given in addition to all volunteers receiving LED Book Lights that said "Volunteers Light Up Our Lives". Music was played by Steve Rains and Jim Harrington. The Retired Seniors Volunteer Program (RSVP) provided two cakes for the volunteer event. There were 85 total participants including volunteers, MSL Staff and guests (Commissioner and Mrs. Richard Quillin; Russ Cravens and Margaret Smith, Telephone Pioneer Representatives; Jean Applegate, RSVP; Linda Nolan and Merrylee McCrae, Foster Grandparents program; Beverly Berg and Doug Robinson, Blind & Low Vision Services in Helena and Great Falls).

The Talking Book Library is continually challenged in meeting current and new demands for improving patron services. The support we have been given by Management, Administration and the Commission is greatly appreciated in assisting us to meet these challenges.