

LIBRARY AT THE TOUCH OF A FINGER

PHILADELPHIA REGIONAL



LIBRARY FOR THE BLIND AND PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED

THE FREE LIBRARY OF PHILADELPHIA

NO. 63

FALL, 2007

### HEARTFELT THANKS

The Library genuinely appreciates the generous contributions and donations received throughout the year. During these challenging times of level funding for State tax dollars private sources support many of our core programs and also provides needed essentials. Bequests, memorials and in-kind contributions help the Library stretch resources. Your gifts to the Friends of the Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped also benefit the program.

### BEGINNERS GUIDE TO ELECTRONIC BOOKS AND DEVICES OFFERED

The world of audio electronic books can be overwhelming for beginners. On December 11 Pennsylvania's Initiative on Assistive Technology (PIAT) will hold a free session for novices. Attendees will learn about the various types of audio e-books as well as where to get them and how to use them. Some of the newest portable players and devices will be available for hands-on exploration.

In addition to staff from the Library for the Blind presenters will include Ginger Murphy of Recordings for the Blind & Dyslexic and Jule Ann Lieberman, founder of EZ2C. The new NLS digital format, Bookshare, and RFB&D's new initiatives will all be discussed.

All those who are interested are welcome to attend.

To register, call Maria Smith at Temple University's Institute on Disabilities at (215) 204-5395. Event: Tuesday, December 11, 2007 9:30am-12:45pm (registration at 9:00am) 919 Walnut St, 10<sup>th</sup> floor. Light refreshments will be served.

### POETRY, POETRY, POETRY ...

The library has come alive with the spoken word, and it is a trend that will continue.

Last month, an enthusiastic crowd listened while Dan Simpson, the former poet laureate of Landsdowne, PA, delighted them with a selection of poems from his latest work.

The evening of poetry and fellowship was so enjoyable that another event is already planned: David Simpson, poet laureate of Montgomery County, will read at LBPH on Dec. 4 at 6:30pm. Those who would like to attend can arrive any time after 5:30pm.

And don't forget that LBPH has many volumes of poetry that you can request on cassette or in Braille for your reading pleasure. There's nothing better on a long winter's evening.

### DESCRIBED VIDEO COLLECTION GETS A BIG BOOST

The library's described video collection, which includes everything from old classics to modern documentaries, now has more titles available to borrow. The films are on VHS and patrons must supply their own players. Give us a call and we'll explain the program and send you some great flicks with audio description to enjoy.

You may contact us by mail, fax, telephone or email. We are located at 919 Walnut Street (first floor), Philadelphia, PA 19107; (fax) 215-683-3211; (toll free) 800-222-1754 or (local) 215-683-3213; and [flblind@library.phila.gov](mailto:flblind@library.phila.gov)

919 NEWS is published by the Philadelphia Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, Free Library of Philadelphia. It is available in large print, cassette and in braille. Call the Library for the braille or cassette version at 215-683-3213 (in Philadelphia) or toll free at 800-222-1754. We welcome news and comments from our readers.

**THE LIBRARY IS OPEN MONDAY - FRIDAY 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM**

LIBRARY FOR BLIND AND  
PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED  
919 WALNUT STREET  
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA 19107  
215.683.3213  
(TOLL FREE) 1.800.222.1754

**F R E E  
READING MATTER  
FOR THE  
BLIND OR PHYSICALLY  
HANDICAPPED**

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## TWENTY-FIVE YEARS OF THE PHILADELPHIA LBPH: A TIMELINE

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As the library looks forward to a transition to digital media, its most significant advancement in recent years, we also look back at the accomplishments of the last quarter century. From new technological improvements to the creation of accessible educational programs, the LBPH has provided innovative services for our patrons over the past 25 years. This year the National Library Service (NLS) recognized the library's achievements with an award for exemplary service. The library will carry on its commitment to uphold the NLS's motto, "That All May Read," in its new digital endeavor.

### **1983**

A quarterly newsletter, "919 News," is created to inform patrons about LBPH services and programs.

### **1985**

LBPH celebrates 10 years of uninterrupted growth. In the last decade, circulation increased by 44% and registration by 56%.

### **1986**

The library's large print collection becomes more accessible to patrons after LBPH collaborates with the Pennsylvania State Library and Pittsburgh Regional Library on production of the libraries' first large print catalog.

### **1987**

With funding from the Pennsylvania Department of Special Education, the library creates an accessible GED program. Hundreds of students will go on graduated with GED/ABE degrees, and many will continue to college and employment.

The Regional Libraries in Philadelphia, Pittsburgh and New Jersey develop a new circulation system that automatically selects materials overnight.

### **1988**

LBPH and the Pittsburgh and New Jersey Regional Libraries form The Consortium of User Libraries, an organization aimed at creating a shared computer automation system. Over the next several years, libraries from Iowa, Michigan, and Maine will also join the Consortium.

### **1989**

The library opens a computer lab for patron use, which, for the first time, lets users access information themselves.

The library's recording studio is modernized. The professional studio is used for the production of magazines, books, and other volunteer-produced items.

### **1990**

The Telephone Pioneers celebrate 30 years of volunteer service repairing talking book machines. The volunteer group of former telecommunications employees has repaired thousands machines over the years.

### **1991**

National Exhibits by Blind Artists (NEBA) sponsors its first symposium, "Art Beyond Sight: Focus on Art and Vision," at the Philadelphia Museum of Art. The event presents a wide variety of speakers addressing issues related to work by blind artists and teaching art to the blind.

### **1992**

"Friends of LBPH" is established as an organization to help support the library's activities, facilities and programs. The group, which now has hundreds of members, advocates for the library and raises funds.

A new recirculation system, which allows returned items to be sent to a new patron the day after they are received, leads to faster turnaround times and a dramatic increase in the circulation of recorded cassettes.

### **1994**

The first Access Technology workstation is installed for patrons in the new Talking Book Center. The PC is equipped with speech, large print, and Braille.

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The library receives a grant to buy digital audio-recording equipment and begin production on the "Pennsylvania Collection," a series of recorded fiction and non-fiction books that are related to Pennsylvania's heritage.

**1996**

Circulation reaches a record high of one million. It will continue to grow.

Congress passes the Chafee Amendment, allowing LBPHs to record books without first seeking copyright permission from authors.

**1997**

"Hands-on Cezanne," a touchable art exhibit on loan from the Philadelphia Museum of Art that includes several tactile drawings and two three-dimensional models of the Cezanne's "Still Life With Apples," is displayed at the library.

**1998**

The LBPH Web page is launched, allowing patrons with Internet access to get information about programs and resources that are available through LBPH.

**1999**

NLS launches Web-Braille, an online program that allows patrons with computers to download Braille books and magazines via the Web and read them on machines with Braille displays.

Reference calls skyrocket to 90,532 after the installation of two toll-free telephone lines.

**2001**

New compact shelving doubles the collection storage space in the library's basement.

McNaughton books, a rented collection of popular large print titles, are added to the collection, allowing the library to fulfill requests for large print best sellers more quickly.

The Free Library establishes an Access Technology task force, which will install computer workstations for print-impaired patrons in several branches of the Free Library.

**2002**

The Online Public Access Catalog (OPAC), which allows patrons to search the collection and request books independently, is launched.

The new "Mobile LBPH" van visits retirement communities, nursing homes, hospitals, schools, and senior centers to promote the library's service more directly to those who can use it. The van lets the library sign up eligible readers on site.

**2003**

All 576 stacks on the library's second floor are disassembled and rebuilt with higher shelving, more than doubling storage space.

The accessible computer workstations at the LBPH and other branches of the Free Library offer free access to some full-text databases, the Internet, and word processing for individuals with visual impairments.

**2005**

LPBH co-sponsors a course series with Pennsylvania Initiative for Assistive Technology (PIAT) about innovative approaches for people with disabilities.

NEBA celebrates its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary with a gala at the Philadelphia Museum of Art The Free Library begins offering free downloadable audio books on its Web site. A library card is required to get these materials online.

**2006**

The Library Services and Technology Act awards both the Philadelphia and Pittsburgh LBPHs funding for the transition from analog to digital media.

**2007**

The Philadelphia regional library is awarded the NLS's annual Network Library of the Year Award for excellence in serving the blind and physically handicapped community.

**2008**

The library plans to introduce Digital Talking Books and players.

**JUDY DIXON OF NLS AT  
PA COUNCIL OF THE BLIND**

Judy Dixon, Consumer Relations Officer of the National Library Service, spoke to the Pennsylvania Council of the Blind at their recent annual state convention. Describing the conversion to digital format at NLS and its' impact on future library service, she brought working prototypes of the new digital talking book player. The new format and the devices will begin shipping late in 2008. Call LBPH if you would like to be put on the waiting list for the new players and medium.

Dixon also stressed that now would be a excellent time for users of the NLS service to share their enthusiasm with their state and federal legislators. Funding is always a concern for the National Library Service, and making your wishes known to elected officials really helps.

**INDEPENDENCE STARTS HERE:  
FESTIVAL/MURAL**

If you participated in Independence Starts Here: A Festival of Disability Arts and Culture, which featured the work of artists with disabilities, you know that it was a real treat.

The culmination of the festival was the dedication of the "Independence Starts Here" mural. Prominently displayed on the side of Hahnemann Hospital facing City Hall, this breathtaking mural reminds us that it is all about ability.

**NEBA EXHIBITS IN WAYNE  
AND PHILADELPHIA**

The National Exhibits by Blind Artists (NEBA) exhibited at the Wayne Art Center from Sept. 23-Oct. 21. The show, Art Beyond Sight: Focus on Art and Vision, featured the work of 38 artists. Street Thoma from the Philadelphia Museum of Art led a Sensory Tour of the NEBA exhibit. (Contact PMA's Accessible Programs at 215-684-7602 or TTY 215-684-7600 for information about additional tours.)

If you missed the NEBA show in Wayne, it will be at the Free Library of Philadelphia Central Library at 1901 Vine Street, from Jan.-March, 2008. Visit the NEBA Web site at [nebaart.org](http://nebaart.org) for more information.

**LBPH PATRON HITS HOLE IN ONE**

Sheila Drummond, an LBPH patron, hit a hole in one on Aug. 19 at the Mahoning Valley Country Club in Lehigh, PA. Mrs. Drummond was interviewed about her achievement on "Good Morning America." "I was in a fog," she replied when asked how she felt. "I see golf as an addiction."

Mrs. Drummond, a sports enthusiast, began golfing after she lost her sight 15 years ago. She urges interested patrons to visit the Blind Golf Association Web site, <http://www.blindgolf.com>, for more information about the sport.

And of course LBPH will be glad to send along those sports-related titles to get you ready for Spring and new adventures.

**The Library will be closed on the following days:**

Christmas, December 25  
New Year's Day, January 1  
Martin Luther King Day, January 21  
President's Day, February 18

**YES, I AM PLEASED TO GIVE A HOLIDAY GIFT TO THE LIBRARY  
(800) 222-1754 OR (215) 683-3213**

Enclosed please find my check for \$\_\_\_\_\_ payable to the Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped/FLP Foundation.  
*(Donations are tax-deductible to the extent of the law)*

Donor Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

**Mail to: Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped  
919 Walnut St., First Floor, Philadelphia, PA 19107**