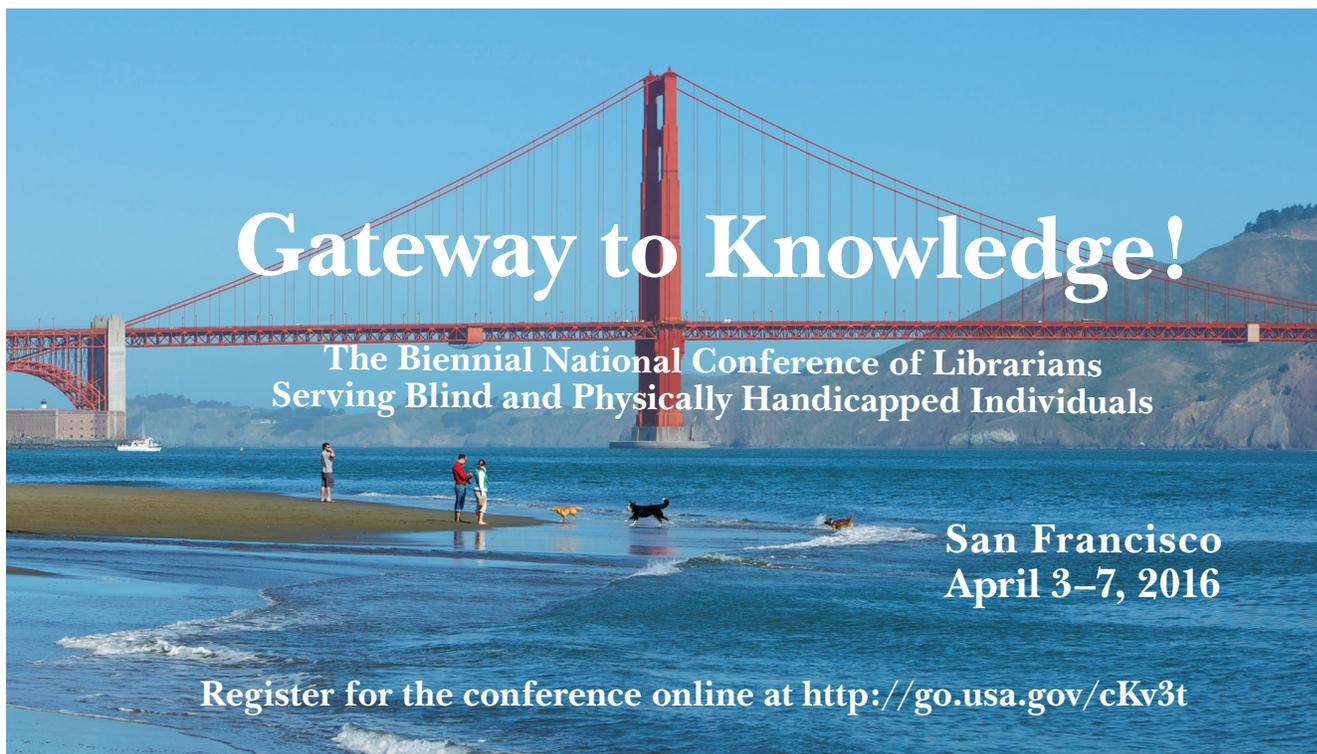




National Library Service  
for the Blind and  
Physically Handicapped

[www.loc.gov/nls](http://www.loc.gov/nls)



## Gateway to Knowledge!

The Biennial National Conference of Librarians  
Serving Blind and Physically Handicapped Individuals

San Francisco  
April 3–7, 2016

Register for the conference online at <http://go.usa.gov/cKv3t>

San Francisco Travel Association photo

**When:** April 3–7, 2016;  
pre-conference workshops April 2

**Where:** Fairmont San Francisco  
Hotel, 950 Mason Street, San  
Francisco, CA

**Reservations:** 1-800-441-1414  
(ask for “Reservations” and say  
you’re attending the 2016 Library  
of Congress conference) or go  
online to <https://goo.gl/w3vbeH>

**Rates:** Start at \$289 per single or  
double, plus tax and fees (approx-  
imately \$336 total)

**Deadline:** Make reservations by  
noon (PST) on Feb. 1 to receive  
the conference rate.

**More information:**  
<http://go.usa.gov/cK3fz>

### Conference features training, updates, demonstrations, and inspiring speakers

President William Howard Taft called San Francisco “the city that knows how.”

And by the time the 2016 National Conference of Librarians Serving Blind and Physically Handicapped Individuals wraps up, those who attend will know how, too:

How to make a digital talking book using the Hindenburg Audiobook Creator.

How to explain the differences between Unified English Braille (UEB) and English Braille American Edition.

How to use the BARD Mobile app for iOS and Android devices.

And much, much more.

The 2016 conference takes place at the historic Fairmont San Francisco Hotel on Nob Hill from Sunday, April 3, to Thursday, April 7.

Turn the page to learn more!

2016 National Conference Preview

**The Program**

The National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, Library of Congress, publishes books and magazines in braille and in recorded form for readers who cannot hold, handle, or see well enough to read conventional print because of a temporary or permanent visual or physical disability.

Through a national network of state and local libraries, the materials are loaned free to eligible readers in the United States and to U.S. citizens living abroad. Materials are sent to readers and returned by postage-free mail. Most books are also available for download on the NLS Braille and Audio Reading Download (BARD) website, <https://nlsbard.loc.gov>.

**Books and Magazines**

Readers may borrow all types of popular-interest books including bestsellers, classics, mysteries, westerns, poetry, history, biographies, religious literature, children’s books, and foreign-language materials. Readers may also subscribe to more than seventy popular magazines in braille and recorded formats.

**Special Equipment**

Special equipment needed to play the audiobooks is loaned indefinitely to readers. Amplifiers with headphones are available for eligible readers who are also certified as hearing impaired. Other devices are provided to aid readers with mobility impairments in using playback machines.

**Eligibility**

You are eligible for the Library of Congress program if

- You are legally blind—your vision in the better eye is 20/200 or less with correcting glasses, or your widest diameter of visual field is no greater than 20 degrees;
- You cannot see well enough or focus long enough to read standard print, although you wear glasses to correct your vision;
- You are unable to handle print books or turn pages because of a physical handicap; or
- You are certified by a medical doctor as having a reading disability, due to an organic dysfunction, which is of sufficient severity to prevent reading in a normal manner.

**How to Apply**

You may request an application by calling toll-free 1-888-NLS-READ or download one from the NLS website at [www.loc.gov/nls](http://www.loc.gov/nls).

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**Editor:** Mark Layman

**Contributors:** Lina Dutky, Claire Rojstaczer, Stefan Gunther

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San Francisco, of course, is home to the Golden Gate Bridge, and the conference theme, Gateway to Knowledge, is a hat-tip to that icon.

Conference coordinator and NLS network consultant MaryBeth Wise said, “The conference will be all about learning—whether it’s innovative approaches to outreach and programming, the use of technology to increase access to information, or hands-on training on using NLS databases and BARD tools to streamline services.”

The conference program begins at 1 p.m. on Sunday and at 9:30 a.m. on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, but attendees will have an opportunity to attend training sessions starting at 8:00 a.m. each day. Topics that will be covered in these early-morning sessions include reader advisory tools and strategies, using the NLS database, and best practices for managing a recording studio.

On Sunday morning there will be an orientation for new network librarians. On Monday and Wednesday mornings there will be an accessible technology “petting zoo” where attendees can practice using NLS and third-party products to download and read books from BARD, the Braille and Audio Reading Download service.

A grant-writing workshop is scheduled for 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on Thursday, the final day of the conference.

Early arrivals can attend preconference workshops on

**Learn more about the featured speakers**



Accessible technology pioneer **Dr. Joshua Miele** on Twitter: @BerkeleyBlink



Bookshare founder **Jim Fruchterman**’s Beneblog: <http://benetech.blogspot.com>

Saturday, April 2, on staffing and standards and duplication on demand.

As always during the biennial conference, NLS staff will give updates on the agency’s work, and representatives of each of the three regional conferences will make presentations. NLS director Karen Keninger and NLS staff also will discuss plans for evolving technologies and infrastructures, including the next-generation digital talking-book machine.

The conference will have sessions on UEB, led by NLS

Get the latest conference news on Twitter: #NLSSFO



The conference will take place at the Fairmont Hotel on Nob Hill (above). Construction of the hotel was finished shortly before the great earthquake and fire that decimated San Francisco in April 1906. Cable cars (left) have navigated the hills of San Francisco since 1873.

Photos courtesy of the Fairmont Hotel and the San Francisco Travel Association, [www.sanfrancisco.travel](http://www.sanfrancisco.travel)

consumer relations officer Judith Dixon and braille development officer Tamara Rorie; on the new *Revised Standards and Guidelines of Service*, led by Network Division chief Richard Smith; and on public education and outreach, led by Publications and Media Section head Jane Caulton.

Representatives of the network library circulation systems will demonstrate new features of CUL (Consortium of User Libraries), KLAS (Keystone Library Automation System), and READS (Reader Enrollment and Delivery System).

Dr. Joshua A. Miele, an NLS patron and associate director of the Smith-Kettlewell Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center on Blindness and Low Vision, will speak on Tuesday. Miehle, who was blinded by an acid attack when he was four years old, is a pioneer in the field of accessible technology.

And Jim Fruchterman, a Silicon

Valley entrepreneur who founded Bookshare and helped develop optical character recognition technology, will speak on Wednesday.

The conference won't be all work; there will be opportunities for informal networking after-hours. The San Francisco Public Library will host a reception for conference attendees on Monday evening, and Keystone Systems Inc. will host a reception on Tuesday evening.

"We hope everyone can take advantage of this once-every-two-years opportunity to learn about new initiatives and programs, share ideas, hear inspiring speakers, and get hands-on training on the latest technology," Keninger said. "The national conference is a time for us to acknowledge, together, the important work that we do and to set the course for the next two years—all with the aim of ensuring that all may read."

## Talking-book workshop supports network studios

Twenty-one network library staff members attended workshops at NLS this fall on making digital talking books (DTBs) with the Hindenburg Audiobook Creator (HABC).

“We recognized there was a need for hands-on training with the Hindenburg



NLS audiobook production specialist Phillip Carbo (right) works with a participant in the HABC workshop in September.

software, both for libraries that are and libraries that are not participating in the locally produced digital talking-books program,” said Paula Bahmani, NLS education and training specialist.

“Enrollment for the first session filled up so fast that we scheduled a second session.”

NLS audiobook production specialist Phillip Carbo, who assisted with the design of the HABC software used to make DTBs, has been helping libraries transition from the old audiobook-creation software—the low-complexity mastering (LCM) system—to HABC. “Libraries love the idea of making DTBs for NLS—they want to produce at our level of quality and to our specifications,” he said. “Hindenburg, because it was specifically designed for NLS, makes it easier for libraries to meet our requirements.”

Carbo believes that the main issue with transitioning to HABC is unlearning habits that were picked up while libraries were using the old software. “The hands-on aspect is the key to it all. This one-on-one interaction

is really the way to train people. The response from both sessions was great. The participants had informed, specific questions and expressed an interest in returning for an advanced DTB-making course,” he said.

NLS staff, including Automation officer Michael Martys and Recording Studio director Celeste Lawson, walked the participants through the steps of making and uploading a DTB to the NLS Braille and Reading Download (BARD) site. Lawson’s session on recording and narration techniques is being turned into a YouTube video that will be available on the Library of Congress YouTube channel.

“We are hoping to offer more training in the future—perhaps an advanced DTB-making course, an analog-to-digital conversion course, or an in-depth course on NLS specifications,” Bahmani said.

Arizona Talking Book and Braille Library studio manager Maria Piña, who attended the first workshop, said, “I was really impressed with the training. They explained the whole process from start to finish. It was very easy to understand and helpful to network with other library colleagues. I was really excited to [return to Arizona] and hit the ground running and implement everything I learned.”

Anthony Bannister, studio manager at the Free Library of Philadelphia, attended the second workshop. “It was needed, informative, empowering, and encouraging,” he said. “I learned not just how to utilize the Hindenburg software, but how to approach the recording process. I hope that NLS creates more resources like this for network libraries to use in the future. We need a repository of information to help us transition from LCM to Hindenburg.”

### Read more

From the July–September 2015 issue of *News*:  
“Network-produced talking books booming on BARD”  
[www.loc.gov/nls/newsletters/news/2015/jul-sep.html#net](http://www.loc.gov/nls/newsletters/news/2015/jul-sep.html#net)

## UEB implementation on target for January 4

NLS remains on track to implement Unified English Braille (UEB) by January 4, 2016, in line with Braille Authority of North America (BANA) recommendations. All books and magazines entering production after that date will be transcribed in UEB, with hardcopy UEB books potentially entering circulation as early as March.

“We’ve been holding monthly meetings with all our vendors and monitoring as our transcribers go through the UEB certification process,” braille development officer Tamara Rorie said. “No one has failed yet.”

Readers are also practicing to get up to speed in UEB; Rorie said more than 1,000 signed up for a recent Hadley School for the Blind correspondence course. While NLS does not offer its own UEB course for patrons, it has released a list of frequently used UEB symbols to help patrons familiarize themselves with changes from English Braille American Edition (EBAE). The list, available in BRF and large-print PDF, has proven so popular that hardcopy braille versions are being produced for distribution through the multistate centers and network libraries.

Currently, approximately 50 UEB books are available on BARD. Most

The NLS document *Frequently Used UEB Symbols* may be downloaded as a BRF file at [www.loc.gov/nls/bds/index.html](http://www.loc.gov/nls/bds/index.html). The document also will be published in each issue of *Braille Book Review* for the foreseeable future.

were produced in Canada or European countries, where UEB adoption preceded adoption in the United States by several years. A few, however, were produced in this country, including Harper Lee’s instant bestseller *Go Set a Watchman* and the fiftieth anniversary edition of her perennial classic *To Kill a Mockingbird*. The four magazines produced by the Royal National Institute of Blind People—*Short Stories*, *Conundrum*, *Braille Music Magazine*, and *Braille Chess Magazine*—have also circulated in UEB since July.

Response has largely been positive, though Rorie noted that one patron did call, unaware that a magazine was now in UEB and concerned that it had a minor transcription error.

“UEB and EBAE are very similar,” Rorie said. “If patrons are familiar with EBAE, it should be easy for them to transition to UEB.”

### Scourby Award-winning talking-book narrator dies

Roy Avers, a narrator for the American Printing House for the Blind (APH) who recorded more than 1,750 books for NLS, died at his home in Sellersburg, Indiana, on November 13 at age 82. Avers recorded his first talking book in 1971 and in 1990 became APH’s first winner of the Alexander Scourby Award, which honors excellence in talking-book narration.



## Network Exchange

### Nebraska TBBS chief David Oertli retires after 32 years

Anyone who thinks librarians are boring hasn't met David Oertli.

After a nearly four-decade career as a librarian that has been anything but ordinary, Oertli retired this fall from the Nebraska Library Commission's (NLC) Talking Book and Braille Service (TBBS).

Oertli's first job, after completing a master's degree in Library and Information Science at the University of Missouri–Columbia in 1977, was serving the patients and staff of a maximum security mental hospital in Illinois. During his two years with the Shawnee Library System, he encountered a patient body with diverse reading levels that, he said, "craved recreational reading and keeping in touch with the wider world."

The theme of serving as a conduit to the outside world reemerged after Oertli moved to Nebraska's capital city of Lincoln, where he served as a prison librarian and coordinator of library service for the prison system.

Oertli's experience in serving non-traditional patrons put him in the perfect position when NLC announced a vacancy for director of its braille and talking book program, and he was appointed to the job in 1983.

During his tenure there, he has witnessed tremendous technological change in the way visually impaired patrons are served. The change from records and flexible discs to cassettes and then digital cartridges has facilitated improved access for borrowers. At the same time, outreach to patrons

is increasing in importance, especially since many are coming to talking books later in life, thanks to improvements in health care that result in later onset of visual impairment.

Oertli exemplifies the vital role played by regional leaders in extending NLS's programs and services to the largest possible number of eligible readers. At the same time, he has

helped enrich the catalog of available materials by analyzing and communicating reader interests specific to the Midwest and Nebraska: *Great Plains Game and Fish*, *Cowboys & Indians*, and *Hail Varsity* (a publication for fans of the Cornhuskers) are three network-originated magazines that demonstrate the importance of local connection.



David Oertli

Equally comfortable on larger stages, Oertli is keenly aware of the need to participate in policy-making bodies and professional organizations. He was elected chairman of the Western Conference of NLS network libraries and appointed to an advisory committee providing input into the revision of the Association of Specialized and Cooperative Library Agencies' *Revised Standards and Guidelines of Service for the Library of Congress Network of Libraries for the Blind and Physically Handicapped*.

Oertli's professional life as a librarian has focused on providing access to underserved populations. "Everyone's life is a story, and everyone's story has integrity," he said. "I will miss the unfolding stories that take place in the lives of staff, volunteers, and, of course, borrowers."

## Network Exchange



**California.** Grammy-winning singer, author, and actress Debby Boone was the featured speaker at the Los Angeles Braille Institute's annual library open house on October 16, 2015. More than 435 guests attended. Sue Wiygul Martin, author of *Out of the Whirlpool* (DB 78152), also spoke, and the a cappella trio the LA Muses performed. The morning program was followed by a Senior Resource Fair that provided an opportunity for attendees to obtain information about local programs and services.

In the photo at left, Boone, center, is flanked by Dr. Henry C. Chang, Braille Institute director of library services, and Tina Herbison, open house chair.

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**Washington:** The Washington Talking Book & Braille Library (WTBBL) in September hosted an exhibit by the China Braille Press. The exhibit highlighted braille publishing in the digital age, international exchanges, famous blind people in the United States and China, and other subjects. "This exciting exhibit demonstrates both the importance of braille worldwide and the developing partnerships between China and the United States regarding services for people who are blind or visually impaired," library director Danielle Miller said. Zhang Wei, president of China Braille Press; an official from the Information Office of China's State Council; and Washington Secretary of State Kim Wyman attended the ribbon cutting. Here is a story from China's Xinhua News Agency: <http://goo.gl/GBs021>.

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**Illinois.** Patrice Johnson (right), first assistant at the Chicago Public Library Talking Book Center, received the 2015 Illinois Library Association Alexander J. Skrzypek Award. The award is given to a person who has made an outstanding contribution to the advancement of library services for blind and physically disabled people in Illinois and is sponsored by the Illinois State Library Talking Book and Braille Service.

Johnson developed statewide summer and winter reading programs and chaired the monthly "Book Break" program for readers' advisors in Illinois, and eventually across the country. She also has served as secretary of the Midlands Libraries' regional meetings and a member of the 2015 NLS Tri-Regional Conference Planning Committee.

Skrzypek (1905–1976) was the first librarian for the blind at the Chicago Public Library.



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## **NLS FY 2016 Exhibit Schedule**

**American Music Therapy Association**, November 12–15, Kansas City, MO  
**American Library Association Midwinter**, January 8–12, Boston, MA  
**Music Library Association**, March 2–5, Cincinnati, OH  
**American Nursing Association**, March 9–11, Lake Buena Vista, FL  
**American Foundation for the Blind**, March 3–5, Arlington, VA  
**National Conference of Librarians Serving Blind and Physically  
Handicapped Individuals**, April 3–7, San Francisco, CA  
**Public Library Association**, April 5–9, Denver, CO  
**Council for Exceptional Children**, April 13–16, St. Louis, MO  
**Abilities Expo**, April 29–May 1, New York, NY  
**AARP**, May TBA  
**American Optometric Association**, June 29–July 2, Boston, MA  
**American Library Association National**, June 23–28, Orlando, FL  
**National Association of Area Agencies on Aging**, July 23–27, San Diego, CA  
**National Federation of the Blind**, July TBA  
**American Council of the Blind**, July TBA, Minneapolis, MN  
**Blinded Veterans Association**, August TBA  
**National Book Festival**, September TBA, Washington, DC