



Special Services Unit Spring 2017 Newsletter

Welcome Wendy to Our Staff!

You may have noticed a friendly new voice on the phone when calling with your requests and questions. SSU welcomed Wendy to our staff as the new Assistant Librarian beginning mid-February. Originally from the East, Wendy lived on the West Coast for many years before relocating to Vermont last fall. She has over 20 years' experience working in public and academic libraries providing reference and reader advisory assistance, technical support, programming for children and youth, cataloging, and circulation. She has also tutored students of all ages, and taught a class for adults with dyslexia. Wendy says, "I'm thrilled to be learning a whole new area of library service and look forward to meeting all of you." Wendy replaces Assistant Librarian and Interim Director Jennifer who will be retiring soon after 28 years with the Library.

Newspapers Now Accessible Through NFB-Newsline

NFB-Newsline is now available to Vermonters who are blind, visually impaired, or have some other print disability. NFB-Newsline provides access to over 400 publications including international, national, and state newspapers and magazines; breaking news online; TV listings; job listings; retail ads; and local weather reports and alerts. There are six Vermont newspapers participating. Content is available seven days a week, 24 hours a day, through a variety of accessible methods including touch-tone phones and iOS mobile apps. Interested individuals can sign up or get additional information by contacting the Library, or by emailing or calling Taya Tarr at the Vermont Division for the Blind and Visually Impaired: taya.tarr@vermont.gov or 1-888-405-5005.

VermontABLE Savings Initiative for Vermonters with Disabilities

Vermont State Treasurer Beth Pearce announced in February that Vermonters with disabilities can now start saving and investing in tax-advantaged VermontABLE accounts, making Vermont one of only a handful of states to offer a plan since

President Obama signed the Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) Act into law in December of 2014.

VermontABLE accounts will allow individuals with disabilities the opportunity to save and invest up to \$14,000 per year without being removed from public benefit programs. VermontABLE will also allow eligible Vermonters to receive preferred federal tax treatment as they save for disability related expenses like housing, transportation, employment training, and other important needs. For more information and for instructions on how to sign up for a VermontABLE account, visit <http://www.vermontable.com>, or call Tim Lueders-Dumont, Policy Director in the Treasurer's Office, at 802-828-1451.

It's Almost Planting Time!

Spring has sprung, so it's time to start planning your gardens! Gardening is a very physical activity, which can be difficult for people with mobility issues, and blind and visually impaired gardeners need to be able to recognize what is growing. The titles below suggest techniques and types of plants to make gardening easier. These titles can be requested from the Library or can be downloaded from the BARD (Braille and Audio Reading Download) website.

Accessible Gardening for People with Physical Disabilities, DB 52241, by Janeen R. Adil. An avid gardener provides tips and techniques for adapting garden formats and methods for people with limited mobility. Explains advantages of containers, raised beds, and vertical gardens.

All New Square Foot Gardening, DB 69864, by Mel Bartholomew. The author advises using six-inch-deep boxes containing soil that requires no digging or fertilizing and vertical frames for climbing plants. Recommends creating wider aisles and elevating boxes for easier access.

Gardening for a Lifetime, DB 72840, by Sydney Eddison. The author describes her decades of creating a home garden and gives advice on taking shortcuts in old age. Offers strategies to reduce the workload, including removing certain demanding plants, choosing ones that require less care, and seeking help when necessary.

The Enabling Garden, DB 43253, By Gene Rothert. A step-by-step guide to barrier-free gardening for people with disabilities and older adults. Provides a checklist for assessing one's gardening abilities, and offers advice on selecting appropriate structures, tools, equipment, plants, and garden designs.

The Able Gardener, DB 40311, by Kathleen Yeomans. Nurse and gardener Yeomans covers general aspects of gardening while emphasizing adaptive techniques such as using raised beds, back-saving tools, and easy-care plants. If the gardener is visually impaired, she suggests designing with plants that are fragrant, textured, edible, or even audible.

Six More Vermont Books Now Available

Since our last newsletter, we have recorded and put into circulation six more Vermont books:

The Seer (VTD 11) and *Otherspace* (VTD12), by Vermont author David Stahler, Jr., continue the young adult science fiction trilogy begun in *Truesight* (DBC 1380) about a futuristic, distant world in which blindness is a virtue and those who see are aberrations.

Stories of My Life (VTD 14), by Katherine Paterson. Sharing the true stories of her life, Paterson takes you on an amazing journey where you will meet the influential people and relive the many experiences in her life that have lent inspiration to the characters and story lines of her books.

Ice Cream Social (VTD 16), by Brad Edmondson. This is the story of the genesis of the Ben & Jerry's ice cream company, its dedication to changing the

world with its three-part mission, the various trials the business and employees endured along the way, and their eventual successes as told from perspectives other than the founders, Ben Cohen and Jerry Greenfield.

The Vermont Way (VTD 17), by Jim Douglas. Former governor Douglas offers a guided tour of the last half-century of Vermont politics.

Outsider in the White House (VTD 19), by Bernie Sanders. In this autobiography, Sanders chronicles his political career and vision for America. From his grassroots days to his time as an Independent representative, Sanders presents a clear and compelling insight into the movement surrounding his political campaign.

Our local recording program makes available books and magazines of Vermont interest that are not in the national collection. This includes books by Vermont authors, books set in Vermont, and books on topics of importance to Vermonters.

All our locally-recorded books are also available for download through our online catalog:

<http://webopac.klas.com/vtssu>. Please call the Library if you want to use our catalog and don't know your user ID or password.

Vermont Humanities Council Announces 2017 Vermont Reads Book

The Vermont Humanities Council (VHC) has announced its 2017 selection for Vermont Reads, Vermont's statewide, one-book community reading program.

Brown Girl Dreaming, DB 80026, by Jacqueline Woodson. In this autobiography told through vivid poems, Woodson explores her childhood as an African American in the 1960s and 1970s and her growing awareness of the civil rights movement. Woodson reflects on the joy of finding her voice through writing stories, despite her difficulties with reading as a child. *Brown Girl Dreaming* was a National Book Award recipient in 2014. It also received the Coretta Scott King Award, a Newbery Honor Award, the NAACP Image Award, and the Sibert Honor Award.

2017 marks the 15th year of the Vermont Reads program, in which the Vermont Humanities Council invites citizens across the state to read the same book and participate in a wide variety of community activities related to the book's themes. Two hundred different Vermont towns and cities have participated in Vermont Reads to date. For more information about Vermont Reads events in your community visit the listing of events on the VHC website at

<https://www.vermonthumanities.org/vermont-reads/vermont-reads-2017/vermont-reads-events/>
or call the VHC at 802-262-2626.

Another Book of Note

Blind: A Memoir, DB 83860, is Belo Cipriani's account of having to learn a new way of life after losing his sight in a vicious attack. Cipriani is the national spokesperson for Guide Dogs for the Blind, and 100 Percent Wine, a winery that donates 100 percent of its proceeds to non-profits that help the disabled find work.

Free Classes from Hadley School for the Blind

Have you ever wished you had studied a foreign language? Or perhaps, with your eyesight worsening, you would like to learn braille? Or maybe it's time to move out of your parents' home, but you don't feel you have the independent living skills necessary to do so? Or maybe you want to open your own business?

Classes on these and many other topics are available free-of-charge from Hadley School for the Blind. According to the school's website, www.hadley.edu, its mission is "to promote independent living through lifelong, distance education programs for individuals who are blind or visually impaired, their families, and blindness service providers." You can

study in your own home, at your own pace, and the courses are available in audio, braille, large print, and online. You will have an instructor assigned to you who you can call, write, or email. For more information, check out Hadley's website or call 1-800-323-4238. You can also write to them at: 700 Elm Street, Winnetka, IL 60093.

ReadBooks! Because Braille Matters

ReadBooks! Because Braille Matters, sponsored by National Braille Press (NBP), is a program to encourage families to think about braille literacy at the earliest possible age. It costs nothing, and you may start a child on the path to literacy. There are three different levels of ReadBooks! Because Braille Matters bags available: red (birth to 3-year-olds); blue (4- to 5-year-olds); and green (6- to 7-year-olds); and there are both English and Spanish versions of these bags. The bag contents differ slightly, containing age-appropriate books, tactiles, and toys. They also include two vouchers: one for an additional free print/braille book, and another for a free copy of *Just Enough to Know Better*, a primer on braille for sighted parents. Over 16,000 of these bags have already been distributed to blind children in the United States and Canada. To request a ReadBooks! bag, call NBP at 1-800-548-7323, or order online at www.nbp.org.

Tech Talk – BARD Express

The National Library Service (NLS) has designed a new software program aimed at helping BARD users who have personal computers running Windows operating systems to download books. The goal of the software is to simplify logging in, searching, browsing, downloading, and transferring audio files from the BARD website. BARD Express is not for use with mobile devices, like smartphones or tablets, and cannot be used on Apple computers. The software and additional BARD Express information is now available on the BARD main page under “Additional Links” and then “BARD Express.” NLS has also produced a set of tutorial videos, called the BARD Express How-To Series, that describe how to use the functions and features of BARD Express, which are linked from the “Frequently Asked Questions” page in the BARD Express “Documentation” section.

Using Bookshelf to Find Magazine and Book Titles

Locating specific magazine or book titles on a cartridge containing multiple titles is easy if you use the Bookshelf feature on your digital player. It allows you to navigate back and forth through the

cartridge to find the magazine or book title you want to read. Just follow these steps:

1. Insert the cartridge into the digital player.
2. Hold down the green Play/Stop button until you hear the word "Bookshelf."
3. Release the Play/Stop button and tap down on the white arrow-shaped Fast Forward button to the right of the Play/Stop button to move through the titles on the cartridge until you hear the title of the magazine or book you want to read.
4. To move back through the titles on the cartridge, hold down the Play/Stop button until you hear "Bookshelf," and then tap down on the white arrow-shaped Rewind button until you hear the title you are seeking.

Digital Talking Book Topics Change

NLS now sends "Talking Book Topics" on digital cartridge WITH the paper order form. Formerly, the large print paper form was sent separately. Patrons now receive a cardboard container with both the cartridge in its plastic mailing case and the paper order form. There is a sticker mailing label on the plastic case instead of the usual mailing card. You can recycle the cardboard box. It is not needed to return the cartridge. Make your selections on the

order form and mail it to the Library. Return the plastic mailing case in the mail.

Care and Feeding of Your Digital Player

Feed your digital player lots of books and keep it plugged in when not in use. This practice keeps the battery charged and ready for its next use. If the player is unplugged for an extended time, the battery power could drop to a level low enough that it will not recharge. If your player will no longer hold a charge, please contact us here at the Library to arrange for a replacement to be sent to you. It is important that you hold on to the original box and packing materials that were sent with your machine should you need to return it. It is also helpful to call us before you return the machine and/or to fill out the form enclosed with the machine so we know why the machine is being returned.

Mailing Cards Reminder

You may have noticed the new mailing cards you have been receiving with your digital audio books. Unlike the old cards with their distinctive hole, the new cards have a distinctive notch, which is a corner cut off the card. When the book arrives, the notch will be in the TOP RIGHT corner. That is the side that has your address on it. When you return the

book, just flip the card so that the notch is in the TOP LEFT corner.

Reduced Library Hours and Voicemail

Just a reminder that we now have reduced hours for walk-in service. We are open Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 9:30am to 3pm; closed Monday and Friday. We are still open for telephone service Monday through Friday, 7:45am to 4:30pm, at 802-828-3273 or 1-800-479-1711. If we are unable to get to the phone we do have voicemail, so it is fine to leave us a brief message any time of the day or night, including your book requests. Please make sure you include your name, reason for calling, and phone number if you require a return call. We will get back to you within one business day.

Spread the Word!

If you know of any friends or relatives who may qualify and benefit from our services, please give them our phone number (802-828-3273 or 1-800-479-1711). We work hard at promoting our services, but we can always use your help and support with spreading the word! We are also happy to send out extra applications to any facility or institution that serves individuals who qualify. Please let us know if you have any ideas or

suggestions as to how we may better reach potential patrons.

Stop by our exhibit table and say HELLO at the Vermont Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired's 2017 Technology Fair -- Wednesday, April 26th, 2017, 10 am to 2 pm, at Winooski High/Middle School, 80 Normand Street, Winooski.

Holiday Closings

Memorial Day – Monday, May 29, 2017

Independence Day – Tuesday, July 4, 2017

Bennington Battle Day – Wednesday, August 16, 2017

Labor Day – Monday, September 4, 2017

Vermont Department of Libraries, Special Services Unit

1-800-479-1711 or 802-828-3273

Monday-Friday, 7:45 am to 4:30 pm

Email: lib.ssu@vermont.gov

Website: libraries.vermont.gov/library_for_the_blind

Online catalog: webopac.klas.com/vtssu

This newsletter is available in alternative formats upon request.



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