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STAFF FEATURE

Welcome to our team!

ABLS Welcomes Tawanda Walters

Tawanda Walters, ABLS's new Library Support Assistant, helps the library do something new: she focuses on helping patrons who use library technology. This enables patrons to more effectively use reading devices and downloading services, such as our digital talking book players, BARD, and NOBLE download services.

In addition to supporting patrons with library technology, Tawanda has also been working on documentation explaining how to use that technology. Now that you



Tawanda Walters

know about this new position, let's take some time to learn a little bit about Tawanda!

Q: What led you to decide to work with ABLS?

A: I have to be honest; this has always been a dream job for me. I love helping others and giving back to the V.I. community.

Q: Where did you work previously?

A: My last place of employment was at Pharmaceutical Strategies as a Customer Service Representative.

Q: What have been some of the highlights of your position here so far?

A: One of my highlights of this position so far is learning the KLAS database and all it entails. Another one of my highlights is talking with the different staff members and having a better understanding of how a library is operated and that each department within the library plays a vital role. Another one of my highlights for this position is learning new technical skills that will enable me to assist patrons with technical issues.

Q: Have you found anything about this position particularly challenging?

A: The one thing I find a little challenging is learning the ins and outs of the KLAS system.

Q: Do you have anything in particular you would like to accomplish in this position?

A: The one thing I would like to accomplish while being in this position is to be able to give the patrons one hundred percent in customer service and technical help.

Q: Who are some of your favorite authors?

A: Some of my favorite authors are James Patterson, Tom Clancy, Brad Taylor, and Danielle Steele.

Q: What is an interesting hobby or hidden talent of yours you would like to share?

A: One of my hidden hobbies that I would like to share with everyone is that I like to box.
□



COLLECTIONS COMMUNIQUE

A Quarterly Collections Update

- **The National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled (NLS) has launched a Braille-on-Demand project.** This project allows active patrons to request and receive up to one hard-copy braille title per month to permanently keep for personal use. This is particularly useful for titles you will re-read many times, like a cookbook or your child's favorite bedtime story.

These copies will arrive in soft-cover format. NLS must have an electronic

version of a title to emboss it, so requested titles will be limited to braille books that are currently available on BARD. The request form is located at: surveymonkey.com/r/NLSbrailleondemand. To submit a request, you will need your SLNC ABLS patron ID number, the book title, and the book number.

- We have made the following noteworthy additions to our subject preference list: Asian American/Pacific Islander Interest, In-

ternet Technology, Psychological Fiction, Gender Non-Binary Interest, and Pop Music. We have also added specific language interest preferences for Arabic, Greek, Mandarin Chinese, Polish, Russian, and Vietnamese. Please contact the library to add or exclude any of these preferences on your account.

- An update to last issue's announcement regarding NLS's decision to incorporate retail book descriptions for new titles being added to the collection: These retail book descriptions have replaced the Library of Congress annotations for most new titles added to the collection. These new annotations are longer and more detailed than the old-style annotations. They are visi-

ble on BARD and in our on-line catalog.

- NLS has permanently ceased production of the large-print format Talking Book Topics (TBT) due to ongoing paper and supply shortages. TBT remains available online and in audio format, distributed via cartridge. Please contact the library for assistance in signing up for these alternative formats.
- If you are interested in receiving a 20-cell Braille e-reader device as part of your Braille reading service with us, please contact a reader advisor here at the library to add your name to our waiting list. If you have already submitted your name, no need to do so again. □



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.

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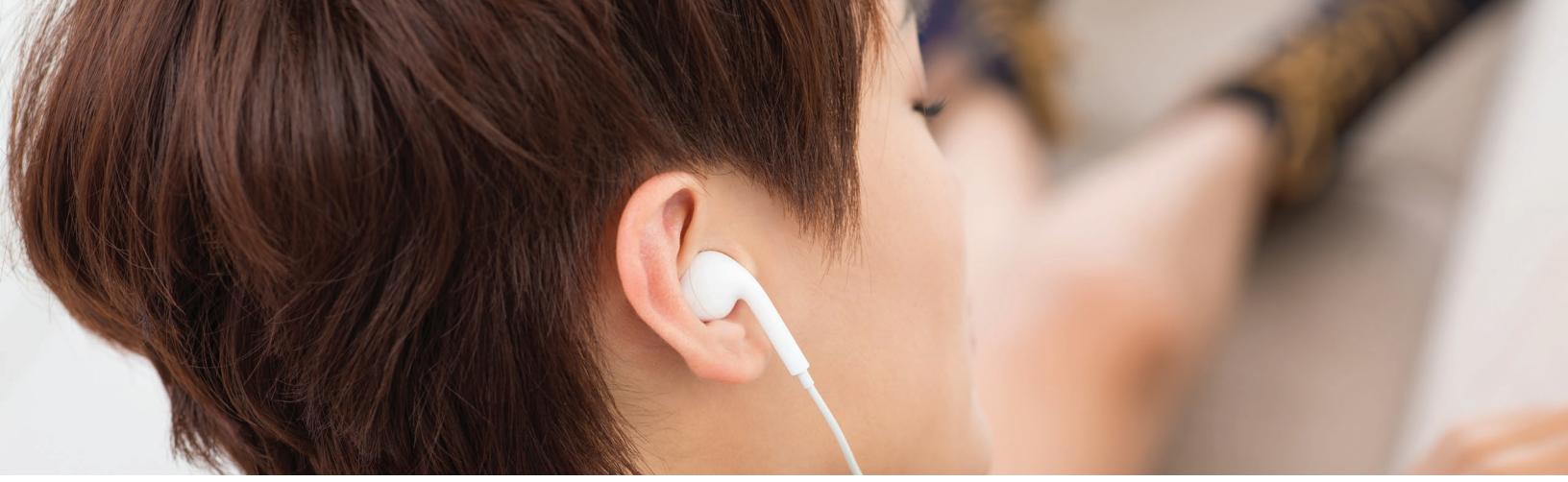
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LISTEN TO OUR 2020-2021 WRITING CONTEST WINNERS

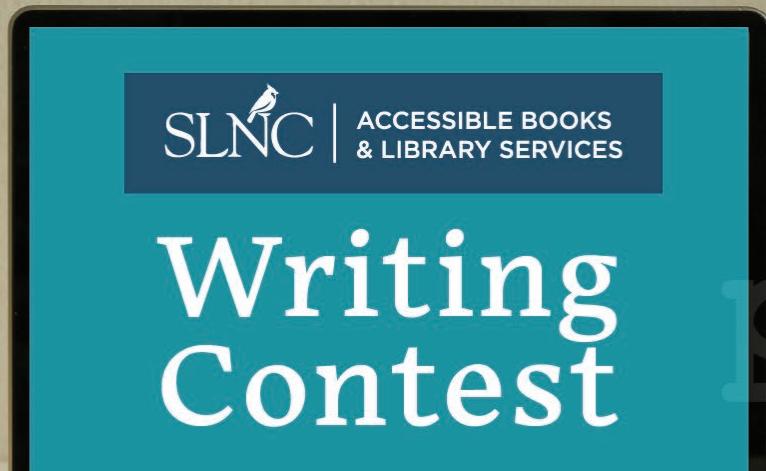


The writing contest winning stories are now available to order or download from the library.

If you would like to order a copy from the library, contact us by phone, chat, or e-mail, and request "SLNC ABLS Writing Contest Winners 2020-2021", or "DBC06123." You can also download it from BARD using the same criteria. Additionally, you can find it on NOBLE.

In addition to being available to our patrons, the stories are also accessible to the public! If you are not a patron of our library and would like to listen to the stories, please visit slnc.info/20-21wcw.

2022-2023 WRITING CONTEST



It's that time of year again!

We are accepting entries for our third writing contest from September 15, 2022, through December 15, 2022.

Contestant entries may include the following: short stories, novel excerpts, poems, songs, fiction/nonfiction, autobiographies/biographies, or something entirely different—be creative!

All submissions will be judged on the following criteria: Clarity, Spelling, Grammar, and Creativity.

Each contestants' entry has the potential to be added to our collection. If your entry is selected, we will notify you be-

fore it is published. The entry will be subject to proofreading before it is added.

The contest will be divided into four age groups:

- 8 and younger
- 9-12
- 13-17
- 18 and older

Your entry will automatically be entered into your age group at the time of submission.

Writing Contest Rules:

- Contestants must be a patron of Accessible Books and Library Services.
- Your entry must be an original work.
- Please do not use previously published materials.
- Only one entry per contestant is allowed.
- There is a 5,000-word count limit for all submissions.
- All mail-in entries must be typewritten, at least 14-point font, double-spaced with numbered pages, and must include a cover page with title and author's name.
- If your entry is in Braille, an additional Word file is required.
- If your entry is in an au-

dio format, please include a transcript as a word file.

- If your entry contains images, please include the alt text.
- If your submission is in a different language, an English translation is required.

Acceptable Submission Formats:

All writing contest submissions must be in one of the following formats: Word File, Audio File, Braille File, Mail-In Type-written.

Prizes:

The following prizes will be available to each age group:

1st Place - Contestant will receive a certificate and the first-place prize. Submission will be added to the library's collection and

made available for download.

2nd Place - Contestant will receive a certificate and the second-place prize. Submission will be added to the library's collection and made available for download.

3rd Place - Contestant will receive a certificate and the third-place prize. Submission will be added to the library's collection and made available for download.

Honorable Mentions - Contestant will receive a certificate. Submission will be added to the library's collection and made available for download.

All other contestants will receive a certificate for their entry.

Visit the ABLS Writing Contest Page:

slnc.info/WC22

Submit your entry:

slnc.info/WC22submit

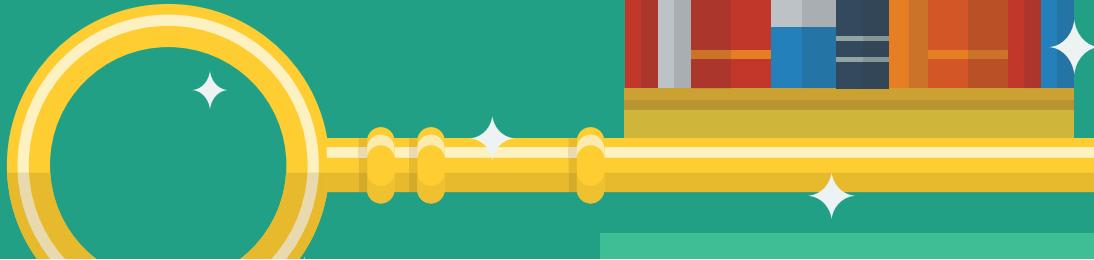
Access Resources for writing:

slnc.info/WC22-resources



**Let's
Write!**

THE MANY FACES OF BARD



Beginning August 11, 2022, we will offer our patrons a monthly program called, The Many Faces of BARD.

The program is offered every second Thursday at 7:00 p.m. (Eastern Standard Time). Each program will cover one aspect of BARD (the Braille and Audio Reading Download) usage.

The program will last one hour and begin with a brief presentation, followed by a Q&A session covering BARD related topics as well as questions about the pre-

sentation. The next month's topic will be revealed at the end of each program. The first presentation will provide an overview of all of the available BARD products.

These sessions are open to all patrons, everywhere. They can be joined by going to slnc.info/manyfaces on a computer, or calling 1-669-245-5252. Full Zoom invitation information follows: To call into a session, participants must use the telephone number provided above for Zoomgov.com, do not use the regular

Zoom telephone numbers. Upon connecting, participants will be placed in a virtual waiting room until the program begins. When they enter the room, they will be on mute and should remain on mute unless the host calls upon them to speak. At that time, they

may unmute by using Alt-A from a computer or star 6 (*6) by phone.

All Many Faces of BARD programs will be recorded. If participants do not want to be on the recording, they may refrain from speaking. □

“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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CRAIG'S DESK



Craig's Desk



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)

Hello again from Craig's Desk. Here are some highlights from the mostly monthly podcast where I, Craig Hayward the technology librarian, answer your reading and library technology questions and let you know about some happenings and offering at NLS

and the library's website. You ask the questions and I'll look for the answers. A kind of listen and learn program.

On the latest episode, we learned a tip about downloading from BARD with an Apple Macintosh computer. It is a little bit different from a Windows computer. We also talked briefly about the NLS's new quarterly feature, "The Patron Corner," and we learned how to find foreign language books in our online catalog. It was a good show.

On the topic of upcoming episodes, I'd love to hear from you so I can answer those questions and create the best show possible! Without your questions, comments, and feedback, I don't have much of a show. Please send me your questions big or small to [ABLS.
Help@ncdcr.gov](mailto:ABLS.Help@ncdcr.gov).

Beyond your questions, I'll showcase some of the great reader resources on the library's website. We'll take an inside look at some coming events in NLS's future—such as the braille e-reader, the future of BARD, and just how to find more books to read.

If you are a regular podcast listener, Craig's Desk is available on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, Google and our podcast platform, Pod-Bean. 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 that 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 at nccraigsdesk.podbean.com. □



NEW DESCRIPTIVE MOVIE TITLE LIST

For a long time, we have sent incredibly large packets to our patrons containing our entire Descriptive Video Catalog. This included the movie title, the rating, release date, and a brief description of the movie. Moving forward, the Descriptive Video Catalog will omit the brief descriptions of the movies.

The movies will also be listed in alphabetical order instead of the Movie Disc (MD) number. This will make it easier to find the movies you want to order. With far fewer pages, our patrons won't have to do as much flipping and the library can save on some paper!

Movie descriptions will continue to be available on our Online

Public Access Catalog. You can access the catalog by going to ncabls.klas.com. Use the Quick Search to find movie descriptions. You can also search for descriptions on IMDB or Google. Be careful to avoid spoilers! If you are not subscribed to our Descriptive Video Service, membership is a one-time fee of \$20. The loan period for a movie is two weeks. Applications can be requested by emailing ncabls@ncdcr.gov.

The Descriptive Video Service is not available at all talking book libraries. Our Descriptive Video Service is funded entirely by our Friends of the Library.



ABLS PSA

ABLS PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS

If you receive cartridges from us, you may have noticed something playing before your books. This is a public service announcement (PSA). These PSAs have important information about the library, such as seasonal reading programs, virtual programs, or updates about your library service. While this is a great way to reach a good chunk of our patrons, some patrons who are signed up for large print, braille books, or BARD do not receive these updates.

If you are not receiving cartridges from us, you may be missing out on library updates! You can visit our website Blind & Print Disabled to see when a new PSA comes out. You can also opt in to receive our PSAs by e-mail.

To receive PSAs by email, visit: slnc.info/abls-outreach.

Finally, you can always give us a call at 1-888-388-2460 and ask for the latest news from the library!

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

WE ❤ OUR VOLUNTEERS

This time our volunteer spotlight introduces two volunteers! **Kathy Norris** and **Joan Flanagan** are one of our library recording teams.

You can download and listen to many of their projects on NOBLE. In this recording team, Kathy is the narrator and Joan is the monitor. Joan monitors and operates the recording equipment while Kathy narrates the book or magazine. If Kathy makes a mistake in the narration, Joan stops the recording, and they repeat that



Kathy Norris (left) and Joan Flanagan

part.

Each week, Kathy and Joan volunteer their services for two hours. When they come in, they bring a breath of fresh air into the library and are visibly happy to be here!

In addition to their work in

our studio projects, the pair has helped us in other ways too. Before a project is ready to be put on NOBLE, it needs to be thoroughly reviewed. If we fall behind on reviewing, Kathy and Joan are willing to switch their duties that week to review mode.

The two have even helped us with projects outside of the library, such as helping to sign up kids for our summer reading program at the Governor Morehead School for the Blind. They truly are a joy to work with and, like all of our volunteers, are irreplaceable.

Q&A

Q: How long have you been volunteering with the library?

Kathy: I've been a Narrator at the library for four years.

Joan: Four or five years.

Q: Why did you want to volunteer at our library?

Kathy: I have several friends

who are visually impaired and when approached by one of them about becoming a narrator I was impressed with her explanation of what a wonderful service the library is. I love to read so being able to make books and magazines available to those who need an audible version is a gift.

Joan: My sister, who is blind, also volunteers at the library and this gives us an opportunity to volunteer together.

Q: What have been some highlights of your volunteer service here?

Kathy: One highlight was reading a book by a North Carolinian author that required me to develop several different voices and accents to differentiate the various characters. Another was meeting a fellow volunteer who has severe dyslexia and although she isn't blind, reading is very difficult for her. It showed me how the library serves a variety of visually impaired peo-

ple and how helpful it is.

Joan: Meeting the folks who work at the library and meeting the other volunteers. Also, the volunteer luncheon!

Q: Are there any interesting hobbies of yours you'd like to share with our readers?

Kathy: Since moving to the Triangle in 1990 I've performed with several local theaters including N.C. Theatre, NCSU TheatreFEST, and Theatre in the Park, including many years in the cast of their annual production of A Christmas Carol. I also crochet as part of a committee of the Wake Forest Woman's Club for Project Warmth. We make hats and scarves for the homeless and for the clients of our local food

pantry. We make shawls and lap blankets for a local nursing home and baby blankets for new moms in need.

Joan: I love to read. So, recording books for those who are blind is a great opportunity.

Q: What would you say to people who are interested in volunteering for our library?

Kathy: Please do it! So many benefit from the services of the library. Whether you are reading, monitoring, reviewing, or helping with mailings, you are needed!

Joan: Definitely sign up to volunteer! It's a wonderful place to spend some time and meet a wonderful group of people. □



If you're interested in helping out with the library, visit slnc.info/ABLSvolunteer or contact our volunteer coordinator, Adrian Sanders at adrian.sanders@ncdcr.gov.

LIBRARY CLOSING DATES

Veteran's Day Friday, November 11, 2022

Thanksgiving Thursday, November 24, and
Friday, November 25, 2022

DOWNLOAD SOMETHING NOBLE

One of the many services we offer our patrons is access to NOBLE (North Carolina BARD Local). NOBLE features digital, braille, and talking books and magazines 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.



ACCESSIBLE ABSENTEE VOTING

As of the 2020 election, North Carolina visually impaired voters can request an absentee ballot to vote 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.

Visually impaired voters have multiple ways to vote in North Carolina, but many of these methods rely on the voter receiving outside help from a caregiver, as-

sisted living staff member, or a poll worker. These options do not always allow the voter the privacy and independence to which they are entitled. All polling places have a special ballot marking device (for example, the AutoMARK), but accessing these requires transportation.

As of the 2020 election, visually impaired voters can request and submit an absentee ballot online, eliminating the need to get to the polls. An overview of the accessible voting process

can be found at: <https://www.ncsbe.gov/voting/help-voters-disabilities/accessible-absentee-voting>.

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 sign, (or type) attesting that they verify your identity and witnessed you marking your ballot. They do not 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 North Carolina Absentee

Ballot Portal.

More information about the voting options for voters with disabilities, including help for those in care facilities, curbside voting, requesting ballots in alternative formats like large print, etc. can be found at Help for Voters with Disabilities.

If you are blind or visually impaired and need assistance with any aspect of voting, first contact your county board of elections. If you are not familiar with your county’s board of election, you may find them using County BOE Information.

You may also contact the ADA Coordinator, at ADACoordinator@ncsbe.gov, (919) 805-1302, 6400 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-6400. □

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'll be given extra time should there be 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.

MOREHEAD PLAYGROUND



New Playground for Governor Morehead School for the Blind

A team of architecture students from North Carolina State University, known as **Freedom by Design**, is working on a project to enhance the recreational experience of students at the Governor Morehead School for the Blind (GMS).

Freedom by Design is designing and constructing a new playground for the campus. GMS is North Carolina's resi-

dential flagship school for children who are blind or visually impaired.

According to GMS, the play equipment was outdated, the drainage was problematic, and students often lost their canes in the mulch while setting them down to play. Additionally, the students showed a strong preference for the slide, monkey bars, and swings while the rest of the equipment was rarely used.

The playground will be redesigned into a play and learning zone. The new play equipment will be up to current standards of care, offer better drainage, and dedicated areas for older and younger students. To learn more about the current status of the project and the team behind it, visit design.ncsu.edu. □