A MESSAGE FROM THE NEW JERSEY STATE LIBRARIAN

I am delighted to see that so many books were finished during the Winter Reading Challenge; our users are among the best-read in the state! Librarians tend to think of reading challenges as being for children, and I’m so grateful that TBBC staff launched this program for adults. I’m hopeful that participation in our Summer Reading Program for Children and Teens will be as robust.

Staff at TBBC are working diligently to make sure you have access to the titles you want, when you want them. They are also looking for ways to connect readers with books, like through our book club and reading challenge. Please join me in thanking them for their dedication during National Library Week, April 7-13, 2024.

Be safe and be well.

Thank you,

Jen

Jennifer R. Nelson
New Jersey State Librarian
Amazon’s Alexa and BARD

The National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled (NLS) plans to make audiobooks and magazines available through Amazon Alexa smart speakers in mid to late summer. NLS is in the final stages of beta testing this ability with patrons from across the country. Patrons will use their voice to find and play books and magazines on a variety of Amazon’s smart speakers.

As with other smart speaker products, the books and magazines will be stored within your BARD account. BARD is the Braille and Audio Reading Download service offered by the National Library Services for the Blind and Print Disabled, Library of Congress. If you have more than one Amazon smart speaker, you would be able to move from one speaker to another and continue listening.

The National Federation of the Blind’s Newsline has been allowing smart speaker access to local and national newspapers for a number of years.

TBBC will begin training staff on this new feature in May.

Additional BARD News

Besides the work on the smart speakers from Amazon, NLS continues to work on the development of a new Talking Book Player. NLS is in development with the HumanWare company on adding many new enhanced features for the player.

In other news, the number of foreign language titles available in BARD has increased to 60 different languages. The largest collection of titles remains in Spanish with over 6100 audiobooks available to download.
along with 61 titles in Braille. Luisa Martucci of TBBC staff is available to assist patrons wanting more information about books in Spanish. Luisa can be reached at extension 822.

2024 Summer Reading Program for Children and Teens

Spring has sprung and summer is not far behind! Which means it’s almost Summer Reading time! Every summer, TBBC offers a Summer Reading Program to all TBBC children and teen patrons interested in joining the fun.

Throughout the summer, we mail out packets to anyone who has signed up which includes a variety of activities, trivia, crafts, book lists, reading incentives, and more. The incentives we send are provided by the Friends of the Library for the Blind and Handicapped.

Last year, participants received trivia games, craft ideas, word puzzles, sidewalk chalk, and a STEM kit, just to name a few!

This year’s Summer Reading Program theme is Adventure Begins at your Library! We can’t wait to share the fun adventures and surprises we have planned!

Registration for this year’s Summer Reading Program will be going out in the mail and by email soon, but if you just can’t wait to sign up to receive your Summer Reading Program packets in the mail for this summer, you can email TBBCYouth@njstatelibrary.org to register today!

You or a family member must be registered for TBBC services to receive the Summer Reading Packets. If you have a print disability and are not already signed up for TBBC services, applications for TBBC services can be found on our website.
Once again, a huge thank you to the Friends of the Library for their support and generosity which makes the Summer Reading Program what it is.

We look forward to an Adventurous summer!

The 13th Annual TBBC Golf Classic

The NJ State Library Talking Book & Braille Center is hosting its 13th Annual TBBC Golf Classic, proudly sponsored by the Friends of the New Jersey Library for the Blind & Handicapped. Through this generous funding we have been able to reduce the ticket price per golfer, in efforts to attract more golfers and sponsors while raising awareness of our programs and services. We have also moved the venue to a new golf course for a change of pace and to allow golfers to visit golf courses that they otherwise would not have access to. This year it will be held on Tuesday, June 18th at Makefield Highlands Golf Club in Yardley, PA. This 18-hole championship course was rated “Best of Bucks” and “Golf Digest 9th Ranked Public Course in Pennsylvania.”

The day begins at 8:30 a.m. with registration and a Continental Breakfast, followed by a 10:00 a.m. shot gun start. There will be two contests during the day, a putting contest with a chance to win $5,000 by making a 60ft putt and a Closest to the Pin contest on a par 3 hole.

There will be hospitality stations on the course throughout the day. As the golfers end their play they will head back to the clubhouse for cocktail hour and hors d’oeuvres while they wait for all golfers to finish up their play. A buffet lunch will be served, followed by announcement of the winning 1st and 2nd place teams, a 50/50 winner, Closest to the Hole finalist, and the putting contest finalist. Also, at this time the Putting Contest finalist will take a one putt shot on the putting green for
a chance to make a 60ft putt and win $5,000. During the reception golfers will be given an opportunity to purchase Penny Auction tickets for a chance to win donated baskets and various other items. There will also be a Silent Auction with donated items for golfers to view and bid on. The day will conclude with dessert!

Many thanks to The Friends of the NJ Library for the Blind & Handicapped for supporting our event for the past 13 years. Proceeds of the event benefit the Talking Book & Braille Center, New Jersey’s only FREE library for the reading and print disabled (anyone who is blind, visually or physically impaired).

Please help spread the word! If you know anyone interested in golfing, sponsoring, donating an auction item, or have any questions about the outing, please feel free to contact Linda Cerce at 800-792-8322 ext. 835 or email lcerce@njstatelib.org.

2024 Chilly Chapters Winter Reading Challenge

Reflecting on TBBC’s 2024 Chilly Chapters Winter Reading Challenge

During this winter season, TBBC, with generous support from the Friends of the Library group, launched its inaugural Winter Reading Challenge for adult patrons. This initiative aimed to inspire reading during the chilly months, encouraging participants to track their progress from January 8th to March 1st, 2024. Together, our patrons accomplished an impressive feat, collectively finishing almost 800 books!

Participants registered for the challenge in advance; and then submitted their reading logs. Each registered reader who completed at least one book earned a chance to win an Amazon Fire HD tablet in our
prize drawing. Additionally, the top five readers, who reported reading the most books, received three entries each into the drawing. As a token of appreciation, the first 50 participants were gifted a TBBC hat. All participants received eight book lists featuring staff-selected recommendations across various genres.

The prize drawing was held on Friday, March 15th. We're thrilled to announce that patron Paul Ressler was the lucky winner of the tablet! Paul shared his plans to enhance his reading experience by using the tablet to access BARD mobile.

The Winter Reading Challenge showcased the incredible commitment of TBBC's readers! As we reflect on this year's success, we eagerly anticipate what next year's challenge will bring. Stay tuned for more reading adventures!

Below, please enjoy some titles from one of the book lists sent to our Winter Reading Challenge participants. If you want the rest of the list; or the other lists that were sent to participants; please contact Liz Kelly.

ICY HISTORICAL FICTION

**Snow Falling on Cedars DB40688**

By David Guterson, Reading time: 14 hours, 30 minutes.

Historical Fiction, Legal Fiction

Set on an island in Puget Sound shortly after World War II. Carl Heine has drowned, and Kabuo Miyamoto, a fellow fisherman, is charged with Heine's murder. Covering the trial for the local newspaper is Ishmael Chambers, who was the first love of Hatsue, the defendant's wife. As the trial gets under way, the courtroom and the entire once peaceful community are tense with suspicion and prejudice. Strong language and some descriptions of sex. 1994.
The Water Dancer DB96729
By: Ta-Nehisi Coates, Reading time: 14 hours, 16 minutes.
Historical Fiction, Fantasy Fiction
Born into bondage, Hiram Walker is robbed of all memory of his mother when she is sold. But Hiram is blessed with a mysterious power. This power saves him when he almost drowns, and he knows he must escape the only life he has ever known. Violence. Commercial audiobook. 2019.

Winter Sisters DB91204
By: Robin Oliveira, Reading time: 14 hours, 37 minutes.
Historical Fiction
New York, 1879. After an epic snowstorm ravages the city of Albany, former Civil War surgeon Mary Sutter begins to search for two little girls who vanished without a trace. Their parents, Mary's close friends, were killed by the storm. Some strong language. Commercial audiobook. 2018.

The Glass Woman DB96621
By: Caroline Lea, Reading time: 11 hours, 20 minutes.
Gothic Fiction, Historical Fiction
Iceland, 1686. Rósa joins the husband she barely knows. Jón lives in a rural home near the sea and rumors swirl regarding the fate of his first wife. Rósa prays to the old gods for protection when she hears noises coming from a forbidden room. Unrated. Commercial audiobook. 2019.
TBBC’s Virtual Book Club: The Perfect Place to Talk About Books!

Did you know that TBBC has a monthly Virtual Book Club?

Our book club is a great place to get together with other TBBC patrons and discuss some amazing books. We are always looking for new members!

Our Virtual Book Club meets the first Thursday of every month at 1:00 p.m. Since the club is virtual, members can join either online using a link that is emailed to them, or by calling in over the telephone.

Club members get to vote on the books we read, and every book that we feature is available through our library. We also have time at meetings for members to talk about other books they have read recently, which is a great opportunity to get other reading recommendations.

If you are interested in joining a meeting, please call us at 800-792-8322 ext. 812 or email us at tbbc@njstatelib.org

For more information, and for future meeting dates, you can read more about our Book Club online at https://www.njstatelib.org/talking-book-braille-center/tbbcs-virtual-bookclub/

TBBC’S CONTACT INFORMATION

Toll-Free Number: (800) 792-8322

Local Phone Number: (609) 406-7179

Email Address: tbbc@njstatelib.org

Website Address: www.njstatelib.org/tbbc