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Oklahoma City Convention & Visitors Bureau

NLS network will explore new frontiers at national conference in Oklahoma City

New Frontiers! is the theme of the 2014 National Conference of Librarians Serving Blind and Physically Handicapped Individuals, taking place May 4–8 at the Marriott Renaissance Hotel and Convention Center in Oklahoma City.

The conference will focus on a number of new programs, ranging from NLS efforts such as the Braille and Audio Reading Download (BARD) Mobile app and the distribution of magazines on digital cartridges to broader initiatives such as TIGAR, the World Intellectual Property Organization’s Trusted Intermediary Global Accessible Resources venture.

Preconference workshops will be held from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on Saturday, May 3. The first, sponsored by the Oklahoma Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (OLBPH), will focus on distributing locally produced magazines

and will include presentations by several network libraries. Saturday afternoon’s workshop, sponsored by NLS, will offer hands-on training in using the Hindenburg Audio Book Creator. “Making a digital recording gets easier every year as technology advances,” conference coordinator MaryBeth Wise explained. A later conference session led by NLS staff will build on the preconference session by discussing efforts to expand distribution of locally produced audiobooks through BARD.

Opening ceremonies will begin at 1:00 p.m. Sunday, May 4, with a performance by the Oklahoma Fancy Dancers, a Native American dance troupe known for its authenticity and focus on education. The

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Have you registered?

<http://go.usa.gov/KEVw>

The Program

The National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, Library of Congress, publishes books and magazines in braille and in recorded form for readers who cannot hold, handle, or see well enough to read conventional print because of a temporary or permanent visual or physical handicap.

Through a national network of state and local libraries, the materials are loaned free to eligible readers in the United States and to U.S. citizens living abroad. Materials are sent to readers and returned by postage-free mail. Most books are also available for download on the NLS Braille and Audio Reading Download (BARD) website, <http://nlsbard.loc.gov>.

Books and Magazines

Readers may borrow all types of popular-interest books including bestsellers, classics, mysteries, westerns, poetry, history, biographies, religious literature, children's books, and foreign-language materials. Readers may also subscribe to more than seventy popular magazines in braille and recorded formats.

Special Equipment

Special equipment needed to play the audiobooks is loaned indefinitely to readers. Amplifiers with headphones are available for blind and physically handicapped readers who are also certified as hearing impaired. Other devices are provided to aid readers with mobility impairments in using playback machines.

Eligibility

You are eligible for the Library of Congress program if

- You are legally blind—your vision in the better eye is 20/200 or less with correcting glasses, or your widest diameter of visual field is no greater than 20 degrees;
- You cannot see well enough or focus long enough to read standard print, although you wear glasses to correct your vision;
- You are unable to handle print books or turn pages because of a physical handicap; or
- You are certified by a medical doctor as having a reading disability, due to an organic dysfunction, which is of sufficient severity to prevent reading in a normal manner.

How to Apply

You may request an application by visiting the NLS website at www.loc.gov/nls or calling toll-free 1-888-NLS-READ, and your name will be referred to your cooperating library.

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Follow the conference on Twitter: #nlsokc

traditional Roll Call of the States will be led by Kevin Treese, OLBPH regional librarian, and Paul Adams, Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services projects coordinator.

Fredric Schroeder, first vice president of the World Blind Union, will give the first conference address Sunday afternoon. “Fredric is a very dynamic speaker and a passionate advocate for accessibility who will provide an international perspective on how much our services mean,” Wise said. Both Schroeder and Tulsa, Oklahoma, author Jim Stovall, who will give the second conference address on Wednesday morning, have personal experience with NLS as patrons. Two of Stovall’s books—*You Don’t Have to Be Blind to See* and *The Ultimate Gift*—are available in braille and audio through the NLS collection.

In addition to the regular regional conference meetings and NLS program updates, the five-day event will feature a number of special programs. Sunday’s talk, *Braille in the Twenty-first Century*, led by NLS director Karen Keninger, will continue the conversation begun at the 2013 Braille Summit and provide an opportunity for NLS to introduce its new braille development officer, Tamara Rorie.

On Monday, May 5, Collection Development Section head Edmund O’Reilly will discuss efforts to expand the collection through the incorporation of more commercially produced audiobooks and other initiatives.

Tuesday, May 6, will feature presentations on the Magazine on Cartridge program and the official announcement of the Patron Information and Machine Management System (PIMMS), a new database that merges the Blind and Physi-

cally Handicapped Inventory Control System (BPHICS), which tracks NLS-owned equipment, and the Comprehensive Mailing List System (CMLS), the database of NLS patrons. Other highlights include continuing discussion of new BARD features, specifically the BARD Mobile app released in 2013.

In addition to Stovall’s conference address, Wednesday, May 7, will include a presentation by Bureau of Engraving and Printing (BEP) external relations specialist Sabra Pressman about the BEP’s new currency reader initiative. Publications and Media Section head Jane Caulton and representatives of the Reingold communications and marketing firm will brief attendees on the strategic plan for new public education initiatives. The NLS Network Services Section staff will lead a discussion on shelving practices in the changing environment of the modern library. Attendees will also have an opportunity to tour the Oklahoma Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped and attend a reception there.

Other opportunities for social mixing will include receptions on Sunday, hosted by NLS at the Marriott, and Tuesday, hosted by Keystone Library Automation Systems at the Myriad Botanical Gardens.

Participants are also encouraged to explore the area on their own. “Oklahoma City is steeped in Native American and Western culture,” Wise said. “We hope attendees will take advantage of the opportunity to look around together. I’m excited about this year’s conference programming, but those social interactions are also essential for building bonds between libraries and strengthening the network.”

Five things to see and do in OKC

Days during the 2014 national conference will be packed with meetings and events, but those attending will have a little time to explore Oklahoma City on their own. Here are five attractions you might want to check out:

Oklahoma City National Memorial and Museum.

Commemorates the victims of the April 19, 1995, bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building and the city's resilience and recovery afterward. Visitors can hear the only sound recording of the explosion, watch news footage, and learn how investigators solved the case. Outside is the 3.3-acre memorial with the Survivor Tree (above) and a field of empty chairs representing each of the 168 people killed.

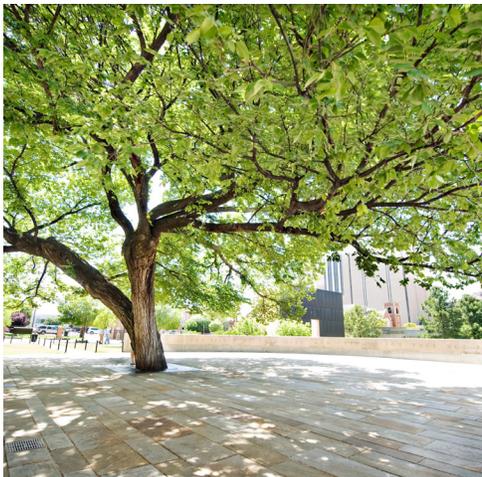
Entrance to the memorial grounds—which are open around the clock—is free; National Park Service rangers are on site from 9:00 a.m.–5:30 p.m. Museum admission is \$12 for adults; hours are 9:00 a.m.–6:00 p.m. Monday through Saturday and noon–6:00 p.m. Sunday.

www.oklahomacitynationalmemorial.org.

National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum.

Interactive history galleries focus on cowboys, rodeos, Native American culture, Victorian firearms, frontier military, and western performers. The museum also boasts a large collection of classic and contemporary western art, including works by Frederic Remington, as well as James Earle Fraser's famous sculpture "The End of the Trail" (above).

Admission is \$12.50 for adults; hours are 10:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m. daily. www.nationalcowboymuseum.org.



Chickasaw Bricktown Ballpark.

Yankees great Mickey Mantle was from Spavinaw, Oklahoma, and the home of the AAA Oklahoma City RedHawks is on the street named after him. The RedHawks, the AAA affiliate of the Houston Astros, will be playing the Memphis Redbirds May 6–9. okcredhawks.com.

Paseo Arts District.

The Paseo is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Amid the district's Spanish revival stucco buildings are art galleries, boutique shops, and restaurants. www.thepaseo.com.



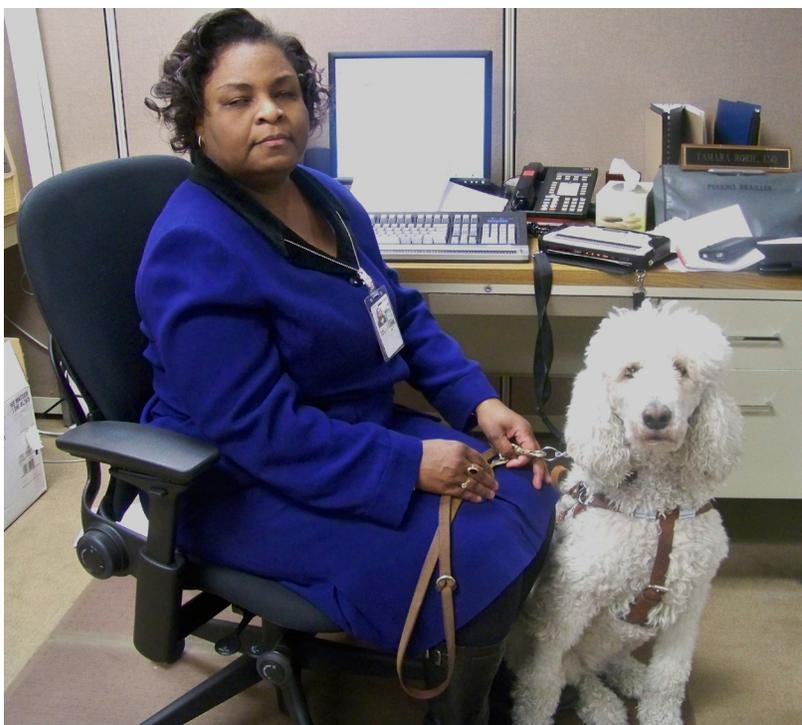
Toby Keith's I Love This Bar and Grill.

In the heart of the Bricktown entertainment district, Toby Keith's features memorabilia, murals, benches made from Ford pickup truck beds, and a menu that includes chicken

fried steak, black-eyed peas, and fried okra. www.tobykeithsbar.com.

Other stops to consider while you're in Oklahoma City: the **American Banjo Museum** and the **National Softball Hall of Fame**. And if you fly into OKC, you'll be landing at **Will Rogers World Airport**, named after the famed humorist and native of Oologah, Oklahoma (which was Indian Territory when Rogers was born in 1879). Find out more about these and many other attractions at www.visitokc.com.





Tamara Rorie (with her guide dog Jaya) says her mission at NLS is to bring braille to the forefront and advocate for braille production, literacy, and use.

Q&A: Tamara Rorie, Braille Development Officer

On February 10, NLS welcomed Tamara Rorie as its braille development officer. Before coming to Washington, Rorie—a user of the talking-book and braille program since childhood—was assistant director of business operations and special projects at the Alternative Media Access Center (AMAC) at the Georgia Institute of Technology in Atlanta. She has more than 20 years of legal experience in consumer rights, discrimination, small business concerns, and domestic law; and of training in all areas of disability and related discrimination laws and access technology.

“Throughout her professional career, Tamara has led many braille training, production, and outreach initiatives. She is a lifelong braille reader and a staunch advocate,” said NLS director Karen Keninger. “We are very fortunate to have her leading our braille development efforts.”

What is your background?

I am originally from North Carolina; I grew up in Charlotte. I went to public school and graduated from high school at a time when mainstreaming wasn’t popular. I received a BA in political science in 1984 from the University of North Caroli-

na–Chapel Hill. After graduating I worked in sales for about four years and then attended Wake Forest University Law School, where I received my law degree in 1991.

Describe your work experiences before joining NLS.

My first job out of law school was with West Publishing in Eagan, Minnesota, a suburb of St. Paul. I held several positions, including reference attorney client representative, training attorneys and law students with visual disabilities how to use our services. At the time, West was a DOS-based program so users could access the materials directly, rather than relying on sighted readers. I started West’s Special Needs Department, which was responsible for providing materials in special formats to law students and other legal clients. I had been doing that sort of work as a client representative anyway—training and sending out braille copies to lawyers and students—and it was right around the time the Americans with Disabilities Act passed. And West had a government contract for providing copies of Supreme Court cases and federal statutes, so it had incentive to create this department.

I moved to Georgia in 1995 and took a position as policy analyst for Georgia’s Assistive Technology program. After that, I started and maintained my own law practice for approximately 12 years. I was a general practitioner and my workload was generally domestic law, with some consumer and some small business cases.

For the past eight years, I worked at AMAC, which is currently based at Georgia Tech. I held several positions, starting as the compliance manager. In that role, one of my duties was to develop and implement the braille production program. Later, I spearheaded the development of a curriculum that includes teaching braille to prison inmates who were seeking to become certified braille transcribers.

How long have you been a braille reader?

I’ve been blind since birth, so I am what I would call a “native” braille reader—braille is the way that I learned to read and write. I have been using the NLS talking-book and braille program since I was five. I have seen it go through vinyl (hard disc and floppy disc), tapes, and now digital.

How has braille changed over the years?

Several changes in the code have occurred over the past 40 years. Possibly the most significant has been the availability of on-the-fly translation for printed material and refreshable braille displays. For example, if I have my braille writer hooked up to my computer, it will translate what is on the screen into contracted braille instead of spelling it out letter by letter. Braille writers also can back-translate: I can type something in contracted braille into a Word document and it will print letter by letter.

What do you think the future of braille is?

I believe that there will always be a place for hard-copy braille, but the big future of braille is electronic braille.

What challenges do braille readers face today?

One of the biggest challenges is cost. It is expensive to pay good transcribers. It is expensive to emboss hard-copy braille. And it is expensive to purchase refreshable braille

displays to read braille electronically.

Another challenge is educating new braille users about the importance of braille.

What are your plans/goals as the NLS Braille Development Officer?

Of course, my first goal is to carry out the mandates of the Materials Development Division and the NLS director. My personal goals are to bring braille to the forefront and be an advocate for braille production, literacy, and use.

Many people—especially sighted people who have a responsibility to teach braille to children—are convinced that audio is enough and can replace braille. They do not understand the importance of being able to read for oneself, and therefore are not good advocates for teaching it to their students or convincing their students to apply themselves to learn it. Learning to read braille is like learning to read print; the brain function is similar in that the reader has a cognitive understanding of the word. Young readers need to learn grammar, spelling, and punctuation. That is the whole reason why children are given spelling and grammar tests for years—learning grammar and reinforcing it. Reinforcement is vital to writing appropriately later in life. Children will never learn how a word is spelled if they are listening to audio.

Guide dogs are pretty much a part of the staff here at NLS. Tell us a little about yours.

My dog’s name is Jaya. She is a cream-colored, full-bred standard poodle.

How did you come to choose this breed?

Generally, you don’t get to choose a breed, although you are told that you can express a strong preference. I discovered five years ago that I am allergic to cats and highly allergic to dogs (I have both). I had already had dogs for more than 20 years at the time. The Seeing Eye [guide dog school] was doing some experimenting with poodles—which do not shed—and asked if I wanted to try one. The rest is history.

“Young readers need to learn grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Children will never learn how a word is spelled if they are listening to audio.”

—Tamara Rorie,
Braille Development
Officer



John Bryant's advice to the next person to sit at this desk: "Always be flexible."

Production Control Section head Bryant retires

John Bryant, head of the NLS Production Control Section (PCS) since 1997, retired in January after a 23-year career in which he helped implement many improvements that benefited network libraries as well as patrons.

"I'm going to miss this place," Bryant said. "I stayed here a lot longer than I thought I would because I was really moved when I found out what good work we were actually doing."

Before he came to NLS in 1991 as assistant head of PCS, Bryant—who has a BS in physics and an MBA—worked for the Polaroid Corporation and Ernst Leitz GmbH, the German-based company that made Leica cameras. He ran a franchise printing business in Massachusetts ("It was awful," he recalled. "I spent a couple years doing nothing but trying to get people to pay what they owed me.") And he served five years in the U.S. Air Force, flying C-130 transport planes during the Vietnam War and then returning stateside to Langley Air Force Base near Hampton, Virginia.

But his NLS career lasted longer than all those combined.

Early on at NLS, Bryant worked on PICS, the Production Inventory Control System, and helped select the Duxbury Braille Translator as the standard for NLS braille transcription. He guided sometimes-reluctant PCS staff members into the computer age. "I was lucky when I started that

the Internet came along. We were able to eliminate a lot of manual clerical work and provide much better service to the libraries."

Bryant was one of the NLS representatives on the committee that standardized specifications for digital talking books, and oversaw the transition of NLS audiobook and magazine contractors from analog to digital production.

But many at NLS will remember Bryant best for the whimsical limericks he composed for coworkers' retirement parties. "My mom used to write little poems and leave them in my lunch bag—I think that's where I got that from," he said. "I've always thought that it was important to have some fun in the celebration when people leave."

In years past Bryant enjoyed running in nearby Rock Creek Park during his lunch hour, and he has taken running up again since his retirement. He is looking forward to spending more time with his three grandchildren and is planning a trip to Hawaii with his wife Carol, an associate dean at George Washington University. "Mostly I've got to learn to relax," he said.

His replacement hasn't been named yet, but Bryant has a few words for his successor. "Things are changing so much. The best advice is always be flexible. Change can be very good—it has paid off for this place over the years."

NLS hosts international library committee at LC

Advocates for vision-impaired people estimate that only 5 percent of the published books in developed countries—and even fewer in developing countries—are produced in accessible formats.

Bridging the gap between materials available for sighted and non-sighted readers is the mission of the Libraries Serving Persons with Print Disabilities Section (LPD) of the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA).

At the invitation of NLS director Karen Keninger, the LPD's standing committee held its mid-year meeting at the Library of Congress February 10–12, 2014. This is the first time the committee has held one of its twice-a-year meetings in Washington since it was established in 2007. NLS foreign-language librarian David Fernández-Barrial is a member of the standing committee.

Making it easier to share accessible books across international borders without running afoul of copyright laws is one of the LPD's top concerns. Fifty-one countries took a step in that direction last summer during a meeting in Marrakesh, Morocco, when they signed a treaty that would improve access to copyrighted works for visually impaired people. The United States signed the treaty but it has not been sent to the Senate for ratification.

“We need to provide our representatives with examples and arguments of why this treaty deserves their support,” said LPD standing committee chairman Koen Krikhaar from Dedicon, a non-profit organization that produces and distributes braille and talking books in the Netherlands. “This is the first worldwide recognized copyright exception based on user rights and we should not be kept in the waiting room too long before we can start sharing our collections.”

In the United States, the Chafee Amendment permits NLS to reproduce and distribute previously published nondramatic literary works in specialized formats for blind people or others with reading disabilities without seeking permission from the copyright holders.

But a 2006 survey by the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) found that only 60 countries have similar provisions in their copyright laws. Even when they do, the provisions don't cover the import or export of copyrighted works. As a result, organizations in each country must get approval from copyright holders to exchange such books across borders, or produce their own special-format books—which is costly and duplicative.

The Marrakesh treaty would require countries that ratify it to add provisions in their copyright laws to permit the reproduction and distribution of books in accessible formats. The treaty also provides for the exchange of these books across borders by organizations that serve people who are blind, visually impaired, and print disabled.

In the meantime, there is TIGAR—a Swiss-based cooperative venture between publishers, libraries, and WIPO that contains records for more than 224,000 titles in accessible formats in various languages.

According to Francois Hendrikz, director of the South African Library for the Blind, about 900 of those books have been cleared for international exchange and uploaded to TIGAR's database. Participating agencies can download those books in accessible formats. If an agency requests a book that is in TIGAR's database that hasn't been cleared for exchange, TIGAR follows up with the copyright holder to secure permission.

“The reason why the TIGAR framework is different is that it exists with the explicit consent of publishers,” Fernández-Barrial said. “The active cooperation between copyright owners, WIPO, and organizations serving persons with print disabilities is a game-changer: it makes building the infrastructure of outreach and exchange possible.”

NLS participates in TIGAR, along with agencies in Canada, Switzerland, France, Brazil, Australia, and a few other countries.

If the Marrakesh treaty is signed and ratified by both the sending and receiving countries, permission to share accessible books across borders will no longer be required.

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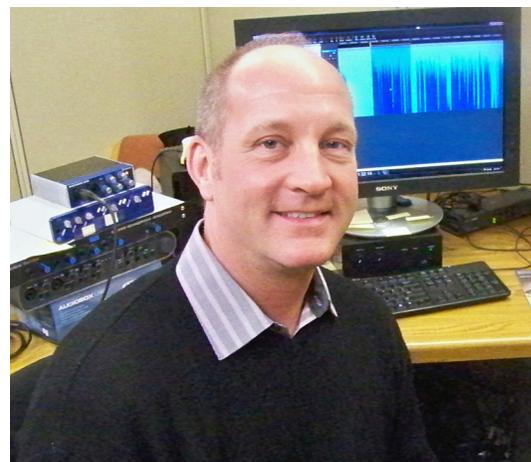
ALA honors Multistate Center East's Chris Mundy

Chris Mundy, quality assurance specialist at the NLS Multistate Center East (MSCE) in Cincinnati, is the 2014 recipient of the Francis Joseph Campbell Award, presented by the Association of Specialized and Co-operative Library Agencies (ASCLA).

Mundy began working part time at the MSCE while he was a marketing and communications student at Xavier University. He became QA specialist in 1994. His primary responsibility is assisting volunteer recording studios around the country—a role that is taking on greater importance as NLS begins to provide locally produced audiobooks on the Braille and Audio Reading Download (BARD) service.

Educating volunteer studios on NLS standards is a big part of the job, Mundy said. "I answer questions ranging from 'What is the role of a monitor?' to 'How do we record a book that has a lot of charts?' I try to take the studios as far as their aspirations will allow."

Mundy has been working with 15 to 20 studios, but expects that number to grow this year, as nearly 60 studios around the country have expressed interest in con-



Chris Mundy

tributing recordings to BARD.

The Francis Joseph Campbell Award—named after the American educator who co-founded England's Royal National College for the Blind—is presented each year to a person or institution that has made an outstanding contribution to library service for blind and physically handicapped people. ASCLA is a division of the American Library Association (ALA). Mundy will receive the award during the ALA's national conference in Las Vegas in June.