

Montana Talking Book Library (MTBL) January 25, 2014 – March 21, 2014

Prepared for the April 9, 2014, Commission meeting by
Christie Briggs, Regional Librarian. This report represents accomplishments of MTBL
staff: Briggs, Gunderson, Landry, Meier, 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 – *Horses They Rode* by Sid Gustafson; *Montana Curiosities: Quirky Characters, Roadside Oddities & Other Offbeat Stuff* by Ednor Therriault; *This is Not the Ivy League: A Memoir* by Mary Clearman Blew; and *Ride the Jawbone* by Jim Moore. The benefit to Montana patrons is access to Montana audio titles in the highest quality recording product available from a talking book library's local recording studio, staff and volunteers.

NEW Montana Digital Books (MDB's) Currently in Review- *Hostiles? The Lakota Ghost Dance and Buffalo Bill's Wild West* by Sam A. Maddra; *Power Switch: A Novel* by Patrick C. Lee; *The Red Corner: The Rise and Fall of Communism in Northeastern Montana* by Verlaine Stoner McDonald; *The Beautiful Birthday Cake* by Margaret Scherf; *Bedside Book of Bad Girls: Outlaw Women of the American West* by Michael Rutter; and *The Threadbare Buzzard: A Marine Fighter Pilot in WWII* by Thomas M. Tomlinson. This process ensures the highest quality review of completed recordings to be made available to Montana patrons.

Local Magazines ready for recording in Digital format The digital formatting was completed in March in order for local magazines to be recorded. The digital recording for the first magazine, *Montana Outdoors March/April 2014*, started in March. *The Montana Magazine of Western History, Spring 2014*, will be recorded when the issue is received at the library. Free courtesy copies are given to MTBL, for recording purposes, in partnership with Fish Wildlife and Parks and the Montana Historical Society. As issues are completed in the recording studio, each issue will be duplicated onto digital audio cartridges for the first time ever, for patrons to enjoy.

Montana Retrospective Conversion (Cassettes to Digital) Project. The Digital Conversion Project began July 1, 2013. As of March 21st, 154 MCB (cassette) titles were converted to Montana audio digital books (MDB's). In March, a software encryption challenge was discovered, addressed in consultation with NLS audio experts, and resolved for each Montana digital title.

Xess Process The Circulation Manager is preparing nearly 6,000 audio cassette book (RC) copies per quarter for recycling to meet NLS requirements and to making room for shelving and circulation of new incoming NLS digital book copies. This is called the "Xess process" and is an NLS on-going quarterly book copy recycle requirement. In

addition, 2013 was the first year NLS required a similar process for recycling audio digital book (DB) copies. These are done on the new digital cartridge format. MTBL has adopted the same recycle procedure internally in an effort to reuse as many library purchased digital cartridges as possible.

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.*

'Bits of Gold' Newsletter In March, 2014, the MTBL 'Bits of Gold' Newsletter will be offered to patrons on digital cartridges, in addition to website postings (both in pdf and html formats), e-mail and large print mailings. Patrons have been anxiously awaiting production of our newsletter in a digital audio format on cartridges. Delays occurred in offering this to patrons due to securing an adequate number of digital cartridges to meet patron subscription requests. In addition to the digital format being made available on cartridges, MTBL has included several other formats to meet patron demands for audio digital and an easier large print format suitable for screen readers for both computer and stand-alone magnifiers.

BARD Pre-Pilot Project A Success! MTBL has its first local recording on the NLS BARD (Braille and Audio Reading Download) website! The first Montana "born digital" recording accepted on BARD is "Hand Raised: The Barns of Montana" by Chere Juisto and Christine Brown. The process had many challenges, especially with the programming of the current audio recording software (Low Complexity Mastering System- LCM), application of the NLS required encryption software, and other required markup applications. The direct benefit to Montana patrons, as well as nationwide patrons and other talking book libraries, is direct access to downloadable local audio books from BARD.

Increased Patron Requests for Digital Format Keeping ahead of the need for digital cartridges and containers for the new digital NLS format has been challenging as patrons increasingly expect materials in the easy to use digital cartridge format. In addition to internally recycling low circulating books on digital cartridges, plans are underway to address these and other needs of this continuing transition.

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.*

NLS conference in May Along with demonstrations of new software for machine lending agencies and magazine services, a new, easier to use audio recording software demonstration will be offered for the newly NLS proposed, and soon to be approved, HABC (Hindenburg Audio Book Creator) recording software. Once approved by NLS, this software will be available to talking book library recording programs for direct vendor purchase in the near future.

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

School District Consultation Provided easier solutions for accessing MTBL Braille services to individual Billings Public Elementary Schools to better serve students with vision impairments.

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

Database Upgrade MTBL's patron and collection database was upgraded in mid-January by the Keystone Library Automated System (KLAS) vendor. MTBL staff, especially Readers' Advisors, benefited from better performance of and improvements in several database functions.

New volunteers Diane Gunderson trained these new MTBL volunteers: Lori & Caroline Carey, Recording Program Narrator/Monitor Team.

NLS Open Forum Conference The February call between NLS staff and Talking Book Library staff focused on several important projects in the works, including a new digital cartridge cable accessory adaptor (initially with limited quantities available to each library) for BARD patron downloading, discussion of upcoming demonstrations of the Hindenburg (HABC) audio book creator recording software. Other topics discussed included the NLS budget survey for talking book libraries, adult winter reading programs, Xess of cassettes going beyond 2015, delays in the embossed Braille book Xess process, NLS commercial magazine delinquency reports and NLS expectations of mail delivery services.

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.*

The Patron Outreach Project (POP) Plans for the sustainability of continued marketing and advertising of MTBL is currently underway. The obvious success of the TV and radio ads, indicates a need for MTBL to continue marketing efforts through the rest of 2014 and into the future.

Plans for New Audio Recording Software In planning the purchase of new audio recording software and support services, and ancillary resources, we are learning what the costs of the new HABC software and support services will be. Talking book libraries (TBL's) are moving in this direction to resolve current challenges with the Low Complexity Mastering (LCM) audio recording software being used in the majority of recording studios. NLS is answering the call from TBL recording programs to offer an audio recording software program that is easier to use, able to meet NLS recording standards, has excellent technical support, long term warranties, offers NLS one-on-one training and is consistent throughout all recording studios.

Job Profile Review The Director of the Recording and Volunteer program job profile was reviewed and updated in preparation for a new hiring process for this position.

Updates to Recording and Volunteer Program processes To insure a smooth transition to a totally new audio recording format (including equipment) in the Recording Program, as well as securing an on-going solid tradition of excellence in the Volunteer Program, all recording and volunteer forms, manuals, processes and procedures are being reviewed and updated for the next director of these programs.

Staff Acknowledgements Diane Gunderson will be retiring as of May 2nd after 27 years with Montana State Government, mostly at MSL. A retirement celebration will be held on April 25th, Friday, in the MSL Grizzly conference room from 12:30 to 2:30pm to honor, roast and feed this wonderful team member of MTBL! All commissioners, public librarians, MSL, NHP and FWP staff are invited to attend this potluck style celebration.