

Mississippi Talking Book Services READING LIGHT

*A Quarterly Newsletter of talking Book Services at
the Mississippi Library Commission*



Fall 2026

Mississippi's Talking Book Services: First Local Book on BARD

In September 2026, our very own Patron Services Coordinator, J.D. Burns, received his certification from the National Library Service (NLS), making him eligible to upload audiobooks from Mississippi to BARD (Braille and Audio Reading Download). This immense opportunity comes with over a year of diligent work in our recording studio to create quality audio for our patrons in Mississippi as well as on a national level. J.D. reflects, "I am immensely proud to finally have my certification from the National Library Service in audio production. Mississippi has a rich literary identity, and being able to, even in my small way, contribute to the ability of patrons here in the state and across the nation to experience that identity in an accessible way means the world to me."



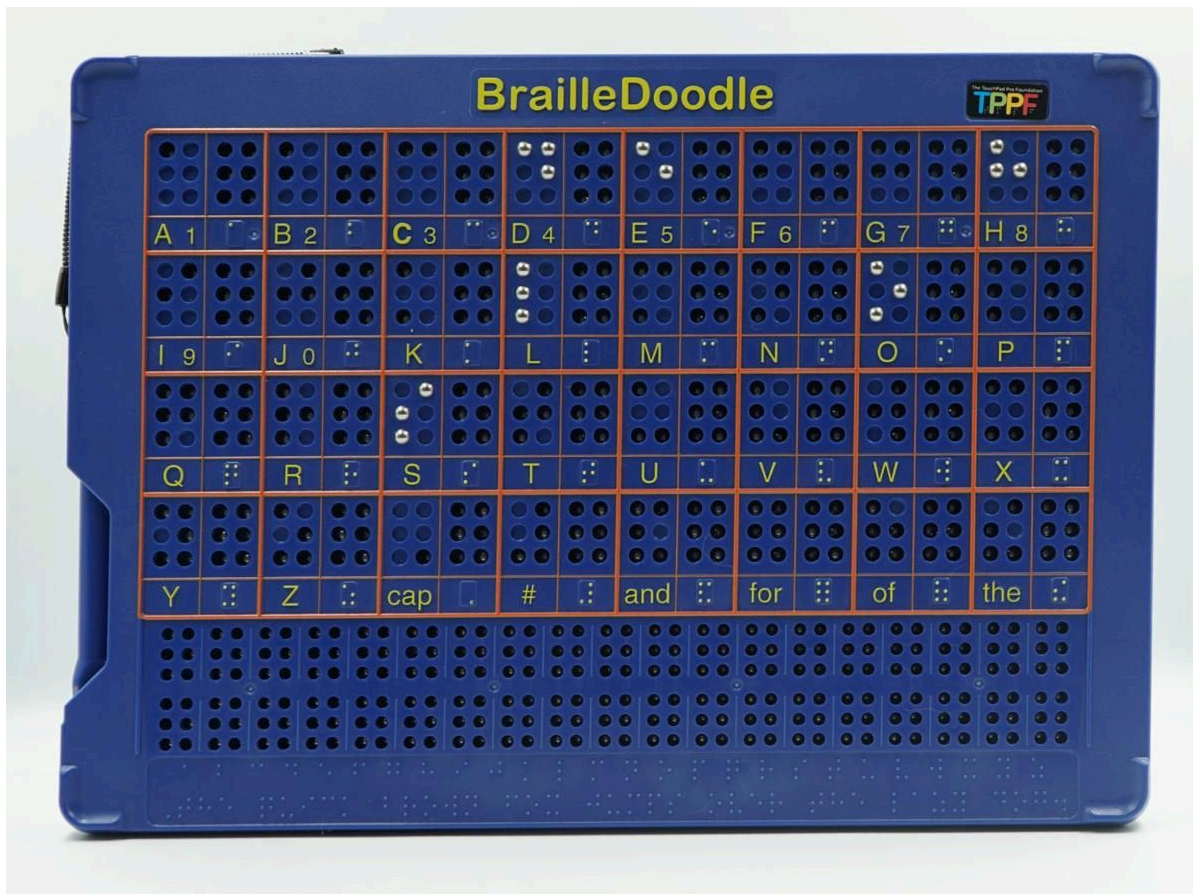
J.D. began this special project with a background in music, through both guitar and music production. The audio engineering quality he brought to the TBS team automatically fell into place with our recording studio, and he began recording and producing two local magazines, *Mississippi Outdoors* and *Mississippi Magazine*, as narrators were available. J.D. states, "In my initial interviews to work with TBS, my experience and background in sound and audio production were at the forefront, so it has been a goal of mine since day one to bring the audio production aspect of our department up to modern standards. I am proud of the work we do and will continue to produce."

Mississippi's Talking Book Services' (TBS) first audiobook available nationwide on BARD is *Sandpiper: My Journey with Sight and Blindness* by Karen E. Brown, DBC035180. *Sandpiper* tells the story of Karen's journey from sight to blindness, as well as her

childhood and college years, her marriage in Germany and the year abroad that follows, and her move back to the States. The autobiography will be presented to the author at her home, followed by a small celebration. TBS Director Miranda Loper states, "Our TBS team is so excited for this new chapter of providing accessible, local material to NLS patrons across the country. To be able to present this book to the author, a longstanding patron of TBS, makes this honor even more special." The department plans to add more local audiobooks and local magazines on BARD.

Pictured above, J.D. Burns is in the audio engineering station outside the TBS recording studio holding his certificate from NLS.

New Item for Checkout: BrailleDoodle



Talking Book Services (TBS) has a new item in our collection! Meet the BrailleDoodle: a tactile tablet with two sides for Braille learning and Tactile drawing – Science, Math, Art, and Reading with a surface that refreshes repeatedly. Learners use a simple, attached magnetic stylus to lift tactile, metal “dots” to write and create while feeling each mark instantly, then erase with a quick push or swipe. Three stencils are included to practice drawing, Braille writing, and math. The BrailleDoodle is for all ages and skill levels. In fact, one adult patron of TBS, Marinita Taylor, says, “I love this thing!! I am going to keep it as long as I can!”

A huge thank you goes out to the Friends of our library for purchasing these tablets for our patrons! The checkout period is two months, and shipping is free, just like all other TBS materials. Please call a Reader Advisor to check out at **601-432-4151**. [**Visit The TouchPad Pro Foundation, the nonprofit company that invented the BrailleDoodle, for more information.**](#)

Pictured above, the BrailleDoodle is shown on the Braille practice side, featuring letters A through Z, a few common contracted words, and space for practicing sentences.

Reminder:

2027 Braille and Large Print Calendars

It's time to begin thinking about next year! If you would like a pocket Braille calendar or wall-sized Braille/Large Print calendar for 2027 and have not already subscribed, please call a Reader Advisor at 601-432-4151. Orders must be placed by the end of 2026 to receive a 2027 calendar. Each TBS patron is eligible for a calendar mailed directly to their home from NLS. Subscribe today!

Upcoming Holiday Closures

Talking Book Services (TBS) and the Mississippi Library Commission will be closed on the dates below. The USPS receives heavy shipping traffic during the holiday season, so please remember that the mail will take longer than usual. We are here to help if you would like to order additional reading materials in advance.

November 11, 2026
November 26-27, 2026
December 24-25, 2026
January 1, 2027

Featured Resource: Hadley

Living with vision loss brings many changes - learning about an eye condition, finding new ways to do everyday things, and managing the emotions that come with it. Talking Book Services (TBS) partners with Hadley, a nonprofit organization dedicated to ensuring no one faces vision loss alone.

If you've lost some vision, find Hadley.

Discover new ways to do things with Hadley's free help:

- Practical: **Short video workshops** with everyday tips, from pouring coffee or using a sharp knife to choosing a magnifier or new tech gadget.
"Hadley gave me confidence that I can do this." -Beverly
- Supportive: **Discussion groups, support groups, a community-generated podcast**, and a **peer-to-peer program** give you a sense of community and the peace of mind that comes from knowing you're not alone on this journey.
"Even sharing those bad times together is just as important as sharing resources that can help." -Judy

Hadley comes to you online, by phone, or in the mail—no waiting list, no doctor's note, no travel, no fees.

Sign up today for Hadley Help. If you prefer to have a TBS staff member submit your information for a referral to a Hadley specialist, please call **601-432-4151**.

HadleyHelps.org | 800-323-4238 | info@HadleyHelps.org

Reading Corner



Our BARD service allows you to download books to your personal device or computer instantly. BARD Mobile is available for Apple and Android devices. BARD Express is available for Windows-based computers.

Check out our new tutorials for operating BARD applications on our website!

Recent Top BARD Downloads

Audio

- *The Crossroads* by C.J. Box, DB136427
- *Hope Rises* by David Baldacci, DB136934
- *Yesteryear* by Caro Claire Burke, DB137558
- *The Calamity Club* by Kathryn Stockett, DB138089
- *Ironwood* by Michael Connelly, DB137790
- *Mad Mabel* by Sally Hepworth, DB137144
- *Best Kept Secrets for Travelers with Sight Loss* by Lynn Jensen, DB136908
- *Whistler: A Novel* by Ann Patchett, DB138513

Braille

- *Gator Bait* by Jana DeLeon, BR026400

- *Laura & Nellie: Adapted from the Little House Books* by Melissa Peterson and Laura Ingalls Wilder, BR013979

Fall Picks

Discover what our Reader Advisors are reading this fall!

Margaret's Pick: *An Acceptable Time: O'Keefe Family Series (4)* by Madeleine L'Engle, DB043198, BR010728

In this companion to *A House Like a Lotus* (DB023837, BR006368), sixteen-year-old Polly O'Keefe visits her grandparents' farm in Connecticut and discovers a "time gate" that takes her back three thousand years. There she meets Anaral, a Native American girl; Karralys, a druid expelled from Britain; and Tav, a warrior who has accompanied Karralys. This is part of an ongoing battle between the forces of Good and Evil that have been faced by members of the O'Keefe and Murrie families featured in Ms. L'Engle's novels.

Evan's Pick: *Heir to the Empire* by Timothy Zahn, DB033042, BR008668

Evan says, "Before the franchise changed owners, this novel was the official continuation of *Star Wars*. The first book of the famous *Thrawn Trilogy* takes the story of Luke, Leia, and Han past the events of *Return of the Jedi*, showing us the consequences and results of their battle against the Empire and the dark side of the Force."

The Galactic Empire has been defeated, and Emperor Palpatine is dead. However, a new evil arises in the form of Grand Admiral Thrawn, an Imperial strategist who returned with his fleet from an expedition to the far reaches of space, only to find the government that he once served in ruins. What can the infant Republic do against an enemy that seems to have a contingency for nearly any outcome, even being able to overcome the greatest advantage the Jedi have—the Force?

JD's Pick: *The Dog Stars* by Peter Heller, DB075493

Set nine years after a flu pandemic and blood disease have radically devastated society and killed off most of the population, Hig and his dog Jasper live at an abandoned airport in Erie, Indiana, with their neighbor Bangley, a heavily armed survivalist. Hig uses his skill as a pilot to patrol the area for threats and scout for resources from the air, while Bangley uses his knowledge of weapons and artillery to defend the ground. The story follows Hig as he navigates loss and discovery and what it means to become whole again in a fractured and broken world. While there are very real threats, Peter Heller creates an alternative apocalypse, a quiet world without monsters or zombies, without cellphones or social media, where nature could prove to be the biggest threat and where a simple change in the weather could spell disaster.

J.D. says, "As summer fades into fall and the world becomes a little quieter, I like to imagine Hig and Jasper out there in some forest, hunting game or gathering supplies for winter, not totally unlike the preparation many of us will be doing as the days start to shorten and the seasons start to change."

John's Pick: *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley, DB025835, BR012173, LP18-pt F S545

John says, "Now is the perfect time of year to read *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley. Everyone knows the story of the mad scientist who creates a living monstrosity. The scientist's creation, refused a wife and rejected by society, turns violent and is chased deep into the Arctic. I like the book for its gloomy outlook and sci-fi-gothic atmosphere. Before Shelley's Romantic age in Europe, science more freely commingled with philosophy, religion, and morality. *Frankenstein* depicts the terror of science liberated from those three handmaidens."

Reading Light is written and edited by the staff of the Mississippi Library Commission's Talking Book Services department. It is available in Braille, by email, in large print, as well as via audio on cartridge and on our website. Any mention of products and services in the Reading Light newsletter is for information purposes only and does not imply endorsement.

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