“Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.”
—Helen Keller

In the blink of an eye

Losing your sight should never mean losing your vision or zest for life. Rather, it can mean finding new ways to experience life to its fullest.

Erskine Brantley received a degree in communications and spent more than 15 years working in telecommunication sales. Brantley also spent eight years as a prison counselor mentoring and serving as a positive influence for incarcerated men.

When glaucoma left him legally blind, he sought counseling for himself to address new challenges he faced. After losing his sight, Brantley found Alabama’s Business Enterprise Program (BEP), which gave him the training needed for self-employment opportunities in vending and the foodservice industry.

As a program of the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services, BEP provides qualified blind individuals with job training and employment opportunities that provide independence through self-employment. Currently, the Alabama BEP operates more than 100 small businesses employing more than 470 Alabamians in a diverse range of retail businesses including snack bars, delicatessens, vending machine facilities, commissaries, cafeterias, and the foodservice industry.

Erskine Brantley is self-employed through Alabama’s Business Enterprise Program, continued on page 6

See BEP, continued on page 6

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APLS welcomes second assistant director

Jessica Everingham was hired in October as the Alabama Public Library Service’s (APLS) assistant director to manage the agency’s day-to-day operations. She arrives at APLS with 16 years of relevant library experience across a variety of settings. Everingham joins the agency after most recently serving as the library director for the West Georgia Regional Library System. She previously served as Okefenokee Regional Library System’s director and as the director of library services at Altamaha Technical College in Jesup, Ga. In addition, Everingham has more than three years of state library experience serving as an assistant state librarian for the Georgia Public Library Service. Among Everingham’s first projects at APLS is developing a coordinated continuing education training program for Alabama’s public libraries, including training for new public library directors, grant writing training, library collection development, and collection weeding. She joins the APLS Administrative Team which includes Director Nancy Pack and Assistant Director Kelyn Ralya.

BPH wraps second season of veteran’s reading program

Montgomery-area veterans recently completed an eight-session reading program funded by the Alabama Humanities Foundation (AHF). The program attracted 15 veterans and family members to participate in reading, discussion, and fellowship over four months. Offered in partnership with the Alabama Public Library Service (APLS), BPH staff hosted the program for a second year. Dr. Ben Severance, History Department Chair at Auburn University at Montgomery (AUM), served as program facilitator.

“This has been a welcomed opportunity to meet other veterans, to read about the history many of us helped to make, and to share our thoughts on military leaders and their accomplishments,” said Harold Wilson, U.S. veteran and program participant. Wilson served nine years in the U.S. Army and completed two tours in Vietnam as a helicopter pilot.

Additional community partners included Auburn University at Montgomery Center for Disability Services, BPH Consumer Advisory Committee, and the Central Alabama Veterans Health Care System.
Each quarter, BPH Reader Advisors Mike Coleman and Tim Emmons, share NLS annotations from titles they think may be of interest to our readers. As you prepare for sharing a month of love stories in February, inserted below is a list of titles you might enjoy:

**DB42187**  
**Narrated by Jill Fox**  
**Rice, Patricia; Lange, Emma; Kingsley, Katherine**  
**F 9 hours and 59 minutes**  
**A Regency Valentine: Five Stories**  
Mary Balogh’s Golden Rose features a masked Valentine’s Day ball at Bath. Gentlemen are to send anonymous valentines to the ladies they want to meet at the dance. Katherine Kingsley, Emma Lange, Patricia Rice, and Joan Wolf contribute four other regency valentine romance novellas. 1991.

**DB96376**  
**Narrated by Victor Slezak**  
**Brown, Sandra**  
**F 14 hours and 1 minute**  
**Outfox**  
FBI agent Drex Easton is determined to capture con man Weston Graham. Over the years Weston has assumed many names and countless disguises to lure eight wealthy women out of their fortunes before they disappeared without a trace. Drex believes he finally has the suspect in sight. Unrated. Commercial audiobook. Bestseller. 2019.

**DB96664**  
**Narrated by MacKenzie Beyer**  
**Bennett, Jenn**  
**F 11 hours and 17 minutes**  
**Serious Moonlight**  
Eighteen-year-old mystery-loving Birdie’s new job at a historic Seattle hotel leads her and her coworker, Daniel, to a real mystery about a reclusive writer who resides there. Some strong language and some descriptions of sex. For senior high and older readers. 2019.

**DB96860**  
**Narrated by Susan Bennett**  
**Michaels, Fern**  
**F 8 hours and 5 minutes**  
**Spirit of the Season**  
Joy Preston is shocked when her beloved grandmother leaves her a bed-and-breakfast in North Carolina. She finds the place has undeniable charms, especially during the holidays when the inn is rumored to be able to reunite guests with the spirits of their departed loved ones. Unrated. Commercial audiobook. 2019.

**DB96967**  
**Narrated by Jeff Allin**  
**Jenkins, Beverly**  
**F 10 hours and 8 minutes**  
**Captured**  
Notorious privateer Dominic LeVeq captured a British frigate while on a dangerous mission against the Crown. Dominic should be thinking only of his ship’s safety, but the rebel captain is utterly entranced by Clare Sullivan, the beautiful slave on board the captured ship. Some explicit descriptions of sex. 2009.

**DB96907**  
**Narrated by Julia Whelan**  
**Moyes, Jojo**  
**F 13 hours and 54 minutes**  
**The Giver of Stars**  
1937. Alice Van Cleve is still trying to adjust to married life and living in Kentucky after being raised in England. When offered the chance to join a group of women to deliver Eleanor Roosevelt’s new traveling library, she jumps at it. But they face dangers. Unrated. Commercial audiobook. 2019.

If you are interested in receiving the titles listed above and need assistance, please call BPH at 334-213-3906 or toll-free at 1-800-392-5671.
The 2020 census is counting on us

It’s never too early to start thinking about the 2020 census. April 1 is Census Day. Census results play a large part in determining how government entities allocate hundreds of billions of dollars for services that communities depend on. Because certain groups of people historically have been undercounted in previous census counts, we want to make sure that the people NLS and its network libraries serve—people who are blind, visually impaired, or have a disability that makes reading print difficult—are aware of the 2020 census and participate to ensure they are counted.

We ask that you keep a few dates in mind as we prepare for the census. On March 12, the U.S. Census Bureau will mail households an invitation to respond to the census. For the first time, households will have three ways to respond: online, by calling a toll-free number, or by mail. In mid-April, census workers will begin visiting homes that haven’t responded to collect information in person. As required by the Constitution, the census has been conducted every ten years since 1790. The Census Bureau estimates the current U.S. population (as of Oct. 30) to be 329,910,106. For specific questions about the 2020 census, contact BPH at 334-213-3906.

NLS adopts new name, logo

NLS officially changed its name to the National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled on Oct. 1.

“Both NLS and the Library of Congress sought input from stakeholder groups and gathered data regarding this change,” said NLS Director Karen Keninger. “We also heard from members of the public through emails, in-person interactions at events and channels such as Facebook. In keeping with the strategic plan of the Library of Congress, and our alignment to its goals, our new name is patron-centric. As with all of our work, it puts the emphasis on the people we serve. It picks up on the language used in the Marrakesh Treaty which refers to ‘persons who are blind, visually impaired, or otherwise print disabled.’ And it removes a word—‘handicapped’—that has become dated and that some find offensive.”

Network libraries, such as the Alabama Regional Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, will review potential name changes in 2020.
NLS launches pilot for expanded services

NLS is launching pilot projects in Texas and Pennsylvania to explore the impact of easing access for people with reading disabilities. Under current regulations, people with dyslexia and other reading disabilities may enroll in the NLS program—but only if a medical doctor certifies that their disability is the result of “organic dysfunction.”

The Texas Talking Book Program (TTBP) was chosen for the pilot because Texas recently enacted a law that requires schools to refer students with reading disabilities to the TTBP. Texas’ participation in the pilot will help NLS understand how active engagement by the education community could impact program enrollment.

Other pilot participants are two network libraries in Pennsylvania: the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh and the Free Library of Philadelphia. The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania – which ranks fifth in population – does not have a law like the one in Texas. NLS will compare and contrast the two states’ experiences in the pilot to determine if a national rollout of service expansion is feasible.

Pilot participants will be instructed on how to download books on a smart device using the BARD Mobile app. They will not be provided with a digital talking-book machine unless they request a hardship waiver. The pilot began in Texas and Pennsylvania on Oct. 1 and will continue through September 2020.
Donors to BPH

Donations made to BPH go a long way in providing promotional materials about library services, as well as new products for library patrons. Staff use the promotional products to share as take-away items at various outreach events. Thanks to the following who donated in 2019 from June 16 to Dec. 16:

- Joan F. Baccus in memory of Laura B. George
- James and Joan Foil
- Phillip and Elizabeth Forrester in memory of Anna Terry McCutchen
- William B. Gilbert
- Joan N. Herren
- Rhoda Herzog
- Connie Hinkle in memory of Anna McCutchen
- Infomedia.com in memory of Anna McCutchen
- Phyllis H. Neff
- Sojourners’ Literary Club in loving memory of Mrs. Clement Clay (Gene) Torbert
- Carol O. Sommers
- Donald and Nancy Stroup in memory of Anna McCutchen
- Mike and Laura Taylor
- Karen Winn and Judy Placek in memory of Anna McCutchen

For information about how BPH uses donations, please contact the BPH regional librarian at 334-213-3906.

BPH Holiday Closing Dates

The Alabama Regional Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped is opened Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. until 5 p.m. and closed on weekends. Our holidays through July 2020 are as follows:

Jan. 20 – Martin Luther King Jr. Day
Feb. 17 – President’s Day
April 27 – Confederate Memorial Day
May 25 – Memorial Day
June 1 – Jefferson Davis’ Birthday
July 3 – Independence Day (observed)
Return your extra digital players

All network libraries have been asked to recover digital book machines from patrons who may have more than one checked out in their names. With more than 400 patron records falling under this category, BPH has decided to use the newsletter to notify you about this push to recover these additional machines.

If you have more than one digital player at your home, we ask you to please return it to BPH. Also, if you have any additional BPH/NLS equipment in your home that is not being used, please return it to us, as each piece of equipment must be accounted for by our library.

Once these digital machines are back in our care, we will have them refurbished to be used by new or current patrons who need a player or need to replace a broken machine. If you have any questions or need assistance in returning these items, please let us know by calling us at 334-213-3906.

Digital Player Carrying Case

Staff at several network libraries have indicated their patrons are still inquiring about the availability of a carrying case for their digital players. One of our regional librarians has finally found an answer. The Executive Leather Case for the NLS/BPH digital talking book player is available for purchase from the A.T.Guys: Your Access Technology Experts. For more information, visit the website www.atguys.com/store.