



Spring 2007

Volume 1 Issue 4

Editor: Carrie Gors

SOUTH DAKOTA STATE LIBRARY  
BRAILLE AND TALKING BOOK LIBRARY

## **PRAIRIE TRAILS MEMORANDUM**

### **Notes from the Director, Dan Boyd Digital Update**

For the past six months a group of NLS patrons have been doing a pilot test of the NLS Digital Books and Digital Player. The first set of surveys from this group is now in and the initial feedback is very positive.

The pilot tests main goal is to assess such aspects as the usability of digital talking books and playback equipment with regards to the number and placement of navigational markers, audio quality, ease of operation, and the overall reading experience.

This is the largest pilot test conducted to date, it included one hundred patrons from across the country. They were selected based on their interest in the project and their technical expertise.

The patrons are currently reviewing a collection of 1,800 books and 12 magazine titles. Download offerings reflect the full NLS collection, comprising approximately 55 percent fiction and 45 percent nonfiction titles. Only titles that were originally recorded in digital audio are included to maximize the usefulness of the text data.

The results appear to confirm that NLS is approaching the move to digital in the appropriate manner and that the development is on the right path. Research and Development Officer Neil Bernstein stated that, "Only when you put this technology into patrons' hands do you really understand how well or poorly it functions.

The rest of the steps in the move to digital to be started during 2007 and completed in 2008 are: flash-cartridge production, flash-cartridge duplication, manufacture of the initial lot of digital talking book containers and labels, and full digital player production.

The start of digital talking book players being shipped to patrons will begin in 2008 and will continue for three years before all library patrons in the U.S. will have access to a player.

Beginning in 2008 libraries will start receiving digital books along with the continuation of new titles being added to the cassette collection. Beginning in 2011 titles will no longer be added to the cassette collection. All new titles will be digital on flash memory.

The cassette players and the cassette collection will remain in use for another five years or until about 2015.



## Important Items to Remember

We want you to enjoy your talking books. Your Reader Advisor will tailor your service to suit your needs and will be happy to assist you in any way possible. Please do not hesitate to call us for any of the following:

- to make book, descriptive video, or magazine requests
- with any questions or problems
- whenever your name, address, or telephone number changes
- to temporarily stop service
- if you want to change the types of books you receive, or the number of books you receive
- when you have problems with books or machines
- if you want to change the format of your newsletters or catalogs
- to cancel your service



Include your name, address, and telephone number on all correspondence, request lists, emails, and telephone messages.

Please return each book, magazine, and descriptive video as you finish it. The loan period for books and magazines is six weeks. We ask that the descriptive videos be returned within a week because we have only one copy of each video.

Remember to rewind all movies and cassette tapes before returning them.

Mark an "X" on the mail card of any defective book.

Take care of all cassette books, magazines, braille books, and

cassette players; keep them free of food, liquids, dust, and debris.

Remember that if your last name starts with:

**A-I** your Reader Advisor is **Mary**

**J-R** your Reader Advisor is **Carrie**

**S-Z** your Reader Advisor is **Brian**

Toll-free phone number: 1-800-423-6665.

Hours: 8:00 A.M.—5:00 P.M. (central time zone)

You may leave a voice mail after hours.



## Favorite Authors

The database utilized at the South Dakota Braille and Talking Book Library has the capabilities of sending our registered patrons titles of books written by their favorite authors. These favorite authors are stored in a list as a part of each patron's profile. Another feature of our database is that it will not send a patron a title that they have already received unless they specifically request it.

It has lately become an issue with some of our patrons that they are not receiving books by the authors in their favorite author list. In most cases, it is because they have already received all of the available titles written by an author. If you feel that this is the case with your service, we recommend that you call us at 1-800-423-6665 so that we can evaluate whether or not we need to adjust your favorite author preferences.

## Handheld Reader Now Identifies U.S. Paper Currency

The world's newest and smallest reading machine, the Kurweil-National Federation of the Blind Reader, has been enhanced to identify U.S. paper currency. Along with identifying a bill's denomination (one, five, ten, etc.), the new currency feature also gives the orientation of the bill (front, back, or rotated), which is useful for vending machines or other automated machines, which require that a bill be inserted with specific orientation.

The portable reader uses character recognition software combined with text-to-speech conversion technology to read almost any printed material aloud. Weighing less than one pound and only two and one-half inches high, the device fits easily in a briefcase, a purse, or a backpack.

To operate, the user holds the Reader over a bill or a page of print and simply pushes a button to take a picture. The machine takes about thirty seconds, often less, to process the image and then begins reading the contents of the page to the user. In the case of U.S. paper currency, within ten seconds the Reader announces "one dollar, five dollars, ten dollars," etc. The Reader can also announce the bill's orientation. As an example, if the bill is face-up and rotated 90 degrees clockwise, the Reader would announce, "the image is rotated right, the bill is front-side up."

The handheld Reader can be used to read your mail, a menu, a receipt, a newsletter, or just about any printed item. For more information or to purchase a Kurweil-National Federation of the Blind Reader at a special introductory discount, call the National Federation of the Blind at (877)708-1724. A South Dakota company that sells this product is Freedom of Speech, their number is (877)367-4228.

## A Sea of Green

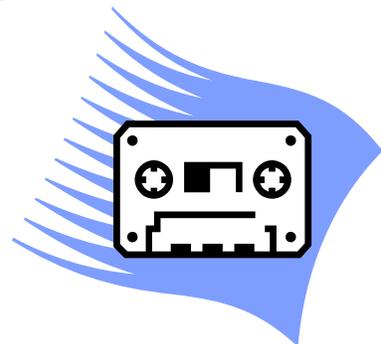
A sea of new green books! That's what it sometimes seems we're swimming in here at the Braille and Talking Book Library. New books are constantly arriving, keeping staff busy processing them and putting them on the shelves so they can go out to you! It's amazing how many new titles we receive each month.

If you're interested in some of the latest reading material, be sure to keep up with your Talking Book Topics catalogs and make your requests. You can also call us to check about newly received books from your favorite authors, new titles you may have heard about in the news or on TV, or new titles in your favorite subjects. We'll do our best to keep you supplied—it helps us to clear more shelf space, and it helps you to have lots of new and enjoyable books to read.

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## Commercially Recorded Books

The National Library Service is purchasing more commercially recorded audio books in order to get books to patrons faster. In the past, it has sometimes taken as long as one year after a book is published until it is recorded and ready for distribution to Talking Book patrons. The National Library Service changes the commercial tape speed to 15/16 ips, adds a four-track format, and inserts side announcements before distributing these tapes to libraries. Many of these books also have background music.



## Taking Care of Your Battery

Taking care of your battery can be easy and will guarantee the battery a longer life. When first receiving a new cassette player, find the electrical cord which is located at the very back of the machine. Make sure you charge the cassette player for at least 12 hours, use the machine until the battery runs down (after about 6 hours of use), and then charge it again for 12 hours. The battery will then be charged enough to use with or without the machine being plugged into an electrical outlet.

Do not remove the battery from the machine. This is a nickel cadmium battery that contains toxic materials that are hazardous if not used or disposed of properly. If you suspect that the player isn't working because of a battery problem, or any other, call us at 1-800-423-6665 and we will advise you.



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## Speed Control

If your tape is running too fast and sounds like Donald Duck, check to be sure that your speed selector switch is still set at 15/16. The speed selector switch is directly above the side selector switch on the right side of the machine. Another trick is to take the tape out and tap it firmly on a hard surface, which quite often will solve the problem.

If you would like to play your own "regular" cassettes (not four-track) on your talking book machine, switch the speed selector switch to 1 7/8.

## Books in Series

Many authors write books in a series. People can be disappointed if they receive the third book in a series before they receive the first.

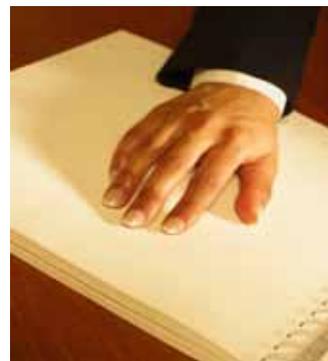
Our library computer program has a helpful feature that can send series books in order. At your request, library staff identifies and then adds the series code to your patron record. Once this is done, the computer program will send the titles in order, one at a time. So when you return book one and it comes back to the library and gets checked in, book two will automatically be sent out to you, and so on until the series is completed.

Without your direction, we do not add any series codes to your patron record. If you receive a book that is part of a series you would enjoy receiving in sequence, please contact your Reader Advisor.

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## Congress Approves Coin to Honor Louis Braille

Congress has authorized the U.S. Mint to produce a commemorative silver dollar honoring the 200th anniversary of Louis Braille's birth. Braille created the tactile alphabet bearing his name while a teenager. The Mint will produce up to 400,000 silver-dollar commemorative coins in 2009.



## Vision to Go

Enhanced Vision, the leading manufacturer of innovative solutions for people with macular degeneration and other low vision conditions, announces "NEMO" a pocket sized digital magnifier. NEMO, is an affordable (\$795), portable, battery-operated video magnifier for low vision individuals on the go.

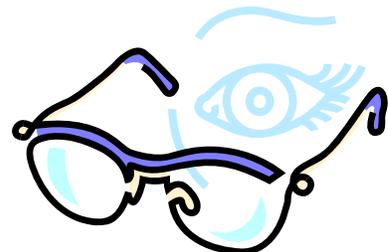
The NEMO is lightweight and compact, with the brightest image in its class, and adjustable 4.5-9X digital magnification. It features a four inch anti-glare LCD screen, easy to use tactile controls and a freeze frame control that takes a temporary picture. NEMO includes a wrist strap and carrying case for ease and comfort, a three-hour battery life and a two-year warranty.

For more information about the NEMO and other Enhanced Vision products, please call (888)811-3161 or visit [www.enhancedvision.com](http://www.enhancedvision.com).

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## Vision Aware

A new information website that provides self-help techniques, resources, and basic eye medical information was launched in October 2006. It is aimed at consumers and family members who are searching for answers to dealing with new vision loss and want to know what services and techniques are available to them and/or their family member. It is easily searchable and experts answer questions. Screens are friendly to use with screen readers and offer magnification choices. Visit [www.visionaware.org](http://www.visionaware.org).



## Browse APH Catalogs on the Web!

Looking for APH products? Visit their Catalog Download Center at [www.aph.org/catalogs/index.html](http://www.aph.org/catalogs/index.html)—here you'll find APH catalogs in two accessible electronic editions:

- 1) Text-only editions easily opened by your web browser and read with speech (HTML format).
- 2) Text/graphics editions that are exact reproductions of the printed catalog pages. These catalogs can be enlarged on your screen (PDF format, requires free Adobe Acrobat Reader).

### APH Catalogs Include:

**Products Catalog**—our complete line of products

**Family Life Catalog**—products for families with visually impaired children

**Daily Living Catalog**—products for independent living

**APH Bookstore Catalog**—fiction and non-fiction books in braille and enlarged print.

APH invites you to browse these APH catalogs for products for school, work, home, and play.



### Important!!

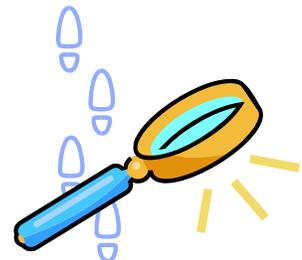
Please remember that there is a one day processing time when you order books. So if you call in for books anytime on Monday, they will not be mailed out until Tuesday. If you find yourself running out of books on a regular basis, please call the library at 1-800-423-6665 so that we can work on fixing this problem.

## 2007 Summer Reading Program

The 2007 Governors Summer Reading Program sponsored by the South Dakota Braille and Talking Book Library and supported by the South Dakota Lion's Foundation will run from June 11 through July 20, 2007.

"Get a Clue @ Your Library" is the theme of this year's program. The program is open to all registered students of the Braille and Talking Book Library between the ages of 7 to 15. The readers are broken into age divisions: 7 to 9 years, 10 to 12 years, and 13 to 15 year olds. The readers can only read recorded books or braille books for the program. Participants are required to submit written or oral book reports. They may receive assistance in writing the report. The student submitting the most book reports will be the winner in their age division. Incentives are mailed throughout the program. The more book reports returned the more prizes they receive. Each age division has a winner in the recorded format and in the braille format. Plaques will be awarded to the first, second, and third place winners in the recorded and braille division. The first place winners receive their plaques at an awards program determined in August. The awards program is attended by the winner's and their family and includes a luncheon and special program.

A registration form for the program may be obtained from the Braille and Talking Book Library. We encourage students to participate as this gives them the opportunity to do recreational reading during the summer. Students are encouraged to choose their books. The program may be incorporated into summer school that requires reading novels. For more information call the Braille and Talking Book Library at 1-800-423-6665 and ask for Mary.



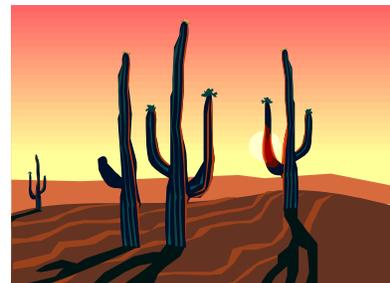
## South Dakota Books By Mary Sjerven, Reader Advisor

The South Dakota collection features books about South Dakota or books written by a South Dakota author. Recently the Braille and Talking Book Library added books by Judith Ann (J.A.) Jance. Jance was born in South Dakota and raised in Bisbee, Arizona. She is a graduate of the University of Arizona. Before becoming an author, she worked as a school librarian on a Native American reservation, as a teacher, and selling insurance. She is an award-winning American author of mystery and horror novels. She writes at least three series of novels, centering on retired Seattle PD officer J.P. Beaumont, Arizona small-town sheriff Joanna Brady, and Brandon Walker. The Beaumont and Brady series intersect in the novel *Partner in Crime*, which is both the 16th Beaumont mystery and the 10th Brady mystery.

### Joanna Brady series

The series is centered in the small desert town of Bisbee, Arizona. Joanna starts out as the mother of nine-year-old Jenny and the wife of Andy Brady, who runs for Sheriff of Cochise County but gets murdered before the election and is then accused of having been dirty. Joanna runs for Sheriff instead, clears his name, and wins the election to become Sheriff, even though she does not have much background in upholding the law.

SD003724 Desert Heat  
SD004128 Tombstone Courage  
SD003747 Shoot Don't Shoot  
SD003699 Dead to Rights  
SD004125 Skeleton Canyon  
SD004124 Rattlesnake Crossing  
SD003698 Outlaw Mountain



RC053377 Devil's Claw  
RC052914 Paradise Lost  
RC054929 Partner in Crime  
RC057119 Exit Wounds  
RC063146 Dead Wrong

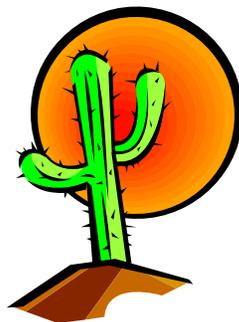
**J.P. Beaumont Series**

J. P. Beaumont (nick-named 'Beau') is a fictional retired Seattle PD Homicide Detective still living in Seattle.

SD003746 Until Proven Guilty  
SD004127 Trial By Jury  
SD004107 Taking the Fifth  
SD003728 Improbable Cause  
SD003748 A More Perfect Union  
SD004121 Minor in Possession  
SD004119 Without Due Process  
SD004123 Name Withheld  
RC051757 Birds of Prey  
SD004126 Long Time Gone

**Other books by J.A. Jance include:**

SD004120 After the Fire (a book of poetry)  
SD003462 Devil's Claw  
RC061940 Edge of Evil



## If you like...why not try

If you like **Julie Garwood's** romantic suspense, you might like: Linda Howard, J.D. Robb, Karen Robards, and Elizabeth Lowell.

If you like **John Grisham's** legal suspense, you might like: Steve Martini, Lisa Scottoline, Brad Meltzer, David Baldacci, and Stuart Woods.

If you like **Stephen King's** horror and suspense, you might like: Dean Koontz, Douglas Preston, Peter Straub, and Dan Simmons.

If you like **Louis L'Amour's** westerns, you might like: Douglas C. Jones, Elmer Kelton, Alistair MacLean, and Tony Hillerman.

If you like **Jean Plaidy's** historical fiction, you might like: Rosalind Miles, Margaret Campbell Barnes, Robin Maxwell, Diane Haeger, Philippa Gregory, and Georgette Heyer.

If you like **Danielle Steel's** contemporary women's fiction, you might like: Barbara Delinsky, Barbara Taylor Bradford, Eileen Goudge, Fern Michaels, and Nicholas Sparks.

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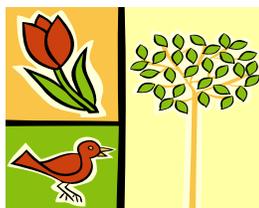
## Just Give Us a Call

Please don't write notes on the mailing cards that come with each book we send you. They can be easily missed or lost. If you need to tell us something about your library service, the fastest and surest way is to call us at 1-800-423-6665.



The Braille & Talking Book Library will be closed on the following holidays. Please place your book orders in advance so that you will have plenty on hand.

May 28                      Memorial Day  
 July 4                        Independence Day



The Prairie Trails Memorandum, published quarterly, is our means of communication with our patrons. The Prairie Trails Memorandum is available in braille, cassette, large print, and is also posted on our website.

If you wish to request this newsletter in an alternative format, please contact the Braille and Talking Book Library at 1-800-423-6665.

If you have any questions or comments that you would like to share with us about the library program, please contact us.

Write: South Dakota Braille & Talking Book Library  
 800 Governors Drive, Pierre, SD 57501



E-mail: [talkbkreq@state.sd.us](mailto:talkbkreq@state.sd.us)



Call: 1-800-423-6665



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