



Fall 2007

CTBL News

Colorado Talking Book Library • Denver

Highlighting The Digital Transition

Finally, the moment you have been waiting for...

The New Digital Talking Book and Machine!

This photo shows the digital talking book machine (DTBM) and the digital talking book cartridge (DTB) in the mailing container. The machine is about 1/3 the size of the current machine and weighs in at two pounds. The book



cartridge is about the same size as the current cassette for easy handling. The mailing container is also similar to the current container so the current mailing cards can still be used.

CTBL will be closed on the following days in 2007:

September 3rd, November 22nd & 23rd , December 24th & 25th

From the Director

In May I attended the Western/Midlands Regional Conference for NLS in Scottsdale, Arizona. The hot topic of the meeting was the upcoming transition to digital talking books. The transition begins next summer. We were able to play the prototype machine which will be much easier to use and have great sound quality. Read more about it in this issue.

Debbi

Veterans Alert

Please call the library and let us know who you are. Our old applications had no way for you to indicate if you were a veteran and we do need to know. So please call a reader advisor and have them add this status to your patron record.

Outreach

Debbi continues to visit with many vision support groups and presented Podcasting @ CTBL for a panel at the national meeting of the Special Libraries Association in June. CTBL was at the Caregivers Symposium in Boulder and the Assistive Technology Conference in Denver. If you would like Debbi to visit a support group, meet with a group, or know of an event that CTBL should attend, please contact her.

CTBL Staff Changes

We welcome Joe Burkins as our new Media Specialist. Joe will be working with Terri Marcotte, Volunteer and Studio Director, helping in the studio and focusing on duplication of digital books and converting old analog files to digital.

We also welcome Susan Archer who joined us in Mailroom Operations.

More on the Digital Transition

The digital talking book is based on the flash technology which computer users will recognize as the same technology in their USB storage devices also known as thumb drives or key chain drives or USB sticks. Flash is a solid state technology that uses no moving parts and is extremely robust. There are many exciting changes this technology makes possible.

For one, a single cartridge will now hold the entire book. No more turning tapes over, changing tapes or getting tapes out of order. For the mailroom there will be no need for rewinding the tapes. The cartridge itself is the size of a cassette, but with a more complex shape that ensures there is only one way the cartridge fits into the player. The end of the cartridge has a round finger hole for easy handling and placement into the mailing container.

[continued on page 4](#)

Digital Transition continued from page 3

Another great change is that there will be no moving parts in the new machine which means that they should last much longer before needing to be repaired. The battery is also new technology and will have a longer charge cycle.

The machine controls will still be large, color coded and different shapes for tactile recognition. You will be able to press a control button and get an audio description of the button's function.

Another new change is the addition of the Sleep button that will turn the player off thirty minutes after it is pressed. This feature is one of the most requested additions to the machine.

There will be all the same functionality as the current machine with tone and volume controls. The Speed control changes the speech from 50% to 300% of normal, with no change in pitch. The machine also has a pull-out handle, headphone jack, rechargeable battery, speakers, and power cord.

A new feature is a USB port for repair personnel to use for diagnostic information and for patrons to play other audio files they may have in other formats such as MP3 files.

There will be an advanced model, exactly the same size machine, but has advanced controls are for setting and retrieving bookmarks and for navigating through the structured levels of a book.

The machine will include digital rights management software which is a fancy way of describing the method of dealing with copyright issues. NLS chose AMR-Wideband Plus as the compression ratio which will bring better quality sound to the books.

The cartridge shipping container is slightly longer and wider than a green cassette box but only half the thickness. The color will not necessarily be blue, despite the photo.

Now the bad news...

As of this writing Congress appropriated only \$12.5 million, 60% of the requested additional funds in the upcoming federal budget, for this transition. What this means is a slower transition and patrons on waiting lists for the new machines. NLS will be requesting additional funds for the next fiscal year so please write or call your federal legislators and tell them how important this program is to you, if you feel moved to do so.

In the next few months CTBL will be sending out a letter asking if you want to make the switch to the new digital talking books. If you do, please return the letter back as soon as possible. We will date stamp the return letter and put your name on the list in that order. When we have machines available we will start at the top of the list and work our way down until everyone has the new machine despite how many years that may take. Please keep in mind this transition process will take many years to complete.

Reader Advisors

Spring is long over, but there is still cleaning to do. A lot of changes are happening at the library with the pending arrival of the digital talking books. So that we all start off on the same foot, some patron record maintenance needs to be done. We notice a lot of over-due books on a lot of records. Some of our patrons may not be aware of this. Items might have been lost in the mail system or, for many other reasons, the items never made it back to us. To help our patrons with their record maintenance, we are sending out over-due notices for these items. If you believe there is a problem with your account, give us a call and we will see what we can do to fix it. Before you call, check to see what books you do have on hand so we can compare it with what is on your record.

On November 1st, to further aid the cleaning of patron records, we will be removing all reserves or holds that are older than January 2006. If you have been on hold for a book for a long time, tell your Reader Advisor. Occasionally, the book you are looking for may be lost, or never returned by previous patrons. We can check the inventory for you and have the lost copies duplicated so you can enjoy your book in a more timely fashion.

Collection News

New large print continue to arrive daily. Please call the library for more information or search the online catalog. Stay tuned to the next edition of CTBL News for new additions to the Colorado Collection.

Upcoming Events of Interest

- **VisionWalk**—Foundation for Fighting Blindness
September 29th
The Hudson Gardens, 6115 S. Santa Fe Drive, Littleton, CO
For more information contact Richard Faubian at 303-799-1501
or <http://www.fightblindness.org>

The money raised funds research in retinal degenerative diseases.

- **Possibilities Fair**—NFB & CCB
October 4th—9:00 am to 2:30 pm
DoubleTree Hotel, 3203 Quebec St., Denver, CO
For more information call 303-778-1130
or <http://www.cocenter.org>

Experience hands-on demonstrations, listen to guest speakers during lunch, and visit with exhibitors focusing on independent living for vision impaired persons. NFB state convention will follow in the same hotel on October 5th and 6th.

- **It's All About Touch: A Tactile Event**
October 12th through November 23rd
Access Gallery, 909 Santa Fe Drive, Denver, CO
For details call 303-777-0797

Sponsored by VSA arts of Colorado and Colorado Center for the Blind, this juried show will feature tactile art by blind artists.

Volunteer News

Volunteers Urgently Needed

In March of 2007, NLS stopped production of the current cassette model of the talking book player. Our patrons have relied on this machine for more than ten years to listen to talking books. While we are all looking forward to receiving the new Digital Talking Book player in the future, it is important that we keep as many cassette machines playing as possible.

Every Wednesday and Thursday morning two groups of volunteers meet at CTBL to repair and refurbish the cassette players. Because there are no new machines to send to our patrons, we must have enough machines refurbished for each new patron who signs up for our service and to replace malfunctioning machines from all our current patrons. This has become a daunting task!

Please pass the word to any friends or family members who enjoy fixing things that we would love to have them come and work with us. Machine repair doesn't require special skills and we can teach the basic techniques to anyone who can use a screwdriver. If you would like to help, but can't come on weekday mornings, let us know when you are available and we will schedule training for you.

For more information on this volunteer opportunity, please call Terri Marcotte, Volunteer Coordinator, at 303-727-9277.

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continued on page 10

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continued on page 12

Donations continued from page 11

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continued on page 14

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continued on page 16

Donations continued from page 15

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