

Montana Talking Book Library (MTBL) November 20, 2013 – January 24, 2014

Prepared for the February 12, 2014, Commission meeting by
Christie Briggs, Regional Librarian. This report represents accomplishments of MTBL
staff: Briggs, Gunderson, Landry, Meier, Stanton, Harris, Crepeau and 90 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.*

NEWLY COMPLETED Montana Digital Book (MDB) titles – *More Montana Moments* by Ellen Baumler and *Goosetown in Their Own Words, 1900-1945: An Oral History of Anaconda's Ethnic, Working-Class Neighborhood* by Alice Finnegan. Each book met one or more of the required MTBL criteria for recording: published work written by a Montana author; Montana history; Montana interest or issue; patron request that would be of interest to other patrons; not available to Montana patrons from a national or state talking book library resource. When completed, each recording passed the MTBL review process. The ultimate benefit to Montana patrons is receiving the highest quality recording product available from our local recording studio, staff and volunteers.

NEW Montana Digital Books (MDB's) Currently in Review- *Montana Curiosities: Quirky Characters, Roadside Oddities & Other Offbeat Stuff* by Ednor Therriault; *This is Not the Ivy League: A Memoir* by Mary Clearman Blew; *Ride the Jawbone* by Jim Moore; *Hostiles? The Lakota Ghost Dance and Buffalo Bill's Wild West* by Sam A. Maddra; *The Red Corner: The Rise and Fall of Communism in Northeastern Montana* by Verlaine Stoner McDonald; *The Beautiful Birthday Cake* by Margaret Scherf; and *Bedside Book of Bad Girls: Outlaw Women of the American West* by Michael Rutter. Each book is being reviewed by the MDB review committee (consisting of patrons, staff, and volunteers), against criteria which includes consistent format, voice quality, pronunciation, accurate unabridged narration, technical sound production, and overall quality of the recording. This process ensures the highest quality of the recordings made available to our Montana patrons.

Beginning in February, 2014, local magazine recordings (Montana the Magazine of Western History and Montana Outdoors) will be offered to patrons in a digital cartridge, as issues are completed in the recording studio.

For the first time in 2013, National Library Service (NLS) began offering popular nationally-distributed magazines "on loan" in digital form to patrons. This program has been well received although it has presented a challenge, especially to Montana patrons because, for the first time, NLS requires patrons to return these items within 30 days of shipping leaving Montana patrons one week to read and return a digital magazine. NLS is monitoring this new digital magazine service in an effort to improve service options.

Retrospective Montana Cassette Book Digital Conversion Project. This project began July 1, 2013. As of December 31, 2013, of the 1,060 total Montana cassette book titles (MCB's) to be converted, Wendy Kongstevdt (part-time Digital Recording Conversion Specialist) has completed the conversion of 130 recorded titles (12.3%) to Montana digital books (MDB's). Criteria selection is based on prioritization of highest circulation statistics, Montana author and genre popularity through weekly consultations with supervisor and recording program director. The conversion process has involved extensive interlibrary loans of print copies, real-time evaluation of cassette masters for quality, software conversion challenges, NLS reformatting requirements, copy duplication, and final cartridge and mailing container labeling for patron circulation and collection development. This process ensures the highest quality of the retrospective cassette recordings converted to a consistent digital format for our Montana patrons to enjoy. There are 930 titles left to convert by June 30, 2014 (87.7%), which is the end of the one-time funds approved by the Montana Legislature for this project.

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.*

Beginning in February, 2014, the MTBL 'Bits of Gold' Newsletter will be offered to patrons on digital cartridges, in addition to the current formats of website postings, e-mail and large print.

BARD Pre-Pilot Project- MTBL was invited by the National Library Service (NLS) Quality Assurance Division to participate in this project with the eventual goal of posting local recordings on the BARD (Braille and Audio Reading Download) website for availability to patrons nationwide. The first Montana "born digital" recording currently being reviewed is "Hand Raised: The Barns of Montana" by Chere Juisto and Christine Brown. The process requires meeting the current NLS standards and guidelines for quality recordings.

The Patron Outreach Project (POP): An Executive Summary of the overall accomplishments of this project will be made available to Commissioners by February 8th, and presented in person at the February 12th Commission meeting by Johna Wilcox and Pamela Bennett of Wendt, Inc.

Statistical comparison of calendar years 2012 with 2013:

Circulation:

2012: USPS processed: 222,308; Downloaded (BARD) materials: 15,966

2013: USPS processed: 225,627; Downloaded (BARD) materials: 19,031

An increase of 1.5% in USPS processed materials

An increase of 19.2% in BARD downloads

A total increase of 20.7% in overall circulation of processed materials

Interlibrary loans:

2012: Total- 210. Breakdown: 77- direct digital book ILL's from the NLS- Multistate Center West to Montana patrons not signed up for BARD (these were limited in availability from NLS); 34 out-of-state digital book ILL's requested from Montana patrons; 99 Montana cassette book ILL's to out-of-state patrons.

2013: Total- 687. Breakdown: 598- direct digital book ILL's from the NLS- Multistate Center West to Montana patrons not signed up for BARD (NLS opened this up to unlimited requests); 45 out-of-state digital book ILL's requested from Montana patrons; 44 Montana cassette book ILL's to out-of-state patrons.

An increase of 227%

In 2013, NLS allowed talking book libraries to acquire (through the ILL process) an annual quota of 125 digital masters (1 copy each) from BARD-only titles, increasing the amount of USPS materials available to non-BARD patrons.

New Patrons Signed up with MTBL:

2012: 348; 2013: 451.

An increase of 29.6%

BARD Patron and Institution Members:

2012- 233

2013- 273

An increase of 17.2%

Benefits to our patrons continue to increase through circulation, ILL, and an increase in available digital books (both local and national offerings) and magazines for our patrons' enjoyment and education.

Goal Three – Training – *MSL provides libraries, agencies, its partners and Montanans with appropriate trainings and training resources so that they can make the best use of the resources offered.*

Three Readers' Advisors continue to offer BARD technology support to 273 Patron and Institution BARD members on a daily basis.

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

A staff member and a volunteer presented a Twin Vision Braille story time and demonstration to 44 students and 3 teachers of the Central School Kindergarten Classes, Helena on Nov. 11, 2013. Students totaled 44 with 3 teachers. The goal was to educate the elementary students on how an individual who is blind reads Braille books, and help them understand the development of Braille and the need for an alternate

reading method for individuals with vision disabilities. Each student and teacher was given a Braille alphabet card and a name tag with their name in both Braille and standard print. Instruction was given on how the six-cell Braille alphabet was created. A tactile display was used consisting of a six-slot muffin tin and six tennis balls. It was demonstrated how the muffin tin slots resembled Braille cells and the tennis balls resembled Braille alphabet raised dots.

MTBL Twin Vision and Braille materials were supplied to 42 students and 3 teachers of the Bitterroot Elementary School in Billings for their third grade classes in January, 2014. Materials included Braille alphabet cards, name tags in Braille and print for each student and teacher, Braille rulers, bookmarks, and music sheets, Twin Vision books, and MTBL brochures and patron applications. The goal was to meet the schools' annual disability curriculum requirements in teaching alternative methods of reading and writing Braille.

A staff member gave a MTBL presentation to the Director of Disability Services and staff at Helena College- U of M in January, 2014. A demonstration was given on the BARD mobile APP works on an iPad for student/patron use. MTBL materials were placed with the department for future reference and referrals.

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

Vickie Collins is the new Network Division Chief for National Library Service (NLS). Ms. Collins has a Masters in Library Science, was a previous Regional Librarian for a talking book library, and has been an NLS network consultant previous to accepting this position.

Two staff and several Telephone Pioneer volunteers met with Kevin Watson, NLS Equipment Officer, on Dec. 16, 2013, via teleconference, regarding the best practices for the maintenance and repair of digital players. NLS is currently developing new digital testing tools for use in each Machine Lending Agency in the talking book library network.

Goal Six – 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.*

MTBL joined Facebook on January 16, 2013; built an audience of 86 "friends", and created 61 posts that included announcement of information on MTBL events, staff, volunteers, educational opportunities for patrons on Braille classes, new technology, in addition to new titles available in digital (both local and national). MTBL Facebook account has created greater awareness of our services outside of our usual partners, and an educational opportunity for current partners to learn about new services we provide.

Staff Acknowledgements:

Jackie Crepeau, new Readers' Advisor as of November 4th, will be introduced at the February 12th Commission meeting (previously announced in the December Library Commission minutes.)

Carolyn Meier, Circulation Manager, will receive her 30 year employment appreciation pin at the February 12th Commission meeting. *While she has requested that verbal praise at the meeting be kept to 5 words,*

Carolyn's accomplishments in MTBL are noteworthy and include these highlights: As a Readers' Advisor for many years she took the lead in implementing the first (READS) database with NLS. She was a key member in the database transition from READS to KLAS in the mid-1990's. As Circulation Manager, her accomplishments included organizing and overseeing the move of the entire collection from its previous location upstairs to downstairs; managing MSL first class mail; creating a highly efficient random shelving system that is the envy of all talking book libraries; managing the collection transition from cassettes to digital; training volunteers in digital check-in; increasing the efficiency of processing and distributing books to and from patrons. She continues to meet her personal goals for the digital transition of the collection. She was a key member in setting up the Duplication on Demand process for making more titles available to non-BARD patrons from BARD-only titles. Carolyn has received two Governor's Awards of Excellence; one for her personal accomplishments and one for her collaborative accomplishments as a team member of MTBL.