

Montana Talking Book Library (MTBL)

September 17, 2014 – November 18, 2014

Activity Report Prepared for the December 10, 2014, Commission meeting by
Christie Briggs, Regional Librarian.

This report represents accomplishments of MTBL staff: Briggs, Crepeau, deMontigny,
Harris, Landry, Meier, and over 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.*

Recording Program:

Upgrading to the new Hindy Recording Program: Update

-The volunteer recording teams have concluded their current recordings utilizing the outdated recording program (LCM) software and (XP) hardware. MTBL is in the process of installing a completely updated, and NLS recommended, recording program including new computers, recording software, and recording accessories in the recording studio.

-An inventory of MTBL's digital books and projects was conducted to address current and long-term digital storage needs.

The benefit to Montana patrons will be a higher quality recording product MTBL's recording studio, staff and volunteers. As well, inventory and documentation of the various stages of conversion on all Montana cassette and digital (new and old) recordings is of benefit to staff and ultimately patrons.

New MT Digital Titles Completed and Circulating:

MTBL recorded the book *Who Lost: The Biography of a Blind Man with Great Vision* by Montana author Dale Sheldon (MDB 2029). This was also recorded by the volunteer Vanisko recording team. *The benefit to patrons met a high demand of requests to record this book and offered patrons an enjoyable and meaningful reading experience on the unique accomplishments of this author's story.*

Special Projects Completed:

The 2014 Voter Information Pamphlet for the Montana Secretary of State's Office was completed. MTBL volunteers Bob and Marie Vanisko recorded the text, and Secretary of State Linda McCulloch recorded her introductory letter. This was a "rush" project.

The benefit to patrons was to have completed it well before the deadline, giving Montana voters ample time to read it prior to the November election.

Montana Retrospective Conversion (Cassettes to Digital) Project: Update

Continuation of the Digital Conversion Project (which was funded from July 1, 2013- June 27, 2014, completing 231 MCB (cassette) titles (or 25%) converted to audio digital books (MDB's) is at a standstill at this time. This was not included in the approved final Governor's budget. Alternative avenues for funding are being researched.

Circulation Management:

-Listing was completed for an additional 6,000 audio cassette book (RC) copies for shipping to the new NLS recycling contractor. We continue to strive to meet our December, 2015, goal of decreasing cassettes and increasing digital materials and online access for patrons.

-New Patrons: There were 88 new patrons added between 9-17-2014 and 11-18-2014.

-Materials Circulated Statistics: Overall circulation of materials to patrons during this time period, including 79 locally distributed magazines and books in all formats and sources (except November BARD stats which are not available) totaled 40,718 items, and other requested materials. *Benefits to patrons include ease of access and utilization of digital and electronic audio and braille materials as cassette books diminish and digital and electronic books and magazines increase in addition to improvements to BARD downloading capabilities.*

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.*

Interlibrary loans:

During this time period there were 249 interlibrary loans processed for patrons. *Benefit to patrons is direct access to materials outside of our internal collection.*

Machine Circulation:

Machines circulated to new patrons and replacements for existing patrons totaled 31 cassette machines and 142 digital machines during this reporting time period. *Benefit to patrons is access to quality operating machines by which to listen to their reading materials.*

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.*

-An iOS APP downloading demonstration for BARD was presented to public librarians and staff at the MSL Fall Workshop Poster Session in Helena on Sept. 12th.

-Volunteer recruitment and MTBL service information was presented to students at the Carroll College Student Connection through the Hunthausen Center on Sept. 27th.

-Two U.S. Currency Readers were demonstrated at the Oct. 27th Montana Association for the Blind consumer group in Helena, as well as at the DPHHS/EDT Division/Blind and Low Vision department's consumer support group on Nov. 3rd in Great Falls.

Registered MTBL patrons requesting a device will be submitted to NLS for one free currency reader from the Bureau of Engraving and Printing. *The impact to communities includes better communications and awareness of MTBL services and opportunities for volunteerism.*

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

Website accessibility-

Input was requested on the accessibility tool bar from patron input and the use of screen readers for the MSL website, and was shared at the MSL web oversight committee. Further testing is in progress to follow-up on this input. Additional patron suggested changes were recommended directly to MTBL staff regarding certain web content and links. These addressed reducing duplication of content, easier access to links, necessary clean-up of leftover content in moving from WordPress to the DNN format. *The impact on MTBL patrons is the continued honing of accessibility that will directly benefit patrons, potential patrons, and their support networks in quickly finding needed information on the MTBL website, as well as quick access to the overall wealth of information available on the MSL website through a multitude of services provided.*

Social Media -

Since the October Commission meeting, MTBL has posted 11 Facebook posts that included an announcement of our newsletter, information from the National Federation of the Blind, pictures from the Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon, and various profiles of books available for order. These posts reached over 681 social media users. *The impact to communities includes better communications and awareness of MTBL services and better access to information as a program of MSL.*

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

NLS (National Library Service) Open Forum Monthly Conference with NTBL's:

Highlights from the October monthly teleconference with NLS staff and staff of all NTBL's (network Talking Book Libraries) focused on:

-A new contract is in place, and mailing cards were shipped to NTBL's, to return already listed cassette books to the new NLS contractor for recycling.

-A new NLS online readership and circulation reporting tool was installed for NTBL's. Glitches are still being worked out by NLS with the NTBL's input.

-Over 20,000 NLS cassette titles have yet to be converted to digital. All are posted directly to BARD. Any duplication of physical copies from BARD continues to be the responsibility of the NTBL's.

-An NLS survey regarding digital cartridges will go out soon to NTBL's to assess NTBL's cartridge needs.

-BARD (NLS online braille and audio recording download service): Patrons using iOS devices are still experiencing problems with Apple's recent upgrades. NLS installed BARD fixes for patrons and are collaborating with Apple to assist them in fixing the malfunctioning search features in the Apple upgrade. Patrons have been informed and are patiently awaiting resolution of the issues.

-An issue with partially downloaded materials by patrons using BARD is being evaluated by NLS.

The impact from the monthly conference call on MTBL staff, and nationwide NTBL's, is essential to enhance communications and resolve issues that directly impact patrons.

-Representing MSL, and as an MTBL host agency for VA employment training, Erin Harris and Christie Briggs received Helena Industries' 2014 Service Recognition Award. *Impact on staff and volunteers is to improve our skills in developing better procedures, training others, and offering a positive environment in which to prepare individuals for re-entering the workforce.*

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.*

New Readers' Advisor Hired

Bobbi deMontigny was hired in MTBL on October 6, shortly before the October Commission meeting and was introduced to those Commissioners in attendance. Bobbi previously worked for four years as an information assistant at the Lewis and Clark Library. She has a BSLS with a focus on communications from Montana State University, and will complete her MLIS in June, 2015, at the University of Washington. We are delighted to have her join us. Bobbi has already proven to be a great asset to the MTBL team.

Follow-up on the 2014 Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon "Expressions of Gratitude":

The event held on October 9th in Helena was a huge success! Chrysti the Wordsmith, guest speaker, was well received. Volunteer awards were presented to the following:

Longevity Awards: Mary Biskupiak, 20 years, and Frank Flynn, 20 years

Telecom Pioneers and Machine Repair Volunteers: Frank Flynn, Chuck Flynn, Tom Tompkins, Gloria Purcell, and Jim Brown

Youth Volunteers: Ariaiah, Dominic, and Jordan Danzer; Derek and Olivia Martinez; Alexis, CJ, and Ricky Meier; and Kirsten Marble

Special Appreciation Award: The Special Appreciation Award winner, Ralph Leonard, was unable to attend the luncheon due to illness, so we planned a successful "surprise" party for him upon his return to "work". The surprise party was extra special because Ralph's family was able to attend and help celebrate as he was presented with the award.

Recording Team of the Year: This award was presented to Colleen Mockler (narrator), Jane Weidler (monitor), and Giles Walker (reviewer). Giles has volunteered 2,054 hours for MTBL, and has reviewed most of Colleen and Jane's books. Colleen and Jane have been volunteering in the MTBL recording studio for 24 ½ years, having recorded 70 books for our patron's reading pleasure. Jane is retiring from volunteering at the end of the year and will be greatly missed.

Nancy Hanford, 2013-14 President, and Adina Fox, President's special project Chairperson, of the GFWC-MT (General Federation of Women's Clubs of Montana) made

a surprise presentation of \$17,000.00 (in both cash and in-kind donations) to the Montana Talking Book Library's Recording Program. Nancy's presentation was especially heartfelt, due to her family's experiences with macular degeneration which inspired her and over 700 GFWC-MT women to make this contribution to MTBL a reality. State Library Director Jennie Stapp graciously invited Nancy and Adina to present again at the December Commission meeting.