

Louisiana Hotlines



A Newsletter of the State Library of Louisiana
Talking Books and Braille Library
Office of Lt. Governor, Department of Culture, Recreation & Tourism

Vol. 25 No. 2

Spring 2025

Holiday Closings

April 18	Easter
May 26	Memorial Day
July 4	Independence Day

2025 Adult Summer Reading Program

The TBBL Adult Summer Reading Program will start May 1, 2025, and will run through August 31. The theme this year is "Color Our World." Thanks to a generous gift from the Jones Foundation, everyone who completes the program by reading 20 books will receive a free set of charging cables. The cables have USB-A and USB-C input connectors and both iPhone and Android compatible output connectors.

If you participated last year, then you will automatically be signed up for this year's program. If you are not already signed up, please contact your reader advisor! Audio books, Braille books, large print books and audio magazines all count. We will keep track of your reading history. Happy reading!

WRBH Radio for the Blind

WRBH 88.3 FM is a New Orleans based 501(c)(3) non-profit organization and is the only full-time reading service on the FM dial in the United States. Here is their mission: WRBH transforms the printed word into the spoken word, ensuring that the blind and print-impaired have the same access to information as their sighted peers.

The roots of WRBH go back to the mid-1970s when founder Dr. Robert McClean, a blind mathematician, leased airtime from WWNO and began reading local newspapers over the radio. In 1982 McClean purchased the 88.3 FM signal. In 2000 WRBH started live streaming and podcasting, making their programming accessible to a global audience.

WRBH Radio for the Blind 88.3 FM broadcasts a wide range of content 24/7, from local and national news to best-selling books, magazine articles, and cooking shows. Their schedule includes best-selling non-fiction as well as great literature and even vintage radio programs. They do all this with the help

of 150 volunteers who donate 5,000 hours of their time every year.

WRBH's FM signal reaches a 90-mile radius across parts of Louisiana and Mississippi; their streaming and podcasting reaches listeners worldwide. For more information, visit their website at www.wrbh.org or call them at 504-899-1144.

Two Useful Smartphone Apps

Seeing AI is a free iOS app from Microsoft that is designed to provide audio descriptions of the world to people with visual impairments. Users point their phone's camera and turn the visual world into an audible experience with descriptions of people, text, and objects, using the power of Artificial Intelligence (AI). Using VoiceOver, the app enables users to recognize:

- Short Text – Speaks text as soon as it appears in front of the camera.
- Products – Scans barcodes, using audio beeps to guide you; hear the name, and package information when available. (works with iPhone 6 and later)
- People – Saves people's faces so you can recognize them, and get an estimate of their age, gender, and emotions.
- Scenes (early preview) – Hear an overall description of the scene captured.
- Images in other apps – Just tap

"Share" and "Recognize with Seeing AI" to describe images from Mail, Photos, X, and more.

Be My Eyes is a Danish mobile app that aims to help blind and visually impaired people to recognize objects and cope with everyday situations. An online community of sighted volunteers receive photos or videos from randomly assigned affected individuals and assist via live chat. The app is currently available for Android and iOS.

A visually impaired person starts a live stream showing their view from their cell-phone camera. They are assigned, through a phone call or chat, a random volunteer who speaks the same language and who is in the same time zone. This allows the volunteer to describe an object and assist the visually impaired person, such as guiding the person to move their camera, read instructions, or clean up a spill. Through speech synthesis, content can be read out loud.

2025 National NFB Convention

The National Federation of the Blind National Convention is the largest gathering of blind people in the world. This year it will be held in New Orleans from Tuesday, July 8 – Sunday, July 13 at the New Orleans Marriott/Sheraton. The website for this national convention is:

<https://nfb.org/get-involved/national-convention>

For more information, please contact us at 410-659-9314 or conventionregistration@nfb.org.

New Title for BookTalks

Our BookTalks Spring Book Selection will be:

DB 123077 *The Spellshop* by Sarah Beth Durst

Kiela has always had trouble dealing with people. Thankfully, as a librarian at the Great Library of Alyssium, she and her assistant, Caz—a magically sentient spider plant—have spent the last decade sequestered among the empire's most precious spellbooks, preserving their magic for the city's elite.

When a revolution begins and the library goes up in flames, she and Caz flee with all the spellbooks they can carry and head to a remote island Kiela never thought she'd see again: her childhood home. Taking refuge there, Kiela discovers, much to her dismay, a nosy—and very handsome—neighbor who can't take a hint and keeps showing up day after day to make sure she's fed and to help fix up her new home.

How to Join BookTalks

We hold our book discussions via an email discussion list. Members comment on the book by sending an email to the discussion list. All members then see the comments and have the ability to respond by email to the group. If you want to join our discussion group, go to: <http://pelican.state.lib.la.us/mailman/listinfo/tbblbooktalks> and create an account by entering your name (make sure to put

your name so we can verify you), email address and make up a password or, as always, you can call your reader adviser.

BookTalks Book Club

If you join BookTalks, we will add you to our mailing list and automatically send you a digital book copy of the newest selection. We hope that this will make it more convenient to read the book and participate in the discussion.

Thank you, and we hope to hear from you soon!

Spring Book Recommendations

By Sneha Padumane

DB 123864 *The Fellowship of the Ring* by J.R.R. Tolkien, read by Andy Serkis
Frodo Baggins, a young hobbit, sets out on a perilous journey to the Cracks of Doom, along with a band of warriors from different kingdoms, to destroy the Dark Lord's Ring of Power.

DB 124108 *The Booklover's Library* by Madeline Martin

In wartime England, widow Emma, when she's separated from her daughter, seeks solace in the friendships she forms at Boots' Booklover's Library, but when the Blitz intensifies, she fights to reunite with her daughter, learning to depend on her community and the power of literature to find hope in the darkest of times.

DB 123457 *Instruments of Darkness: A Thriller* by John Connolly

Working alongside lawyer Moxie Castin to prove the innocence of a woman accused of abducting and possibly mur-

dering her child, private investigator Charlie Parker, to solve this heart-wrenching case, follows its twists and turns to an old house deep in the Maine woods, a house that should have never been built.

DB 123182 *Maria: A Novel of Maria von Trapp* by Michelle Moran

Maria von Trapp. You know the name and the iconic songs, but do you know her real story? This dramatic novel, based on the woman glamorized in *The Sound of Music*, brings Maria to life as never before.

DB 123847 *The Life Impossible: A Novel* by Matt Haig

When retired math teacher Grace Winters is left a run-down house on a Mediterranean island by a long-lost friend, curiosity gets the better of her. She arrives in Ibiza with a one-way ticket, no guidebook and no plan. Filled with wonder and wild adventure, this is a story of hope and the life-changing power of a new beginning.

DB 123953 *One Last Shot* by Susan May Warren

When country music star Oaken Fox joins survivalist Mike Grizz's new adventure show in the Alaskan wilderness, he just wants to boost his fan base. But when tragedy strikes and Air One Rescue must save them, Oaken wants to quit. Too bad his producer has other plans — signing him on with Air One Rescue as a recruit and making a reality show.

DB 124219 *The Hitchcock Hotel* by Stephanie Wrobel

A Hitchcock fanatic with an agenda invites old friends for a weekend stay at his secluded themed hotel in this fiendishly clever, suspenseful new novel from the international bestselling author of *Darling Rose Gold*.

DB 122408 *Nightfall at Little Aces* by Ralph W. Cotton

Sheriff's widow Emma Vertrees is far from the straight-and-narrow citizen the residents of Little Aces assume her to be. When fate reunites her with Memphis Warren Beck, a member of a despicable collection of miscreants known as the Hole-in-the-wall Gang, Arizona Ranger Sam Burrack finds himself right in the line of fire.

DB 122631 *The Blind Woodsman* by John Furniss and Anni Furniss

This inspiring autobiography is about a man who finds true joy after struggling with depression, drug addiction, anxiety, financial despair and a failed suicide attempt at the age of 16. Despite being blind, John is now a highly skilled woodworker creating incredible pieces of art in complete darkness. This story that will give hope and inspiration to those dealing with depression, addiction and the many anxiety driven stresses in our lives.

DB 124197 *Ian Fleming: The Complete Man* by Nicholas Shakespeare

Ian Fleming's greatest creation, James Bond, has had an enormous impact on our culture. Fleming himself was more mysterious and subtle than anything he wrote. Ian's childhood set the pattern for his ambition to be "the complete man", and he would strive for the means to achieve this "completeness" all his life.

Talking Books and Braille Library 2025 Biennial Survey

To help us better serve you, please provide your feedback in this survey. Pull out this section from the newsletter. Fold it so that the library's return address is visible; secure with tape, and drop it in the mail. No postage is required. To complete the survey online, visit <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2025TBBL>

1. Name (optional): _____
 2. Phone number (optional): _____
 3. Please mark the types of material you receive from the library.
 - ☐ Digital Books
 - ☐ Large print books
 - ☐ Braille books
 - ☐ BARD books
 - ☐ Magazines
 4. Do you or a family member use the web catalog to search for and order books?
 - ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
 - ☐ I would like information (contact reader adviser)
 5. For what purpose do you use the TBBL web catalog? (Check all that apply.)
 - ☐ Search for authors, titles, or subjects I want to read
 - ☐ School book requests and reserves
 - ☐ School assignments
 - ☐ Check my account for overdue books, lost items, etc.
 - ☐ Check my reading history
 - ☐ N/A
 6. Have you visited the TBBL web site?
 - ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
 7. How do you rate the TBBL web site in terms of accessibility?
 - ☐ Excellent
 - ☐ Good
 - ☐ Average
 - ☐ Fair
 - ☐ Poor
 8. Do you or a family member download books from BARD?
 - ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
 - ☐ I would like information about the service.
-

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9. If you are not a BARD user, what prevents you from using it?
- ☐ I have no internet access
 - ☐ I did not know about BARD
 - ☐ I do not have a computer
 - ☐ I am not interested
10. Do you currently use a smart phone, tablet, or e-book reader?
- ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
11. Have you downloaded the BARD mobile app to an iOS or Android device?
- ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
12. Which device?
- ☐ iOS
 - ☐ Android
13. Would you like to have NFB Newsline service read newspapers and popular magazines to you over the phone?
- ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
 - ☐ I would like more information
14. Would you be interested in participating in the next Adult Summer Reading Program?
- ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
 - ☐ I would like information (contact reader adviser).
15. Do you use any type of social media? (Check all that apply.)
- ☐ Facebook
 - ☐ Twitter
 - ☐ LinkedIn
 - ☐ Google+
 - ☐ Instagram
 - ☐ Other (please specify)
-
16. Please rate the courtesy you receive when you contact the library staff.
- ☐ Excellent
 - ☐ Good
 - ☐ Fair
 - ☐ Poor
-

17. When you order books and other materials from TBBL, how would you rate the speed of delivery?

- ☐ Excellent
- ☐ Good
- ☐ Fair
- ☐ Poor

18. Please rate TBBL services overall.

- ☐ Excellent
- ☐ Good
- ☐ Fair
- ☐ Poor

19. Do you have suggestions for improving the library service?

20. Please make additional comments here.

21. What is your age?

- ☐ Under 18 ☐ 18-24 ☐ 25-34 ☐ 35-44 ☐ 45-54 ☐ 55-64 ☐ 65+

22. Did you participate in the Teen/Children Summer Reading Program?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

23. If you answered yes to question 22, please respond. The Summer Reading Program helped me improve my literacy skills.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

Thank you so much for your feedback. Pull out this section from the newsletter. Fold it so that the library's return address is visible, secure with tape, and drop it in the mail. No postage is required.

**FREE MATTER FOR THE
BLIND OR HANDICAPPED**

Talking Books and Braille Library
701 N. Fourth Street
Baton Rouge, LA 70802

Books and Beyond: A Section for Children and Teens

Summer Reading Program 2025

The 2025 Summer Reading Slogan is “Color Our World – All Jazzed Up” and the focus is on art and music. TBBL will offer three youth programs: Children’s, Teen’s, and Read-To-Me. We will send out art packets with crafts and a reading folder. This year we will also do a paper quilt. Instructions will be in the packets. NLS will also offer an online program. Invitations mail out April 20th, and the program begins June 1st. A gracious thank you to the Jones Foundation for providing this year’s Summer Reading Program prizes!

From Crib to Crayons

The TBBL Early Literacy Program *From Crib to Crayons* will start in July this year. Designed for children aged 0-6, four literacy packets are sent throughout the year to children and their parents. Each kit will be themed to focus on one early literacy skill: print awareness, play motivation, phonological awareness, letter knowledge, and narrative skills. For more information, contact Children’s and Teen Services Librarian Charlene Moore at 225-342-9563 or email at tbblkids@library.la.gov. This program is made possible through the generous support of the Jones Foundation.

BELL Academy 2025

The National Federation of the Blind Braille Enrichment for Literacy and Learning— NFB BELL Academy— helps blind and low-vision children, ages 4 through 12, develop the literacy skills that will empower them to achieve their

academic goals and live the lives they want. The BELL Academy will be offered in person at the Louisiana Center for the Blind Sunday, June 1st thru Saturday, June 7th for ages 4-10. The Academy for ages 11-14 will be Sunday, July 20 through Saturday, July 26.

For registration information, contact the Louisiana BELL Academy Coordinator Krystal Guillory by email at kguillory@louisianacenter.org or by calling 318-245-8955.

Accessible STEM Program During NFBLA 2025 Convention

Thanks to a generous donation from General Motors (GM), the NFB of Louisiana is offering STEM2U, a one-day STEM camp for grades K-12, on Friday, March 28 from 3-5 pm at the Marriott in Baton Rouge. The focus will be on using the scientific method to design and test exciting experiments exploring physics, chemistry, and technology. The camp will be held during the NFBLA convention. Convention registration is not a requirement for attending camp. For more information contact Kristen Sims at ksims@latech.edu or call 318-348-4637.

Camp ABLE 2025

Camp ABLE will be June 22nd - 28th at the Affiliated Blind of LA in Lafayette. Registration ends April 25, 2025. Visually impaired high-school students can apply online at <https://abltc.wufoo.com/forms/m1ogr1x1mzg0az/>

Call 337-234-6492 for more information.

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2025 Youth Leadership Forum Recruiting Staff and Delegates

The 2025 Louisiana Youth Leadership Forum will be held July 10–13, 2025 at the Louisiana State University Eunice campus. YLF is a four-day residential leadership program for 10th-12th graders, focused on empowering youths with disabilities while promoting an environment of disability culture and pride. This program gives delegates the skills needed to become future leaders! Lodging, accommodation, and meals are provided at no cost.

For more information or assistance with applying, please contact Program Coordinator, Lillian DeJean via email at ldjean@fhfacadiana.org or call 337-205-2504.

Community Grace Scholarship 2025

Community Grace is excited to announce four \$400 scholarship opportunities for graduating seniors. Students must be residents of Louisiana and have visual impairment. Applications are due by May 9, 2025.

Apply online at <https://blindgrace.net/> or call 225-521-1350 for more information.

State Library Now Has BookFlix

BookFlix, for beginning and developing readers ages 3-8, combines animated stories with Scholastic nonfiction ebooks to create an interactive and engaging reading experience. To access Bookflix on the State Library's website, go to www.library.la.gov and scroll down to the Louisiana Library Connection tab. Go to BookFlix and click to start your reading experience.

First Book in a Series

Check out the first book in these engaging series.

Preschool

BR014344, DB045823, LP020022 *Danny and the Dinosaur* by Syd Hoff
DB078605, LP027362 *Clifford, the big red dog* by Norman Bridwell

Grades K-3

BR016902, DB055800, LP022819 *Henry and Mudge* by Cynthia Rylant
DB032121, LP027415 *Commander Toad in space* by Jane Yolen

Grades 2-4

BRC01080, DB011047, LP022807 *Encyclopedia Brown, Boy Detective* by Donald J. Sobol
LP021798 *The talent show from the Black Lagoon* by Mike Thaler

Grades 3-6

DB039425, LP014699 *The Boys Start the War* by Phyllis Reynolds Naylor
DB090413, LP026219 *Aru Shah and the End of Time* by Roshani Chokshi
DB084426, LP027660 *Wild Robot* by Peter Brown

Grades 4-8

DB078630, LP027790 *Spy School* by Stuart Gibbs
BR024213, DB096813, LP026842 *Tales from a Not-So-Fabulous Life* by Rachel Renee Russell
BR021669, DB085921, LP026833, Spanish **DB120388, LP027581** *Ghost* by Jason Reynolds

Grades 6-9 and Young Adult

DB053286 *Among the Hidden* by Margaret Peterson Haddix

Support Our TBBL Friends Organization

Since 1981, the Mrs. W. Carruth Jones Foundation has acted as a friends group for the Talking Books and Braille Library in the State Library of Louisiana. It provides a mechanism for accepting donations to enhance and support services to the blind and physically handicapped community state-wide.

The Jones Foundation directly supplements the programs and initiatives of TBBL within the State Library. It is a primary sponsor of the State Library's large print collection, TBBL's summer reading program, staff enrichment, and early literacy program.

To contribute, make checks payable to the Foundation and mail to the following address:

Mrs. W. Carruth Jones Foundation
1131 N. River Road
Port Allen, LA 70767

All donations are tax deductible.

Anyone who makes a donation receives a one-year membership to the Jones Foundation.

For meeting information, call Shelia Coleman at 225-342-4942.

TBBL Directory

Library Address

Talking Books & Braille Library
701 N. Fourth St.
Baton Rouge, LA 70802

Phone Numbers

Baton Rouge: 225-342-0035
Statewide: 1-800-543-4702
Fax: 225-342-6817

Special Services

Music section: 800-424-8567, ext. 2
Braille service: 800-453-4293

Email

tbbl@library.la.gov
tbblkids@library.la.gov

Walk-In Hours

Monday – Thursday
10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Phone and Email Hours

Monday – Friday
8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Library Services

Audio books and magazines
Braille books and magazines
Large print books and big books
Online catalog
BARD download service
BARD mobile apps
Newspaper reading service

Eligibility

Any Louisiana resident who is unable to read or use standard print materials as a result of a temporary or permanent visual or physical limitation is eligible to receive free library services.

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Special format library materials are loaned
to qualified patrons by

Talking Books and Braille Library

State Library of Louisiana

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