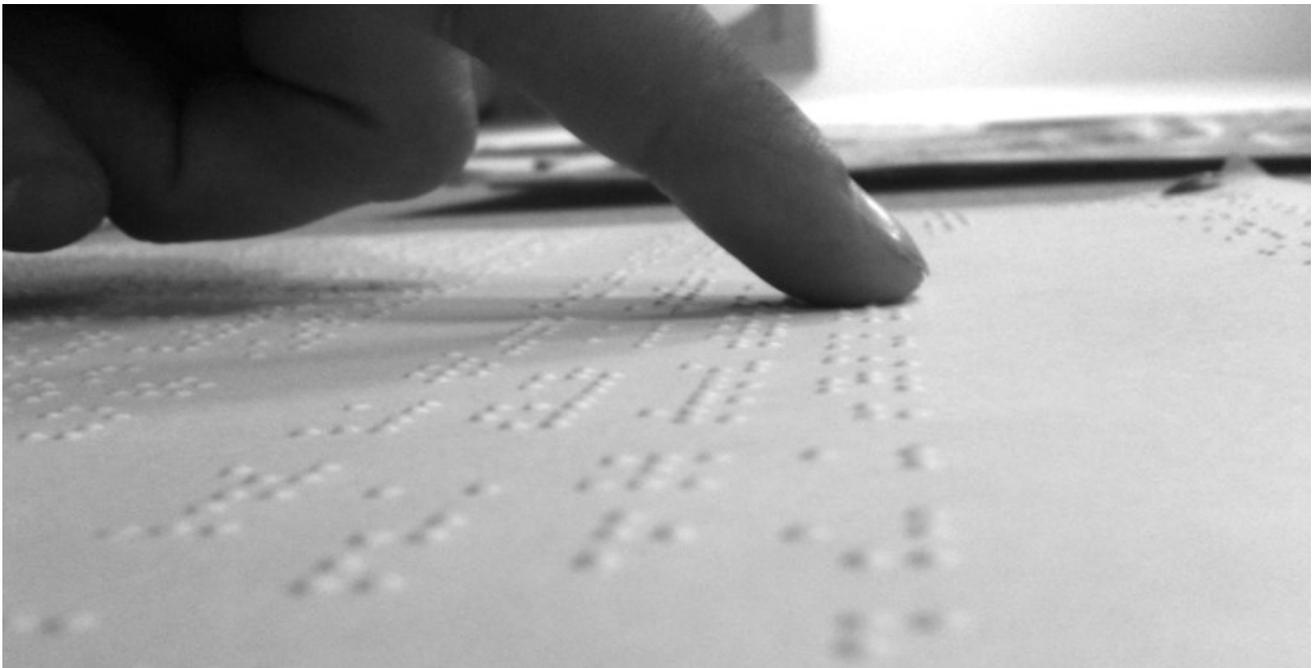

WISCONSIN BRAILLE



Volume 21, Issue 1

Winter 2020



Meet Some Braille Readers



WISCONSIN BRAILLE



Volume 21, Issue 1

Winter 2020

Dear Parents, Teachers, Transcribers and other supporters of braille reading,

Welcome to our Winter 2020 issue of the Wisconsin Braille newsletter. We have attempted to fill it with a variety of articles about our braille reading community. This issue contains pieces from members of our board, braille readers, transcribers and teachers of the visually impaired. In the future we hope to hear from you, our readers, about your uses, experiences, and views on the subject of braille and braille reading.

As mentioned, this edition of our newsletter has many authors. Ryley is a younger braille reader, who eagerly writes about using his electronic braille device. You will be fascinated to read about the many ways Ryley accesses the internet and more with this device. We also share with you a blog post written by Jack McPadden, a college student, who speaks about the importance of braille in his life. Erica Christie, a braille user, stay-at-home-mom and author shares with us her opinions of the importance of braille in the lives of visually impaired individuals. Of course, most of the braille that braille readers use would not be available to them without the many highly trained transcribers who spend countless hours transcribing print into braille. Kurt Pamperin, at OSCI shared a "walk through" of the process of making braille available to the public via the OSCI braille program he directs. His description is quite interesting and informative!

We hope you enjoy this newsletter,

Alison McKee

The purpose of Wisconsin Braille Inc., is to advance communication and coordinate the efforts of all persons concerned with the availability, quality, and distribution of brailled materials in the state of Wisconsin thereby encouraging braille literacy.

Introducing Erica Christie

Hello there!!

My name is Erica Christie! I am a twenty-six-year-old Wisconsin resident, and I am honored to be able to share my opinions, experiences and concerns about braille with our readers. I am a UW-Whitewater graduate with a degree in Spanish Education and a double-minor in French Education and speech pathology. After college I worked as a speech therapy aid but now I am a stay-at-home mom working on raising my family and finishing writing a novel. Braille has made my dream of being an author possible and I am grateful for the time and privilege I am able to dedicate towards writing.

In my spare time (when I have any) I love watching movies, going for walks and spending time with family and friends. I am a social butterfly by nature and enjoy helping people, hanging out and having a tall glass of wine on a Saturday night. One day I hope my novel will be published and prosperous, so that I may take my family on book tours and travel to see the world.

Thank you again for the opportunity to express myself in this newsletter. I look forward to you all getting to know me better as my thoughts, beliefs and ideas shine through in articles and writing.

Bless it be, and stay wise.

Braille, the Gift of Independence

In this modern, twenty-first century world, technology is everything. Computers entertain our children, run our lives and foster 80% of our social interactions. Cell phones host our calendars, provide applications for banking, and enable our youth to be crippled by instant gratification. When a person wants to break away from the screen, feel a paperback book's pages turning in their hands, they are questioned, berated, and judged.

The evolution of technology isn't all bad, however. Modern advancements have allowed the disabled citizens of the first world a better chance of succeeding. Electronic implants have helped the deaf to hear. Powered wheelchairs have given mobility to those who can not walk. High quality cameras, artificial intelligence, and electronically accessible materials have granted the blind with information and resources far beyond anyone's wildest dreams.

Braille in and of itself has evolved with the times. A new braille code has been instated to include symbols and language of the ever-growing internet. Electronic tablets have been constructed to allow braille books to be downloaded and translated with ease.

Continued on pg. 5, Independence

OSCI Braille, Its Functioning and How It Supports WisBrl

By Kurt Pamperin

In July of 1997, as a progressive approach to inmate rehabilitation and solving a rapidly escalating need for high quality educational braille material for the blind and visually impaired community, OSCI (Oshkosh Correctional Institution) Braille was formed.

Following the structure of other prison based braille programs, OSCI was conceived and implemented by David Hines, (retired); Judy Smith, OSCI Warden (ret.); and Mary Ann Damm and Constance Risjord, pioneering members of *WisBraille Inc.* David Hines oversaw the day-to-day running of the program at the prison. Mary Ann Damm and Constance Risjord, residents of Madison, made regular trips to Oshkosh to train the first six inmates in braille transcription. This was the pilot group. During that pilot year one book was transcribed. Since that first pilot program was launched in 1997 OSCI Braille has become a very active and prosperous braille production program. It is now under the leadership of Kurt Pamperin.

The braillists at OSCI are certified in Literary braille, formats, music, and math (Nemeth). As such, they have produced braille, on request, for individuals, businesses and organizations across the country. On the educational front, OSCI Braille has produced textbooks for grades K-12 in all subject areas: college textbooks (advanced courses in math, economics, statistics, and biology), university class lectures and study assignments, and maps and miscellaneous tactile graphics for use in classroom settings. For the private sector, OSCI Braille has produced state proclamations, hotel directories, meeting agendas, miscellaneous forms, manuals for state agencies, business cards, and done custom embossing assignments.

FROM THE EDITOR: OSCI Braille has played a key role in helping *WisBraille* achieve one of its missions: to promote braille literacy in Wisconsin. *WisBraille Inc.*, supported by a generous grant from the Glen Stacey Fund, annually provides a select list of free braille books to Wisconsin blind children. OSCI Braille provides the transcription, embossing and other production services for this annual offering. Over 6,000 copies of 304 titles have been distributed since the *WisBraille* book project began. Without the services of OSCI Braille, *WisBrl* would not be able to complete its mission of promoting braille literacy here within the state.

Occupying Aging: Delights, Disabilities, and Daily Life

By Katherine Schneider

Can you imagine getting to know an author by “living” with her for an entire year? Katherine Schneider is a baby boomer who has been blind since birth and has had fibromyalgia for over twenty years. She admits that she has struggled with disabilities and society’s disabling attitudes for long enough to have learned a few tricks of the trade. She confesses that sometimes they work, sometimes they don’t, but she is willing to pass them on to us, her readers, in the hopes that these tricks are helpful with occupying life, at whatever stage of life her reader is in.

Here’s what Deborah Kendrick, award-winning columnist and author; disability rights advocate; and senior features editor for AccessWorld says about this book.

“Peeking into another’s life is part of what drives us to read. Occupying Aging gives us that and so much more. Warm, wise, and conversational, these 366 journal-like entries fly off the page and into your heart.

You’ll travel with Katherine Schneider through ordinary and extraordinary components that make up an inner and outer life. You’ll find wisdom and humor, frustration and joy,

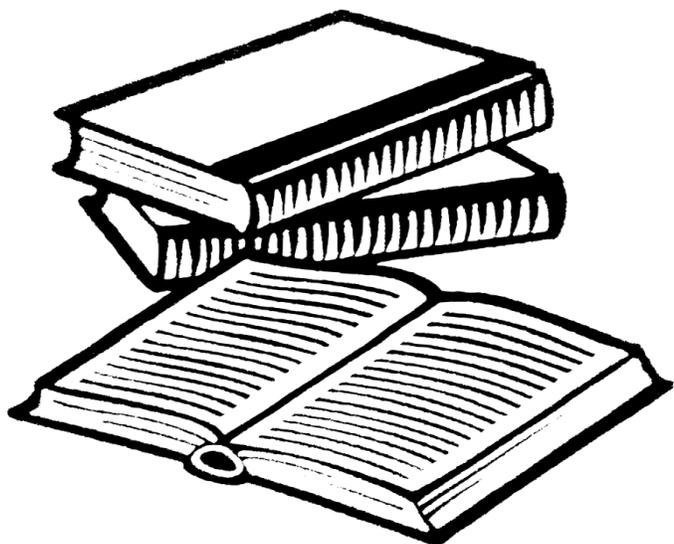
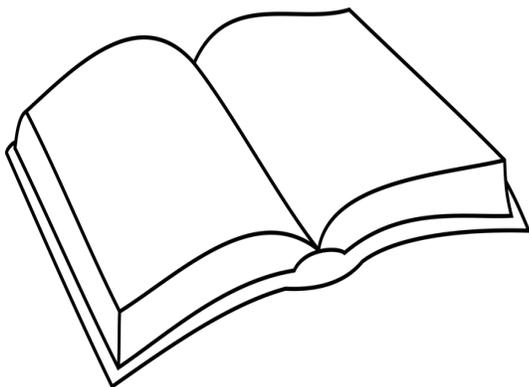
and learn up close and personal what one baby boomer’s life, a baby boomer who happens to be blind, feels like when you’re the one in it.

She is prayerful and irreverent, smart and funny, and makes lists of things from books to platitudes to text shortcuts for seniors, which will make you reflect deeply at times and laugh out loud at others. What does a retired psychologist with a Seeing Eye dog do with her days? She helps others every way she can - feeding pets, mentoring children, entertaining friends, contributing in her church, marching on in that uphill struggle to help the world understand that people with disabilities are first and foremost, just people.

And she spends a lot of time reading, thinking and, ultimately, writing this book. Lucky for us that she did!”

Book recommendation by David Grulke

Book review by Cindy Collins



A Perspective On Being a Young Braille Reader

*The following story was first posted by Jack McPadden on the **Inside NBP** blog on December 12, 2019. This story was written as a fund-raising tool for National Braille Press's Children's Book Club, and we believe it speaks well to experiences we hope all braille-reading children are privy to by way of being connected to the Wisconsin Braille free braille book project. For more information about our free braille book offerings please visit: wisbrl.org and click on the "book project" link. Here is Jack's story:*

My Life as a Braille Reader

By Jack McPadden

When I was two years old, my mother and my Teacher of the Visually Impaired (TVI) acquainted me with braille by placing embossed braille in front of me. By age three, I learned how to read and write short words in braille. One of the first words that I ever wrote on the braille writer was "cab." Slowly, as my TVI instructed me as to which dots to press, I understood how to produce for myself the very same braille that I had learned to read. To this day, my family still keeps and treasures the half sheet of braille paper with that one word, "cab," which I brailled sixteen years ago.

Throughout preschool and kindergarten, my braille instruction progressed to encompass reading and writing my name and larger words. Just as children with sight began to open and read aloud their first print books, I too got to select a braille children's book from NBP's catalogue and, with care, trail my fingers across the pages. "I can do it," I would read aloud to my mother from an uplifting, beginners children's book. "You can do it too," I would continue. I particularly enjoyed reading aloud the books from National Braille Press's Children's Braille Book Club, among them *Green Eggs and Ham*, by Dr. Seuss; the Froggy series, including *Froggy Goes to Bed* and *Froggy Eats Out; Noodle*, a story about a long dachshund; and books from the Curious George series. Braille afforded me the same access to literature and opportunities for success as my peers. Your donations to NBP have helped shape my education and love of reading; thank you!

In the classroom, textbooks produced by National Braille Press ensured that I had the same materials as my peers and could engage in the day's lessons independently. That independence carried on outside the classroom, where braille has proved integral in my enjoyment of activities such as reading news articles, accessing social media applications, and volunteering to organize fundraisers for dog rescue organizations.

Just as it has been in the past, braille will undoubtedly prove essential to me in the future. Currently, National Braille Press is converting into braille a statistics textbook that I will require in the fall. Without this textbook, I could not succeed in this course, which is required for my major in psychology, and

Continued on pg. 9, McPadden

McPadden, continued from p. 8

thus my future career. I can honestly attest that your generosity helps our future by providing access to the printed word. Thank you for making this equality possible for me and thousands of children, students, and adults who are blind. I hope you can continue to help pave the path for literacy.

Please Join Us For Our Next Board Meeting on March 21, 2020

Braille Library and Transcription Services

6501 Watts Rd., Suite 149, Madison

(Take the Gammon Rd. exit ramp on Hwy. 14/18)

10:00-12:30 (Business Meeting)

1:00-2:30 (Annual General Membership Meeting)

Our meetings are always open to the public.

**Wisconsin Braille Board of Directors
Nomination Slate
2020-2022**

Officers

President:

Sandy Adams (2020-2022)

Secretary:

Cindy Collins (2019-2021)

Vice-President:

Leanne Dieck (2019-2021)

Treasurer:

Linda Bailey (2020-2022)

Directors

David Grulke (2019-2021)

Faith Kelly (2019-2021)

Kurt Pamperin (2019-2021)

Connie Risjord (2019-2021)

Alison McKee (2020-2022)

Kevin Jones (2020-2022)

Judith Sherry (2020-2022)

The election of these nominees will occur during the afternoon general Membership meeting, starting at 1:00. Nominations are still open for an additional three directors.

Contributors to this issue are: Sandy Adams, Erica Christie, Cindy Collins, David Grulke, Jack McPadden, Kurt Pamperin, Ryley and Mary Theivagt

The purpose of this newsletter is to disperse information. Wisconsin Braille Inc. does not endorse or vouch for the reliability of any of the persons, organizations, or products appearing in this publication.

Intentionally left blank

Membership Application

Date _____

Use this form to join *WisBrl*, or to renew membership.

Regular membership, annual dues \$10 _____
Sustaining membership annual dues \$30 _____
Lifetime membership \$200 _____
Additional donation \$30 _____
Total amount enclosed _____
Check () cash () money order ()
Donations to *WisBrl* are tax exempt.

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PPHONE: _____

E-MAIL: _____

2020: () New member () Renewal

Newsletter format requested (choose one)

Regular type _____

E-mail _____

Braille _____

What is your affiliation with the braille reading community? (Check all that apply.)

Teacher _____ Producer _____ Ed. Assist. _____

Transcriber _____ Proofreader _____ Parent _____

Administrator _____ User _____

Other (specify) _____

Return application payment to:

Membership Chair

557 Milky Way

Madison, WI 53718

WISCONSIN BRAILLE



WISCONSN BRAILLE INC.

5745 Bittersweet Place

Madison, WI 53705

*Address Correction**Requested*