BPH Consumer Advisory Committee: To grow and to serve

The Alabama Regional Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (BPH) Consumer Advisory Committee has a solid purpose. It was organized to give advice and make recommendations to BPH, the Alabama Public Library Service (APLS), and, when appropriate, to the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS). The Committee also serves as an advocate for the promotion and further growth of library services for all blind and physically handicapped individuals in conjunction with APLS and BPH.

In the photo above, Advisory Committee members are shown with staff and volunteers just before the May 15 meeting. The Committee recognized three of six volunteers for their year of service to BPH. Collectively, the six volunteers provided more than 200 hours of service to BPH in 2017. The volunteers included Janet Hamilton, Johanna Eisen, and Ed Leader. Volunteers not able to attend were Ron Belcher, Ellis Paulk, and Linda Taylor. Advisory Committee officers include Jane Currey Rudick, Chair; Graham Sisson, Vice Chair; Tamara Massey, Treasurer; and Lenore Dillon, Secretary. 

See Committee, continued on page 6

Inside this issue ...

BPH welcomes new staff ... page 2
Advisor’s Corner ............... page 3
Tech tidbits ...................... page 4
Bookshare is coming ......... page 5
Is your account active? .... page 6
Walk-ins welcome .......... page 7
Twenty-five years (and counting)

As an Air Force veteran, Dorothy Baker can speak of experiences that have taken her many places to work with many people. Her 25 years of state service has had the same impact.

Baker began working with APLS in 1993 as a clerk in the A/V department. She left APLS to work at Alabama Department of Transportation for a year, but returned to APLS in 2010. Two years later, she took a position with the Regional Library for the Blind as a library technician.

Since 2012, Baker has used her vast experiences to assist BPH patrons and staff with everything from new applications to duplicating popular titles, and she keeps everything in BPH moving with military precision.

We salute Dorothy for 25 years of state service!

BPH welcomes new team members

The Alabama Public Library Service (APLS) has welcomed two new staff members and both will contribute in significant ways to the work of the Alabama Regional Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (BPH) division. Amanda Trawick joins BPH as a librarian and reader advisor. Ryan Godfrey is the Public Information Officer for APLS and will have direct input with BPH as the new editor for its quarterly newsletter.

Since receiving a masters’ degree in library and information science from the University of Alabama in 2010, Amanda has spent four years working in public and school libraries around the state. She is proficient in the fine arts, and enjoys singing, painting, and sculpting. Amanda will assist considerably with connecting BPH patrons to age appropriate materials. On a daily basis, she will produce audio and magazine downloads, assist with incoming and outgoing mail, and maintain the equipment inventory for the division.

Godfrey is a creative and communications professional, and he comes to APLS with 11 years of public relations/information experience, most recently with the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services where he produced numerous materials to assist persons with disabilities. He will maintain all media relations for APLS, manage the agency’s printed and digital informational materials, and develop the department’s social media footprint. Each quarter, he will design and edit the BPH newsletter.
Advisor’s Corner

Each quarter, BPH Reader Advisors Mike Coleman and Tim Emmons, share NLS annotations from new titles they think may be of interest to our readers. Since “Libraries Rock!” is the 2018 Summer Reading Theme, our advisors want to reach back and share a few classics focusing on music and musicians with Alabama ties. Their recommendations include the following:

DB68466
Narrated by Bob Moore
Owen, Randy
NF 7 hours and 30 minutes
Born Country: How Faith, Family, and Music Brought Me Home
Randy Owen, lead singer for the award-winning country-and-western band Alabama, provides an autobiographical account of his life. Owens describes his family’s southern heritage, the band’s rise to fame and fortune in the 1980s, and the faith and values that have sustained him personally and in his career.

DB58607
Narrated by Todd Scofield
Koon, George William
NF 6 hours and 1 minute
Hank Williams, So Lonesome
Biography of country singer Hank Williams (1923-1953) who wrote over one hundred songs. From interviews with family, friends, and band members, Koon documents Williams’ rise from Depression-era Alabama to Nashville Stardom and examines the mystery surrounding his death.

DB38072
Narrated by Barrett Whitener
Ruff, Willie
NF 12 hours and 29 minutes
In the Midnight Hour: the Life & Soul of Wilson Pickett
Music writer draws on interviews with friends and family to explore the life of a legendary soul singer. Describes the recording of some of his biggest hits from the 1960s, such as “Mustang Sally,” but also covers his wild and sometimes violent behavior off stage.

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.
Tech Tidbits
U.S. Currency readers

In late 2014, NLS announced the availability of a currency reader called the iBill Talking Banknote Identifier. The device is a compact unit that announces a note’s value by voice, pattern of tones, or pattern of vibrations. Users insert a bill into the device and press the button on the device’s side to have the denomination identified. The currency reader does not identify foreign or counterfeit banknotes. It can be carried in a pocket or purse, clipped to a belt, or attached to a keychain or lanyard. Call BPH at 334-213-3906 for staff assistance in completing an application.

What is a download?

When a book is not on the shelf, BPH staff have the ability to copy it onto a cartridge when a patron wants it. Known to many BPH users as Download Alabama, the process keeps clients reading popular material that staff cannot seem to keep on the shelves. The process is quite simple. Once a patron submits a list of titles, staff are able to copy up to 15 titles onto one cartridge (BPH staff can only use approved cartridges for this process). Each Digital Book Machine (DBM) has a “Bookshelf” feature that allows an individual to hear all of the titles available on the cartridge. When a title of interest comes up—and we hope they are all of interest—a simple press of the “play” button can get the book started. This special program, and we call it Download Alabama—with a New Twist, is made possible through the BPH Consumer Advisory Committee. The Committee purchased blank cartridges, computer cables, and grey mailing containers for the program.

BPH Holiday Closing Dates

The Alabama Regional Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped is opened Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. and closed on weekends. Our holiday closing dates for July through December 2018 are as follows:

July 4 - Independence Day
September 3 - Labor Day
October 8 - Columbus Day
November 12 - Veteran’s Day
November 22 - Thanksgiving
December 25 - Christmas
BPH OPAC nearing completion

Staff are in the process of finalizing a new BPH catalog. When ready, this revamped catalog will give any patron with internet access the ability to visit the BPH catalog. While in the catalog, users can select and place titles in their “shopping cart” in preparation for delivery. On the next business day, staff will pull selections to place in the outgoing mail. Known as the Web OPAC, (online public access catalog) this catalog gives adventurous library members the opportunity to place orders without speaking directly to staff. All you need is your five-digit patron number to access the database remotely. This number can be found on the mailing card accompanying each book order.

Bookshare is coming for BPH patrons

Thanks to the BPH Consumer Advisory Committee and a bequest from the late Julia Hite Joseph (1920-2017), at least 50 BPH patrons can have a two-year subscription to Bookshare. This subscription service provides access to more than 630,500 titles, including new books—hot off the press—and classics. Subscribers can find any book needed for school, career, or the simple joy of reading. Due to limited funding from the committee, the program will be made available only to the first 50 patrons with internet access willing to commit to the service for two full years. If you’re interested, be one of the first 50 callers to 332-213-3906. Ask for Bookshare access!

Access to Periodicals

Active BPH patrons have access to at least 60 magazines that are available through the National Library Service (NLS). A list of available titles can be found under Audio Magazines in all editions of Talking Book Topics. It takes at least eight weeks for a subscription to get started and just like Braille or audio books, items are mailed directly to a home address.

Two other services also provide magazines and newspapers to individuals enrolled in our service. The National Federation of the Blind sponsors NFB-Newsline® that provides access to more than 400 newspapers and magazines. For information, visit www.nfbnewsletter.org or call NFB at 866-504-7300.

Additionally, Choice Magazine Listening (CML) is a free audio magazine for adults with impaired vision or other disabilities. Four times a year, listeners can download or receive by mail 12 hours of great stories and articles chosen from 100 of the finest magazines free of charge. For information, call 888-724-6423 or visit www.choicecemagazinelisting.org.
The Committee meets three times a year.

Donations made to the BPH Consumer Advisory Committee go a long way in providing promotional materials about library services, as well as new products for library patrons. Thanks to the following who donated to our BPH Consumer Advisory Committee during the first quarter of 2018 through June 15:

- Herbert Davis
- Joan Herron
- Rhoda Herzog
- Wanda and Gerry Love in Memory of Ms. Wendy Williams Marks
- Neal Mulhern
- Phyllis Neff
- Stephanie H. and Eric Sturtevant in Memory of Mr. Luther Brown
- Helen W. Thomas and Janet T. Wilson

As you make plans throughout the year for giving to various causes, please remember the work of the Consumer Advisory Committee of the Alabama Regional Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (BPH). For additional information about the BPH Consumer Advisory Committee, contact the BPH regional librarian at 334-213-3906.

Individual readers are considered active in the BPH program if they borrow at least one book from the library during a twelve-month period or if they have a subscription to a network or National Library Service (NLS)-produced magazine. If you have not checked out a book or magazine recently, please contact us before your account becomes inactive. For those of you who use the computer to access books on BARD (Braille and Audio Reading Download), you will also need to download at least one book per year in order to keep your BARD account active. Call us at 334-213-3906 if you have questions.
Walk-ins welcome

When BPH patron Allen Lang and his wife, Barbara, stopped by the library on April 2 with a list of requests, Librarian Amanda Trawick wasted no time getting their order together. Local residents are always welcome to visit BPH for reading materials. On average, the library mails just over 500 pieces of mail daily to residents in 63 of the state’s counties. Subregional libraries in Huntsville and Talladega cover the remaining four: Calhoun, Madison, St. Clair, and Talladega Counties. Together, the library system serves more than 7,100 residents in the state.

BPH is in need of new volunteers to lend helping hands in several areas of the operation. If you are interested in serving as a BPH volunteer, or know someone who is, please contact the library at bph@apls.state.al.us or call 334-213-3906. Pictured above are student volunteers from Auburn University at Montgomery. They spent several hours on site to put together boxes needed to send back older cartridges to NLS.