

Talking Book Center News

News & Information from the
Voices of Vision Talking Book Center

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Celebrating 75 Years of Service!

Commemorating the 75th anniversary of the National Talking Book and Braille Program!

March 3, 2006 is our 75th birthday! On that day in 1931, the Pratt-Smoot Act was signed into law by President Herbert Hoover. The Pratt-Smoot Act called for the Library of Congress to work with libraries to provide service on a national scale to blind adults. On the following day, a Joint Resolution was passed appropriating funds to carry out the provisions of the act to provide books for blind adults and the program that would become the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped.

Since the 1930s, the program has experienced many changes, including moving from talking books on records and record players to cassette tapes and tape players. Our program has grown from the original nineteen libraries to a national network of over 130 regional and subregional libraries, providing talking book, braille, and related services throughout the United States.

Here in Illinois, the talking book service is delivered through a network consisting of the Illinois State Library Talking Book and Braille Service in Springfield and four Talking Book Centers.

During 2006 we'll be commemorating this anniversary and taking a look at other events from the 1930s; watch for announcements and information in upcoming newsletters!

INTRODUCING: OUR READER ADVISORS The four Voices of Vision Reader's Advisors are ready to help you select reading materials. With this issue of the newsletter, we've included an introduction by Jean:

I've had a widely varied life even though I've lived almost all of it in the St. Charles and Geneva area. I studied modeling and was a theatre major with a minor in English. I still love to be on a stage when I get the chance. I spent five years working as an office manager of a small radio station.

My mother was an assistant librarian for a junior high school, and my aunt was head of an English department, so books have always been a part of my life. My taste in books is as varied as everything else in my life has been. I enjoy fantasies like the **Harry Potter** series. When I don't want to think too much, I read romance novels; I especially enjoy books by Jennifer Crusie (very funny) and Stephanie Laurens (very romantic with strong female leads.) I most enjoy books that feed the spirit. I just finished **The Art of Happiness at Work** by the Dalai Lama and Howard C. Cutler. (RC 57386). I found it surprisingly funny. I also really loved **Walking the Bible** by Bruce Feiler (RC 52171). Mr. Feiler decided to read the Bible in the places the stories took place. It was a fascinating adventure and expressed how deeply a place can affect you.

Working here has been wonderful. I've always thought that books were extremely valuable, but I didn't appreciate how much that was true until I became a readers' advisor. I've stopped counting how often people tell me that these books are the best part of their life. It's a joy to be able to be of service to such a gracious group of people.

THE LIGHTER SIDE OF READING If you're looking for laughter, the talking book collection can help! Jokes, humor, anecdotes, witticisms, parodies, satire, and stories with a smile can all be found in the collection of talking books and braille.

Writers from "days gone by" known for their humorous works include Mark Twain, P.G. Wodehouse, James Thurber, and Will Rogers. Some modern novels, short stories and even mysteries may bring humor to the reader through plot and characters. Staff picks in this category include titles by such authors as Janet Evanovich (Stephanie Plum novels), Carl Hiaasen, Fannie Flagg, and Bailey White.

Many popular humorists are also represented in our collection; writers who tell stories about their own lives or comment on modern life and times. Erma Bombeck, George Burns, Bill Cosby, Dave Barry, Jerry Seinfeld, George Carlin, and Lewis Grizzard are just a few. Compilations of jokes and humorous essays are also available, including those by such writers as Steve Allen, David Letterman, Milton Berle, and Bob Hope. Biographies of many humorists are also available.

This is just a sampling. Of course, ideas about what is funny can vary widely from person to person! To check on what is available by your favorite humorist, or more information about any of the writers named above, contact your reader's advisor or visit our online public access catalog: <http://www.klas.com/ilbph>

Happy New Year! Happy Reading!

Newsletter Formats: If you would like to receive this newsletter in braille or audio, contact the Voices of Vision Talking Book Center.