

# TAR HEEL TALK

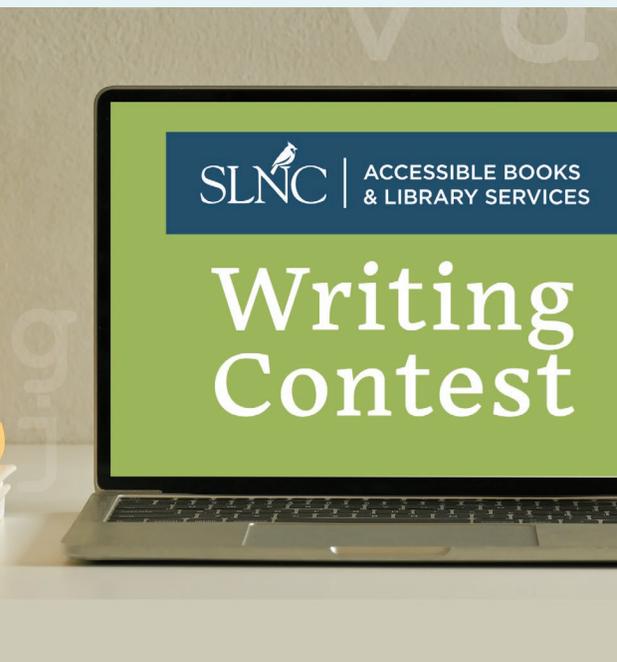
## Accessible Voting

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# 2021 WRITING CONTEST RESULTS

We are pleased to announce the results of the **2021 Writing Contest!**



We had so many more participants than in the previous year. Each of the entries were judged based on their clarity, spelling, grammar, creativity, and impact. We had over 30 participants in total, and all of the participants this year were in the 18 years and older division. We received a lot of fantastic entries and the judging process was difficult. Here are our Writing Contest winners:



**2nd Place**  
*Mama Outsider* by  
Willi Coleman



**1st Place**  
*Goines On* by  
Moristotle



**3rd Place**  
*Money & Motherhood* by  
Robert Bizal

# Honorable Mentions

We decided to limit our Honorable Mentions to 10 participants. They are in no particular order:

*Suitcase Odyssey* by Karen Bright

*A Simple Walk* by Eddie Weaver

*Everybody's got a Road* by Edward Rizzuto

*Dating Online* by Hattie Tyson

*Where Danger and Blessing Meet* by Diane Pitre

*The Visitor and the Amaranth* by Diana Soto

*Why Do I Know You* by Mark Hughes

*The Altar of Grace* by Rebecca Tilley

*10 Pieces of the Puzzle of Life* by Toni Horton

*Attic Windows* by Diann Cunningham

Our winners' entries from the 2021 Writing Contest, as well as the 2020 Writing Contest, will be made available to our patrons in a talking book format. If you would like to receive a copy on your cartridge, please [contact us](#), and we will include them for you.

Thank you all who participated. If you would like to participate in a future writing contest, we will begin accepting entries September 2022 through December 2022. You can expect to see the updated rules for in a future issue of the Tar Heel Talk. □

# CARL KEEHN RETIRES



**Carl Keehn**  
ABLS Regional Librarian

As the Regional Librarian, Carl has had many responsibilities in this role. To name a few of these duties, Carl is responsible for strategic planning, working with the Friends of the Library Board, communicating with staff, ensuring library policies are being followed, aiding in the development of library programs and events, reviewing staff

**T**he library has seen many staff come and go as it has served its patrons. In the past few years we've seen three staff retire after many years of serving the library. This time it will be the Carl Keehn's turn, as he is set to retire at the end of May 2022.

performance, keeping up with building maintenance, speaking at events and conferences, developing and delivering library reports, being an advocate for the library, its patrons, and staff.

An example of his advocacy was his response to the beginning of the pandemic. His guidance and support of the library, its staff, and patrons

through a situation we all knew very little about should not be overlooked. He led the way for the library to adapt to effectively keep our operations running as smoothly as possible with the majority of the staff working from home and a skeleton crew in the library. Getting the library to the point was the combined efforts of the State Librarian, the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources, our dedicated patron advocates, and Carl.

While the responsibilities and duties will be fulfilled by the next Regional Librarian, the daily interactions with Carl himself cannot be replaced. He always has managed to share the spotlight, and he has encouraged his staff to be active within the National Library Service community, supporting any presentation or any working group

the staff wanted to do or be a part of. Not all library directors are so accommodating of their staff.

One of the other personal touches Carl brings to the library is his joy in sharing his knowledge with the staff; he always has an interesting fact to share in almost any situation. He brings his unique blend of witty banter so things would never be dull, and to keep a bit of humor in the work place, Carl would share tasteful cat related memes with the library on a daily basis.

What you will read next are Carl's reflections of his library service. Carl responded to questions concerning what his next life goals are, what he has enjoyed about his time here, how he has seen the library grow, and what he will miss after he retires.

**Q: What has led you to your decision to retire?**

**A:** My career as a librarian began in 1976, when I first started working for the Prince George's County Memorial Library system in Maryland. After 31 years in Prince George's County, I accepted the position of Assistant Regional Librarian for North Carolina and a year later I became the library director. 15 years later, it's time for me to prepare for my next challenge. It has been an exciting 46 years and I have seen the library adapt to better serve our patrons. It is time for the next generation to take the library to places I can't even imagine.

**Q: What do you plan to do during your retirement?**

**A:** NC By Rail sponsors a Rail Ambassador program, staffed by volunteers. One can serve as train ambassa-

dor and ride the trains to answer passenger questions. In addition, one can serve as a station ambassador, providing assistance and answering questions for travelers in the train station. As I love trains and travel by trains, I would like to see about getting involved in the rail ambassador program.

**Q: What will you miss most about the library?**

**A:** The people, both staff and patrons. It has been a true joy working with the staff, they are all talented and committed to providing the best possible level of service. Our patrons are great to work with. They are so appreciative of our service, it energizes us all. I have enjoyed meeting our patrons face to face at the statewide conferences and get their direct feedback of our services.

**Q: What has happened to the library that you were proud to see?**

**A:** There are so many things that the library has accomplished that has filled me with pride. Virtually all of them have involved all the staff working together to achieve our goal. When the library transitioned from analog to digital audio service, we were able to exceed expectations and were the first library in the NLS network to distribute over 100% of our allotted players.

One of my goals as the manager was to try and establish programming to enrich the lives of our patrons. In cooperation with our parent agency, we were able to establish many successful programs, including tactile tours of the art museum and a very successful book discussion, followed by a successful dis-

tance book discussion in Charlotte. One of our dreams was to provide programming that could be accessed on a statewide basis and we took our first steps by offering a hybrid program, which involved a live audience as well as a live streaming of the program to open it statewide. The experience would prepare us for fully remote programs when the pandemic would restrict public gatherings.

I am particularly proud that we were able to rebrand the library to reflect the services that we provide and to make the library more welcoming and inclusive of a diverse audience. Working with the State Librarian and the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources Legal Team, we were able to rewrite the NC Rules to enable the name change and to update the rules governing our operation

and make them more flexible, going into the future.

**Q: What have been challenges the library has had to overcome while you were its director?**

**A:** The biggest challenge occurred not long after I received the appointment as the library manager. With the crash of the economy, the library would undergo a severe budget crunch and we would be forced to close our annex facility, where our braille collection was stored. As our present facility is too small to house the entire braille collection, we would have to dispose of the major part of the braille collection. This would turn out to be a major project, which would ultimately involve the entire state library staff, volunteers from the NC State University, the National Library service that provided us with the

materials to ship out the surplus materials and the United States Postal Service. Ultimately, we would ship out three full tractor-trailer loads of surplus braille, to be sent overseas. We would then establish a contract with the Perkins Library in Massachusetts, to provide braille materials to supplement our remaining collection. Despite the massive nature of the project, our patrons noticed no disruption of their braille service.

**Q: What advice would you share with your successor?**

**A:** My predecessor had a saying. "You will find that you will have all the responsibility and none of the authority." I tried always to be mindful of that. I would advise my successor to listen to their staff, but to remember that ultimately the responsibility will

fall on them. My successor should trust their judgment and not be afraid to commit to a decision.

That said, the staff of this library are committed to providing the best service possible and they are a pleasure to work with. Trust them, provide them with the tools and information that they need to do their jobs and they will work wonders.

**Q: What final message would you share with the patrons as their Regional Librarian?**

**A:** It has been a pleasure to be able to serve you. I have been privileged to meet many of you and talk with you as I attended conferences and conventions and I always enjoyed doing so and being able to bring your kind comments and suggestions back to share with the staff of the library. I

can honestly say that during the 15 years I have worked for the North Carolina State Library and the Accessible Books and Library Services, I have had to face several challenges, but not once regretted being here.

It has been an honor to serve as your Regional Librarian and to share the experience with so many committed and dedicated staff persons. I have been privileged to share in a number of firsts and lasts in my career here. I saw the last talking book phonograph record and the first digital talking book. The library offered our first public program and continued to do a number of memorable programs, many of which left lasting memories. Some of our programs, such as the book discussions in Raleigh and the remote discussions in Charlotte, as well as the regular

tactile tours of the art museum continue to be ongoing favorites and the Summer Reading programs at the Governor Morehead School have always been real favorites of mine.

As I leave, I take with me many memories, memories of the people that I have worked with and memories of the many patrons that I have had a chance to connect with. I take memories of the many committed people of our Friends Group that I have had a privilege to work with, the board members and officers. Although the faces would change through-

out the years, they would all have a common goal, to help support the library and the commitment to help make us one of the top libraries in the nation. It has truly been an honor to be able to serve you for these past 15 years and I depart, knowing that the future of the library is bright.

*-Carl R. Keehn* □



# COLLECTIONS COMMUNIQUE

## A Quarterly Collections Update

- All library patrons who are actively reading audiobooks from our collection and who are receiving audiobooks from us in the mail via Books on Demand have been subscribed to the audio version of the Tar Heel Talk. When a new issue is released, you will receive the issue on your next Books on Demand Cartridge.
- An update on the newly implemented Marrakesh Treaty. This treaty allows participating countries to circulate accessible books across borders. We now have over seventeen hundred of these titles in our collection in both audio and e-braille format. The audio book numbers begin with the prefix DBG, and the e-braille books begin with the prefix BRG. The audiobooks are available on BARD and via Books on Demand. The e-braille books are available via BARD only. New languages are being added every month to this collection. We now have books in Arabic, Polish, and Vietnamese!
- We are undertaking efforts to diversify our locally-produced audio and Braille collections. We have recently added a Braille title called *African American Music Trails of Eastern North Carolina*. This title is available in embossed format as **BRX02817** and is available on BARD as **BRC01868**.

- Locally produced magazines such as *Wildlife in North Carolina*, *Our State*, and the *North Carolina Historical Review* resumed production last fall, but have been put on hold again during January and February due to volunteer restrictions entering the Library during the Covid Omicron surge. We will resume production as soon as it is safe to have our wonderful recording volunteers return to the Library.
  - The National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled is beginning to roll out Braille eReader devices for Braille readers who wish to have one. We are keeping track of patrons who have expressed a desire to borrow one of these devices as soon as they are made available to our Library. If you are interested, please call the library and speak with a reader advisor to have your name added to the list. These devices are 20-cell eReaders.
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**“Tar Heel Talk” is a quarterly publication of the State Library of North Carolina Accessible Books & Library Services section (SLNC-ABLS) and the N.C. Department of Natural and Cultural Resources.**

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**Web Page: <http://statelibrary.ncdcr.gov/blind-print-disabled>**  
**Internet Catalog, Ordering Site: [ncbph.klas.com](http://ncbph.klas.com)**

# BRAILLE LITERACY GRANTS



## 2021 Braille Literacy Grant Award Recipients

In June 2021, the Friends board approved the recipients of the first Braille Literacy grants.

- The children's grant was awarded to the **Governor Morehead School** for the purchase of new UEB books to expand their library services.
- **Hope Clontz** received the adult grant for the purchase of a braille display.
- The Friends' board is excited to play a part in the advancement of braille literacy throughout North Carolina.

## The 2022 Braille Literacy RFP is Now Open

The 2022 Braille Literacy Grant process is open! The Friends seek to award two separate grants, up to \$1,000 to address braille literacy among children and adults in North Carolina. Proposals are expected to address the needs of children and/or adults who are visually impaired in braille literacy efforts

such as, but not limited to, training, services, education, braille access, and outreach. The deadline for applications is May 1, 2022.

## > Application Information

The Braille Literacy grant applications, along with updated information on the application process, eligibility, and deadlines, can be found at:

[https://www.friendsncfbph.org/braille\\_literacy\\_grant\\_informa.php](https://www.friendsncfbph.org/braille_literacy_grant_informa.php)

## > Questions?

Email questions about the Braille Literacy Grant and/or the application process to:

[info@friendsncfbph.org](mailto:info@friendsncfbph.org)

□

# FRIENDS CORNER



*Friends of the*

North Carolina Library for the  
Blind and Physically Handicapped

## Call for More Friends!

Dear Fellow Library Patrons,  
This is Donna Permar, and I am looking forward to working with everyone as the new membership chair of Friends of the Library.

In addition to providing patrons thousands of books in several formats, our library conducts seminars such as Histories Mysteries, hosts a book club, offers volunteer produced recordings of local and regional magazines and books, and so much more!

Funds raised by Friends of the Library support services including audio described videos, our braille writer program

and outreach to local libraries, which raises awareness of our services. The Friends' efforts also support summer youth reading programs, provides substantial funding for the Braille Literacy and Learning (BELL) program, and printing and distribution of the Tarheel Talk newsletter. The Friends participate in conferences to raise awareness of our library services among people who are blind and have low vision. We are involved in advocacy efforts, contacting state legislators to educate them on the unique needs of our library patrons.

Last, but definitely not least, Friends of the Library holds

an annual recognition dinner for all the volunteers who make our library services possible.

By now, you are hopefully so convinced that Friends of the Library provides funding for so many worthwhile projects that you may wish to join us and participate in our important community service efforts. You do not need to be a Board member to participate with one of our committees. For just ten dollars a year, you can become an individual member, or consider one of the other membership options such as a Family membership for \$15 a year.

Thank you for reading and considering membership in the Friends of the Library which has dedicated itself to so many worthy causes!

• **Learn More about Becoming a Member:**

• For more information on becoming a member please call  
• **Toll Free: 1-888-388-2460**, or send an email to  
• [info@friendsnclbph.org](mailto:info@friendsnclbph.org)

• You may also visit our website where you can find a  
• membership form at <https://friendsnclbph.org>

*Donna Permar* □

# **FRIENDS BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

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C (828) 238-6195

[sking@gmail.com](mailto:sking@gmail.com)

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H (919) 833-2259

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## **PAST PRESIDENT**

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H (910) 619-4084

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C (919) 576-3825

**Verdina Gillette-Simms**

C (919) 414-5316

**Jennifer Gray**

C (919) 451-1724

**Patricia Tessnear**

C (252) 291-3405

**Jim Turner**

C (919) 812-3538

**Dawson Hart**

H (828) 212-0881

**Donna Permar**

H (919) 452-6920

**Kellie Hightower-Spruill**

C (336) 253-6566

**Melaney Stein**

H (919) 656-1157

**Yvonne Kea**

H (910) 283-3981

## **NON-VOTING**

**Carl Keehn**

**Regional Librarian - ABLIS**

W (984) 236-1107

# STAFF FEATURE



**ABLS Receptionist  
Heather Riggs**

## **Heather Riggs joins us as our new receptionist!**

The position had been open for quite some time due to the pandemic. Heather started working for the library in January of this year.

As the library's receptionist, Heather will be responsible for being the first point of contact for visitors, volunteers, and local callers to the library providing assistance as needed. She will be part of the Pa-

tron Processing Unit and her role will be to perform initial processing for new patron applications and updating patron records. She also manages our multi-line telephone system, routing calls to the appropriate department or staff member. In addition, she will perform general office operations such as mail processing, daily deposits, photocopying, and keeping track of office supplies.

Now that you know what her role at the library is, here's your chance to get to know a little more about Heather!

**Q: What lead you to apply for NCABLS?**

**A:** I had been working in the healthcare setting for over 10 years and always had a passion for libraries and how they serve the communities around them. So, in 2019 I decided to go back to school,

and I started volunteering at my local library in Wake County. This eventually led to a library page position, then a library assistant position with the Harnett County Public Library where I eventually became their Adult Outreach Program Specialist. I applied to the NCABLS because I was looking to expand my knowledge of different types of libraries and how they operate to best serve their patrons. The NCABLS seemed like a wonderful place to learn something new about libraries.

**Q: What aspect of the job do you find most intriguing?**

**A:** In general, what I find most intriguing about SLNC ABLIS is that the whole state can benefit from the library and the services it offers. This is a huge task, and it takes a really strong team of people to make sure that every patron is receiving the materials and services that they need.

**Q: Have there been any highlights working here so far?**

**A:** Meeting all the staff and learning about what they do and the positive impact they are making across the state.

**Q: Where did you work before SLNC ABLIS?**

**A:** For 10 years, I was the Regulatory Affairs Specialist for a healthcare facility in Raleigh that provided bereavement counseling, home health, palliative care, and hospice services. I was a Volunteer and a Library Page with Wake County Public Libraries. I was a Library Assistant and Adult Outreach Program Specialist for the Harnett County Public Library in Lillington.

**Q: Who are some of your favorite authors?**

**A:** Jane Austen, Edith Wharton, J.R.R. Tolkien, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Mary Higgins-Clark, Daphne Du Maurier, Caroline Graham, Agatha Christie

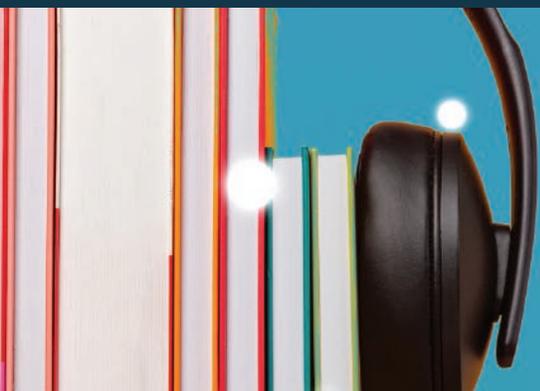
**Q: What are some of your hobbies?**

**A: Reading, photography, writing, baking, and travel**

**Q: If you were famous, what would it be for?**

**A: The M&M cookies I bake for the holidays or nothing ever going the way it was planned . . . however, life would be less of an adventure if it did. □**

# 2022 WINTER READING WINNERS



## SLNC ABL'S WINTER READING



The results of the **Winter Reading Challenge** are in!

Everyone who read at least five books will receive a prize, and the top three readers who read the most in their category will win an Amazon gift card! Here are our winners!



### **BARD READERS**

**1st** Arlene Novels .....198 books

**2nd** Karen Reynolds .....169 books

**3rd** Vinnie Lambert .....145 books



### **NON-BARD READERS**

**1st** Marcia Hackworth.....374 books

**2nd** Libby Walton .....265 books

**3rd** Vivion Steele .....256 books



## **YOUTH READERS**

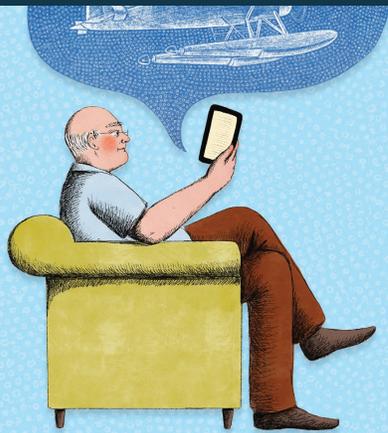
**1st Layla Hildenbrand .....84 books**

**2nd Dylan McClearly .....38 books**

**3rd Caden Karner .....36 books**

**Thank you all who participated in our Winter Reading Contest!  
We hope you participate in future reading challenges and  
library programs! □**

# 2022 SUMMER READING CHALLENGE



## OCEANS OF POSSIBILITIES

© CSLP 2021

### **Summer Reading is just around the corner!**

This year's theme is Oceans of Possibilities! The program will run through June 1st to August 31st. Registration for Summer Reading will be between May 15th and July 31st; all books read during the length of the program will be counted towards your total books read despite when you registered.

Like every year, the program will be divided into an adults' division and a youths' division for patrons 20 years old and younger. Furthermore, patrons who obtain their books from BARD will be counted separately from patrons who are receiving materials from the library by mail.

Any participant who reads at least five books will win a prize. Those who were the top three readers in each category will win an Amazon gift card.

If you would like to sign up for Summer Reading today, you may contact our Outreach department at [abls-outreach@ncdcr.gov](mailto:abls-outreach@ncdcr.gov) and you will be added to the program as soon as registration begins. □

# CRAIG'S DESK



## Craig's Desk

SLNC | ACCESSIBLE BOOKS  
& LIBRARY SERVICES

## From Craig's Desk to you...

some content intended for people who are blind or print impaired by Craig Hayward, Systems and Digital Services Librarian (aka The Tech Librarian).

Hi there readers! It's your friendly local technology librarian, Craig Hayward, here to highlight a recent episode of the Craig's Desk podcast that I host monthly.

The purpose of the podcast is to answer your reading and library technology questions in a more direct way.

You ask the questions and I'll look for the answers. It's like a frequently asked questions section for our website made into a program for you to listen to.

On lucky episode number 13 we answered a question from a fellow patron about whether or not you could use a Microsoft Surface Tablet, since it is a portable device, like an iPhone to listen to books and magazines. The answer is in the Your Technology Questions segment of the show. I hope you'll listen to the show to find out the answer to this and other questions.

On that topic, I'd love to hear

from you. Without your questions, comments and feedback, I don't have much of a show. Please send me your questions big or small to (note the new easier to remember email address) [craigskdesk-nc@gmail.com](mailto:craigskdesk-nc@gmail.com).

In addition to answering your questions, I use this show as a way to let you know about some of the great reader resources on the library's website and an inside look at some things that you have asked about coming in NLS's future, like the braille e-reader, the future of BARD and finding Marrakesh books.

If you are a regular podcast listener, Craig's Desk is available on Apple Podcasts, Spotify and our platform called PodBean. To find the show use your favorite podcatching app and search for Craig's Desk, with an apostrophe S. If you don't regularly listen to podcasts it just so happens on our first episode of Craig's Desk we introduced you to

how to listen to Podcasts.

After you listen to that one, I recommend going back for more episodes from our podcast website, provided for us generously by the State Library of North Carolina, at [nccraigskdesk.podbean.com](http://nccraigskdesk.podbean.com). □

# ACCESSIBLE VOTING IN NC



North Carolina visually impaired voters have a number of ways to vote, but most of these methods rely on the voter getting help from a family member, nursing facility staff, or even election workers.

These approaches do not allow for the voter to be able to vote privately and independently. This is of fundamental importance to most voters.

Previously, the exception to this is the in-person use of a special ballot marking device (one example is the AutoMARK machine). There are

a number of issues with these machines, chief among them the need to get to the polling place to vote in person.

As of the 2020 election, North Carolina visually impaired voters have the ability to request and vote an absentee ballot online independently and privately without the need to get to the polls in person. This article aims to assist in the publicizing of the online accessible absentee ballot option and gives guidance on learning how to take advantage of this capability.

A very good overview of the process for voting using the accessible ballot: is [slnc](#).

[info/ABLS-VOTE](#). The “How It Works” section will walk you through the process of requesting, accessing, marking, and returning the accessible absentee ballot.

Note that the web pages and forms are all compatible with screen readers and allow for entering signatures digitally. Note also that (as for anyone voting absentee) you must have two witnesses that sign (or type) attesting that they have witnessed you marking your ballot and verify your identity. They are not to observe how you vote.

You can practice locating, marking, and returning a demo ballot at any time through the N.C. Absentee Demo Ballot Portal at [slnc.info/3vDskgr](#).

Much more information about the voting options for voters with disabilities, including help for those in care facilities, curbside voting, requesting ballots in alterna-

tive formats like large print, etc. can be found at [slnc.info/3EIp7k2](#).

If you are blind or visually impaired and need assistance with any aspect of voting, please first contact your county board of elections. If you are not familiar with your county’s board of election, you may find them using [vt.ncsbe.gov/BOEInfo](#).

You may also contact the ADA Coordinator, at:

**Email:**  
[ADACoordinator@ncsbe.gov](mailto:ADACoordinator@ncsbe.gov)

**Phone:**  
(919) 805-1302

**Address:**  
6400 Mail Service Center,  
Raleigh, NC 27699-6400 □



## **NEW** TIPS FOR BETTER SERVICE

- You may return material now. We are checking in and checking out material.
- If you receive cartridges, please return the cartridges one at a time.
- If you leave a phone message, please spell your last name, state the city you live in, and leave us a phone number to respond to your call if necessary. Also, due to possible phone connection problems it always helps to repeat the phone number if possible.
- If you are calling for someone else, please leave their name and city, so we can pull up their record in our computers and would have another contact number if we can't reach you.
- In order to avoid a delay in your service, notify us immediately of any change of address.
- If you email the library, please include your name, phone number, and mailing address in the email.

# **LIBRARY CLOSING DATES**

**Memorial Day**..... Monday, May 30, 2022

**Independence Day** ..... Monday, July 4, 2022

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## **DOWNLOAD SOMETHING NOBLE**

One of the many services we offer our patrons is access to our version of BARD we call NOBLE (North Carolina BARD Local). NOBLE features digital braille books and digital talking books and magazines which are published in North Carolina and produced by our library. While there is no patron application necessary to use NOBLE, all media downloaded from NOBLE can only be played on a digital book player approved by the National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled. You may visit NOBLE to see if there is anything you would like to download by going to [slnc.info/ABLS-NOBLE](http://slnc.info/ABLS-NOBLE).



**medicare**

## **MEDICARE INFORMATION IN ACCESSIBLE FORMATS**

Medicare provides free auxiliary aids and services, including information in accessible formats like braille, large print, data or audio files, relay services and TTY communications. If you request information in an accessible format, you won't be disadvantaged by any additional time necessary to provide it. This means you'll get extra time to take any action if there's a delay in fulfilling your request.

To request Medicare or Marketplace information in an accessible format you can:

**1. Call us**

- For Medicare: **1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227)**
- TTY: **1-877-486-2048**

**2. Send us a fax: 1-844-530-3676**

**3. Send us a letter:**

**Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services  
Offices of Hearings and Inquiries (OHI)  
7500 Security Boulevard, Mail Stop S1-13-25  
Baltimore, MD 21244-1850  
Attn: Customer Accessibility Resource Staff**

- **Your request should include your name, phone number, type of information you need (if known), and the mailing address where we should send the materials. We may contact you for additional information.**
- **Note: If you're enrolled in a Medicare Advantage Plan or Medicare drug plan, contact your plan to request its information in an accessible format.**
- **For Medicaid, contact your State Medicaid office.**