

Comment: (Richard Smith - NLS)

Welcome to the May NLS phone forum. We just had a nice heat wave (and) we're waiting for the thunderstorms to come in but it's not as big as last weekend where hundreds of thousands of motorists went up and down the interstate and gave us the rolling thunder for Memorial Day. It's pretty impressive if you're here in Washington DC during that time. Now...we'll go around the room and introduce ourselves. I'm Richard Smith, Chief of the Network Division, and we have...

Comment: (Library Staff - NLS)

David Perrotta, Network Program Specialist; Jason Yasner, Deputy Director; Michael Martys, Senior Advisor; Don Olson, Network Services; Hien Nguyen, Bibliographic Control; Margie Goergen-Rood, Quality Assurance; Kristen Fernekes, Head of Communications and Outreach; Meredith Beckhardt, Reference Section; Andrew Skinner, Production Control; Juliette Appold, Music Section; Vickie Collins, Network Services; Paula Bahmani, Education and Training Specialist; Steve Prine, Network Division.

Comment: (Richard Smith - NLS)

That's a nice group for a beautiful May day here in DC. With that, we'll get on with some reports, and I think we have updates from Kristen...

Comment: (Kristen Fernekes - NLS)

I have a couple things that I wanted to just check in with everybody... There was an invitation (for) our Network Libraries to attend a workshop with Veterans History Project, which is an event that will take place in association with ALA – which, of course, is coming up here in Washington DC. We're all very excited about that. I'm encouraging everyone, if you would like to attend – and we would absolutely love to have you – please email me at kfe@loc.gov by the end of this week. If you have any questions about that workshop...I'm happy to respond and give you any information that would be of assistance to you. We also – earlier today – sent out our Operations Alert regarding our upcoming name change, so we're also very excited about that. I'm hoping everybody had an opportunity to see that. The Operations Alert informs everyone that we've gotten final approval from the Librarian of Congress and as of October 1st, our name will officially become “National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled.” I've already gotten a couple of questions over how that changeover is going to take place. Just to let everybody know that NLS is presently in the process of doing a sweep of all the instances where our name appears, and then making determinations as to production times and so forth.

We expect that by October 1st the vast majority of these instances will be changed over, but there was a specific question that had come in regarding printed materials that you all have. In the interest of not throwing away perfectly good materials, we're going to go ahead and expend those. When the time comes to reprint, we'll make the change on those materials – on a rolling basis. If anyone has any specific questions otherwise, feel free to get in touch with me or Richard and we'll be more than happy to answer those questions. One final thing: We've recently done the “Good Reads to Go” posters that some of you recently ordered. Those are being mailed out. Some of you may not yet have received them but they should be to you soon. We always want to hear feedback...to see if everybody is liking those and whether or not they're useful to you so again, feel free to get in touch with me, or you can email Mark Layman at mLAYMAN@loc.gov.

Comment: (Richard Smith - NLS)

I also want to mention – now it's going on two weeks ago – we had...our annual Network Library of the Year award, and the two libraries winning it were the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh – one of the regional libraries – and (the) Staunton, Virginia Talking Book Center won the Subregional Advisory and Outreach Center of the Year award. We had a wonderful ceremony here and it was unique this time because the Librarian of Congress showed up and gave a few remarks, congratulating both those libraries. So that was a nice twist. It's always a nice function. The best thing I like about it is the Color Guard showing up and giving their salutes. It was a very nice operation and, finally, on our agenda...

Comment: (Andrew Skinner - NLS)

We have kind of a late add on the agenda. There was a book that went out recently, 94077. You'll notice it might not have labels correctly. We've already talked to the duplicator on that. The labels will be sent to the libraries for your copies. So, look for those in the mail soon. They should be sent out in the next couple days.

Comment: (Richard Smith - NLS)

The last thing on the agenda was for ALA also. For those visiting and coming to ALA on June 20th, beside the regular tour for everyone at the conference, we'll have an Open House and Reception here at NLS on Taylor St. We'll have some refreshments, a tour of the building and you can come out and greet some people – on June 20th at ALA – 4pm to 5pm.

Comment: (Steve Prine - NLS)

That's correct – and if you're going to come, please RSVP me by June 17th – spri@loc.gov.

Question: (Carl Keehn - NC)

Thank you and congratulations on the new name – and really, it's an implied expanded scope for our service. I think it's terrific. My question is: Will it be reflected in revisiting the qualifications process for learning-disabled and reading-disabled people?

Answer: (Richard Smith - NLS)

Basically, it is under consideration. Primarily, the certification, which we think would...expand our operation on that – but yes, it's been under (consideration) for the last year, and down the road, we hope to move forward on that. Until then, it hasn't changed.

Question: (Jill Rothstein – NY8)

I have an announcement and a question. The announcement – I just want to share with everyone that we've gotten 20 BrailleMe (units) to do a pilot refreshable braille display loan to patrons – and survey how it affects their goal-seeking and reading, and how much staff support is needed for what? And so, I'd be happy to get feedback from any of you guys on what you'd like us to survey and take note of. So, we're super-excited about that. My question is whether there is any update or anything to say about Keystone Duplication-on-Demand compatibility?

Answer: (Richard Smith - NLS)

I'll pass that on to Karen. We're excited about your pilot. We're certainly interested in any results you have, especially any "best practices" or "lessons learned" after the pilot. We'll certainly be doing our braille e-reader down the road in a year or so. Good luck with that and keep us informed – we're very interested. We are working with Keystone. I'll have David Perrotta (provide) an update on that...

Answer: (David Perrotta - NLS)

A timely question actually. We're expecting an announcement by Keystone – to be forthcoming at their User Conference next week in West Palm Beach, Florida. NLS is going to be supporting their efforts. By the time of our next Forum call, we'll be able to talk about further details with you, but, progress (is) being made.

Comment: (Richard Smith - NLS)

There was a fantastic San Antonio conference. We know that the New York conference was last month. San Antonio was this month. A lot of good programs down there. We gave our reports, but I think we learned a lot more from regional libraries and what they're doing in the field. It's always great to get out to the regional libraries and meet with everyone. Of course, we're looking forward to our Biennial Conference, which will be in 2020 in Nebraska. I guess we'll have a new leader in Nebraska, since Scott is going on to...a music library – I heard – out in Nebraska. We're looking forward to seeing everyone there in 2020. I guess our Regional Conferences really went well – it looks like we answered all their questions – of the 38 participants that are on the line. We'll give you a little more time.

Question: (Erin Pawlus - AZ)

We're getting calls from patrons periodically, and the issue is narrators with foreign accents. In the past it's been hodge-podge and we're missing some and what I would do when we received books, we'd plug them in and see if there was a foreign accent and just note that in the record but, now we're not receiving all the books. So I don't know if it's possible to include that some way in the record, so that we can more easily determine that and make our patrons happier?

Question: (Michael Martys - AZ)

Are these the commercial titles? The ones that we're getting with the narrators from the publishers? Or are these NLS narrators?

Answer: (Erin Pawlus - AZ)

All titles? I just don't see it in the records in either case. Now, certainly there's been more since we've been doing the commercially-produced – and I'm making a list of narrators and searching as I have time – but if it was in the record, it would be very helpful.

Answer: (Andrew Skinner - NLS)

We would have to look into that and see what we can do – on how we can possibly do that. It would be something we'd have to (determine) how we would do that before we would commit to anything.

Comment: (Erin Pawlus - AZ)

Yes, I know with the Rating Unrated Books project, that's something that the volunteers and staff members across the country are looking in, and they will put it there. It's just I feel that we're missing quite a bit. So, anything you can do...would be appreciated.

Question: (Angela Fisher Hall - AL)

Well, good afternoon everyone. It's really good to hear from all of you and thank you so much for joining the Southern and Western Regions in San Antonio. We really enjoyed having you with us... It was a great conference and I'm still talking about it here in Alabama with everybody. Looking ahead at 2021, the Southern Region will join the Northern Region for a conference, and we will be meeting in Florida – in 2021. I'm wondering how we go about setting the dates. Has anyone already asked about a date for 2021 for the regional conference?

Answer: (Richard Smith - NLS)

No, that would be the Regional Conferences and usually they decide what the best time and the best place is for everyone in the region – and they ask everyone in the region what it's going to conflict with and if there's any other things going on, whether it's a State conference or anything else – and they select the best date.

Comment: (Angela Fisher Hall - AL)

Okay, well, wonderful. I just wondered if there was anything going on at NLS that we needed to be on the lookout for.

Comment: (Jill Rothstein – NY8)

Hi again. Sorry, I realized there was something else I need to bring to your attention. We are getting more and more calls from patrons as this evil flood of new mailboxes is sweeping across our city. The new mailboxes have those new, small slots that our Talking Books don't fit in, and it's causing a lot of problems for our patrons, as they can't get them back to us. I just wanted to bring it to your attention again as something to hopefully ask you to bring up with your main liaison at the Postal Service.

Comment: (Vickie Collins - NLS)

Hi Jill. I just got the answer and unfortunately, it wasn't really good news. We sent it to our postal liaison, and he asked us to send (an) actual cartridge to two different people in the Post Office. One, we still have not heard from but, one did email me and also sent the cartridge back Priority Mail. His email basically indicated that, yes, the cartridges will not fit into the new mailboxes that are being deployed. I discussed this with our liaison, and our liaison said that this had to do with security concerns at USPS. It did not seem that they were open to the idea of changing the design for the benefit of our patrons. I did also ask our liaison if he had a suggestion for what we could tell our patrons – as a way to express a concern and a complaint to USPS. He has still not let me know what that might be – and I know this week he's away but next week I'll check with him again and see if he has some recommendation for ways that patrons could express a complaint. Our liaison feels that it is not unreasonable for patrons to request that their postal carriers pick up the cartridges once they are ready to be returned. That is something that is a little delicate and would need to be negotiated by each patron with their postal person. It's certainly an alternative that can be explored.

Comment: (Jill Rothstein – NY8)

Ok well, I really appreciate this Vickie. Keep me updated. It's going to be a big problem.

Comment: (Richard Smith - NLS)

We'll continue to look into it. Okay, well we did answer a lot of questions at the regionals – good for us! With that, we'll say "adieu" and talk to you in June.