# Library Users of America, Inc.

## Spring, 2023

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## Editor's Page

Enjoy Your Public Library

Deborah Armstrong

As Brian Charlson pointed out in his Ledger article for Spring of 2022, your public library offers much more than you might at first expect. So if like Brian, you borrow books from your state regional NLS library and/or bookshare, remember it's your tax dollars which fund your town's public library -- its many free services are there for you to take advantage of.

Libraries have many events and classes publicized through online calendars. They loan tools, toys, wi-fi hotspots, sporting equipment and even tablets. Our local libraries loan chromebooks, Nook and Kindle readers and even android devices.

Public libraries contain vast online accessible databases of magazines and journals, newspapers and encyclopedias. Whether you want to learn more about Windows 11, Ukraine, how to grow oregano, what your local congress person thinks about public transportation or if your uncle's heart condition is mild, a library database can be the best place to research. You'll also find libraries offer free access to subscription-based commercial services like The Great Courses and Linked In learning.

Each city has its own rules so you'll find in some places you must live in that city whereas other libraries require only you reside in their county or state. But getting a library card is always a valuable free investment.

Public libraries also let you stream movies, download or stream music and of course e-books. In this issue, I provide a full review of the Libby app which lets you borrow audio books from your local library with your phone.

If after this issue, you’ve had enough reading about public library offerings, why not contribute your next piece to The Ledger. For example, tell us about a Jewish, Christian or Moslem library you benefit from spiritually. Or, perhaps a book review or report on your own regional or local library services is more to your taste. But we need to hear from you members to make this ledger truly an affiliate effort!

## President's Letter

Nuts and Bolts

Judy Wilkinson

In the before time, that is, when we held our conventions in person, the room would be crowded to hear, for instance, the NLS director or the official visiting talking book narrator. But even including a fire alarm, nothing would clear the room faster than the presiding officer’s announcement, “Be sure to come back and take your seats for our LUA business meeting!”

Carla Ruschival who held the job of Convention Chair when that job was difficult but easier than now as Janet Dickelman sits in that seat, warned our LUA board (yes in those days when it too met in person) nothing was deadlier than holding a business meeting during convention. And she who scheduled the rooms, knew that fact all too well!

Well it’s an ill wind that blows no good in that in these hybrid days, our business meetings are now held via Zoom during the three-day period in the week prior to the in-person activities.

And so it shall be: the Library Users of America’s business meeting will occur via Zoom on Thursday, June 22, at 4 PM Central Time (you’re on your own for getting there at the right time in your time zone.)

So grab your beverage of choice, cuddle up in your easy chair, and join us for our annual business meeting. Elsewhere in this issue, you’ll find the minutes of last year’s meeting, so competently provided by our secretary Ralph Smitherman. And Ralph won’t even have to run the mic as we’ll have an official ACB host to keep your president appraised of raised hands. And because the meeting will be zoom-web, the uninterested host can keep track of our votes as we raise our hands to vote for LUA officers for the next two years.

I truly hope we will have some contested elections so that we must indeed raise hands to vote! In odd years, officers are elected. This year both Paul Edwards, current vice president, and I will term out. That means that I will become immediate past president, and Brian Charlson who has so ably served this affiliate for decades, terms out as well.

Both Ralph who became secretary four years ago, and Adam Ruschival who became treasurer decades ago (Truly I don’t know how many years Adam as so faithfully served us) can run for an unlimited number of terms. Adam would be the first to admit that Carla, she mentioned above, serves LUA well in many capacities including “honorary” treasurer!

In all seriousness, though we hope these stalwarts will attend future board meetings, this change in officers will result in a lot of history being lost. Board member Leslie Thom will chair our nominating committee. She may reach out to you or you can certainly contact her with thoughts about candidates, especially for president and vice president! You can reach her at (landline) 916-429-8201 or (cell) 916-9995-2135; email [lathom@comcast.net](file:///C:\Users\CharlsonK\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\INetCache\Content.Outlook\Y0RG64KL\lathom@comcast.net).

A recommended slate will be sent to all members in a timely manner, and of course members can always run from the floor; you could even nominate yourself!

I am excited to report to you that our website committee is hard at work establishing our long-awaited Library Users website. Paul and Brian along with designer Jeremy Johanson and California Council’s web genius Phill Obregon are moving ahead and we should have an exciting update for you at our meeting.

For what it’s worth, I will do my best to sum up my years as your president, and we’ll deal with other business time permitting.

The affiliate’s business meetings provide the skeletal structure, the nuts and bolts for everything our affiliate does. And while that may seem boring, I know you know how crucial our business-work is. Just as all politics is local, so all affiliate work begins and is underpinned by participation of you, and me, members together.

## Know Your Series Order

Make Your Series More Fun to Read

Deborah Armstrong

Thank goodness we have Jane Corona to help us track missing books from any series that NLS distributes. See her article in our previous issue about her series sleuthing skills.

Whether it's your Victor Reader Stream, NLS player, EReader or other digital player, all of them have a bookshelf where the digital files for your Braille or audio reside.

If you have a computer, and know how to rename files, you can arrange them on that bookshelf in series order.

My first job is to make sure I know that series order. I google for the author or the main character's name followed by the words "series order". So my request looks like "Joe Pickett series order" or "D.K. Hood series order".

A variety of pages match this query and I look at them and pick the one that's the most accessible. I might keep that page open or copy and paste the book names to a text file.

Now that I have a reliable list, I download all the books from NLS and/or bookshare. I might use BARD express for NLS or Humanware companion or K1000 for bookshare, or simply download direct from their websites.

Once all the books are on my computer, I need to rename their folders in series order. On Windows, I arrow to the book's folder name and press F2 to begin the rename. I then press the Home key to cursor to the beginning of the line and enter a two-digit number, followed by a hyphen. So, a book originally named "Power Play" is now named "14-Power Play".

When a book is missing from a series I skip its number; I might be able to acquire it later.

Good sources for missing books are your local public library's digital collection, Apple books or Kindle and Learning Ally. You might also be able to borrow the digital book from archive.org. You'll want to make a note of its order in your series if you must read it on another device like a smartphone. A series I am currently reading has its seventh and ninth books on Apple books and the fifth book is only on Kindle.

When my player is turned on again, with a cartridge or SD card inserted, it will read the books on my bookshelf in series order. Most players read the book title and not the series number I've assigned, but now at least they are arranged on the player's bookshelf in the order in which I intend to enjoy them.

## A Love Letter to Libraries, Long Overdue

From The New York Times

By Elisabeth Egan and Erica Ackerberg

February 14, 2023

Step into a public library and you know what to expect.

First, there's the smell: a paper bouquet of nothing and everything, including notes of vanilla, sawdust, wet coats, rubber soles and school. Then there are the spines lined up like soldiers, snug in plastic jackets. There are the shelves — metal, wood, sturdy as trees — stretching in every direction.

There are the rolling step stools. The windowsill ferns. The free bookmarks. The bulletin board papered with fliers advertising firewood, a 10-speed bike, free kittens, CPR class.

There are the sturdy armchairs, the picked-over magazine racks, the award-winning dioramas on loan from adolescent creators, the study carrels etched with decade-old graffiti. There's the water fountain spouting the coldest beverage in town, a different vintage from the lukewarm dribble in the school gym or the violent torrent at the Y.M.C.A.

There are the overhead lights casting their fluorescent glow, occasionally flickering, flattering no one except people who live on the page. Still, they get the job done.

And above it all — hovering over the murmurs and coughs and scraping of chair legs and gurgle of fish tanks and crackle of plastic covers — there is a weighted blanket of quiet, that reassuring hush we're hard-wired to expect from our inaugural visit to the children's room. Whether you first crossed that threshold in the scrum of a class trip or clutching your mom's hand; whether your hometown library was on a country road or at a busy intersection; whether you put your library card to good use or used it to pick locks; odds are good that, at some point, someone touched an index finger to their lips and shared the universal password for the kingdom of words: "Shhhh."

But this sentiment doesn't really apply anymore. It hasn't for a long time.

Just as reading has changed (from paper to pixel to audio) and tools for research have streamlined (sorry, World Book), so have the places that house the goods. Silence is no longer a requirement; versatility is.

It's easy to romanticize libraries. But, the fact is, they're not "just" about the written word. Were they ever? As local safety nets shriveled, the library roof magically expanded from umbrella to tarp to circus tent to airplane hangar. The modern library keeps its citizens warm, safe, healthy, entertained, educated, hydrated and, above all, connected.

Imagine a teacher who's responsible for a mixed-age classroom where students are free to wander in and out as they please, all opinions are welcome and detention is not an option. This person is also the principal, the guidance counselor, the school nurse and, occasionally, the janitor. This person is your local librarian.

Yet somehow librarians still find time to match people with the books they need. These selections may be second-guessed by irate taxpayers who don't know the difference between F. Scott Fitzgerald and L. Ron Hubbard or don't understand that ideas and stories aren't contagious; the only disease they'll infect you with is empathy. Nevertheless, librarians persist. One could argue that they distribute more wings than an airline pilot. Put yours to good use and you can fly anywhere.

Libraries have always been a place of worship for a certain type of person, but they're also community centers, meeting houses and pop-up medical clinics, offering vaccines, homework help, computer classes, craft sessions and tax advice. Perhaps you need fresh needles, marigold seeds, a loaner guitar, a hammer, a venue for your knitting club or a donation box for your old eyeglasses? Head to your local library. It might have you covered and, if it doesn't, someone there will know where to send you.

Best of all, you never need a reason or an invitation to go to the library. You aren't required to make a reservation ahead of time or purchase a cup of coffee while you're there. You can pop in when your Wi-Fi is on the fritz or you need a break from your roommates. You might go there to dry off or to cool down. To study for algebra or to read a romance novel. To stock up on thrillers or to take stock of your less-than-thrilling life. To meet a friend or to be alone. For a bit of excitement or for a moment of calm.

Last fall, The New York Times sent photographers to cities, suburbs and rural areas in seven states to document how different libraries respond to the needs of their communities, and the many ways in which patrons find a haven in each one.

At the time, the news was full of grim dispatches from the land of letters. In Colorado, two branches closed because of meth contamination. In McFarland, Calif., city leaders debated whether to convert a library into a police station. In New York City, Mayor Eric Adams proposed massive budget cuts that would slash library hours and programming. The American Library Association announced that attempts to ban books were accelerating across the country at a rate never seen since tracking began more than 20 years ago.

It was enough to make you wonder if the ancient tradition of book lending was going the way of card catalogs.

Then the photos started to roll in, and they told a different story. In this version, toddlers tried to catch bubbles on the loose in the library. Grateful seniors welcomed monthly deliveries of movies and crime novels. Teenagers strummed guitars together. Children and caregivers gathered beneath technicolor trees to listen to a picture book read by a beaming librarian. In a different time zone, another librarian worked contentedly in the cozy oasis of a bookmobile.

It was impossible to look at these pictures and not feel hopeful about the state of humanity, especially with several seasons of isolation still fresh in our minds. Remember when you were craving the casual comfort of strangers? Remember when the simple act of checking out a book felt like a small miracle?

Sitting in a windowless room in Times Square, scrolling from library to library, state to state, we were unexpectedly moved by the color, light and joy at our fingertips. These glimpses into lives of strangers were a reminder that copies of the books piled on our desks at the Book Review will soon land on shelves in libraries across the country and, eventually, in the hands of readers. You'll pass them to other people, and on and on.

We all know that books connect us, that language has quiet power. To see the concentration, curiosity and peace on faces lit by words is to know — beyond a shadow of a doubt, in a time rife with shadows — that libraries are the beating hearts of our communities. What we borrow from them pales in comparison to what we keep. How often we pause to appreciate their bounty is up to us.

(Editor’s Note: This article appears online accompanied by many lovely photos. If you have some sighted help or some sight yourself, you may want to check those out.)

## Start Spreadin’ the News

Library Users of America Convention Program 2023

Judy Wilkinson

What an exciting program we have planned for our friends and members of Library Users of America.

And the good news, all four of our sessions will be hybrid! For each time slot only two hybrid rooms are available and we are thrilled that you will be able to join us in person or via Zoom to participate during all four sessions as well as for our business meeting.

So, when registration opens in mid-May, please register for LUA’s sessions. Remember, registration for convention events sponsored by LUA is not the same thing as becoming a LUA member! Registering for the convention shows how much you value LUA’s programming. We have wonderful support from those who support us by registering, and we know you come for more than the door prizes! But hey, who doesn’t want a door prize?

Here’s a preview of what you will experience.

Brian Charlson who has coordinated so many memorable convention events has hit two out of the park this time.

### Sunday, July 2

two back-to-back sessions on Artificial Intelligence.

The buzz word of the moment: artificial intelligence. LUA’s got your back as in two back-to-back sessions on aspects related to library use of this hot concept.

Session 1: 1:00 PM CT

Text to Speech, Artificial Intelligence and You

Come hear the new, amazingly professional, amazingly natural sounding voices demonstrated.

Do you realize that with just a few moments of your recorded voice as a sampling, you could conceivably “read” an entire audio book?

The future is quickly approaching and now is the time to learn just how it will be affecting you. Come learn from our panelists what the near future of audio production holds for those of us who rely on audio to read, access video and interact with the world around us. What will Talking Books become? Will we continue to rely on live describers? Join the conversation and give a listen to just how far we have come.

Session 2: 2:30 PM CT

AI and the Big Boys

What do Microsoft, Google, Apple and Amazon have in common other than they are well funded, massive and have an incredible workforce at their disposal? They are all looking to reinvent themselves to remain relevant.

Come here what each company is up to in the artificial intelligence space and what they hope the future will hold. We hope for samples of what they have achieved and some blue skying on how all of this will play out for those of us who are blind.

### Monday July 3

Session 3: 1:00 PM CT

Meet Talking Book Narrator Jake Williams

Talking Book narrator Jake Williams will be presenting at Monday’s general session, but you will have a chance to be with him in this much more intimate setting during this LUA-specific session. Bring your questions for Jake. One of our lucky convention attendees will be able to share a visit with Mr. Williams: bid high at the auction for this prize!

Leslie Thom, you may be a member of the LUA board, and you have snagged the visit with the narrator for many years! But I suspect you’ll have some stiff bidding competition for this visit.

LUA is a Pearl sponsor at the convention, and that annual donation supports the participation of one of our beloved narrators.

### Tuesday July 4

Session 4: 1:00 PM CT

Meet the Representative from the National Library Services for the Blind and Print Disabled

Mr. Jason Yasnar, will present to the General Session. But once again LUA joined by the Braille Revival League and the Association of Blind Teachers sponsors a visit with the folks from NLS. This year Deputy Director Jason Yasnar will be with us. We look forward to his appearance along with others from his team.

### Library Users of America Business Meeting

Thursday, June 22, 4:00 PM CT

Finally, first but not least, please attend our business meeting, where we will be electing officers among other important items of business.

## Listen with Your Smartphone

Libby Makes Borrowing Easy

Deborah Armstrong

When public libraries first offered audio books, they provided cassettes and CDS for patrons to borrow. Both, however are fragile, so when digital media distributors, commercial companies who act as the middlemen between publishers and consumers began selling services to libraries, librarians were eager to jump on that bandwagon. Now almost every public library loans e-books and downloadable audio books using one of these digital media distributors. The most popular one is Overdrive, Inc. which enables users to search for and borrow books from within a browser. But their Libby app is even easier to use.

If you tried Libby several years ago and found it was not accessible, that was then -- this is now! Overdrive listened to complaints from the blind community and have done an outstanding job of creating an app that is simple to understand and works flawlessly with the screen reader on your Amazon Fire, android device, iPhone or iPad.

When you first open Libby, you'll need to choose your library by searching for it via your current location, zip code or city and state. Once selected, you log in to your library with your cards numeric bar code and your personal pin. Libraries are happy to assist you if you don't know how to get this information.

You can log in to multiple libraries and the app keeps them straight. It also remembers your login credentials so they need be entered only once.

Libby lets you:

* Borrow E-books, e-audio or e-magazines.
* Borrow books for 1, 2 or 3 weeks.
* Put books you want to read later on a wish list.
* Put books others are currently borrowing on hold.
* Renew books if others are not waiting to borrow them.
* Listen to or read borrowed books.
* Download books to your device so you can read in airplane mode.
* Avoid downloading to save memory on your device, and stream titles instead.
* Keep your place in any borrowed book.
* Listen when your screen is locked.
* Enable a sleep timer.
* Remove books automatically when their loan period is over.

The Libby screen has five tabs at the bottom:

Search: This is where you locate books by subject, title, author, narrator or keyword.

Library: This is where you can read your current library's announcements about new and popular books.

Menu: this is where you access help, settings and notifications as well as switch between active libraries or add accounts for libraries you have not yet logged in to.

Shelf: This is where your loans and holds live. You can scroll through this list to play or read a particular borrowed book or borrow a book on hold once it is your turn.

Timeline: This is the actual book reader. It lets you navigate through a book whether it is text-based or audio. You can adjust the playback speed and create bookmarks. Each time you pause, that place is saved as a time mark so it's easy to locate it if you need to return there. iOS users will be happy to know their magic tap, the two-finger double-tap does toggle between play and pause.

For most books, a table of contents is displayed with chapter names, so you can tap on a chapter and begin an audio book there.

Libby also has a few other features worth noting.

Libby's search capabilities are sophisticated, making it easy to narrow down your search with filters which let you pick the exact thing you are seeking. For example, by tapping a few filters I can find thrillers that are currently available, in audio and that are also considered science fiction. You can narrow the vast category of self-help down to management advice.

On most screens, a line at the top tells you where you are, for example "you are in a dialog" or "you are at shelf". This helps you stay oriented in the app. Libby also pops up notifications when a hold becomes available to borrow, or when a book you've borrowed is about to expire and whether you can renew it. You can only renew a book if others are not on a waiting list. But you can suspend a hold and resume it at a later date. You can also add books to a wish list.

Libby's E-books are also mostly accessible, and can be read with speech and/or Braille, though sometimes you can lose your place. Some books are image-based and therefore cannot be read with speech or Braille. Magazines by default display as images, but a text view can be enabled.

The Libby site at <https://help.libbyapp.com/en-us/index.htm> is full of frequently asked questions, tutorials and blog posts that will help you master new features. And if you want to use a browser rather than an app, you can go to <http://libbyapp.com> for the same accessible experience in your web browser.

If you want to use Libby on multiple devices, once it is set up in one place, you can have it supply an eight-digit code to enter on a second device to automatically transfer all your settings. I have a dozen library cards and was able to transfer all their information from my iPhone to my Amazon fire with that single code.

Though many of the books your public library offers are the same bestsellers you can find on BARD, you often will find the missing title in a series you've been enjoying or the newest offering from a favorite author that NLS has not yet acquired or recorded. Personally, I find my local libraries offer more modern nonfiction than NLS especially when it comes to health, science, finance and education.

Also, if you enjoy reading with the Kindle app or an Amazon device, you can often have Libby transfer a borrowed e-book to your Amazon Kindle account.

Libby has extensive help, including how-to videos, plus I've always found local librarians super helpful when I had questions about the app. If you teach, know that Libby is a great tool for reluctant readers, such as disinterested teens or dyslexic adults.

My mom who in her late eighties, had severe macular degeneration, found Libby easy to navigate with her decreasing vision, even though her technology skills were limited. It's a terrific platform for reading and listening to books whether or not you are blind.

## Book Review

Friendships and Video Games

Linda Adams

Whether or not you have personal experience with video games, “Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow” by Gabrielle Zevin (DB109032) will reward you with an intimate look into the relationship of three video game wizards. Sadie and Sam first meet as young children and, after a six-year gap, mend and resume their friendship in college. They are joined by Sam’s roommate, Mark, and the trio successfully develop a video game. Disability, mixed heritage, love, grief and the testing of close friendships are integral topics in this novel. Their story spans over 30 years, moving from Harvard and Cambridge to California where they establish their business. The author’s description of how video games are created shows the value of teamwork and reflects how relationships develop in layers. The book received widespread critical acclaim including New York Times most notable books for 2022. If you’re planning to see the musical “Tommy” at the ACB 2023 convention in Schaumburg, this is a must read.

## Get Conversational

Learn Spanish with NLS

Deborah Armstrong

NLS has many offerings for the Spanish learner, from the beginner, to the more advanced student. Though you've likely seen advertising for Rosetta Stone, Duo Lingo or Babbel, you don't need commercial software to learn Spanish. Here is a minibibliography with my commentary.

### Starting Out with Lessons

**Spanish (Latin American) DBF04955**

Reading time: 3 hours, 41 minutes.

NLS Annotation: A self-study course teaching essential conversational Spanish. Original method allows for easy absorption of the Spanish language. Includes vocabulary and grammar useful in conversational settings.

My Comments: A Pimsleur method recording, this is a quick and uncomplicated introduction to simple phrases. If you're a tourist, this is the easiest set of lessons to master.

**Drive time Spanish. Beginner level DB87043**

Reading time: 4 hours, 13 minutes.

NLS Annotation: A simplified program to learn the basics of Spanish vocabulary, grammar, conversation, and culture.

My comments: For people practicing in their car, there's no printed reference material. It takes you from absolute beginner to the point where you can ask simple questions and utter common phrases. It's perfect for someone traveling to Mexico, south America or Spain.

**Getting along in Spanish DB18141**

Reading time: 10 hours, 13 minutes.

NLS Annotation: An introductory guide to Spanish, emphasizing phrases and sentences of particular interest to the traveler. A grammatical outline and vocabulary are included.

My comments: This was the oldest book on learning Spanish in the NLS talking book collection. It is more helpful if you already have a little Spanish under your belt.

**Spanish for dummies DB57058**

Reading time: 15 hours, 23 minutes

NLS Annotation: Five-part guide with twenty chapters on learning Spanish. Presents conversational dialogs for handling a variety of situations from basic greetings to emergencies. Also includes grammatical reference notes, colloquial expressions, cultural facts, a mini-glossary, and other information. 2000.

My Comments: This book is more useful if you've had some Spanish and want to brush up on grammar, vocabulary or idioms. It helped me, for example, master the two preterit tenses. If you have access to Bookshare, download the same book to see how words are written.

**Behind the wheel. level 1 Spanish, DB98320**

Reading time: 9 hours, 56 minutes.

NLS Annotation: The first part in a series of short lessons covering beginning to intermediate level Spanish. Features an English-speaking instructor with native Latin American Spanish speakers to aid with pronunciation. Supplementary print material available as BR 23827.

**Behind the wheel. level 2 Spanish, DB98321**

Reading time: 9 hours, 7 minutes.

NLS Annotation: The second part in a series of lessons teaching Spanish grammar, vocabulary, sentence construction, and listening skills. Reviews vocabulary and basic concepts from Behind the Wheel: Spanish 1 (DB 98320) and expands on these. Features both English and native Spanish speakers. Supplementary print material available as BR 23828.

**Behind the wheel. level 3 Spanish, DB98322**

Reading time: 8 hours, 57 minutes.

NLS Annotation: The third part in a series of Spanish lessons. Begins by building on the lessons of Behind the Wheel: Spanish 2 (DB 98321) and continues to build skills in vocabulary, grammar, and listening comprehension. Focuses on listening comprehension and interactive conversation skills. Supplementary print material available as BR 23829.

My Comments: This three-part series is for the serious student but it starts at a completely beginner level. It can be mastered by anyone in middle school or above. Works best with daily practice. Has more emphasis on understanding spoken Spanish than other programs. The optional supplementary material available in Braille is also thorough but you can get along without it. Use your Braille on demand credit to order the embossed volumes though it also works great on the eReader, since you are only working with a phrase or two at a time. You won't understand the Spanish news or soap operas but you'll be able to make yourself understood or converse on a basic level with a Spanish speaker.

(If you do not read Braille, local libraries loan this program along with downloadable zoomable PDF files for that supplementary material.)

**The Berlitz self-teacher, Spanish: BR15673**

4 volumes.

NLS Anotation: Spanish-language study guide designed for the independent student. Stresses oral practice and presents each of thirty-eight lessons as a conversational dialog incorporating vocabulary and grammar exercises. A pronunciation guide and English translation follow each sentence. Also provides information on Spanish customs. 1949.

My comments: Lessons consists of phrases to memorize, followed by exercises with answers to help rearrange words to create new sentences. Each phrase is followed by pronunciation and its English translation. Unlike dictionaries, pronunciation is shown as standard English alphabetical characters, so the only symbols you need to memorize are the few Spanish accented letters. The English is grade 2 while the Spanish is uncontracted.

**A new reference grammar of modern Spanish: BR14863**

10 volumes.

NLS Anotation: Provides a complete and up-to-date reference to the grammatical rules of modern Spanish as currently spoken and written in Spain and Latin America. Covers

formal, colloquial, familiar, and popular usage of the language, illustrated with examples in Spanish with English translations. 1988.

My Comments: Completing the fourth semester of college-level Spanish, I was faced with a hairy final exam. Having this book on my eReader was the valuable study aid helping me earn an A. But if your goal is not so ambitious, you might as well leave its ten volumes behind.

**The University of Chicago Spanish-English, English-Spanish dictionary: a new concise dictionary of words and phrases basic to the written and spoken languages of today BRE00010**

27 volumes

My Comments: There's no NLS annotation but I saw this book once in hardcopy, consuming an entire bookshelf. On your eReader, which can search across volumes, you might find it useful. The last eleven volumes are the Spanish-English portion of the dictionary. Using a Braille display, I actually edited it down to a single volume by removing headers, footers, guide words and the last 11 volumes plus all the pronunciation information for each word. That made it far more searchable. Note this is in uncontracted Braille.

### Coming Next

The NLS union catalog shows the Pimsleur system for learning Spanish is an in-process title, which means they are working on it. They will also be producing the supplemental material that accompanies this commercial set of lessons in Braille. I've borrowed the Pimsleur lessons from a public library; it includes five separate units, and each unit comprises many individual lessons. It's the most comprehensive independent study program I know of that can be borrowed for free.

### Children's Bilingual Books

NLS has a rich collection of books for young children featuring both English and Spanish. For adult learners, they can move you from beginner to intermediate, or even advanced. Some present the entire text first in one language and then follow with the entire story in the second language. Others alternate between Spanish and English with each paragraph, sometimes providing fully translated paragraphs and at other times, moving the story forward without every sentence being translated.

Beginners should avoid being discouraged when they don't understand every word. Listening to the cadence and different dialects while just absorbing these tales will help you feel more comfortable with the language.

I present this list in order of complexity.

**First 100 words DBC14570**

Reading time: 7 minutes.

NLS Annotation: With over 100 essential first words to read in Spanish and English.

My Comments: Even the absolute beginner will learn from this easy book for little children.

**The great and mighty Nikko!: a bilingual counting book DBC14564**

Reading time: 7 minutes.

NLS Annotation: Nikko's mother wants him to stop jumping on his bed, but he's not jumping on his bed, as he tried to convince her. Instead there are luchadors, masked wrestlers, trying to fight him one at a time. In the end, of course, Nikko is the winner.

My Comments: Bilingual children's books can introduce you slowly to the sounds of Spanish allowing you to comprehend more than you might expect.

**The Ugly Duckling DBC17157**

Reading Time: 5 minutes

NLS Annotation: Easy Reader version in which the ugly duckling goes through a year of sadness, isolated from the other animals, before becoming a beautiful swan.

My Comments: Read at a slow pace where each English sentence follows with the same sentence in Spanish.

**Where is the green sheep DBC14566**

Reading time 6 minutes

NLS Annotation: There is a red sheep and a blue sheep, but where is the green sheep?

My comments: Playful, easy to understand even for beginning learners.

**La princesa and the pea DBC07053**

Reading time: 9 minutes.

or BRC01797

1 volume.

NLS Annotation: A rhyming bilingual fairy tale about a girl who must detect a pea beneath a mountain of mattresses if she is to marry the prince. Includes a glossary of Spanish words used in the text.

My comments: Rhymes can be a valuable memory aid; don't overlook books for preschoolers when trying to master a language. This is also available in Braille so you can see how words are written.

**Tito Puente, Mambo King: a bilingual picture book DBC14965**

Reading time: 11 minutes.

NLS Annotation: A vibrant bilingual picture-book biography that portrays the musical and cultural phenomenon of Tito Puente, Mambo King.

My Comments: Introduces more vocabulary.

**Dentist DB58439**

Reading time: 12 minutes.

NLS Annotation: Explains the job of dentists, including how they help people and what to expect during a visit to one.

My Comments: Who knew Bruce Huntey could read Spanish! Each English paragraph follows with its Spanish translation.

**The adventures of Connie and Diego DBC07282**

Reading tine 13 minutes

NLS Annotation: People make fun of Connie and Diego because their skin is multi-colored. They run away to ask the animals where they really belong.

My comments: Easy for a beginner or intermediate learner to follow as each paragraph's translation follows immediately.

**El Perro con Sombrero: a bilingual doggy tale DB101006**

Reading time: 16 minutes.

NLS Annotation: One day, the wind blows a sombrero onto Pepe's head, and people finally start noticing the lonely street dog. He enjoys his newfound fame, but still wishes he had a family. But now, a jealous cat has a plan to steal Pepe's hat, and all that attention.

My Comments: Full of music and sound effects, the English comes first, followed by a full dramatic presentation in Spanish.

**Uncle Nacho's hat DB33670**

Reading time: 18 minutes.

NLS Annotation: Uncle Nacho's hat is old and full of holes and of no use for anything anymore. After his niece gives him a new hat, Uncle Nacho tries to get rid of the old one, but it keeps coming back, time after time.

My Comments: Slightly more difficult vocabulary but easy for an intermediate learner to grasp.

**My name is Celia: the life of Celia Cruz DBC14968**

Reading Time: 19 minutes

NLS Annotation: A bilingual portrait of the "Queen of Salsa" describes her childhood in Cuba, her musical career, and her move to the United States and explains how her

music brought her native Cuba to the world.

My Comments: Loaded with adjectives, this prose poem interlaces English verses with their Spanish equivalent.

**Grandma Fina and her wonderful umbrellas DBC14560**

Reading time: 22 minutes.

NLS Annotation: After her friends and family all notice that her favorite yellow umbrella is torn, Grandma Fina gets quite a surprise on her birthday.

My Comments: Each English paragraph is followed by the same in Spanish. Playful, fanciful dialog.

**My Mexico DB60578**

Reading Time: 22 minutes

Eighteen short poems about living in Mexico. The subjects range from the bright colors of "Houses/Casitas" and the big fields in "Corn/Maíz" to selling "Iguanas on the Taxco Road”.

My Comments: Slightly more advanced vocabulary and a faster reading pace. Each poem is very short and followed immediately by its Spanish equivalent.

**Jeremy Jackrabbit recycles the can DBC05824**

Reading time: 20 minutes.

NLS Annotation: After he trips over an aluminum can, Jeremy Jackrabbit discusses the importance of recycling with his desert friends.

My Comments: The first in a series. The pace is slow and measured, making the Spanish easy to follow for intermediate learners.

**Jeremy Jackrabbit captures the sun DBC05825**

Reading time: 21 minutes.

NLS Annotation: Jeremy Jackrabbit finds that his plants grow taller with sunlight, and his desert pals chime in with other neat things the sun can do.

My comments: Children's books let you learn Spanish the same way a kid does, by listening and absorbing.

**Jeremy Jackrabbit saves every drop DBC05826**

Reading time: 22 minutes.

NLS Annotation: With the help of his animal friends, Jeremy Jackrabbit learns how to conserve, capture, and reuse water, so precious in the desert where he lives.

My comments: A great way to build vocabulary, these simple bilingual children's books will help new words stick in your memory.

**Eric and the enchanted leaf: a visit with Canis Lupis DBC16218**

Reading time: 24 minutes.

NLS Annotation: In this bilingual tale, Eric uses a magic leaf to communicate with and learn about wolves, Canis lupis while on a camping trip to Isle Royale National park.

My comments: Full translated paragraphs follow in order, first English, then Spanish.

**Charro Claus and the Tejas Kid DBC14562**

Reading time: 26 minutes.

NLS Annotation: One Christmas Eve, Santa Claus asks his cousin Pancho to help him deliver toys to the boys and girls along the Texas-Mexico border, and when he agrees, Santa magically transforms him into Charro Claus.

My comments: Playful story where we learn about Santa's Mexican cousin. The Spanish is read first.

**I'm Going to Texas DBC14558**

Reading Time: 26 Minutes.

NLS Annotation: Rhyming story about a child preparing to go to Texas. Also includes factual information on Texas.

My Comments: Each verse rhymes in English and is followed by a less lyrical but accurate Spanish translation.

**The rooster who would not be quiet DB86989**

Reading time: 27 minutes.

NLS Annotation: In this bilingual tale, the mayor of La Paz--a noisy village--institutes new laws forbidding all singing. But a brave little rooster decides he must sing, regardless of the punishment.

My Comments: The dramatic reading begins in Spanish and the English translation follows in full.

**Prietita and the ghost woman DBC26478**

Reading time: 27 minutes.

NLS Annotation: Prietita, a young Mexican American girl, becomes lost in her search for an herb to cure her mother and is aided by the legendary ghost woman.

My Comments: Read slowly, with simple vocabulary, the Mexican "ghost-woman" is a common folklore symbol. Paragraphs are translated in to Spanish as soon as they are completed, making the story easy for beginners to follow.

**Celebrations: holidays of the United States of America and Mexico DB59493**

Reading time: 28 minutes.

NLS Annotation: Beginning with New Year's Day, presents holidays of the United States in chronological order with corresponding Mexican festivals mentioned by date. Discusses differences and similarities in celebrations and includes facts about cultural and political history.

My Comments: This is one of the books where the Spanish is fully read first. Fast forward to get to the English section. Less of a childish theme and appropriate actually for all ages.

**Hello Ocean DB107125**

Reading Time: 25 minutes.

NLS Annotation: A bilingual poem about spending a day at the beach. Learn the five senses in English and Spanish, as the author describes the smell of the ocean and the feeling of sand between your toes.

My Comments: Each verse is followed by the Spanish equivalent. Includes full descriptions of illustrations in both languages.

**Animal nursery rhymes DB71668**

Reading time: 38 minutes.

NLS Annotation: A selection of Spanish-language animal-themed nursery rhymes and English poetic renderings

My Comments: Somewhat more advanced grammar and vocabulary here.

**Laughing tomatoes and other spring poems DB55040**

Reading time: 23 minutes.

NLS Annotation: Bilingual collection of humorous and serious poems celebrating spring, when nature and poetry make us "see everything for the first time."

**From the bellybutton of the moon and other summer poems DB55041**

Reading time: 22 minutes.

NLS Annotation: The poet remembers his childhood summers spent in Mexico in this collection of bilingual poems.

**Angels ride bikes and other fall poems DB55042**

Reading time: 28 minutes.

NLS Annotation: Bilingual poems express the joys of autumn and family in Los Angeles, California--a place of opportunity.

**Iguanas in the snow and other winter poems DB55043**

Reading time: 23 minutes.

NLS Annotation: These bilingual verses depict the pleasures of winter in the San Francisco area of northern California as experienced by a Mexican American family.

My Comments: This lyrical poetry series by Fransisco Alarcón introduces new vocabulary to the intermediate learner.

**A Movie in my Pillow DB107751**

Reading time: 43 minutes.

NLS Annotation: A collection of bilingual poems expressing the feelings of a young boy who moves from El Salvador to California because of civil war.

My Comments: The pace of the reading is faster than books for younger children. However, the complete English translation should aid with mastering its Spanish.

### For Teens and Adults

Here are a few more advanced bilingual selections with more verb tenses and less common vocabulary.

**Red hot salsa: bilingual poems on being young and Latino in the United States DB61296**

Reading time: 2 hours, 11 minutes.

NLS Annotation: Poems in English, Spanish, or a blend of both speak to themes of identity, neighborhoods, love, family, memories, and victory. Contains an introduction by Oscar Hijuelos, a glossary of selected Spanish terms, and biographical notes on the poets.

My Comments: For the more advanced learner, it's a great way to pick up more idioms and listen to colloquial speech.

**Once upon a time: traditional Latin American tales DB71639**

Reading time: 1 hour, 56 minutes.

NLS Annotation: Seven classic folk tales for children from Spain and the Americas. Includes "The Tlacuache and the Coyote," "Martina the Cockroach and Pérez the Mouse," "The Flower of Lirolay," and "Pedro Urdemales and the Giant."

My Comments: This is fairly advanced. The complete stories are each about 15 minutes long, and the English translation is not interwoven. Fast forward past all the Spanish to reach it.

**U.S. citizenship test: 100 bilingual questions and answers DB77973 or BR 20454**

Reading time: 1 hour, 28 minutes or 1 volume

NLS Annotation: A bilingual compilation of one hundred questions about government and history from the U.S. naturalization test. Includes reading and writing vocabularies, questions for people age sixty-five and older, and contact information for U.S. government agencies.

My comments: Helps you learn to read more formal Spanish as well as useful if helping a relative study for citizenship. Note that it's also available in Braille.

**Mexican tongue twisters BR09197**

1 volume.

NLS Annotation: Collection of forty-eight popular and humorous tongue twisters from Mexico, each with English translation. Included among the challenges to Spanish enunciation

are "Three Sad Tigers," "Chinese Monkeys," "A Lot of Coconuts," "Pepe Pecas," and "Parangaricutirimicuaro.". Also includes bilingual preface.

My comments: Try reading this one out loud to improve your pronunciation.

**Cultural contrasts: Hispanic-North American DB17984**

Reading time: 2 hours, 0 minutes.

NLS Annotation: Compares some of the differences between Latin American and North American customs relating to manners, personal behavior, language, dress, social relationships, eating habits, and other cultural traits. The author explains that ignorance of such customs is often the source of embarrassment or prejudice between Hispanics and North Americans.

My Comments: This is an adult book with advanced vocabulary and valuable information. The Spanish however is read at a slower pace and is enunciated clearly. A full English translation follows the complete Spanish text.

**More stories and poems in English and Spanish for children DBC18410**

Reading time: 5 hours, 54 minutes.

NLS Annotation: Opens the door to the world of literature for English and Spanish speaking children of pre-school to young adult reading levels. The collection of short stories and poems is designed to stimulate children's imagination and creativity, as well as their linguistic mastery and reading skills. It reflects the characters, themes and customs specific to Hispanic culture in the United States.

My Comments: The vocabulary is a little simpler than what one would find in a newspaper or adult novel, but the book is read at a standard Spanish speaker's pace. Once you can read this book, you likely can comprehend more difficult material without translations. The first part has all the material in English, and a second part contains the same poems and stories in Spanish. It's particularly useful if you spoke Spanish as a child and are rusty today.

### Final Thoughts

If you like reading simple Spanish in Braille, you can always try the Josefina stories.

**Meet Josefina, an American girl DB45561**

Reading time: 1 hour, 30 minutes.

NLS Annotation: In 1824 nine-year-old Josefina lives with her father and three sisters on a rancho near Santa Fe, New Mexico. The girls try hard to take care of things the way Mama did before she died the previous year. When their grandfather comes for a visit, they are surprised by the guest he brings—Tia Dolores, their mother's sister. Prequel to Josefina Learns a Lesson (DB 45562).

My Comments: This is the first book in the series in English. Listen to it first to become familiar with the story. Then read it in Braille:

**Así es Josefina, una niña americana BR14464**

If you need the story in English Braille borrow or download this too:

**Meet Josefina, an American girl BR11391**

You can get the entire Josefina series both in Braille and digital talking book in English. It's only available in Spanish in uncontracted Braille.

For a far more advanced experience, here's the first book in a historical trilogy:

**Genesis: memory of fire, I: part one of a trilogy DB24440**

Reading time: 10 hours, 5 minutes.

NLS Annotation: The history of Latin America in a blend of folklore, poetry, journalism, political analysis, and anecdotes. Covers myths of Pre-Columbian America and historical events through the fifteenth century. Includes some North America history, such as the Salem witch trials.

My comments: This is the translation in to English. The original in Spanish is available in both digital Talking book and Braille, making it possible to read along as you listen. Borrow or download:

**Los nacimientos: Memoria del fuego (I) DB70976**

for the talking book or

**Los nacimientos: Memoria del fuego (I) BR23666**

for the Braille. It's seven Braille volumes and takes twelve hours and sixteen minutes to read. The following two books in the trilogy are also available in both languages from NLS on talking book and in Braille in Spanish.

Right now, I'm struggling through just the first volume of the first book: wish me luck!

## Library Users of America

Annual Business Meeting Minutes

Ralph Smitherman

June 24, 2022: Zoom Platform

Roll Call of LUA Board Members

The roll was called at 2:30 PM, central time. Present were: President Judy Wilkinson, Vice President Paul Edwards, Treasurer Adam Ruschival, Secretary Ralph Smitherman, Board member Carla Ruschival, Board member Rhonda Trott, Board member Jane Carona, Board member Sharon Strzalkowski, Board member Leslie Thom. Absent was Immediate Past President Brian Charlson. Several members and guests were in attendance. A quorum was established.

Call to Order:

President Wilkinson called the meeting to order.

Approval of Agenda:

A motion was made and seconded to approve the agenda; this motion carried.

Reading of Minutes:

Secretary Ralph Smitherman read the minutes from the July 26, 2021, annual business meeting; he then made a motion to approve the minutes as read; there was a second; this motion passed.

Treasurer’s Report:

Treasurer, Adam Ruschival presented a comprehensive report. Current checking account balance, $5,764.46. Investment account balance, $17,850. Adam stated that we needed to pay for the ACB Braille Forum raffle ticket-$100-and the two $50 door prizes we donated to ACB for the convention this year. Adam Ruschival made a motion to accept the report; Paul Edwards seconded the motion; the motion passed. Note, Treasurer, Adam Ruschival maintains a copy of the report.

Election of Board Members:

President Wilkinson stated that we need to elect the five LUA Board members. There are three incumbents, namely, Rhonda Trott from Alabama; Jane Carona from Maryland, Leslie Thom from California; Donnah Siren made a motion to elect those three by acclamation Adam Ruschival seconded the motion; the motion carried. Mary Haupt from Louisiana, and Theresa Petrey from Arkansas introduced themselves, because their names were listed on the slate of possible LUA Board members. David Trott made a motion to elect Mary Haupt and Theresa Petrey by acclamation; Paul Edwards seconded the motion; the motion passed.

President Wilkinson, thanked Carla Ruschival and Sharon Strzalkowski for their dedicated service as LUA Board members.

Membership:

Carla Ruschival reported that LUA in 2022, has 124 one year members and 46 life members, which totals 170, allowing LUA seven delegate votes at the summer convention this year. She stated that if anyone is interested in becoming a member of LUA just call the following number:502-897-1472. Carla said that people could pay by check. LUA has three affiliates, one in Kentucky, one in Texas and one in California. National dues are $12 per year and life membership is $150. Several questions were brought forth concerning joining LUA! If a person wants to pay their dues by PayPal, the address is [lua-payments@gmail.com](mailto:lua-payments@gmail.com).

Publications Committee:

President Wilkinson, reported that at present, Paul Edwards, Brian Charlson, Jane Carona, Debbie Armstrong and Judy Wilkinson constitute this committee. Judy Wilkinson encouraged anyone who is interested in serving on this committee to contact her.

LUA Ledger:

Sharon Strzalkowski has stepped down from being the Ledger editor. President Wilkinson thanked Sharon for her dedicated service as editor. Judy stated that she would edit the next issue of the Ledger, and of course, she encourages people to submit articles for the Ledger.

2022, LUA Summer Convention:

President Wilkinson reminded everyone that LUA is a Pearl sponsor for the convention. She announced that Ray Foushee, an NLS narrator, would be joining us this year. Judy thanked all who paid the $10 LUA administrative fee. Judy stated that LUA would have two sessions on Sunday of convention week and two sessions on Tuesday of convention week. Judy said that NLS was now offering Braille books on demand, whereby a patron can order a Braille copy and keep said copy.

LUA Delegation:

President Wilkinson will be the delegate for the summer convention, while Sharon Strzalkowski will serve as alternate delegate.

Resolution:

Paul Edwards explained the Resolution concerning NLS discontinuing the large print version of Talking Book Topics, our Resolution is requesting that NLS continue to produce Talking Book Topics in the large print format. Paul Edwards made a motion that LUA join with other organizations in support of this Resolution; Sharon Strzalkowski seconded the motion; the motion carried.

Library Without Walls:

Paul Edwards described Library Without Walls, he stated that LWL meets during odd numbered months on the third Wednesday at 7:30 PM. He said that a specific topic was chosen for each event and, that participants were encouraged to bring two books concerning the particular topic. This project is a very successful project for LUA. Many thanks to Jane Carona, who is our scribe for LWL, she compiles a list of the books mentioned for each call and distributes them to members of LUA.

Library of the Year:

Sheila Young reported that the cooperating Library in the state of Washington was awarded the Library of the Year award, and the sub regional Library in Clear Water Florida also was chosen.

President’s Comments:

President Wilkinson thanked Monica for being a great host for our meeting. She thanked the LUA Board and everyone for participating on this call. There were fifty participants.

Adjournment:

We stood adjourned at 3:42 PM, central time.

Respectfully and humbly submitted by Secretary Ralph Smitherman.

## Library Users of America Officers and Board Members

July 2022

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