Winter 2005-06
Volume XLVIII, No. 4

WHAT’S INSIDE:
BRAILLE LITERACY
– It's a Family Value
"The Good Old Girl System"
Computer Braille Code
The Least Restrictive Environment
Message from the Editor

I would like to thank both Dr. Vasiliauskas M.D. and Winifred Downing for their excellent contributions to this issue of the CTEVH Journal. This is my tenth Journal as your editor and I feel very fortunate to work with our very special team of Specialists. As I peruse this year’s selection of conference workshops I have many difficult decisions ahead. I look forward to seeing you all at conference and hope you enjoy this issue.
# CTEVH JOURNAL

**Winter 2005-06 Volume XLVIII, No. 4**

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January 6, 2006

President’s message

The 2006 conference will be over when you receive this issue. I want to thank Jane Vogel and John Zamora for all their hard work. It takes many hours of work to put on this major conference. Please thank former conference chairs and volunteer to help future chairs.

The 2007 CTEVH conference will be held in Santa Clara with Pat Leader acting as chair. Contact a board member if you or your group would be interested in hosting the 2008 conference.

I’m pleased that CTEVH was able to facilitate the giving of the pilot test of the National Literary Braille Competency test. John & Jane worked with the hotel to find space on March 9th (the pre-conference day). Thank you Jane & John!! This test will provide a national standard for measuring competency in Braille.

This is my last message as president. The last two years have gone by very fast. The job has been challenging but also gratifying. I want to thank all the board members that I have worked with. I do appreciate all your many hours of volunteer work. I will be chairing the nomination committee for the next two years. Please e-mail me with any suggestions for board positions.

Remember to visit our web site at www.ctevh.org.

Paula Lightfoot
CTEVH membership dues are for the calendar year. **Any dues received after October will be applied to the following year.** Membership includes the *CTEVH Journal* as well as annual conference materials.

### CTEVH MEMBERSHIP DUES

- **Annual Dues** $25  
  - **Renewal**  
  - **New Member**  
- **Life Membership** $300  
  - **Foreign Membership** $35  
  - **Institutional Membership** $100

**Donation:**
- General Fund $__________
- Katie Sibert Memorial Fund $__________
- Donna Coffee Scholarship Fund $__________

**TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED** $__________

Please make checks and money orders payable in US dollars to **CTEVH** and return payments with this form. Transactions can also be processed on-line at [www.ctevh.org](http://www.ctevh.org).

Check for address change on renewals.

**NAME** __________________________________________________________

**ADDRESS** _____________________________________________________________________________

**CITY**____________________**STATE _____ COUNTRY ___________ ZIP____________**

**TELEPHONE** (optional) __________________________

**E-MAIL** _________________________________

Do you consider yourself primarily *(circle one)*
- TRANSCRIBER  
- EDUCATOR  
- PARENT  
- OTHER *(specify)* __________

If you require specialized media, do you want **CTEVH** publications in: *(circle one)*
- BRAILLE  
- TAPE  
- TAPE w/BRL Examples  
- RTF  
- FLOPPY DISK  
- VIRTUAL *(e-mail required)*

Return application and payment to:

CTEVH Membership Chair  
741 North Vermont Ave  
Los Angeles, CA 90029-3594  
323-666-2211 *(messages only)*
### CTEVH Financial Statement as of December 31,

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Katie Sibert Expense  31.36  
Outreach  1,000.00  
Transcriber Support  6,035.00  
Vacaville  1,000.00  
Secretary  44.31  
Site Finding  31.12  
Specialists  834.04  
Treasurer  196.89  
Webfee  38.00  

137,822.95

Cash on hand - December 31, 2005

CASH RECONCILIATION:
Checking  9,646.82  
Savings  97,913.60  
107,560.42

RESERVE ACCOUNTS:
Donna Coffee Youth Scholarship  4,224.24  
Katie Sibert Scholarship  68,129.55  
Life Membership  47,066.70  
Transcriber Support  21,856.35  
141,276.84

TOTAL CASH ACCOUNTS

$248,837.26

CTEVH 2005 Conference
Receipts 2004  7,060.00  
Receipts 2005  83,106.57  
Total  90,166.57

Disbursements in 2004  2,291.34  
Disbursements in 2005  73,339.05  
Total  75,630.39

Excess of Receipts Over Expenditures  $14,536.18

CTEVH 2006 Conference
Disbursements in 2005  5,297.62
Contributions to the CTEVH Gifts and Tributes Fund will be used to improve services to persons who are visually impaired.

**KATIE FUND**
- Michael Tropp
- Leslie Burkhardt
- Doris Cada
- Paula Lightfoot
- Stephen Wimbish
- Claudia Switzer
- Louise McCormick
- Helene Holman

**DONNA FUND**
- Michael Tropp
- Leslie Burkhardt
- Doris Cada
- Stephen Wimbish
- Helene Holman
- Ellen Voyles

**GENERAL FUND**
- Michael Tropp
- Camilla Gentz
- Margaret Glaeser
- Charles S. Haynes
- Hope Smith
- Florence Sumatami
- Stephen Wimbish
- Jinger Valenzuela
- Helen Holman
- Merri M. Leonard

Donor’s Name, Address, ZIP
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In honor of: __________________________________________

In memory of: ________________________________________

Name, Address, ZIP for acknowledgement:
___________________________________
___________________________________
___________________________________

___ Please direct contributions to THE CTEVH-KATIE SIBERT MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP FUND

___ Please direct contributions to THE DONNA COFFEE MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP FUND

All contributions to CTEVH are tax deductible.
FEID number available upon request.
Make checks payable to CTEVH and mail them to:

CTEVH Gifts and Tributes
Iona Luke
1301 Ashwood Court
San Mateo, CA 94402
CTEVH 2006 NOMINATIONS

The election of new members of the CTEVH Board will be held at a general session during the 2006 Conference in Anaheim.

First Term:
Sue Douglas
Educator
Albany, CA

Debi Martin
Educator
Sacramento, CA

Second Term:
Bonnie Grimm
Transcriber
Fontana, CA

Nominating Committee:
Carol Morrison
11922 Kling Street #203
North Hollywood, CA 91602
dot5carol@aol.com

Jeanne Brown
2127 Moonstone Circle
El Dorado Hills, CA 95762
jea75bro@comcast.net

Julia Moyer
5971 Chula Vista Way Apt. #8
Los Angeles, CA 90068
jkmoyer3@earthlink.net

Marilyn Westerman
719 Boyer Road
Marysville, CA 95901
mwesterman8@aol.com

Liz Barclay
500 Walnut Avenue
Fremont, CA 94536
lbarclay@csb-cde.ca.gov

Bonnie Grimm
17336 Owen Street
Fontana, CA 92335
bgrimm@brailleinstitute.org
CONGRATULATIONS, DR. NEMETH!
by Winifred Downing

On October 14, Dr. Abraham Nemeth was one of four outstanding individuals in the blindness field to be welcomed into the Hall of Fame at the American Printing House for the Blind, Louisville, Ky. The other three recipients were William Hadley, founder of the Hadley School for the Blind in the early 1920s; William English, past superintendent of the Wisconsin School for the Blind; and Max Wooley, past superintendent of the Arkansas School for the Blind. Each award winner received a certificate and a sculpture of his face, and it is these sculptures that are assembled at the museum of the American Printing House.

Dr. Nemeth was honored for his Mathematics code which has been used by blind children learning this subject for the last 55 years. He never received any monetary sum in recognition of his tremendous contribution to the education of the blind but has been satisfied with the accomplishment itself.

Though 86 years old, Dr. Nemeth continues to work diligently, now in the development of the Nemeth Uniform Braille System (NUBS). Anyone who has used braille for a substantial amount of time reacts negatively to the suggestion that braille must change in some fairly substantial ways, especially with regard to technical material. The anomalies are easily apparent when one realizes that there are now three different dollar signs in use: one in literary braille, one in computer braille, and a third in mathematics. Two different forms of parentheses are also employed, and literary braille presently offers no sign for plus, minus, or equals.

Even more important, having several different codes in preparing braille material means that scanning and translation programs cannot easily be used to produce the ever increasing and ever more diverse documents in braille that are required now that almost all blind children are being mainstreamed and require textbooks which tell them the same things that those books tell the sighted students. For the traditional braille user, it isn’t important to know whether the print is italic, boldface, in small upper case letters, etc. When these varying print styles appear in the textbooks being used in classrooms today, however, they are used to communicate some additional meaning to the reader; and a way must be found to bring to the blind child all the information given to sighted students by changes in print.

Some 16 years ago, the Braille Authority of North America (BANA) accepted these realities and assembled committees to develop a single code which would express to the blind reader everything that the sighted reader can experience. The code became known as the Unified Braille Code and, after its acceptance by most of the English-speaking countries, the Unified English Braille Code (UEBC). From the very beginning, some observers of the procedures initially adopted realized that there were very serious problems, and Dr. Nemeth proceeded to develop an alternative code. The intensity of the discrimination practiced by BANA and the braille publishers so closely involved with that organization was so all absorbing and shockingly unjust that observers are baffled by it to this day. He was not permitted to offer his code and was even denied the opportunity to read his papers explaining his reservations. Though in more recent years there has been a recognition that there is an alternative to the UEBC available, serious consideration or detailed study has never been approached because the code, the UEBC experts tell us, is not “complete.” What a curiously discriminatory attitude that accusation is when
one remembers that the braille we use every day has had changes made several times in the last 20 years and that committees concerned with the UEBC are still dickering over some decisions!

Like the reception offered initially to the NUBS, the discriminatory practices continue by exacting a standard for Dr. Nemeth’s system not applied to any other development in braille. It has even been impossible to advance any discussion of this subject in the professional magazines in the field. I am not connected with any publishing house but have been aware for years of the problems presented by the UEBC. Several years ago, I requested an opportunity to write an article on the subject for the “Journal of Visual Impairment and Blindness” (JVIB); but the editor denied my request because the matter involved was of too limited interest to be included. Later, however, Bill Gerry, a blind person of considerable technical knowledge, contributed an article praising the UEBC which was accepted by JVIB and jubilantly reproduced by the publishing houses and BANA whenever any opposition was expressed. As far as I know, Bill Gerry is the only blind person with experience in technology who has taken this stand.

Many of the people associated with BANA and the publishing houses insist that they know braille; and they do when it comes to the construction of the characters and interpretation of the rules governing contractions, punctuation, etc. They are not, though, users of braille. To them it is not significant that three or four symbols are necessary to express one character, that an arithmetic multiplication problem with two numbers cannot be written on a 40-cell braille line, that very few blind people have achieved the ability to write in the UEBC, or that 55 years of technical braille material will be scrapped if that code is adopted. I believe that there are people in the UEBC camp who realize that the code cannot be used successfully to express technical material, and the chair of BANA herself may well understand that fact; but they are afraid to step forward with their views because of the political pressure among professionals. Politics should have no place in determining the future of braille.

Understanding some of the severe problems existing in the UEBC and responding to the fact that the two national organizations of the blind, the National Federation of the Blind and the American Council of the Blind, have, by resolutions approved by their national conventions, totally rejected the UEBC, the National Braille Association (NBA) has established a committee of blind users of braille and braille transcribers to investigate the NUBS and work toward having the broader community learn about it. I have studied the NUBS enough to understand the basic principles and have conducted several workshops to acquaint mainly blind users with the system. My materials were initially prepared by Joyce Hull, an experienced NBA transcriber; and she has furnished me with the 150 to 200 booklets I have needed.

The system has several immediately attractive features, especially the fact that it will not require giving up any of the contractions or spacing practices to which we are accustomed, that it needs less space and fewer symbols to express technical material, and that it builds on what we already know and does it so that the learner can absorb just the extent of the system that is needed. If literary braille is what is being sought, no study of the mathematical or other technical expressions is necessary; but if that knowledge is necessary, it is readily available.

My workshops have been at the California Transcribers and Educators of the Visually Handicapped in 2004, the California chapter
ANNOUNCEMENTS

of the Braille Revival League in 2005, and the Braille Revival League national meeting at the convention of the American Council of the Blind in 2005. About 75 people have experienced the system that way; but wanting to make it better known among persons who could not attend the workshops, I have prepared a cassette to accompany and explain the booklet which exemplifies the main points of interest and have offered the cassette and the booklet to anyone who wants it. I have sent out 60 envelopes of this material since July.

To get a copy for yourself, contact

Winifred Downing,
1587 38th Avenue,
San Francisco, CA 94122;
phone (415) 564-5798;
e-mail wmdowning@mindspring.com.

Please also write to

Angela Cofaro,
National Braille Association,
3 Townline Circle,
Rochester, NY 14623.

If you can spare a monetary contribution, it will be very welcome; for NBA has a tiny fraction of the money that BANA could spend promoting the UEBC. Even without money, though, your expression of interest will be valuable.

If we are going to have changes in braille, it is blind users who must be involved, not just publishers and those indebted to them. Imagine how we could congratulate Dr. Nemeth if the NUBS were to be adopted to meet the needs of blind people in the many uses they make of braille!

News of Groups

San Fernando Valley Braille Transcribers

Interesting Transcriptions:

The Voice That Challenged a Nation: Marion Anderson and the Struggle for Equal Rights
by Russell Freedman
copyright 2004, in 1 volume

I Want to Buy a Vowel: A Novel of Illegal Alienation
by John Welter
copyright 1996, in 3 volumes

Kira-Kira
by Cynthia Kadohata
copyright 2004, in 2 volumes

For more information please contact Universal Media Services at (323) 663-1111 extension 1342 (formerly Braille Institute Press Department)

Ventura County Braille Transcribers Association

VCBTA is currently sponsoring two Literary Braille Classes. AuraLee Stogsdill has accepted the position of Membership Chairperson

www.venturacountybraille.com
Thank you for inviting me here today. My wife and I have been blessed with two wonderful boys. Vėjas is 8 years old and attends second grade at our local elementary school. Petras is 4 and participates in our school district’s preschool program. Both are braille students and it is because of their accomplishments that I have the privilege to speak to you today from a parent’s perspective; a perspective arrived at through 8 years of intensive “field experience” so to speak.

CHANGING TIMES AND SHIFTING PARADIGMS. I am truly excited to have the opportunity to address today’s diverse audience, ranging from those of you on the front lines, that is the parents and teachers, to educational policy makers, and indeed thought leaders of the blind community. During this presentation I will not only share the critical role that braille literacy plays in my family, but I aim to be provocative and in the spirit of progressiveness, I will strive to meet 3 additional rather ambitious objectives. 1) To start I will present a combination of personal experiences and data, which I believe will challenge each and every one of you in this room, including the seasoned veterans among you, to rethink your established personal paradigms, about what is possible when it comes to educating blind and visually impaired children and, importantly, their families. 2) I hope to strengthen your resolve with respect to the vital role braille fluency plays in the ultimate potential success of our children. 3) Lastly, I propose to raise the bar of expectations that I believe we should have for our blind children and their families.

LIVING AN “ICDX” (I CAN DO IT) PHILOSOPHY. These next few slides are here to grab your attention and to give you a sense of where we are coming from philosophically. As parents, our primary long-term goal is for our children to be happy and to be productive members of society. Rasa and I have high expectations for both boys and have no doubt that they will attend university and pursue careers of their choice. In addition to trying to make sure that they acquire all the academic, social, and independence skills they will need, we want our boys to have experiences that other sighted children have. As illustrated in these slides, this not only includes participating in birthday parties, swimming lessons, and piano recitals, but also helping out with chores and tasks both at home and on the road. In this slide Petras is helping to load the clothes dryer. This is Vėjas bringing in groceries from the car, making guacamole for dinner, using the drill to help me put his younger brother’s new bed together, carving out his Jack O’Lantern, and here he is helping me with the suitcases. In fact Vėjas has caught on and from time to time will ask, “Dad did you really need my help, or were you showing me how to do this?” We also work on Orientation and Mobility activities in fun ways like skiing (picture of Vėjas skiing with Dad at 3½ years of age) and surfing (picture of Vėjas at 6½ years of age riding the waves solo in Kauai).
Hawaii during a surf lesson). But today we are here to focus on literacy.

**AVID READER AND ASPIRING AUTHOR.** This is Vejas at 7 years of age enthusiastically writing out one of the many stories from his very vivid imagination on his BrailleNote. Yes, I did say his BrailleNote. One year ago, in March of 2004, I participated in a one day BrailleNote workshop put on by the technology program specialists from the California School for the Blind (CSB). This pre-conference workshop was part of the California Transcribers and Educators of the Visually Handicapped (CTEVH) annual conference. I was also able to arrange for Vejas to have a two hour one-on-one session with one of CSB’s technology program specialists. The very next day, Vejas was already creating documents and folders on his own. Within a week he was feverishly reading braille “e-books” by his favorite authors. This year Vejas and I together participated in two additional CTEVH pre-conference workshops at CSB, one called “Advanced BrailleNote”, the other “JAWS on the Internet”. Vejas is now functionally applying what he has learned and the BrailleNote is being incorporated into his second grade classroom routine. Now that Vejas uses the classroom printer to print class assignments that he completes on his BrailleNote, his regular classroom teacher can give him more immediate feedback, rather than having to wait days for someone to transcribe/inkprint his brailed work so that the classroom teacher can then understand it.

I have downloaded literally hundreds of children’s books from the internet, most from the National Library Service’s WebBraille (www.loc.gov/nls/braille) and Bookshare.org (www.bookshare.org) websites. While we have embossed and bound some of these into the more traditional paper braille books, the majority are transferred to Vejas’s BrailleNote via this compact flash card, which by the way currently has over 300 braille books on it. We have an agreement that he reads with his fingers only for the first 20 minutes, after that is allowed to integrate the voice feature if he so desires.

**MY FIRST GRADE “TECHY”.** This next slide shows Vejas working on a Microsoft WORD document with the assistance of the JAWS screen-reader. Don’t be fooled by the glasses. You see at this distance Vejas can’t tell if the monitor’s screen is on or off. Through toys such as Leapfrog’s School Time LeapTop, Vejas had already learned the QWERTY keyboard layout before he ever touched a real computer keyboard. Now, while many of you are very appropriately thinking to yourselves “wow” or “cool” to see a first grader being exposed to and enjoying the wonders of technology, I know there are those of you in the audience who are shocked or shaking your heads thinking “What in the world is this father thinking? This is just ‘too early’ to introduce theses technologies.” To the latter I say please keep an open mind and I ask you“How do justify singling out my very capable son from the rest of his class when it comes time to address the technology portion of his school curriculum, just because you have been taught that he is just “too young” to do these things?”

**TECHNOLOGY: IT’S IN OUR ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS AND IT’S HERE TO STAY.** You see my little second grader has been attending computer lab every week along side his classmates since kindergarten. Just like an increasing number
of school districts around the state and country, the Manhattan Beach Unified School District has a formal technology curriculum defining what students should master by the end of each grade level starting as early as pre-kindergarten. In our school district, kindergarteners and first graders focus on keyboarding skills, second graders work in Microsoft WORD, and third graders are already using EXCEL and believe it or not, PowerPoint! How is that for “a wake up call”?

Yes, children both sighted and blind are being introduced to computers, PDAs (personal digital assistants), and other technologies earlier and earlier. So while a decade ago it may have been reasonable to delay technology training until 3rd, 4th, 5th grade or junior high school, to continue this practice is to admit that you indeed do NOT believe in equal expectations when it comes to the abilities of blind children. Like it or not, this is in fact a reality which educators of blind children in the year 2005 and beyond need to acknowledge, embrace, and proactively address or our visually impaired kids will progressively, perhaps even exponentially, fall further and further behind.

During this conference there was a lot of talk of age-appropriate expectations. I submit that it is time to apply the “age-appropriate” philosophy to technology training expectations at the elementary level. Our blind children need to be encouraged to develop the same, or parallel, skills as their sighted classmates in order to ensure that they will be able to keep pace with a rapidly changing, technology rich educational environment. Furthermore, there is absolutely no harm in exposing our blind children to what is sure to be an integral part of their future, as long as we in parallel work on other needed skills.

COMPETITIVE BRAILLE READING PROGRAMS. Rest assured, we have not ignored the basics. Vejas and Petras have participated in our local Braille Institute Summer Reading Program every year since they were 2 or 3 years old. Each has earned first place in his age category the last few years in a row. As you see here, Vejas won first place in his age group in the 2004 NFB-sponsored National Braille Readers are Leaders contest, having as a first grader read over 3,300 braille pages in 3 months. Tapes and school work did not count towards this. The committee actually called to check up on us because they were surprised at the variety of books Vejas had read with very few repeats. I should point out that this was still in our pre-electronic era. Credit in large part goes to Vejas’s mother, Rasa, who has brailed over 300 children’s books to date; in fact in January alone of 2004, Rasa brailed 27 books for Vejas to read for the contest. This year our 8 year old second grader read 12,315 pages during the 3 month contest! (http://www.nfb.org/coming/bral_cert.htm) We didn’t “push” him. He accomplished this on his own.

Despite Vejas’s enthusiasm for the BrailleNote, we are still high volume users of the Braille Institute Library/National Library Services and the Kenneth Jernigan Library, both of which mail volumes of books every few weeks for the boys to enjoy. During the contest months, there were times that I ordered 30-40 books from the Braille Institute at a time in an effort to keep up with Vejas reading pace. Even now, Vejas literally trembles with excitement when braille book shipments arrive in the mail. Vejas also enjoys the braille version of “Spider: The Magazine for Children” a monthly children’s magazine which he gets from the National Library Service (www.loc.gov/nls/reference/circulars/magazines.html).
Participating in the NFB’s Braille Readers are Leaders contest in particular has been a truly rewarding and invaluable experience. For the pages to count, Vejas had to read the braille himself. I literally get goose bumps thinking about how much progress Vejas made in his braille reading skills each time he has participated in the 3 month braille reading contest. Last year 2 children from California placed nationally. I would like to extend this challenge you – audience participation so to speak – I challenge you to boost the number of young Braille Leaders from your home state this upcoming year (www.nfb.org/nopbc/braille_readers_enter.htm).

**NATIONAL BRAILLE CHALLENGE INVITATIONAL.** Vejas is very excited to be among the top 60 braille students (grades 1-12) from across the US and Canada to qualify this year to compete in the final round of the Braille Institute of America’s National Braille Challenge Invitational (www.brailleinstitute.org/BrailleChallenge/WhatIstheChallenge.htm). This event is an academic competition designed to motivate school-age braille readers to sharpen their braille skills. Vejas will be competing at the apprentice level (grades 1 and 2) and will be matching his braille skills against 11 of his peers in a series of exercises designed to demonstrate proficiency in braille. We are looking forward for Vejas to have the opportunity to interact with some of the most academically successful blind children in the country.

**EQUAL ACCESS AT SUNDAY SCHOOL.** This slide shows Vejas with his Perkins Brailler and Sunday school textbook; brailed word for word ahead of time by his mother. Thanks to my wife’s efforts Vejas has full access to the classroom experience at Sunday school.

**FULL INCLUSION AT LITHUANIAN SATURDAY SCHOOL.** Here we see Vejas in his Lithuanian Saturday school classroom. As is the situation in millions of American households, English was in fact Vejas’ and Petras’ second language. To help maintain our cultural roots, Vejas attends Lithuanian School for 4 hours every Saturday morning. Petras will do the same when he is older. Early on my wife was able to track down the Lithuanian braille alphabet. Amazing as it may seem, Vejas actually has access to the Lithuanian School curriculum to the same degree as his sighted classmates.

We are very fortunate in that the teachers and administrators at both Lithuanian school and Sunday school have been very supportive and cooperative. For these “extracurricular activities” we have not had access to formal VI support. Therefore as there has been no other choice, the parents have had to apply what we have learned, and in these settings have to the best of our ability assumed the roles of the VI teacher, transcriber, O&M instructor, inclusion specialist, and advocate. Attempting to function in these capacities has certainly given us a better appreciation for how much you the educators do. Importantly, it is when a family independently succeeds in such environments that you the educators really know you have done a good job!

**LITHUANIAN BRAILLE IN THE 21ST CENTURY.** We have now stepped into the 21st Century, so while my wife still modifies the worksheets and brailles out the vast majority of the Lithuanian school textbook passages on our Perkins Brailler, next year I intend to start helping with the longer passages. To illustrate the feasibility of this, here is a page from my...
son’s second grade Lithuanian textbook. I use OmniPage Professional to scan and then optically recognize the Lithuanian text. Then I proof the text on my laptop using OmniPage Professional’s built in proofreading tool which recognizes basic Lithuanian and is similar to spell check in WORD. I then make any additional needed corrections on my laptop using the Lithuanian keyboard option which comes pre-packaged as part of Windows XP. Next I copy the corrected Lithuanian text and import it into the Lithuanian template I created in Duxbury. Then with a single keystroke (Ctrl+T) I translate the text into Lithuanian braille, which can then be embossed or, believe it or not, transferred to the BrailleNote via this compact flash card. Yes, as it turns out, we discovered that the BrailleNote can actually be “tricked” into recognizing Lithuanian braille. Of course I advise turning off the voice feature to avoid listening to what would sound like complete gibberish. As proof of concept please pass around this same Lithuanian textbook passage that my second grader was gracious enough to emboss directly from his BrailleNote for your reading pleasure.

**TOP STUDENT IN LITHUANIAN SCHOOL 1ST GRADE CLASS.** I am proud to share with you that Vejas was in fact formally recognized as the best student and most fluent reader and writer in his Lithuanian school first grade class last year. One day when I was with Vejas in the classroom, he in his usual form finished his assignment before anyone else. I leaned over to let him know this and he whispered back to me: “Of course dad, that’s because I have the advantage - braille is faster”.

_I contend that without access to braille materials Vejas could still successfully participate in the Lithuanian Saturday school and Sunday school settings, but his role would be passive, relying on others to read and do the work for him. He would be “the passenger”, whereas now Vejas clearly shines on his own merits. Now Lithuanian is far from a mainstream foreign language. At this point, I would like for each of you to reflect and think about how many of the children you work with speak Spanish, French, or other languages at home. Are they being exposed braille materials in that language? The answer is likely to be no, at least not to any significant degree. Why is that? As I have demonstrated, the resources and technology are out there._

**IS BRAILLE STILL IMPORTANT IN THE 21ST CENTURY?** One way to answer this is to ask: “Is print still important?” I would sound pretty silly if I stood up here and posed the following question: “In this age of MP3 and wav audio-files, downloadable educational video-files, computer screen-readers, and audio-books, should we still bother to teach our sighted children reading and handwriting skills?” Furthermore, I can only imagine what you would think of me if I told you to toss away the pens and pencils you are holding, because they are obsolete, since we after all now have digital voice recorders, voice-recognition software, and portable keyboards. Indeed these are completely ridiculous statements. So why is it that if one substitutes the words “braille skills” for “reading and writing skills” or “slate and stylus” for “pens and pencils” amazingly to some people these same two ludicrous statements are somehow transformed into reasonable assertions?

**IS BRAILLE STILL IMPORTANT? WHAT’S THE DATA?** By now everyone in the audience should know where I stand on this issue. But alas, I am admittedly “just a parent”.
Furthermore what I have shared with you thus far is anecdotal, completely biased, and is based on what you might call a very small, inadequate sample size, so let me try to step back and be more objective. As part of my day job I am a researcher. Let’s look at some hard data.

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT: HOW WILL MY CHILD DO IN SCHOOL? Let’s critically examine data from the American Foundation for the Blind (AFB) website regarding this issue. As depicted in figure A, only 45% of blind or severely visually impaired, but otherwise capable, students graduate from high school compared 80% of sighted Americans. Furthermore, only 16% of those blind or severely visually impaired students that graduate high school then go on to earn a college degree. Let’s see, if we do the math 16% of 45% is a whopping 7% of our blind kids earn a college degree! From a parent’s standpoint, I have to interject that this “report card of the current status of affairs” is not very encouraging and is certainly not reassuring. Now granted you don’t need a high school diploma or college diploma to get a job, but everyone in this room should agree that advanced education certainly broadens one options.

EMPLOYMENT STATUS: HOW WILL MY CHILD SUPPORT HIS FAMILY? What everyone in this room should be asking is “How likely is my child (or the child I am working with) going to have the financial resources to support themselves and their eventual family?” I now refer you to figure B. Statistics from the United States Bureau of Labor reveal that about 71% of otherwise employable adults have a job. In sharp contrast only about a third of legally blind adults are employed. Wow, as a parent who wants the best for his blind children this is another sobering statistic. Let’s look into this more carefully. How’s this for an eye-opener? 93% of the employed blind read and write braille; only 7% don’t! Also remember that these statistics focus only on employment status, that is employed versus unemployed, not on the type of job one is able to hold. Thus for the totally blind child the statistics speak for themselves - case closed - they need to be fluent in braille.

RESIDUAL VISION: A DISADVANTAGE? But what about the child with some residual vision? Let’s take a closer look at this group. I downloaded these images from the website of one of the schools for the blind to illustrate a point. Now some of you in the audience may look at this photo and think “Isn’t technology amazing? Instead of using some sort of magnifying glass, these children are able to access large print text on a computer.” But let’s take a closer look at this computer screen. Let’s see, at this magnification only 2 lines fit on the screen. There are 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 letters on the top line and 12 characters, the rough equivalent of 1 or 2 words, taking up the entire second line. Can such a child read print? Well, yes; but I ask you how functional is this? Frankly, this is worse than trying to read a web page on cell phone! Can you imagine trying to successfully keep up with high school level homework, or for that matter junior high school level homework this way? The reality is that the difficulties of low vision students are often not as apparent as they are for students who are blind. The irony is that children who have some residual sight may find themselves at a disadvantage because they often can’t keep up with their peers academically.
EMBRACING BRAILLE. I will never forget my first major conference for the blind, the Discovery 1997 Low Vision Conference in Chicago. In the exhibit hall I met a mother who was manning a parent organization booth. She asked me the usual questions of how old my child was and how much he could see. I informed her that Vejas was 10 months old and that we were not yet sure how much he would be able to see. She then eagerly shared with me that because her son had some usable vision in one eye, she and the teachers had decided to hold off on the introduction of braille. Oh how she came to regret that decision! You see, her son then had trouble keeping up in grade school. This mother did not beat around the bush. What she wanted to relay to me more than anything else was to make sure our son would be well versed in braille skills. Now by that point, despite repeated reassurances by doctors that our son would have “usable vision” we had already come to the conclusion that Vejas (and we) should learn braille “just in case”, but this was an eye-opening and a personal philosophy changing realization – our child NEEDED to know braille to really make it.

“LITERACY LETS YOU REACH THE SUMMIT OF YOUR DREAMS”. Does any one recognize this mountain climber? This is Erik Weihenmayer, who is by anyone’s standards a truly inspirational individual. Eric was the first sightless person to scale Mount McKinley and Mount Everest (www.touchthetop.com, www.climbingblind.org), and www.afb.org/Section.asp?SectionID=44&TopicID=16&SubTopicID=34&DocumentID=1832). Erik is an inspirational speaker, a fifth grade English and math teacher, an author, a husband and a father. While now a major national proponent of braille literacy, in his autobiography, “Touch the Top of the World; a Blind Man’s Journey to Climb Farther than the Eye Can See,” Erik describes how due to his residual vision he too as a youngster resisted braille and all blindness skills for that matter. I would like for each of you to take a moment and reflect on your own experiences, friends, acquaintances, and students. How many of you know someone who in retrospect wishes that they had learned braille earlier? How often do they blame their parents, teachers, and “the system” for not having made them learn the skills they now wish they had mastered? Let me take it a step further: have you ever met someone who truly wished they had not been taught braille? Furthermore it is important to remember that, as in Erik’s case, many eye conditions are associated with progressive loss of vision over time; this not only applies to older individuals, but to children and adolescents as well.

SO WHO SHOULD LEARN BRAILLE? WHAT DOES THE LAW SAY? While preparing for an IEP (Individual Education Plan) I actually looked this up. The law as written is quite clear. Section 1414 of the United States Education Code states that “The IEP Team shall in the case of a child who is blind or visually impaired, provide for instruction in braille and the use of braille unless the IEP Team determines, after an evaluation of the child’s reading and writing skills, needs, and appropriate reading and writing media (including an evaluation of the child’s future needs for instruction in braille or the use of braille), that instruction in braille or the use of braille is not appropriate for the child.”
Let me paraphrase: “When you have a visually impaired child (including one that has functional vision, but is at risk of losing it) you are mandated to school them in braille skills UNLESS you and the entire team can come up with valid reasons not to teach them these basic skills to which they are entitled by law.” In other words, the only way to legally get around teaching braille to a visually impaired child is for the IEP or IFSP (Individualized Family Service Plan) Team to make a conscious collective decision an annual basis not to teach braille! And yet this is happening all around us!

“GETTING BY” VERSUS SUCCEEDING.

Let’s go back and take a look at these low vision kids again for a moment. Do these children need braille? Well if the goal is to “just get by”, then probably not. Would these children benefit from braille? Absolutely! Will they be taught braille? Sadly, in the year 2005, there is a fair chance that due to residual vision they will not. But I ask you: How will they keep up in school? They may be able to get by in the lower grade levels, but what about high school, college, or postgraduate studies? How likely are they to get a job? What kind of job will they be able to hold? I submit we are “under-diagnosing” the number of students that could benefit from braille skills!

I believe that braille fluency makes the difference between “getting by” and having a chance to really succeed, to allow your child to reach his or her full potential. Now I am confident that my children will be productive contributors to society, but I have to admit that it breaks my heart each time I see a child in a doctor’s waiting room, at a conference, or in a resource room with his or her nose rubbing up to a large print book or a computer screen, because I know that, if and once, they graduate, they will be starting from a disadvantaged position. This is what one might rightfully call an easily avoidable “iatrogenic handicap”. If any of you are still having doubts about the critical role of braille, I encourage you to read the book “The World Under My Fingers” the text of which can be found online at www.nfb.org/books/books1/worldbk.htm.

HOW HARD IS BRAILLE ANYWAY? IT’S SO EASY EVEN A CHILD CAN LEARN IT! Print and braille are not so fundamentally different! In both cases it is the brain that processes and reacts to the raw data sent to it by the eyes or the fingers (from Braille Today and Tomorrow by Fredric F. Schroeder in “The World Under My Fingers”). Experienced braille readers read at 200-400 words per minute, speeds comparable to that of print readers. There are even some, like my 8 year old, who propose that braille is faster! At a parent teacher conference this last Fall, Vejas’s classroom teacher shared with us that at the beginning of second grade, he was already reading more words per minute than the average (sighted) student reads by the end of second grade (and that was before he read over 12,300 braille pages in 3 months for this year’s NFB contest!). Just as with anything else, practice is important and the rewards to your child are priceless.

PARENTS NEED TO LEARN BRAILLE. During lunch I was asked if I thought parents really need to learn braille. I’m not going to beat around the bush. The answer is an unequivocal, resounding YES!

For fun I would like to share with you my “Top 10” list of reasons for parents to learn braille.

10) So you can read along with your children
9) Because it sends a powerful message to your child that you are interested in what they are doing and in their success
8) Because it gives you more validity as a parent when interacting with the educational system
7) So you can help with homework
6) So you can pick up transcription errors (“Braillo’s”)
5) Because it is a powerful bonding experience
4) So you can understand the personalized thank-you note that Santa brailed for your child for the milk and cookies he/she left for him on Christmas Eve
3) So you can leave notes and “secret messages” for your kids

But the bottom line is: why not?
2) Its so easy even a child can learn it!
1) Its so easy a parent can learn it a few hours!

What you say? I’m 100% serious! In October of 2003, I attended an NFB-sponsored Braille is Beautiful: Beginning Braille for Parents Workshop during the NFB of California’s State Convention. Amazing as it may seem, I watched a room full of parents literally learn the basics of braille in under 4 hours. Not only did everyone leave knowing the braille alphabet, but each parent was able to braille a secret message to their child using a slate and stylus!

Let me put this into perspective. Just one month earlier, at the end of parent orientation night, Vejas’s new first grade teacher encouraged all the parents to leave a note on their child’s desk as a special surprise. I stared at the Perkins Brailier that was sitting on my son’s desk right in front of me. You see, I didn’t have my “cheat sheet”. I couldn’t leave an intelligible note for my first grade child. Despite all my years of schooling, at that moment I realized that from perspective my son’s needs, I was indeed illiterate. I can’t even begin to tell you how excited my son was to get his personalized note from Dad after the Braille is Beautiful: Beginning Braille for Parents Workshop. Talk about empowerment!

Parents, if you don’t know braille, or if your braille skills need sharpening, then I strongly encourage you to attend a Braille is Beautiful: Beginning Braille for Parents Workshop if you have the opportunity.

WHEN EXPOSED EARLY, CHILDREN SEARCH (“LOOK”) FOR BRAILLE BEFORE THEIR 1ST BIRTHDAY! Both of my children were already searching for the “raised dots” of braille on book pages by about 9 months of age. Here we see my youngest son Petras enjoying his favorite night time book “Good Night Moon” with his mother. This next picture brings back fond memories of how, as soon as my wife would sit down to braille or his older brother would sit down with his Perkins to do his homework, Petras at 2½ years of age would scramble over to his Perkins and “braille” away with the same rhythm, intensity, and sense of purpose as his mother or brother. It didn’t even really matter if there was paper or not.

At Petras’s IEP earlier this year, his VI teacher commented on how impressed she was with the way our then 3½ year old followed the braille on the pages of books that they read together. During that same meeting, Petras’s speech teacher shared with us that she had tried using some special story
books while working with him. She was struck by his visible disappointment as he sadly and intently kept searching the pages for braille that was not there! To remedy the situation, the speech teacher requested that braille be added to the books.

“Early introduction” to braille does NOT mean kindergarten or even preschool! Literacy begins at home. If you spend some time at the Borders or the Barnes and Noble children’s section, you will notice that even the simplest of children’s books includes print letters or words. Are our blind kids given equal access to braille at the same age? The answer is simple - NO. We need to get interesting braille books and brailed toys into the hands of our blind and low vision children before their first birthday! Furthermore, I can’t stress enough how important it is to start reading early! Reading contributes to concept development. Reading is fun, is great bonding time, creates discussion points, and early exposure sets the tone that reading is exciting. While braille books for babies and toddlers were virtually nonexistent when I started my braille journey 8 years ago, an expanding selection is becoming available for free or at minimal cost from the Braille Institute of America (www.brailleinstitute.org), the National Braille Press (www.nbp.org), Seedlings (www.seedlings.org), and other sources.

BRIDGING THE GAP: PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT. And now onto my last objective. Why is it that so few parents are told by their VI teachers that they just need to learn braille? If I were to stand in front of an audience of educators and parents of sighted children and asked the question: “Is it solely the school’s responsibility to teach a child to read and write and function in society?” the answer would be a resounding “NO!” Parental involvement makes a huge difference! I submit that this not only applies to the regular school setting, but to the education of blind children as well. The “tone” of what should be expected of parents must be set early on, in early intervention programs, blind preschool programs, and at family camps or weekends for the blind. Unfortunately, this is not happening! Rather than motivating and teaching parents how to empower themselves, the message frequently conveyed to parents is that “all this blindness stuff” is too complex and too overwhelming for a “mere parent” to truly understand. Parents are effectively told from the get go: “don’t worry, we the educators know what is best and we will take care of everything for you – that’s what we do.”

HOW ARE WE TO INTERPRET THESE “EDUCATIONAL REPORT CARDS”? I now refer back to the hard data, the “educational report cards” so to speak that we previously examined. The data suggests that at the schooling level there is a huge discrepancy between the accomplishments of sighted and blind children. After acknowledging this we all need to ask: “If the system is currently doing such a great job at educating our blind kids, why does such a large gap still exist and what can educators and parents do about this?” I don’t know the answer, but I do believe that it is time to give parents some credit and additional responsibility. I believe that we actually need to raise the bar of what is expected of parents and encourage them to be more active participants in their child’s future. Educators of the blind are fooling themselves if they think they can most effectively teach a blind child all the skills they need on their own!
A FATHER’S PLEA TO TEACHERS, ADMINISTRATORS, AND EDUCATIONAL POLICY MAKERS. Educators, I ask you to seriously think about the following. Parents know they have succeeded in parenting when they see their children mature from a state of dependence on them to becoming truly independent individuals. Similarly, please think about how you can mold and help guide families grow from being dependent on you and the system, to a stage of independence, when they become able to take the skills you have taught them so they can then confidently apply what they have learned from you to seek things out for themselves and their child. I have come to believe that behind every successful blind child that truly reaches his/her full potential are involved parents. Make parents active participants in their child’s future, rather than shielding them from what you and many in society perceive as a burden. I assure you that in the big picture, when parents who take it upon themselves to become braille literate reflect back on their experience, they will not look back with frustration, anger, or resentment towards those of you who were bold enough to inform them they needed to learn braille, rather they will view being encouraged to take this “road less traveled by parents” with a sense of gratitude and empowerment. This is the ultimate win-win situation.

BLINDNESS IS NOT THE HANDICAP. As I wind things up, I submit that blindness itself is NOT the handicap; rather, not giving kids the appropriate braille skills creates the handicap - the handicap of illiteracy - at least functional illiteracy. In my opinion this is further compounded by lower expectations on the part of parents and educators of our blind children than of age-matched sighted peers, and I will add low (to virtually nonexistent) expectations of parents by educators. To paraphrase the father of two successful now grown up blind young men: “We must demand higher expectations of our blind youth. Our kids need the skills to make it in the ‘real world’ where he or she will not be given a break just because they have a visual impairment. They will not be given twice as much time as there co-workers to complete their projects.” Once your child graduates, it’s survival of the fittest.

BRaille LITERACy: THE KEy TO A WORLD OF OPPORTUNITIES. I now conclude by reassuring you that braille is very much alive and an integral part of my family’s daily routine. We view braille is a vital ingredient in our children’s success. As depicted by the 6 cell combination lock (resembling a braille cell) on the door in this last side, I ask each and every one of you to please teach our children how to unlock their own doors; the doors to their future and an exciting world of endless opportunities. Please don’t keep the combination a secret!

THANK YOU!

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Len Dozier  
CTEVH Pokadot Specialist

How to Recover Your Unfinished Braille File After an Unplanned Shutdown

Teachers of Pokadot may be able to save some students the exasperation of losing the product of several hours work if they would distribute this article early in their course. I get calls for help from brailists who think that they have lost several pages of braille from their current session when their computer has shut down unexpectedly before they saved the updated file under its unique name. The most common causes are that the computer was left inactive with Screen Saver or Power Options in the Windows Control Panel set wrong, but sometimes it is loss of primary power or a misstep by the braillist. Frequently this apparent data loss happens even though they had followed instructions to press F3 at the blue braille screen after each page was done. They had not remembered that F3 at the braille screen saves the file under the standard name BACKUP1.ACN -- not the unique file name -- so they thought that the new part of their updated file was gone. Fortunately it is only masqueraded.

When each page has been completed and F3 is pressed two things happen. The previous BACKUP1.ACN FILE is renamed BACKUP2.ACN and the now longer file is saved as BACKUP1.ACN. Thus one has at least two copies of the updated file on their hard disk -- one that includes everything up to the next to last press of F3, and the latest one that includes the whole file up to the last press of F3. If this was not the first session on the current file you will also have a non-updated copy on disk under the unique file name from the previous session.

One might ask why not just save the file to its unique name after every page instead of the above procedure. The reason is that some operations if done wrong and then saved could corrupt a large part of the file on the disk. Then the original would be lost with no copies. The BACKUP1.ACN method insures that you can find two other copies of the file on your hard disk that contain data that is up to date or almost so.

Now let’s assume that your computer has shut down for some accidental reason before you have saved the current file to a unique name on your hard disk and that you had been pressing F3 after each page. Here is how to recover the entire file and label it with its unique name.

1- Look at the list of files in the POK76 folder (or other folder) in which the Pokadot program PD.EXE is stored and find the file BACKUP1.ACN.  
2- Load BACKUP1.ACN into Pokadot.  
3- Usually a message will appear warning that the Control Z is not in cell 1 after the last line.  
4- Either delete the last line or finish it properly. In either case then place a Control Z in cell 1 after the last line.  
5- Press ESC to get to the Main Braille Menu and then F3 to start the process of saving to a unique name.  
6- Enter your unique name and when the operation completes check that the number of
kilobytes displayed at the top of the monitor is reasonable. (One dense braille page is slightly less than one kilobyte.)

7- Go to the Main Braille Menu and press D for Directory, then 3 for hard disk, to verify that the unique file name appears and the number of kilobytes is reasonable. This is a good safety measure because if you wait till after quitting Pokadot and the file was not recorded properly you would have to start again from the BACKUP1.ACN file. If the number is not reasonable then get back to the blue braille screen to make any additional corrections needed and resave to a unique name before quitting Pokadot.

There is one situation where the BACKUP1.ACN file does not provide protection against data loss even if there is no unexpected shutdown. That is the presence of an unintended Control Z in the middle of the loaded file before you recorded it. That will occur if you forget to delete the Control Z at the end of your previous session on an incomplete file before starting the continuation of the file. That would cause the recording process to stop at the mid-file Control Z and leave no record of all data after the Control Z. If you made this error Pokadot will warn you at the next press of F3. If that occurs be sure to follow the directions that will appear on screen to find the accidental mid-file Control Z. When you find it, delete it and press F3 again. That will make sure that the last part of the file is included in BACKUP1.ACN.

In summary, if your computer shuts down unexpectedly just remember that the file BACKUP1.ACN on the hard disk will provide you with the opportunity to recover your work. And even if BACKUP1.ACN is damaged you can use BACKUP2.ACN without losing more than one or two pages.

Help: I offer free personal help via e-mail at lend@braille-pokadot.com or phone: (360) 574-6167 after 9 AM Pacific time

Source: Pokadot and BrlProof can be downloaded for free from the internet at www.braille-pokadot.com. Both are also available for $5 on the same CD from the National Braille Association, 3 Townline Circle, Rochester, NY 14623-2513. Their phone number is 585-427-8260.
Mary Denault  
CTEVH Mathematics Specialist  

**Modified Expressions**

**Contracted:**
For mathematical expressions that consist of a single letter or number with a line over it, the contracted form of modified expressions is used. This is simply the number with the horizontal bar symbol after it as shown below.

Horizontal bar symbol:  
Dots (156) ⏭

\[ \frac{311}{900} \]

**Five-Step Rule:**
When more than one number or letter has a line above it, the Five-Step Rule must be used.

\[ \overline{.7512} \]

1. The multipurpose indicator (dot 5) is placed right before the expression to be modified. ⏭
2. Write the expression to be modified next. In this case it is the 12. ⏭
3. Next transcribe the directly-over indicator. (dots 126). ⏭
4. The symbol for a horizontal bar is next. (156). ⏭
5. The last symbol is the termination indicator. (12456). ⏭

For more information, refer to *The Nemeth Braille Code For Mathematics And Science Notation, 1972 Revision*. Refer to Rule XIV, Section 86.
Computer Braille Code – It's not as Bad as it Looks

Linda McGovern

with Patty Biasca and Joanna Venneri

Although not technically under the auspices of the CTEVH Textbook Formats Committee, I wanted to address Computer Braille Code (CBC) as I am seeing more and more website information or e-mail addresses in works I am transcribing. In the process of writing this article, the committee realized that we are not experts in this Code at all – but with our combined wisdom (?), we have come up with a basic primer on commonly seen electronic addresses where we use CBC, plus some examples for you to try, then see how we did them. Our shoulders are broad – you are welcome to point out any errors – just be kind.

Of course you should all have the 2000 Revised Edition of Computer Braille Code developed by BANA, available through APH. This book contains many, many additional examples and rules that this article will not touch. We will only be looking at items I have commonly seen in textbooks to date.

Basics:
• Use uncontracted braille.
• Numbers are brailled in the lower parts of the cell and no number sign is used.
• Do not use the contractions for “to,” “into,” or “by” before a CBC indicator (indicators explained below).
• Ignore any print typeface change except capitalization in electronic addresses.
• All punctuation marks within an electronic address must use the CBC symbol for that mark. (See examples below).
• Use one blank cell for a space which is part of the print electronic address. A transcriber’s note on the Transcriber’s Note page should be included saying that Electronic Addresses are brailled using Computer Braille Code.

NOTE: There are instances where special codes are necessary to show emphasis, extra spaces etc. These are explained in Computer Braille Code Rev. 2000 – not here.

These are a few ways I have seen electronic addresses presented:
• Set Off – where they are set off from the body of the text. There is no need to use the Begin and End CBC indicators. Braille them starting in cell 1 with runovers in cell 2.
• Embedded – where the address is embedded within the text. The Begin CBC indicator must be used to signal that what follows is Computer Braille, and the End CBC indicator must be used to signal a return to regular text.
• Addresses with beginning and ending angle brackets. These brackets are NOT part of the electronic address, and therefore are treated like any other punctuation mark. If embedded, braille the left angle bracket symbol (\textbackslash:), then the opening CBC indicator, address, Closing
CBC indicator, right angle bracket (:::). If not embedded, braille the bracket symbols before and after doing the address.

Of course there are exceptions to all rules. One thing we might see is when the first two or more letters of an address are capitalized. In this case, the Caps Lock indicator is sufficient at the beginning of the address, but you must use the Caps Release indicator to show the end of the capital letters and the End Computer Braille Code Indicator to indicate a return to regular text.

Listed below are the CBC indicators and symbols that are used in the examples shown below. For a complete listing of the many, many symbols, you need to refer to Computer Braille Code Rev. 2000.

Computer Braille Code Indicators – include on the Special Symbols page
:::  (456, 346) Begin Computer Braille Code indicator – shows CBC will follow.
::  (456, 156) End Computer Braille Code indicator – shows CBC is over.
::  (456, 12346) Continuation indicator – shows CBC will continue on the next line.

The continuation indicator may be placed immediately after a CBC symbol, a space, or at any point in the electronic address as you approach the end of the Braille line. All spaces at the end of the braille line need not be filled.
::  (456) Shift indicator – shows next letter is a capital – DO NOT USE DOT 6!
::  (456, 345) Caps Lock indicator – shows following letters are capital letters
::  (456, 126) Caps Release indicator – shows end of all capital letters.

Other Symbols – include on the Special Symbols page
::  (12346) ampersand &  ::  (3456) number sign #
::  (4) at sign @  ::  (146) percent sign %
::  (156) colon :  ::  (1456) question mark ?
::  (1246) dollar sign $  ::  (34) slash /
::  (46) dot .  ::  (456, 45) tilde ~
::  (123456) equals sign =  ::  (456, 456) underscore _

Here are some examples of addresses that are in a project on which I am currently working. Try doing these yourselves, using the indicators cited above, and the list of miscellaneous symbols shown.

1. http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/r_plagiar.html (this is set off in print)

These are embedded in print.
2. A lengthy list of web sites which “help track down plagiarism”:
   <http://www.kalama.com/~zimba/plag&cheat.htm#track down>

3. Site provides tips for detecting, training aids, links to paper mills and articles about plagiarism:
4. Spanish language service for comparing texts:
   <http://www.dcc.uchile.cl/~rmeza/proyectos/detectaCopias/index.html>

And here is the grand finale – have fun!!!

5. For ELA released assessment items from the 2004 CAHSEE, go to
   http://www2.cde.ca.gov/scripts/texis.exe/webinator/search?query=CAHSEE%20released%20items$submit=GO
   (This address is all on one line in print - phew!!!)

1. HTTPS://OWL.ENGLISH.PURDUE.EDU/_&HANDOUTS/RESEARCH/R__PLAGIAR.html

2. HTTPS://WWW.KALAMAZOH.COM/_&ZIMBA/PLAGIACHEAT.HTM#TRACK_DOWN.html

3. SITE PROVIDES TIPS & DETECT-S TRAX & <-- ASK PAPY MILLS & VICTORS AL

4. HTTP://WWW.DCC.UCHILE.CL/~RMEZA/PROYECTOS/DETECTA_COPIAS/INDEX.HTML#:02

5. HTTPS://WWW2.CDE.CA.GOV/SCRIPTS/TEXIS.EXE/WEBINATOR/SEARCH?QUERY=_CAHSEE_<%20RELEASED%20ITEMS$SUBMIT=_GO_:02

P.S. – I was told by a committee member who is WAY more knowledgeable than I that capital letters are usually not necessary in accessing URL’s (computerese for electronic address sites). This generated much discussion (via e-mail, of course) and the conclusion was reached that most of us are not savvy enough to know when they are necessary, and when they are not. So we agreed to go with the “When in doubt, follow print” rule – even though it will mean both transcribers and blind users doing work that may not be necessary!!!

 ty may ria s wrig at okable@earth vanish link mete 42
Translated Sentences in Displayed Material

1. to identify essential characteristics of people and things.

Carlos Fuentes es inteligente y creativo.
Sus libros son interesantes.

Carlos Fuentes is intelligent and creative.
His books are interesting.

2. to indicate profession or vocation.

Carlos Fuentes es escritor.
Yo soy músico.
Tú eres doctora.

Carlos Fuentes is a writer.
I am a musician.
You are a doctor.

For more information, refer to "NBA Interim Manual for Foreign Language Braille Transcribing" Section 4.1
Music in Education

Richard Taesch
CTEVH Music Specialist

TWO SPECIAL MUSIC SESSIONS PLANNED FOR CONFERENCE 06

Two very special sessions are slated for our conference this year. The first will be conducted as a Forum for music and textbook transcribers to discuss and solve common problems and formats used in music textbooks. Specialists from both the music and textbook arenas will be on hand. NBA Music Committee and National Braille Press are expected to be represented. Feel free to bring your own questions, suggestions, and examples for us to discuss.

The second workshop is specifically aimed at issues involving teacher skills and pedagogy needed to instruct early learners in functional music braille reading. Handouts will include actual lessons, assignments, and theory exams that can be used to get a beginner on the right path. The transition from the first steps in music braille reading, to instruction for piano and all other instruments will be covered. Sighted and blind teachers will be on the panel. Our theme is anyone can teach a child to read music braille, and you need not know about the subject prior to giving your first lessons.

FOCUS ON MUSIC EDUCATION FOR BLIND STUDENTS

This year we hope to see more understanding and attention given to the problems of actual music teaching, rather than only transcription issues. We are now seeing wonderful new technology for music braille production, and many newly certified transcribers are graduating under the capable tutelage of Karen Gearreald at NLS. As music braille transcription becomes more efficient, readers will need improved skills to make better use of what we produce. In order to teach our young people more effectively, we must move toward a more standardized approach in the ways that we teach. Career music braille educators are very few and cannot be everywhere to do their work. Effective methods must become readily available in order for any music or resource teacher to provide the best instruction possible for anyone, anywhere. Our educators’ workshop in 2006 will focus on this concept.

As a result of inadequate training, so many blind students have been denied the joy of knowing what it is like to work in classrooms or in bands and orchestras without a great amount of discomfort. Upon careful examination, nearly every blind person who has had a poor experience with music is a casualty of spotty or non-existent training in music and in music braille disciplines. Opinions of educators who may say “... oh, braille is too cumbersome in music” are heard often, and enlightenment is a never ending job.

As a result of seeing how a weak background in music for a blind student can effect higher education, a little guidebook is under preparation. It is called, “A Blind Music Student’s College Survival Guide.” The subtitle is “The Music Professor’s Help Manual.” Keeping in mind that one need not be a music major to encounter music classes in college, good information on music should be available for all college-bound blind individuals and their teachers, no matter what.
CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, NORTHRIDGE -  
Conference on Disabilities 2006

CSUN Center on Disabilities Presents Music / Vocations / Employment for blind individuals as workshop themes for a special workshop on March 22, 2006 at 1:30pm. SCCM’s Braille Music Division will present a special session in co-operation with the CSUN Center on Disabilities called, “Music Literacy and Technology Leading to Varied Career Options for Individuals with Visual Impairment.”

A special feature of this session is the question as to whether a person who has been trained in music can in fact find vocations and/or eventual employment in areas other than those directly related only to music teaching or performing. Much research is being done in this area, and it can be good news indeed for those who may be musically motivated as their strongest interest. Counselors have been known to advise blind students that they cannot support funding for their pursuit of music, as in their opinion, such may be unrealistic. Some subjects of this workshop will include preparation, self-advocacy, vocational options, and what to do once you are in school and find yourself unprepared.

A Blind Music Student’s College Survival Guide - An advance peek

Real experiences with the college dilemma have inspired this work for blind students and their professors. It is a very short work of about 30 pages [16 point], and is intended for helpful and concise guidelines. Subjects covered in the book are:

1. Where to Start - Myths and Facts
2. Braille as a Language - Philosophy or Fact
3. Advocacy, Self-advocacy, and Preparation
4. What to do once accepted to college / funding?
5. Testing out / outside study
6. Tips for the Sighted Professor
7. Syllabi for Transcribers - the good, the bad, and the ugly
8. Labor and Vocational Statistical Resources for Musicians

Here are a few of the Myths and Facts that are explored in the little guidebook.

**MYTH:** All textbooks must be fully prepared in braille prior to beginning classes.  
**FACT:** Complete books need not always be formally produced before classes. [In many cases for music students, this is impossible at best.]

**MYTH:** It is a blind student’s responsibility to make sure that he or she obtains the services of a music transcriber.  
**FACT:** It is not your job to shop for transcribers. Schools generally provide Disabled Student Services to do that for you.
MYTH: One primary problem for braille readers is that of poor “turn-around-time” on the part of over-worked transcribers, and the fact that there are so few experienced music transcribers available.

FACT: The chief problem with music braille is rarely poor turn-around time on the part of transcribers. The problem is nearly always a lack of planning on the part of students, directors, and teachers with respect to required materials for their classes. Educators are professionals in their fields. Blind students must know their own needs, how to obtain support, how to advocate for themselves, and how to respectfully “educate their educators.”

ARTICLES BY MENVI SPECIALISTS

With a focus on music in education, opportunities for blind music people, and vocational options emerging for more musically trained individuals, we felt that the following article from the Dancing Dots President and MENVI Specialist, Bill McCann, might be in order. Following is Part 1 of the AER published article.

Note: The following article first appeared in the fall newsletter of AER’s Education Curriculum Division and is reprinted here with permission.

INCLUDING BLIND STUDENTS IN SCHOOL MUSIC PROGRAMS

By Bill McCann

PART I

The author is a blind musician, entrepreneur and the founder of Dancing Dots Braille Music Technology, L.P. of Valley Forge, PA. He holds a Bachelor of Music from Philadelphia’s University of the Arts and has worked in the information technology and assistive technology fields since 1982.

What do you do when one of your blind or low vision students wants to join a school music ensemble or is required to enroll in a general music course? How can you find ways to support that student by partnering with music educators, parents and/or other school staff to build a network that works for your student? If you yourself are not a musician, how can you find ways to compensate for the lack of those skills in order to help your student to progress?

In the following article, I will summarize the common challenges, offer some ideas that may work for you and point you to resources that should be helpful. The ideas below apply mainly to braille readers. I hope that this article can serve as a starting point for generating ideas and shared practices for successfully integrating not only that population but also low vision and students with multiple disabilities into the music classroom and school ensembles. In general, one size definitely does not fit all. A creative, flexible approach combined with team-building will typically best serve the student’s needs.
Role of the Vision Teacher

Since 1992, we at Dancing Dots have worked hard to create technology for blind people and those who educate them that will solve or, at least, make significant progress toward solving the following challenges: automatically converting printed music into braille; permitting a blind musician to independently create a printed score or multi-track sound recordings of his or her musical ideas. We have made great progress. But our technology alone has no power to alter misconceptions of music educators, inform students and families of new possibilities, and integrate blind students into school music programs and ensembles. That’s where CTEVH members come in.

Considerations

If a student reads literary braille, that student can and should learn to read music braille.

The level of resistance to learning to read music in braille on the part of most students increases in direct proportion to the length of time between when he starts to play an instrument and when music literacy skills are introduced. Even students who play by ear very well and even have perfect pitch benefit from acquiring the skill of reading music.

Louis Braille invented music braille at the same time he created his code for text and arithmetic. A single braille cell can show both the name of the note and its rhythmic value. Braille invented his code largely out of frustration with having to try to read tactile images of staff notation, a system which is optimal for the human eye but not the human finger. New technology now makes it much easier and cheaper to create such tactile images of staff notation but Professor Braille (and all blind musicians with him) would still reject such materials as impractical as a primary learning medium for the blind. Such resources are definitely very helpful in acquainting blind musicians with how sighted classmates view music but a blind student should never be expected to learn new material using tactile images of staff notation.

Prof. Braille’s system is perfectly suited to the way blind people read. One reads braille music sequentially and horizontally from left to right. To read one’s part, there is no vertical component as in print notation.

End of Part 1

In The Next Issue:

Mr. McCann’s AER article will continue in our Spring CTEVH Journal issue. The subjects will move on to include: Common Problems, Challenges, and will offer recommendations and special educational resources. Meanwhile, he can be reached at: www.info@dancingdots.com
The concept of least restrictive environment (LRE) is one that has been discussed, argued and applied when placement of our students in educational programs is an issue. Over the years, we have all been part of IEPs in which discussions of various class options are considered by the team responsible for implementing the best program to instruct a student. The professionals who makeup these teams, make choices based on the goals and objectives of the individual. With each passing year, those needs change, and with those changes, the pupil may also need a change in placement. At this time, the concept of LRE is introduced and its merits weighed on a case by case basis.

Over the past year, I have participated in this process from the viewpoint of a step-parent and a conservator of a young woman who is now 18 years old, developmentally delayed and cortically visually impaired. As a youngster, her parents and I shocked some educators by requesting that she NOT be mainstreamed into the kindergarten music program because the behaviors she demonstrated in that overwhelmingly positive stimulating environment prevented her and all of the children from enjoying the class and learning the material presented.

As she matured, and was better able to sit for longer periods of time and have more appropriate interactions with teachers and peers, she was able to participate in regular education classes for limited times. In the past year, the IEP team initiated a referral to the California School for the Blind for the Transition Program (http://www.csb-cde.ca.gov/). This entailed even more challenges as it involved long bus rides (3 hours or more from our home in a rural county...
to the Bay Area), living in a dormitory setting with Health Service and dining hall routines, dealing with many residential staff members as well as adjusting to a new class, teacher, and on and off campus vocational and community experiences. We stayed in contact with the staff and assisted them and our daughter to work out techniques to assist in her ongoing adjustment.

After a 50 day assessment period, the local special education transition classroom teacher and the orientation and mobility/teacher of visually impaired, met us at CSB in Fremont for an IEP meeting detailing the results from this experience. At the end of the 90 minute review of the past 2 months, it was decided by the team that CSB could provide an appropriate program for our daughter. Each Friday, when she returns home, she seems to have grown up more than 5 days worth. When I asked her what the best part of 2005 had been, she quickly responded, “Going to CSB” which made me feel very good about the hard decisions we had made throughout her life which had brought us to this moment.

Some students and their families have found that full inclusion works best for them, and many parents have found various combinations of program options to ensure that their children have a school environment which allows them to have an appropriate education. This is where the honest input of each individual from the entire team is most critical. To impose upon the regular ed class and teacher a student who is neither willing or able to handle the structure, content and social/behavioral aspects of an age appropriate class is a setup for failure. All involved can suffer if only one student is placed inappropriately. The teacher will often be overwhelmed by this added responsibility, other students may become distracted and often this leads to becoming abusive and belittling toward our student, who is the ultimate loser in this scenario. When misplaced in a class in order to meet some unrealistic goal of a LRE, the student with special needs is most often the one who suffers the greatest stress, decreased self esteem and this can often lead to regressing. This regression is likely only temporary, but can involve displays of poor behavior, loss of skills that had already been shown and the quiet depression of one who has failed to meet standards that their parents, teachers and care givers had hoped/expected of them.

* * * * *

The Least Restrictive Environment concept is only one of the topics which will be discussed at the conference this year in the Itinerant Roundtable and other formal and informal professional meetings. Other topics which are on peoples minds this year are the primary disability determination question as well as accessibility of accelerated and like reading programs. Other topics are welcome and we will share other issues and brainstorm possible solutions.

See you in Anaheim!

Sheila Bonito
The Good Old Girl System

We have always heard of the “good old boy system”; a system where men promote each other’s careers. Let me tell you about the phenomenon. When all the “boys” were in boarding school they helped each other, if at all possible. After they grew up they were referred to as “old boys” and they continued to help each other, for old times sake. In today’s terms a boss will take a new arrival under his wing and show him the ropes, thereby giving the new protégé a break whenever possible. Now we call this mentoring. Actually the mentor system started before the “good old boy” effect. It started in the trade guilds. A guild was usually formed by a group of tradesmen. In the trades many hands were needed to produce products and the master craftsmen couldn’t do the whole job alone. So the master craftsmen would employ several apprentices. They would do all hard labor and the master would get the credit and the pay. In addition to meager wages the apprentice would be able to learn the “trade secrets”. Eventually the apprentices would graduate to become a master craftsmen and hire their own apprentices. This was carefully monitored by the guild to insure fairness within the craft and increase productivity. This system also insured a continuity of quality even after the master craftsman passed away. The craft lived on and became stronger/better.

An article on a web link to a “Fortune 500” list stated that of the “Fortune 500 companies only 9 had women CEOs”. Some people postulate that the reason for so few women in top positions was the lack of the mentoring among women. Is it that women don’t know how to mentor? Over 90% of the people in Braille are women. Which direction is our career field going?

Braille is a craft. Our roots are in the Braille guilds. What happened? Sure we still have Braille guilds where the seasoned transcribers are teaching the new comers how it should be done. But over the last ten years we have leaned on a more technological approach to standardize our techniques. Somewhere along the way we strayed from the mentoring mold. Don’t misunderstand, I think the formatting course from NBA and the publisher files training from APH are great. I encourage every transcriber to participate in both. Standardization is essential to the growth of an industry, especially ours. These courses are vital to standardization that lends credibility to the individual transcriber.

We look up to our subject matter experts and value their advice. If you consider yourself one of our more seasoned leaders, ask yourself “When was the last time I promoted the career of some budding transcriber?” Who is going to carry the torch when it is time for you to pass it on?

Ever since Braille became a business, we became competitive. Competition among vendors of an established product can promote healthy growth in that industry. Even though Braille has existed over 100 years, we are not an established industry. We just became a “job” in 2003. Our competition has only been displayed as in fighting for work assignments. When in reality there were too few transcribers for the work that needed to be done.

It is time for the “good old girl system”. Starting today, take every opportunity to promote other transcribers. If you have a book to transcribe and you are contacted for a second book pass on the name of another transcriber. If you are an agency that hires transcribers, take a chance on some new transcribers. Remember as the industry grows so does your ability to obtain more assignments. You need to adopt the last line of a common prayer as your guide “help us each in every day, each in every way, to help each other”.

In business it is all about the bottom line. Our bottom line should be “Go girl!”
National Braille Association
3 Townline Circle, Rochester, New York 14623-2513
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Professional Development Conferences and Workshops

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Mathematics: MARY DENAULT  701-775-0869
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Pokadot: LEN DOZIER  360-574-6167
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14214 South Figueroa St.  lrsjhm@aol.com
Los Angeles, CA 90061
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<tr>
<td>President</td>
<td>Paula Lightfoot</td>
<td>2006(3rd)</td>
<td>743 Harper St., Simi Valley, CA 93065</td>
<td><a href="mailto:pmbrownl@yahoo.com">pmbrownl@yahoo.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vice President</td>
<td>Bonnie Grimm</td>
<td>2006(1st)</td>
<td>17336 Owen St., Fontana, CA 92335</td>
<td><a href="mailto:bgrimm@brailleinstitute.org">bgrimm@brailleinstitute.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretary</td>
<td>Stuart Wittenstein</td>
<td>2008(2nd)</td>
<td>500 Walnut Ave., Fremont, CA 94536</td>
<td><a href="mailto:swittenstein@csb-cde.ca.gov">swittenstein@csb-cde.ca.gov</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treasurer</td>
<td>Sharon Anderson</td>
<td>2008(1st)</td>
<td>9401 Westminster Ave., Garden Grove, CA 92844</td>
<td><a href="mailto:sande8181@yahoo.com">sande8181@yahoo.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member-at-Large</td>
<td>Jeanne Brown</td>
<td>2007(2nd)</td>
<td>2127 Moonstone Circle, El Dorado Hills, CA 95762</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jea75bro@comcast.net">jea75bro@comcast.net</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member-at-Large</td>
<td>Ann Hinshelwood</td>
<td>2007(1st)</td>
<td>400 Hoover Lane, Nevada City, CA 95959</td>
<td><a href="mailto:anniehinshelwood@yahoo.com">anniehinshelwood@yahoo.com</a></td>
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### Committee Chairs 2005

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<td>Sue Reilly</td>
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<td>Carole Ann Davis</td>
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<td>CSMT Representative</td>
<td>Rod Brawley</td>
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<td>LIDAC Representative</td>
<td>Stewart Wittenstein</td>
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<td>Gifts and Tributes</td>
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<td>Historian</td>
<td>Cath Tendler-Valencia</td>
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<td>JAC Representative</td>
<td>Jane Vogel</td>
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<td>Journal</td>
<td>Lisa Merriam</td>
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<td>Katie Sibert Scholarship</td>
<td>Stuart Wittenstein</td>
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<td>Membership</td>
<td>Christy Cutting</td>
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<td>Nominating</td>
<td>Carol Morrison</td>
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<td>Bylaws/Policies &amp; Procedures</td>
<td>Grant Horrocks</td>
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<td>Sitefinding</td>
<td>Steve Horrocks (Northern)</td>
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<td>Specialists</td>
<td>Bonnie Grimm</td>
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<td>Website</td>
<td>Christy Cutting</td>
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<td>Donna Coffee Youth Scholarship</td>
<td>Steve Goodman</td>
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<td>2006 Conference Chairs</td>
<td>Jane Vogel and John Zamora</td>
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### Board of Directors and Committee Chairs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Email</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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