

**Washington Talking Book & Braille Library
Administered by the Washington State Library
and Office of the Secretary of State**

**Reading Matters
Summer 2011
*David Junius, Editor***

A Message from Danielle Miller, Program Manager

I recall hearing on the radio a few weeks ago that the Seattle area had only experienced a cumulative 75 minutes of real summer. Things have improved a bit and the end of summer looks promising. For staff at WTBBL, summer has been a time to breathe and refocus. Until recently, we have spent at least 75 percent of our time going through some sort of transition or change. But for now things are calm.

As we look toward the fall, I am excited for the Washington Council of the Blind and the National Federation of the Blind of Washington annual conventions, visiting chapter meetings, and working to increase our outreach efforts so that all those who qualify for WTBBL service do get books from us.

We did weather the budget session fairly well, but as you may have heard, the Governor is preparing agencies to cut as much as 10 percent beginning in January. Nothing is final, but I am constantly looking for ways to save money without losing staff or programs.

As part of that effort, this year will be the last year we produce a large print calendar, the calendar for 2012. We will be switching to a more traditional and informative annual report format that I believe will serve us better in outreach and with members of the community, as well as being more cost effective. This was a difficult decision, but many organizations in the area either give away or sell large print calendars. We will be sure to have a list of places to get a calendar for 2013 available to you.

I wish you a fun and happy rest of your summer and remind you to include reading in your days if you can. There are over 25,000 digital books available for download and the number grows quickly. If you

would like information or instruction about downloading books, please call the library.

Finally, I would like to give a big congratulations to our 44 summer reading kids for participating in the “One World, Many Stories” program.

As always, contact me at 206-615-1588 or danielle.miller@sos.wa.gov.

Computers and People Lead to Books by Theresa Connolly

Although many of the staff and volunteers have fit in vacations this summer, we are still happily recording, reviewing and producing new audio books. It looks like most of the quirks in the new recording software detailed in previous issues of *Reading Matters* have been worked out. That means our days are going pretty smoothly.

Our volunteers have shown incredible devotion and tenacity, and many thanks for weathering the changes. Learning curves can be steep and computers seem to be especially good at encouraging frustration. Thank you for sticking with us and lending your intelligence to our cause. Because of you, we are able to offer new audio books every month.

Speaking of audio books, here are five by Washington authors that we have recently released:

A Homemade Life: Stories and Recipes from My Kitchen Table by Molly Wizenberg.

Seattle-based author, food blog writer, cook, and restaurant owner recounts her life here and abroad and offers many delicious recipes. The kitchen and cooking are central parts of her life. Her enthusiasm for that is fun and inspiring. 2009. Digital Book DBW08209

Bretz's Flood: The Remarkable Story of a Rebel Geologist and the World's Greatest Flood by Jon Soennichsen.

At the end of the Ice Ages, repeated floods from Lake Missoula in Montana tore through Northern Idaho and Eastern Washington and down the Columbia Gorge to the Pacific. The floods took much of the topsoil and left behind the channeled scablands and Grand Coulee. J. Harlen Bretz was the first geologist to realize what had happened. 2008. Digital Book DBW08138

I Want to be Left Behind: Finding Rapture Here on Earth by Brenda Peterson.

In Peterson's unusual memoir, fundamentalism meets deep ecology. The author's forest ranger father leads her to embrace the entire natural world, while her Southern Baptist fundamentalist relatives prepare to leave this world. 2010. Digital Book DBW08195

Silver Borne by Patricia Briggs.

When mechanic and shapeshifter Mercy Thompson attempts to return a powerful book she borrowed in an act of desperation, she finds the bookstore locked and closed down. It seems the book contains secret knowledge, and the book's lender will do just about anything to keep it out of the wrong hands. Some descriptions of sex and violence. 2010. Digital Book DBW08206

All Roads Lead Me Back to You by Kennedy Foster.

When a saddled but riderless horse turns up on Alice Standfast's ranch during a Washington blizzard, Alice knows the lost rider's chances for survival are slim. She sets out to find the mare's owner...dead or alive. 2009. Digital Book DBW08320

Braille Department News by Ed Godfrey

A new Wednesday evening braille transcription class at WTBBL will begin in October 2011 and end in June 2012. Our goal is to train and recruit new volunteer transcribers to join our current group of 40 who work off-site to create our locally produced braille books. For more information on the class, visit www.wtbbl.org.

Four titles by John C. Hughes from the Washington State Heritage Center's Legacy Project are now in process for braille production:

Booth Who?: A Biography of Governor Booth Gardner

Lillian Walker, Washington State Civil Rights Pioneer

The Inimitable Adele Ferguson: Bremerton's Legendary Columnist

Nancy Evans: First-rate First Lady

Many other books are in process, including a collection of fiction and nonfiction GLBTQ (Gay Lesbian Bisexual Transgender Questioning) titles made possible by a grant from Queer and Blind and The Pride Foundation; *The War: An Intimate History 1941-1945* by Geoffrey Ward and Ken Burns; and *The Holocaust Chronicle* by various authors.

Suggestions for the collection are always welcome! Braille books produced at WTBBL are available for download as braille files at www.wtbbl.org/braille-files.aspx.

Author Profile: David Sedaris by David Junius

David Sedaris may be to the past decade what Robert Benchley was to the '30s and Woody Allen was to the '70s: a writer with a gift for lampooning the absurdity of daily life in a self-deprecating way that makes him an everyman or underdog. But Sedaris also focuses on the hypocrisy and cruelty of the human condition, at times taking on personas that are very funny but horrific in their self-absorption and callousness.

Coming up through the ranks of spoken-word performance to his wide-spectrum launch in 1992 on National Public Radio with his reading of "SantaLand Diaries," in which he recounts a holiday season as a Macy's elf, Sedaris has also been an Obie-winning playwright (*One Woman Shoe*, co-written with sister Amy), radio contributor (most notably on Chicago Public Radio's *This American Life*), and writer for periodicals like *The New Yorker*, *Esquire*, and the *New York Times*. His following grows with the release of each new book, and his speaking appearances are major events for his acolytes.

His stories and essays have evolved to match his life experiences, including becoming a famous author and expat, keeping the same whimsical sensibility and often dark humor. Sedaris' subjects range from odd jobs he's had to road trips he's taken; from growing up with his mismatched family in North Carolina to relocating to France with his boyfriend Hugh; and from fantastical celebrity tell-alls to backhanded cultural critiques.

The work sometimes involves sex, drugs and violence, but Sedaris' seeming ironic detachment makes it (almost) all right. There is a commonality of classlessness among his characters, where the elite are to be ridiculed for their actions and attitudes, right along with the trashier elements with which Sedaris often relates.

Sedaris has won the Thurber Prize for American Humor for *Me Talk Pretty One Day*, and was named "Humorist of the Year" by *Time* magazine for 2000. He has received three Grammy nominations for his

audio works, and has been nominated for an Audie, the highest audio book honor.

Sedaris' importance can be seen in the NLS making all of his works available in its collection:

[Barrel Fever: Stories And Essays](#) (1994) Cassette Book RC040676

[Naked](#) (1997) Cassette Book RC044134; Large Print LP013990

[Holidays on Ice](#) (1997) Digital Book DB068134; Braille Book BR015182

[Me Talk Pretty One Day](#) (2000) Cassette Book RC050514; Large Print LP018093

[Dress Your Family in Corduroy and Denim](#) (2004) Digital Book DB058825; Large Print LP020781

[When You Are Engulfed in Flames](#) (2008) Digital Book DB067035

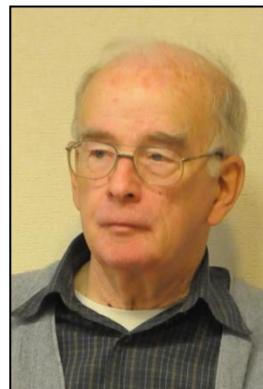
[Squirrel Seeks Chipmunk: A Modest Bestiary](#) (2010) Digital Book DB071939

Volunteer Spotlight: Mark and Mary Forster

Mark and Mary Forster began volunteering at WTBBL in early 2009. This was their place of choice to volunteer after retiring because Mary's mother is legally blind and has been a devoted user of talking books and the Evergreen Radio Reading Service at WTBBL.



Mark worked in electronic repair and maintenance for a number of years, so he was a natural to work in the shipping department repairing talking book machines with other like-minded techies and tinkerers.



During Mary's volunteer interview and tour, she was introduced to the staff of the Braille Department.

Things clicked and she started working as a sighted proofreader for books that were being transcribed into braille by the department's volunteers.

As she became experienced in proofreading, she became more interested in braille, and in January 2010 began the braille transcription course offered by WTBBL. Having graduated the class, Mary is now transcribing books into braille and continues to work with her proofreading teammates.

Mark and Mary both hail from Ohio, but met in Seattle in 1970 when Mary arrived at the University of Washington for a post-doctoral fellowship in the Obstetrics and Gynecology Department. After being stationed at Whidbey Island Naval Air Station, and living in Denver and Albuquerque briefly, Mark worked at Boeing on flight simulators, and then worked in electronics repair and maintenance at the UW and several small companies.

Mary attended graduate school at the University of Illinois and obtained her Ph.D. in Reproductive Physiology and Biochemistry. She has taught at Wheaton College in Norton, Massachusetts, and Pacific Lutheran University in Parkland, Washington. Before retiring, Mary worked for 25 years as the Director of Swedish Medical Center's In Vitro Fertilization Laboratory.

Mark and Mary have lived in West Seattle for 38 years and have two daughters who both still live in Seattle. Mark and Mary are avid vegetable gardeners and grow most of their vegetables for the year. They are renowned for their blueberries and red raspberries. When not busy in the yard or babysitting their two-year-old grandson, Mark's interests include genealogy and crossword puzzles, and Mary enjoys reading and crafts—including cross stitching, knitting and crocheting.

Thanks to the Fabulous Forsters for the more than 1,250 hours they have given to WTBBL!

Remembering and Thanking Our Friends by Carleen Jackson

Many of you are aware of a wonderful tradition at WTBBL, the Ten-Squared Talking Book Club. Ten-Squared recognizes our active library patrons who are 100 years old or older. Each May, a lovely tea is held at

WTBBL to honor these amazing people and to initiate new members to the club. It is an inspiring event that we look forward to every year. Our centenarians tell wonderful stories of their lives and their passion for books, and how much being able to keep reading at their age lightens their days.

In the last 18 months the Ten-Squared Club lost four wonderful members who would regularly attend our event: Maud Lepley, 107; Faith Callahan, 106; Grace Stanchfield, 105; and Evelyn Valentine, 103. Each of these women lived active and fascinating lives and WTBBL was an important part of their lives in their later years.

Maud Lepley was a teacher, a girls' basketball coach, and became the oldest tutor in the Seattle Public Schools. At 98 she made her first trip to Europe, followed by more traveling until she was 103. Wherever Maud went and whomever she met, she impressed everyone with her positive energy and youthful joy of life. And she loved her audio books. She said they helped keep her mind active and provided her with much pleasure.



Faith Callahan was asked at the Ten-Squared tea a couple of years ago what her favorite books were. She cited two that she read as a young woman, *The Shepherd of the Hills* and *How to Live Life on 24 Hours a Day*. Those books had stayed with her all of her life. A writer herself, civically active and a book discussion club member, she was a great consumer of books from WTBBL.

Grace Stanchfield also had an active and full life living over a century of history. She drove an ambulance during World War II, and worked at Boeing and the Seattle Mayor's office. She raised her two sons as a single mom and was an avid listener to liberal talk radio. She loved getting audio books from WTBBL.



Evelyn Valentine lived most of her life in Ketchikan, Alaska. She was involved in many organizations even after moving to Seattle in her 90s. She was a voracious reader and WTBBL provided her with books for her digital player. Her daughter reported that

when Evelyn passed away she had finished all 57 of the books downloaded for her only a couple of months before.

In recent months these Ten-Squared friends also passed away: Gladys Anderson, 100; Bernard Chichester, 106; Herbert Faubion, 100; Marianne Jones, 108; Margaret Kime, 100; Helen Minton, 100; Carol Nagle, 101; Elizabeth Platt, 102; and John Turbitt, 102.

Your gifts to WTBBL made it possible for our centenarians, and many others, to stay involved, active and entertained to the end of their very long lives. Thanks for remembering WTBBL with your contributions that help bring joy to so many lives.

Meet Our Staff: Herrick Heitman

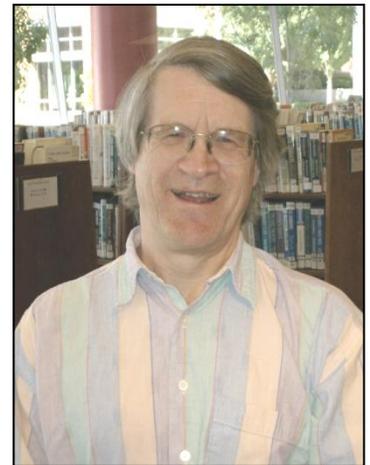
Herrick is the Adult Services Librarian at WTBBL. He answers reference questions, backs up Readers Advisory, and catalogs large print, braille, and talking books.

Herrick grew up near Sandpoint, Idaho, went to Whitman College in Walla Walla, and got his library degree at the University of Washington. He has worked for the Washington State Library for over 28 years, which has taught him that life is one big learning curve and that adaptability is a virtue.

His first job was at the Washington State Penitentiary Branch Library. It was the most educational job he ever had, and also the most taxing. He took a three-and-a-half-year break after that job and rejoined the State Library in 1984.

While working in institutional libraries, he served staff, clients, residents, members and patrons at Rainier School and Fircrest (for people with developmental disabilities), the Soldiers Home, the Veterans Home, and the Public Health Lab, along with a side trip to the State Library's Washington/Northwest Room in 1989-1990. In 1997 he started working at the main branch of the State Library full time.

At the State Library he worked with the online catalog and circulation system, databases for state employees, general reference work, and the Federal Documents collection. Herrick came to WTBBL in



2010, and finds its patrons are the most appreciative and supportive library users he has ever encountered.

When not at work, Herrick enjoys reading, listening to music and hanging out with his many collies. Every year he reminds himself that to be a Seattle sports fan is to be philosophical, usually of the stoic school of thought.