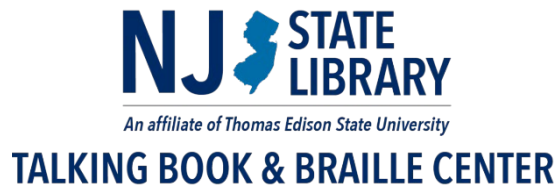


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## **Highlights from TBBC – Winter, 2024**



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### **A Message from the New Jersey State Librarian**

Reading ahead in the newsletter, I'm struck by the number of exciting developments that will be taking place in 2025 regarding the delivery of talking books. These developments are largely driven by new technologies.

While artificial intelligence (AI) hasn't emerged as a trend for the National Library Service yet, AI is sure to be behind the scenes, powering new ways to search and listen to audio books using smart tools like the Echo or Alexa.

The NJ Talking Book and Braille Center will move cautiously in any application of AI to its services – we know that the care and commitment that our staff have can never be replaced by machines.

Be safe and be well.

My best to you and yours in the New Year,

***Jen***

Jennifer R. Nelson  
New Jersey State Librarian

### **New Talking Book Player**

The Library of Congress' National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled (NLS) has announced a new talking book digital machine (Digital Advanced Player 2 (DA2)).

This player will be produced by a nationally recognized leader in the field HumanWare. NLS has placed an order for 21,000 units which should be arriving in late Spring of 2025.

A photograph is below but these players will be 8 inches by 7 inches and weigh only 2.5 pounds. The battery will last 14 hours between charges.

The units will have 28 gigabytes of storage internally. This is enough storage to hold every book you want to read in the coming year. The new player wi-fi. This will allow you to get books from BARD almost anywhere. The player will have a Bluetooth feature. The best example would let a patron with a hearing aid or wireless headphones to listen to a book directly without the speaker playing. More detailed news will come in our next newsletter.



### **My Talking Book**

My Talking Books is an Amazon Alexa skill that NLS patrons can use to access and stream English language audiobooks from [BARD](#). Using the skill's voice-only interface, you can search the BARD catalog of books, manage your wish list and much more

As an Amazon Alexa skill, My Talking Books is available on Alexa-enabled devices. At present, verified Smart Speaker devices for My Talking Books include:

- Amazon Echo (2nd Generation and above)
- Amazon Echo (2nd Generation and above)
- Echo Dot (2nd Generation and above)
- Echo Show 5 (2nd Generation and above)
- Echo Flex
- Alexa App on Android
- Alexa App on Apple iOS

My Talking Books is currently in Open Beta with a limit of 5000 users. NLS plans to open this feature to everyone in early 2025.

## **Blind Golfers**

The Mid-Atlantic Blind Golf Association has two programs for golfers. One for adults and another for youth. We have spoken with Mike Malloy who oversees the youth program and are working together on ideas for patrons. Mr. Malloy has kindly provided a short piece on the golf program for juniors. It is below:

Every year, The Middle Atlantic Blind Golf Association Junior Golf Program holds monthly outings and clinics for boys and girls age 7-21 who are blind or visually impaired. All skill levels are welcome, and the clinics are free.

Sponsored by The Middle Atlantic Blind Golf Association, the Junior Golf Program provides each player with a PGA teacher who will give lessons at a golf course near players' houses. They also provide the player with golf clubs, golf balls and a golf bag.

"Our goal is to teach kids golf, but also to provide a fun-filled day for our families," says Mike Malloy, Program Director of the Junior Program. "Our success is measured in smiles."

Sometimes the outings focus on a particular skill, such as chipping or putting. Other times the junior golfers work their way through a few holes. The junior golfers usually play for about two hours and then sit down to an informal meal together, where families have an invaluable opportunity to network.

"Making a positive impact though golf with MABGA is a highlight every year on our calendar," says Makefield Highlands PGA Director of Golf, David Smith. "Our team here is excited to work with the students from MABGA because the vision that these students possess comes from the heart and mind. It's a day all golfers should witness. Please come out and experience the joy."

If you are interested in learning to play golf, like to have fun and would like more information, please contact Michael Molloy at 215 499-0599 or [mgmolloy@aol.com](mailto:mgmolloy@aol.com) or at [MABGA Jr. Golf | Turning Obstacles Into Opportunities](#)

For many years now, TBBC has circulated by mail large print books to our children and teen patrons. We have so many great titles with classics like *The Great Gatsby*, *Pride and Prejudice*, *A Wrinkle in Time*, and *The Lord of the Rings* series, to newer favorites like the *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* series, *The Hunger Games* series, and *The One and Only Ivan* books. We have the latest and greatest additions like *The Secret Library* by Kekla Magoon, *Twenty-Four Seconds from Now* by Jason Reynolds, and *The Colliding Worlds of Mina Lee* by Ellen Oh. We even have large print books in Spanish Language.

We are constantly adding to our collection of large print books for kids and teens and are always so excited to get them into the hands of our readers. This collection is available to TBBC patrons under 18 only. Please contact [TBBCYouth@njstatelib.org](mailto:TBBCYouth@njstatelib.org) for more information. If you are an adult patron looking to borrow large print books, please contact your local public library.

### **Join the Winter Reading Challenge at TBBC!**

TBBC is excited to bring back the Chilly Chapters Winter Reading Challenge (WRC) for its second year, thanks to generous support from The Friends of the Library. Open to adult patrons aged 18 and over, the challenge runs for 8 weeks from **Monday, January 6, 2025, to Friday, February 28, 2025.**

### **Registration Details**

**When:** December 2, 2024 – December 23, 2024

**How:** Call (800) 792-8322 ext. 805 or email Liz Kelly at [lkelly@njstatelib.org](mailto:lkelly@njstatelib.org)

**What You'll Get:** Registered participants will receive a packet containing the challenge rules, recommended book lists, and a reading log. Prefer us to keep your log? Just let us know! Plus, the first 75 registrants will receive a special incentive gift

### **Submitting Your Reading Log**

Completed logs are due by **March 1, 2025** and can be submitted via:

- **Email:** Send a photo or list to [lkelly@njstatelib.org](mailto:lkelly@njstatelib.org)
- **Mail:** Ensure logs are postmarked by **February 28, 2025** (postage required).
- **Phone:** Call a Reader Advisor to update your log.

### **Prizes and Incentives**

- **Grand Prize Drawing:** All participants who read at least one book are entered to win a \$100 Visa Gift Card.
- **Extra Entries:**

- 2 entries for the top 10 readers.
- 3 entries for the top 5 readers.
- **Top Reader Prize: A tactile chess set for the participant who reads the most books.**

The prize drawing will be held on **Friday, March 14, 2025**. Winners will be notified via email or phone, and results will be featured in the Spring TBBC Newsletter.

Don't miss this opportunity to enjoy great books, earn rewards, and embrace the joy of winter reading. Register today!

Below please find a sample of one of the staff-curated book lists that will be sent to Winter Reading Challenge participants.

### **Hot Cocoa Worthy Reading**

#### **Whiteout DB11240**

By: Dhonielle Clayton, Reading time: 7 hours, 19 minutes.

Subjects: Young Adult; Romance; Holidays

"A snowstorm like this hits Atlanta only once every hundred years. As the city grinds to a halt, a group of teens band together to help a friend pull off the most epic apology of her life. But will they be able to make it happen, in spite of the storm? No one is prepared for this whiteout. But then, we can't always prepare for the magical moments that change everything." – Provided by publisher. Unrated. Commercial audiobook. For senior high and older readers.

#### **Download Whiteout DB11240**

#### **Tomorrow, and Tomorrow, and Tomorrow DB109032**

By: Gabrielle Zevin, Reading time: 13 hours, 55 minutes.

Subjects: Friendship Fiction; Bestsellers; Romance

"On a bitter-cold day, in the December of his junior year at Harvard, Sam Masur exits a subway car and sees, amid the hordes of people waiting on the platform, Sadie Green. He calls her name. For a moment, she pretends she hasn't heard him, but then, she turns, and a game begins: a legendary collaboration that will launch them to stardom. These friends, intimates since childhood, borrow money, beg favors, and, before even graduating college, they have created their first blockbuster, Ichigo. Overnight, the world is theirs. Not even twenty-five years old, Sam and Sadie are brilliant, successful, and rich, but these qualities won't protect them from their own creative ambitions or the betrayals of their hearts. Spanning thirty years,

from Cambridge, Massachusetts, to Venice Beach, California, and lands in between and far beyond, Gabrielle Zevin's *Tomorrow, and Tomorrow, and Tomorrow* is a dazzling and intricately imagined novel that examines the multifarious nature of identity, disability, failure, the redemptive possibilities in play, and above all, our need to connect: to be loved and to love. Yes, it is a love story, but it is not one you have read before.” – Provided by publisher. Unrated. Commercial audiobook. Bestseller. 2022.

**[Download Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow DB109032](#)**

**[How to Excavate a Heart DB112450](#)**

By: Jake Maia Arlow, Reading time: 8 hours, 42 minutes.

Subjects: Religious Fiction; LGBTQ+; Young Adult; Romance

“Snowy weather and fish fossils help bring together two Jewish college freshmen spending winter break in Washington, DC. It all starts when Shani runs into May. Like, literally, with her mom's Subaru. Attempted vehicular manslaughter was not part of Shani's plan. She was supposed to be focusing on her monthlong palaeoichthyology internship. She was going to spend all her time thinking about dead fish and not at all about how she was unceremoniously dumped days before winter break. It could be going better. But when a dog-walking gig puts her back in May's path, the fossils she's meant to be diligently studying are pushed to the side—along with the breakup. Then they're snowed in together on Christmas Eve. As things start to feel more serious, though, Shani's hurt over her ex-girlfriend's rejection comes rushing back. Is she ready to try a committed relationship again, or is she okay with this just being a winter fling?” – Provided by publisher. Unrated. Commercial audiobook. For senior high and older readers.

**[Download How to excavate a heart DB112450](#)**

**[The Many Daughters of Afong Moy: A Novel DB109598](#)**

By: Jamie Ford, Reading time: 13 hours, 31 minutes.

Subjects: Historical Fiction; Family; Psychological Fiction

“Dorothy Moy breaks her own heart for a living. As Washington's former poet laureate, that's how she describes channeling her dissociative episodes and mental health struggles into her art. But when her five-year-old daughter exhibits similar behavior and begins remembering things from the lives of their ancestors, Dorothy believes the past has truly come to haunt her. Fearing that her child is predestined to endure the same debilitating depression that has marked her own life, Dorothy seeks radical help. Through an experimental treatment designed to mitigate inherited

trauma, Dorothy intimately connects with past generations of women in her family: Faye Moy, a nurse in China serving with the Flying Tigers; Zoe Moy, a student in England at a famous school with no rules; Lai King Moy, a girl quarantined in San Francisco during a plague epidemic; Greta Moy, a tech executive with a unique dating app; and Afong Moy, the first Chinese woman to set foot in America. As painful recollections affect her present life, Dorothy discovers that trauma isn't the only thing she's inherited. A stranger is searching for her in each time period. A stranger who's loved her through all of her genetic memories. Dorothy endeavors to break the cycle of pain and abandonment, to finally find peace for her daughter, and gain the love that has long been waiting, knowing she may pay the ultimate price.” – Provided by publisher. Unrated. Commercial audiobook.

**[Download The many daughters of Afong Moy: a novel DB109598](#)**

**[The Very Secret Society of Irregular Witches DB110401](#)**

By: Sangu Mandanna, Reading time: 10 hours, 4 minutes.

Subjects: Fantasy Fiction

“As one of the few witches in Britain, Mika Moon knows she has to hide her magic, keep her head down, and stay away from other witches so their powers don’t mingle and draw attention. And as an orphan who lost her parents at a young age and was raised by strangers, she’s used to being alone and she follows the rules...with one exception: an online account, where she posts videos “pretending” to be a witch. She thinks no one will take it seriously. But someone does. An unexpected message arrives, begging her to travel to the remote and mysterious Nowhere House to teach three young witches how to control their magic. It breaks all of the rules, but Mika goes anyway, and is immediately tangled up in the lives and secrets of not only her three charges, but also an absent archaeologist, a retired actor, two long-suffering caretakers, and...Jamie. The handsome and prickly librarian of Nowhere House would do anything to protect the children, and as far as he’s concerned, a stranger like Mika is a threat. An irritatingly appealing threat. As Mika begins to find her place at Nowhere House, the thought of belonging somewhere begins to feel like a real possibility. But magic isn't the only danger in the world, and when peril comes knocking at their door, Mika will need to decide whether to risk everything to protect a found family she didn’t know she was looking for.” – Provided by publisher. Unrated. Commercial audiobook.

**[Download The very secret society of irregular witches DB110401](#)**

**2024 HOLIDAY APPEAL**

Be sure to watch your mail this month for this year's 2024 Holiday Appeal. The appeal includes a letter and a Recognition Wall book-shaped plaque order form for those interested in purchasing a plaque in honor or in memory of a valued patron. It also includes a remittance envelope pre-addressed to TBBC for your convenience.

If you have any questions about the letter, purchasing a book-shaped plaque, or have not received the letter, contact Linda Cerce at 800-792-8322 ext. 835 or email [lcerce@njstatelib.org](mailto:lcerce@njstatelib.org).

### **TBBC's Virtual Book Club: The Perfect Place to Talk About Talking Books!**

Did you know that TBBC has a monthly Virtual Book Club?

Our book club is a great place to get together with other TBBC patrons and discuss some amazing books. We are always looking for new members!

Our Virtual Book Club meets the first Thursday of every month at 1:00 p.m. Since the club is virtual, members can join either online using a link that is emailed to them, or by calling in over the telephone.

Club members get to vote on the books we read, and every book that we feature is available through our library. We also have time at meetings for members to talk about other books they have read recently, which is a great opportunity to get other reading recommendations.

If you are interested in joining a meeting, please call us at 800-792-8322 ext. 812 or email us at [tbbc@njstatelib.org](mailto:tbbc@njstatelib.org).

For more information, and for future meeting dates, you can read more about our Book Club online at <https://www.njstatelib.org/talking-book-braille-center/tbbcs-virtual-bookclub/>

### **The Friends of the Library**

Marie Sawyer here, I've been just elected to my second term as president of the Friends of the NJ library for the Blind and Handicapped. The Friends support programs and projects with the Talking Book and Braille Center.

I have a hard-working, strong board, but I'd like to make it even stronger. Please consider joining us. The process is simple, an application and a \$10 check.

There are only two meetings every year one in June and one in December. The meetings are conducted on a conference call so you do not have to leave the comfort of your home.

There are two ways to get in touch. The first is to send an email to the Friends. The email address is [Friendsnjlbh@yahoo.com](mailto:Friendsnjlbh@yahoo.com) or you may call me at 973-777-2006. All inquiries will be responded to in a timely manner.

Think about it. Come join us!

### **TALKING BOOK AND BRAILLE CENTER CONTACT INFORMATION**

Toll-Free Number: (800) 792-8322

Local Phone Number: (609) 406-7179

Email Address: [tbbc@njstatelib.org](mailto:tbbc@njstatelib.org)

Website Address: [www.njstatelib.org/tbbc](http://www.njstatelib.org/tbbc)

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