

HOUR GLASS

Volume 1, Issue 1 ■ February 2007

Welcome to your first newsletter

When I began my job as director of GLASS, there were several projects that Deputy State Librarian David Singleton, the staff at GLASS, patrons and I agreed would be my top priorities. This newsletter is the fulfillment of one of those goals. GLASS will publish a patron newsletter, *HourGLASS*, six times each year. We are looking forward to providing this service to you.

HourGLASS will be available in large print, Braille and online. Please contact GLASS at 1-800-248-6701 to request the newsletter in Braille or electronically. We hope to also make the newsletter available on cassette in the future.

I hope that each of you finds *HourGLASS* to be informative and enjoyable. If you have any suggestions for future articles or for improvements, please let me know. ■

— **Stella Cone**
Director of GLASS

You may be eligible to get your news by phone

You may already be eligible for a service that will allow you to read the newspaper free of charge via the telephone. It is called the Georgia Audible Universal Information Access Service. This service includes 243 publications, among them the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, the *Macon*

Telegraph, the *Savannah Morning News* and the *Columbus Ledger*. National papers, such as the *New York Times*, *USA Today* and the *Wall Street Journal*, are also available. There are magazines as well, including *AARP the Magazine*, *Diabetes Self Management* and *The*

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News by phone _____

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Economist. We will continue working to add more information and additional publications.

Eligibility requirements are that you are blind or have a physical or learning disability that prevents you from reading the paper independently. As a library-for-the-blind patron, you are already eligible. It is as simple as ordering a talking book. You can sign up by calling your local talking book library, or you may call Garrick Scott, outreach manager for the Georgia Audible Universal Information Access Service, at 1-866-316-3242.

Once registered, you will be given a unique user ID and password. With this information, you can use any touch-

tone telephone to call a local or toll-free number and listen to the newspaper or magazine of your choice. You may call any time of the day, any day of the week. You will use the telephone keypad to move between newspapers, sections and articles. We are constantly improving the system and hope to have television listings available in the near future.

The Georgia Audible Universal Information Access Service makes NFB-NEWSLINE® available to all Georgia's print-disabled citizens, because lifetime learning, including detailed awareness of current events, is part of what makes a good citizen, a successful employee or employer, and a valuable participant in community life. Without ready access to information, none of us can reach his or her full potential. Take the time to sign up for this free service today! ■

Things you can do to improve your library service

1. REWIND all cassettes before sending them back. This will reduce the time needed to process your returned books and get new books mailed.
2. Update your book lists periodically to ensure that you always have something to read.
3. Send each book back to the library as soon as you have finished reading it. This will guarantee you a steady flow of books.
4. You can order books by sending an e-mail to glass@georgialibraries.org or using the online catalog at <http://www.klas.com/glass>.
5. Review your magazine subscriptions yearly to ensure that you are receiving only those you want to read.
6. If you have a question, problem or suggestion, call a readers' adviser at 404-756-4619 or toll-free at 1-800-248-6701 outside metro Atlanta. ■

JAWS arrives at your local public library

Cue your inner cellist and remember the most famous opening notes in the history of film music: JAWS is arriving at Georgia's public libraries. This JAWS, however, is not predatory; it's practical.

Short for "Job Access With Speech," JAWS is a powerful software that reads information on computer screens using synthesized speech. By providing audible translations, the screen reader enables blind people and those with low vision to access the computer and Internet.

"It makes me independent," said Vanessa Meadows, a library assistant and readers' adviser at GLASS. "If it was not for JAWS, I wouldn't be able to use a computer at all, because I can't see the small type. I wouldn't be able to do my work without it — this program is my eyes. Without it, I might not have a job."

JAWS makes it easier for visually impaired people to use programs, edit documents and read Web pages, and it allows library patrons to tailor the program to meet their individual needs and preferences. The Georgia Public Library Service's license will permit up to 50 simultaneous users on public library computers statewide.

According to Stella Cone, director of GLASS, no specialized equipment is needed. "All anyone needs to use JAWS in their public library is a pair of headphones, a password and log-on information."

Many people who will benefit from the software are already familiar with it, Cone said. "It's the industry standard. People with low vision who go through training at the Center for Visual Impairment, vocational rehabilitation and schools are taught JAWS, so most potential users already know how it operates. Many libraries have offered JAWS classes, and now all public libraries will be able to offer it on their public access computers."

All of Georgia's 58 public library systems will receive the JAWS software by February and can begin offering it to their patrons immediately. "Libraries will receive all the information they need to help them get people started," Cone explained. "If users have any questions that their local librarians can't answer, they will be referred to GLASS, and we'll help them with navigation troubleshooting questions." Questions about JAWS can be directed to the GLASS staff at 404-756-4619 or toll-free at 1-800-248-6701. ■



Digital talking book player, cartridges coming to GLASS patrons in 2008

The National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS) will begin its transition to digital technology for patrons in fiscal year 2008. The new digital system will be based on flash memory technology, which will provide better audio quality for patrons. The goals are to begin distribution of the new digital talking book players in 2008 and to have approximately 20,000 digital talking book titles for distribution by the end of that year. The transition to all digital players and cartridges is expected to require approximately four years.

The picture above of a player and cartridge is one of two that were sent to members of the NLS National

Advisory Committee on Audio Equipment after its September meeting. As a result of seeing the photographs, committee member William Graczyk of the Wisconsin Regional Library posted a detailed description on a Web site for blind readers, for the benefit of patrons who cannot see the images. The following description updates his.

The player pictured is the basic model. The player is about 6 by 9 by 2 inches, in comparison with the cassette book machine (CBM), which is 9 by 11 by 3 inches, or 108 cu. in. compared to 300 cu. in. Weight of the digital talking book player is slightly over 2 pounds compared to the CBM's 7 pounds. The body of the player is dark charcoal gray

to create maximum visual contrast between the background of the case and the colors of the buttons.

The Rewind, Play and Fast Forward controls are centered and are close to the front edge of the player: The square green Play button controls stopping and starting playback of the book. The white triangular Rewind and Fast Forward buttons to the left and right of the Play button move through the book more quickly the more times they are pressed. Each key press gives audible feedback about how far ahead or back the user is moving.

Just behind the navigation buttons are the Power, Sleep and Volume buttons: The round red Power button turns the player on and off. It is close to the left edge of the player. The white Sleep button, shaped like a crescent moon, will turn the player off 30 minutes after it is pressed. It is centered, just behind the Play button. The yellow Volume controls are shaped like arrowheads pointing up and down. They are close to the right edge of the player. Just behind these controls is a raised line running from one side of the player to the other. This line divides the six most frequently used controls located toward the front of the player from the Tone and Speed controls which are located behind the tactile raised line and on

either side of the round speaker.

Both Tone and Speed are shaped like the Volume buttons, up and down arrowheads, and are along its narrow axis. The Tone buttons are close to the left edge of the player; the Speed button is close to the right edge. The Volume, Tone and Speed controls all announce each press of the button, e.g. "tone lower," "tone higher," "tone middle," with similar announcements for the other controls. The speed control changes the speech from 50 percent to 300 percent of normal, with no change in pitch.

The white band along the front edge of the player is a pull-out handle, similar to the one on the CBM. Above the handle is the opening for the digital talking book cartridge. On the right side of the player are the headphone jack, with a brightly colored surround for easy location (color is yet to be determined). Next to the jack is a USB port for repair personnel to use for diagnostic information.

On the back side of the machine, as on the back of the CBM, is a compartment for storing the power cord. On the bottom of the player are four rubber feet, the door to the battery compartment, and two inset bars for

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Digital players _____

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attaching a carrying strap. There is also plenty of room for identification labels.

The advanced model, which is also at the nearly final prototype stage, is exactly the same size but has a second row of controls between the Power, Sleep and Volume controls and the speaker. The advanced controls are for setting and retrieving bookmarks and for navigating through the structured levels required by the National Information Standards Organization.

The cartridge shipping container is slightly longer and wider than a green cassette box but only half the thickness. The cartridge itself is the size of a cassette, but with a more complex shape. The end of the cartridge with the round finger hole is slightly thicker than a cassette, with square sides, but is also beveled, so that when that end of the cartridge is pressed down on a flat surface in front of the player, the other end of the cartridge, with the USB connector, tilts up and can slide smoothly into the player. The end of the cartridge with the USB connector is also beveled, but with the bevels slanting toward the center of the cartridge, so that there is only one way it will fit into the player. ■

Planning for the future

The staff at GLASS, the Georgia Public Library Service (GPLS) and your Library Consumer Advisory Committee (LCAC) are working together to improve the service that you receive from your library. Among the projects that have a high priority are:

- to move the GLASS subregional library to a more accessible location and
- to begin a local recording program in Georgia.

GPLS and GLASS are exploring the possibility of moving the GLASS subregional library to the Atlanta-Fulton County Library. This location, at 1 Margaret Mitchell Square, would provide the facility with easy access to MARTA, along with more opportunities for programs at the library.

Plans are also being made in Atlanta to set up a recording booth that will be used to record books by Georgia authors, books and magazines about Georgia and patron-requested books. Local books will be available on cassette and eventually on digital talking books. Volunteers will be recruited to record these books and magazines.

You will receive updates on the progress of these projects in future issues. ■

New valentine romances available this month

RC 61218

Can I Get an Amen

Editor: Janice Sims

Description: Four stories in which Mother Maybelle helps the women at Red Oaks Christian Fellowship understand love. In “A Love Supreme,” a sworn bachelor falls for his landscaper. In “Love Under New Management,” a gifted singer finds the courage to sing and to love again.

Three cassettes, narrated by Melissa Maxwell.

RC 61448

Summer Boys

Author: Hailey Abbott

Description: Three teenage cousins reunite at their families’ beach cottages. But problems arise when Jamie is rejected by last year’s boyfriend, Ella falls for her sister’s guy, and Beth sees her best buddy, George, in a new light. For senior high readers. **One cassette, narrated by Anne Hancock.**

RC 45746

A Winter Wedding

Authors: Janice Bennett, Carola Dunn, Monique Ellis

Description: Three short stories on the theme of weddings in winter. In “The Fairy Tale Wedding,” the bride’s cousin

gets help from the groom’s cousin in planning the perfect ceremony, but a surprise awaits them both. **Two cassettes, narrated by Janis Gray.**

BR 08795 RC 34412

Moods

Author: Louisa May Alcott

Description: Sylvia Yule is an adventurous tomboy who goes on a river camping trip with her brother, Mark, and his two friends, Adam Warwick and Geoffrey Moor, both of whom fall in love with her. At 17, Sylvia impulsively marries Geoffrey but soon recognizes her mistake — she is in love with Adam. **Four volumes of contracted press Braille; three cassettes, narrated by Janis Gray.**

BR 16120

Every Boy’s Got One

Author: Meg Cabot

Description: In a story that unfolds through travel diaries and e-mails, reporter Cal Langdon and cartoonist Jane Harris clash at first as they travel to Italy to witness their best friends’ elopement. When wedding plans hit a snag, they cooperate to obtain a document and fall in love. **Three volumes of contracted press Braille; also available from Web-Braille as a contracted Braille digital file. Not available on cassette.**

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HourGLASS

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www.georgialibraries.org

New books _____

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RC 43543

The Love Pirate

Author: Barbara Cartland

Description: Bertilla Alvinston's mother sends her to Sarawak as a missionary to get her away from home. After many adventures, she falls in love with trade investigator Lord Saire. **One cassette**, narrated by Yolande Bavan.

To order Braille books in this section, visit www.georgialibraries.org or call the Utah Braille and Talking Book Library at 1-800-453-4293. ■



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FREE MATTER
FOR THE BLIND
AND PHYSICALLY
HANDICAPPED