

TAR HEEL TALK

2023 Writing Contest

FEATURES

Staff Feature	2
Collections Communique	9
Writing Contest	11
Friends Corner	13

STAFF FEATURE

Meet ABLS Director Catherine Rubin

After the retirement of our previous director, Carl Keehn, our library has a new director. Catherine Rubin came to our library as its Assistant Regional Librarian back in 2008. In the Assistant Regional Librarian role, her job was to be the head of the public services of the library. This includes the reader advisory service we offer as well as the management of patron account joining, leaving, or transferring out of our library.

As ABLS's Assistant Regional Librarian, the library programs Catherine organized have been quite memorable. Catherine has managed the Summer Reading program for adults, has organized many in-person programs



ABLS Director Catherine Rubin

in Raleigh partnering with various organizations and high profile citizens, worked with the Betty Ford Branch Library to host our first program in Charlotte, and during the pandemic she brought virtual programming to our library, reaching a statewide audience!

In addition to these programs, Catherine would also oversee the public service aspect of the library. Our library has five reader advisors on staff who assist our patrons with selecting titles

from our library over the phone, email, chat, or by handwritten notes. As the Assistant Regional Librarian, Catherine was in charge of the reader advisors and also spent time during the day assisting patrons with their queries.

As the new Director of ABLIS, Catherine will oversee each department and all aspects of the library. She will also be responsible for leading the library to new directions and guiding staff through any obstacles. ABLIS is in good hands. Take a moment to learn more about Catherine:

Q: How did you know you wanted to work in the library field?

A: I always liked hanging out in libraries from the time I was in elementary school, and when I went to college I enjoyed working in the library and gathering information for research pa-

pers. Also, during college I did an internship at the Maryland Historical Society that involved doing research in the library there, which piqued my interest in libraries. After college, I landed a temporary library clerk job at NC Central University that turned into a permanent one. I was hooked on library work after that, particularly when I worked in the reference department and helped students find information. I then got my master's degree, and I've worked in libraries ever since.

Q: How did you decide to start working within the National Library Service's network?

A: My husband Robert and I moved to the Maryland area when he took a position not far from Baltimore, and I was intrigued by the job posting for the then Maryland State Library

for the Blind & Physically Handicapped (now the Maryland State Library for the Blind & Print Disabled), which is also a part of the National Library Service, in downtown Baltimore. I was there for 8 years and had a variety of roles as a librarian during that time. I did public service work and outreach, worked with assistive technology, organized adult patron programs, and supervised the Circulation area.

Q: What led you to North Carolina?

A: Right after college I was interested in finding a library job, and the Triangle was a good place to look, with so many different types of libraries. I first worked at NC Central University (NCCU) as a library clerk and then attended library school at UNC-Chapel Hill. After that, I worked as a librarian at Campbell University and the NC De-

partment of Labor Library, and then I lived and worked in Maryland. My husband and I really missed North Carolina though, so when the position for Assistant Director of ABLS came open it seemed like a perfect fit to be in North Carolina and to continue my work in the National Library Service network.

Q: What have been some noticeable differences you have experienced working with two libraries in the NLS network?

A: When I worked in Maryland, we were still using analog cassette tapes—although I was there at a very interesting time, because, with Maryland's proximity to the DC area, NLS tapped Maryland to test some prototypes of the digital technologies to come. So I was there as they started planning for digital. At that point, they tested mock-

ups of the digital players at the Maryland library with library patrons in various age ranges and technology skill levels to find out how they could best use the players and technology.

Q: Has there been a difference in the patrons or libraries' operations?

A: Maryland's library had a different structure, which may have changed since then. It had a Children's Librarian position that provides children's programming and outreach. There was no separate department to enter or update records like there is in North Carolina. There was one staff member at the time who entered applications. Librarians and support staff would man the public service desk and answer phone calls, and they would update records.

Maryland also has a studio and volunteer program. During my

time in Maryland we held a lot of programs for adult patrons, and I was fortunate to be there as those programs expanded. Library patrons participated in poetry and writing programs with Poet Laureates of Maryland. We had music and travel programs featuring patrons. There were tactile and descriptive tours at places like the Walters Art Museum and the Everyman Theatre. Actors from the Everyman Theatre actually performed excerpts of their plays at the library, which was a big hit.

At that time in Maryland, patrons' books tended to be selected more by the computer than having staff select them. In North Carolina, there are more staff to assist patrons with book selection.

As for patrons, in each place there are a lot of different patrons with a lot of different pref-

erences. Patrons in Maryland liked popular Maryland authors like Nora Roberts. In North Carolina, religious inspiration is one of the most popular categories, but I don't think that it was as popular in Maryland.

Q: What have been some challenges you've overcome in your new position?

A: We hosted the NC Eastern Braille Challenge in February, right after I took my new position. This event involves testing braille skills for students from 1st to 12th grades. State Librarian Michelle Underhill arranged for the event to be held at the Archives and History/State Library Building.

In addition to the testing component, we provided activities for students, informational programs for their parents, and prizes as well. Because it was such a multifaceted pro-

gram, it was a real team effort. Staff from the State Library (SLNC), Department of Cultural Resources, the Department of Public Instruction, teachers for the visually impaired, numerous speakers, and a lot of other volunteers helped make it happen. Kim Hudson and Jolie Lindley from Eye Shine Foundation, the previous hosts, and staff from the Braille Institute, the national hosts, helped us enormously. Those who attended had a good time, and one of the students, Reese Blum, went on to compete on the national level with Braille Institute in California, so it was a success. Staff from SLNC ABLIS, the SLNC Government & Heritage Library, the Museum of Natural Sciences, and volunteers spent many hours planning and helping out at the event.

Q: What are some library moments you are excited

about as the new director?

A: The Braille Challenge has certainly been a high point, since it was a very different undertaking and a success. We plan to host it again in 2024.

Q: If you had to choose a book from our collection to read for the rest of your life, which book would that be? What about a movie from our collection?

A: Those are really tough questions. A book I read recently that I liked very much and want to read again was *A Gentleman in Moscow* by Amor Towles. *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Bronte is one of my all-time favorite classics.

For movies in the library's collection I'd say "And Then There Were None," because I like Agatha Christie mysteries.

"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.

Address ... 1841 Capital Blvd
Raleigh, NC 27635
Voice (984) 236-1100
Fax (984) 236-1199
Toll Free .. 1-888-388-2460
Email ncabls@dncr.nc.gov

Governor Roy Cooper
Secretary Reid Wilson
State Librarian..... Michelle Underhill
Regional Librarian Catherine Rubin
Editor Clint Exum

**Web Page: <http://statelibrary.ncdcr.gov/blind-print-disabled>
Internet Catalog, Ordering Site: ncabls.klas.com**



New USPS Policies for Package Pickup

The United States Postal Service (USPS) has instituted new optional policies for pickup of packages such as braille and digital books due to staff shortages, turnover, and seasonal workers.

USPS requests that patrons who may need this service use the online form at slnc.info/USPS-ABLS to schedule pickup of library materials. Patrons who do not have computer or internet access may call USPS at 800-275-8777 or reach out to us for assistance.

We would like to emphasize this action is optional, and not all patrons will be required to sched-

ule their library materials to be picked up. If your library materials have always been picked up by the USPS no action may be required on your part. However, if you have had carriers who have not picked up your library materials, this policy can be a remedy.



COLLECTIONS COMMUNIQUE

A Quarterly Collections Update

- **NLS has renamed its Foreign Language Quarterly publication to *International Language Quarterly*. From NLS’s website: “International Language Quarterly (ILQ) lists popular international language books recently added to the NLS collection and available through a network of cooperating libraries. Many come to us from other countries via the Marrakesh Treaty (DBGs), but you will also find books produced by NLS (DBs) and converted from cassette tapes (DBFs). All books listed in International Language Quarterly are available for immediate download from NLS BARD, the Braille and Audio Reading Download.” ILQ can be accessed directly from the NLS website. Go to the Braille and Audio Reading Materials tab and select Latest Books in Braille and Audio.**
- **Did you know that NLS has materials relating to music? From the NLS website: “The NLS music collection, authorized by Congress in 1962, includes braille and large-print musical scores, recorded instructional materials, and recorded materials about**

music and musicians. All materials are circulated postage free, and some digital audio and ebraille materials are available for download over the Internet. To receive music materials from NLS, eligible patrons may contact the NLS Music Section via email at nlsm@loc.gov , phone at 800-424-8567 ext. 2, fax at 202-707-0712, or postal mail at: Music Section, The National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled, Library of Congress, Washington, DC 20542.

- If you are a BARD user and no longer need your digital talking book player, we have a Digital Talking Book Machine recycling program. We will take your no-longer needed player, recondition it, and send it out to another patron in need. You can send it back in the box it came in. Please include a note in the box stating that the player is no longer needed. Please also make sure to take out the mailing card on the top of the box, flip the card over, and reinsert it so that our name and address is visible, rather than yours. If you don't have the box that your player came in, please call us at 1-888-388-2460, and we can send you an empty box. Once your player is boxed up, simply hand the box to your mail carrier or take it to your local post office. No postage is required for sending your player back to us.

2023 WRITING CONTEST



Fall is just around the corner, and you know what that means! It's time for the library's **Annual Writing Contest!**

We encourage our patrons to send in the best original stories for a chance to have them made available on BARD. Patrons can send in short stories, novel excerpts, poems, songs, fiction/nonfiction, auto/biographies, or something entirely different; be creative!

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

Each contestants' entry has the

potential to be added to our collection. If we select your entry to be added to the collection, we will notify you before it is published. Before a contestant's submission is added to the library's collection, it will be subject to proofreading.

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

Contest Rules

- Contestants must be a patron of ABLIS.
- Your entry must be an original work.
- Previously published materials will not be allowed.
- Only one entry per contestant will be 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 include a cover page with a title and the author's name.
- If your entry is in Braille, an additional translated word file will be required.
- If your entry is in an audio format, please include a transcript as a word file.
- If your entry contains images, please include alt text.
- If your submission is in a different language, an English translation will be required.
- The contest will be divided into four separate age groups: ages 8 and younger, ages 9 to 12, ages 13 to 17, and 18 and older. Each submission will automatically be entered to age group of the patron. Each group has the potential to win either the top three places or an honorable mention! Everyone who competes will win a certificate!
- The contest will begin September 15th and will conclude on December 31st. If you are interested in participating, visit slnc.info/WC23 for information about how to turn in your stories. We hope to hear from you!

FRIENDS CORNER



Dear Friends,

Let me begin by expressing my appreciation to all of you who recently voted in the election of the Friends board for 2023-2024 term, and for electing me as your President. I am very honored to be serving in this role. I look forward to serving with the board and also working with the Library to support and assist with our mission that everyone can read. Working alongside of me are two new board members that I would like to introduce to you:

Susanna Dean is beginning her first term with us and says “books take her to her ‘happy’ place”. Prior to developing diabetic retinopathy and ocular hypertension, she founded and directed Adept Nonprofit Ser-

vices, Inc. – a Supported Employment Agency. She is anxious to bring her talents to the Board, and we look forward to her service. She lives in the Mecklenburg county area.

Ryan Trask is also joining the Board, and comes to us with a strong background in service for others. He worked for several years with the Walt Disney Co. as well as with Disney International on the cruise line. He also worked as a camp counselor at Camp Dogwood and had the pleasure of working for Susan King and meeting many folks across the state. For the last 3 years he has worked for the YMCA in Winston Salem, Charlotte and now in Raleigh. We look forward to his service

as well on this Board.

We also have several Board members renewing their terms for another two years. Those members are: **Mary Flanagan** as Treasurer, and serving At-Large are **Brice Smith, Verdina Gillette-Simms, Patricia Tessnear, and Jim Turner.** We are very excited to have the new and returning Board members on our team and looking forward to another successful year.

As you know, we have been accepting applications for our Braille Literacy Grant program until May 1, 2023. The committee is finalizing their selection, and we will announce the winners in the next issue of the Tar Heel Talk. We appreciate the committee's work and thanks to those who have applied for the grants.

As I was writing this article, I re-

ceived an email indicating that July 30, 2023 is International Friendship Day. I realize you will be reading this article after that date, but it is never too late to appreciate and value all of our friendships. According to the United Nations website, "International Friendship Day was proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly in 2011 with the idea that friendship between peoples, countries, cultures and individuals can inspire peace efforts and build bridges between communities." So, take the time today to remember your friends, past and present. Our friends are part of our everyday story, and without them, we would not be who we are today. Hug a friend today! We, the Friends of the NC Accessible Books and Library Services, thank you for being our Friend, and wish you a happy

(though a little belated!) International Friendship Day!

If you have checked out our web page lately, you will notice that many of the pages have our old name. We are in the process of updating the name as well as updating the content and making the website more visually appealing to both visually impaired and sighted visitors. Stay tuned!

Even though our website is going through a significant change, the material that is on the old website is still very useful. For example, you can find out more about the **James Benton Braille Writer Program**, how to join the **DVD Audio Description Service**, and how to donate or how to become a member of the Friends of the NC Accessible Books and Library Services. If you are

not a Friends member, or if you would like to renew your membership, you can join us with an Individual membership of \$10 annually. There are other levels of membership that you could also consider. Your membership provides needed funding for both Friends programs and services as well as funding to enhance and assist the Library with their programs and services. If you have any questions or comments about our programs or services, please send me an email at info@fnca-bls.org.

Until next time, keep reading and have a terrific summer!

Eddie Weaver, President

FRIENDS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

PRESIDENT

Eddie Weaver
(910) 619-4084

SECRETARY

Debbie Meadows
(919) 219-2677

TREASURER

Mary Flanagan
(919) 602-1334

PAST PRESIDENT

Susan King
(828) 238-6195

MEMBERS AT LARGE

Heather Brown
(919) 389-7671

Susanna Dean
(919) 656-1157

Verdina Gillette-Simms
(919) 414-5316

Yvonne Kea
(910) 283-3981

Donna Permar
(919) 452-6920

Jeremiah Rogers
(704) 996-5334

Brice Smith
(919) 637-1028

Patricia Tessnear
(252) 291-3405

Ryan Trask
(518) 322-3292

NON-VOTING

Catherine Rubin
ABLS Director
(984) 236-1100



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.



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! The loan period for a movie is two weeks. Applications can be requested by emailing ncabls@dncr.nc.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.



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.**