All time for my lessons, so says my house, and
I'm thinking of my story, thinks my story
for the better brain the better and the past
I sigh my syllables and think I'm sure of today's
grape and jelly sandwiches to the quick.
And I'll put then back on the table and put the light
of the conversation all the way on the street
and a pop under the magnolia tree.

And I'll say, wrapped his arms around her
right in my own house.
JBI: Looking towards the future

Presented by:

• Arlene Arfe, Librarian
• Jane Blecher, Studio Manager
• Jennifer Horowitz, Braillist
• Livia Thompson, President
Outline of today’s presentation

I. Introduction: Who We Are, JBI’s Offerings, Why JBI and Who JBI Serves
II. JBI History in brief
III. JBI’s Offerings: circulating library, liturgical texts, customized materials and cultural offerings
IV. JBI Sound Studio and Volunteerism
V. JBI Brailling
VI. How Can We Help?
Who We Are

JBI provides people of all ages and backgrounds who are visually impaired with access to a vast circulating library, liturgical texts, customized materials, and cultural offerings, enabling connection to the rich literary, cultural, and religious life of the Jewish community.
Who We Are

• We create, publish, and distribute.
• We ensure accessibility and inclusion for all individuals living with vision impairment.
• We are an Associated Agency of the Library of Congress’ National Library Service (NLS).
Millions of people, young and old, have visual impairments or physical conditions that leave them unable to read traditional print texts.

1 million Jews and individuals in a Jewish household.

20% of Americans over the age of 65 have eye related impairments.

Isolation and related issues such as depression are common among our constituents.
Why JBI

We provide:

• individualized attention and resources
• connections within the Jewish community and beyond
• critical conduits, providing advice and a friendly voice at the end of the phone, helping to guide people to their books and community involvement
**Who JBI Serves**

**Individual Patrons:** We provide our material, free of charge, to people of all ages and backgrounds located around the world who are blind, have low vision, or are print disabled.

**Organizations:** We partner with groups seeking to meet the accessibility needs of their communities through braille, audio, and large-print texts. These include schools and universities, libraries, day camps, publishers, retirement and senior centers, synagogues, and a wide range of Jewish and secular nonprofits and associations.
JBI’s Offerings

JBI’s offerings, which include a vast circulating library, liturgical texts, customized materials, and cultural offerings, enable our patrons to connect to the rich literary, cultural, and religious life of the Jewish community. We create, publish, and distribute thousands of audio, braille, and large print materials free of charge.
We offer more than 13,000 circulating audiobooks and several thousand braille titles and large print materials.

Our reader advisors offer personalized service to our patrons in English or Russian.
Our audiobooks are available in:

- English
- Russian
- Yiddish
- Spanish
- French
- Hebrew
- Hungarian
- Romanian
- Polish
Some of our current books being recorded
About JBI’s Liturgical & Lifecycle Material

Religious texts of all denominations are available for our patrons’ permanent ongoing use by request and free of charge.

We offer materials in large print, braille, and audio formats, including a variety of Haggadot; prayer books; the Bible; special services, including Yizkor service, Shabbat, daily prayers, and Kaddish/memorial prayers; and more.

These materials are given as permanent gifts and do not need to be returned.
About JBI’s Liturgical & Lifecycle Material

This year, we brailled three new haggadot, and are in the process of brailling the Lev Shalem Siddur and Machzor. We are also planning to braille the Reconstructionist Siddur by the end of the calendar year.

In 2022, we sent over 1600 haggadot around the country, and 1500 calendars. In 2023, we sent over 2400 haggadot. We want to continue to expand our liturgical and life cycle materials selection.
Reading one of our braille books
JBI prides itself on fulfilling a wide range of requests for individuals who are blind, have low-vision, or are print disabled to help them participate fully in Jewish life and learning.

Our free customized materials are made on a personalized basis for our patrons (individuals, larger groups, and organizations) and are available in braille, audio, and large print formats.
Parents and educators also turn to JBI to produce textbooks, educational materials, Torah and Haftorah portions, etc. for students who are working to obtain a Jewish education, participate in holiday celebrations, learn Hebrew, become bar/bat mitzvah, and otherwise be active in the Jewish community.
Other special requests have included song books and materials for participation at Jewish summer camps, poems for readings at events such as a wedding, or song sheets for participation in a choir, as well as materials for funeral homes (such as mourners' minyan materials), and brochures for museums and other organizations looking to make their services more inclusive and accessible.
JBI provides various special programs and projects that enhance people’s ability to connect to the Jewish community.

We offer several compilations of articles of broad Jewish interest from a variety of Jewish and secular news sources, including:

We also produce an annual Jewish calendar in large print in English and Russian, and in English Braille.

**Special programs:** Based on input from our patrons, we will continue to offer special programs and initiatives.
A critical part of our work, volunteers help to narrate, direct, and maintain quality control for our audiobooks, as well as helping in the production of braille texts.

JBI is actively recruiting more volunteers for these and other roles and we welcome individuals and organizations looking to give their time to support our mission. All work takes place in our state-of-the-art recording studio in midtown Manhattan.
Volunteer Opportunities:

Recordings
JBI records audiobooks in English as well as in Russian, Yiddish, Hebrew, Hungarian, Romanian, Polish, and Spanish. If you are a native speaker of any of these languages, we would love to hear from you.

In addition to studio recordings, JBI has opportunities to volunteer in other capacities. Please visit https://www.jbilibrary.org/pdfs/JBI_Volunteer_Application.pdf to submit an application.
Our volunteers at work
"Thank you to all the wonderful people involved in keeping JBI running. It makes my affliction more tolerable and keeps me more active as a human being."

Pauline H. • Capetown, South Africa
History of JBI: Our beginning in 1930/1931

Leopold Dubov: a blind émigré from Poland who settled in the Bronx

Samuel Wachtell: a lawyer, who met Leopold when he was a teenager

Rabbi Michael Aaronson: a blind WW I veteran, HUC graduate

Sisterhoods of Reform Judaism
Leopold DuBov, JBI founder
Key Moments in JBI's History

1931: The Jewish Braille Institute founded by Leopold Dubov, the blind son of a rabbi, with the help of Rabbi Michael Aaronson, who had been blinded in World War I

1932: JBI establishes the Braille Library and begins publishing The Jewish Braille Review
Key Moments in JBI's History

1940: JBI develops Hebrew Braille Code

1950: First Braille edition of the Torah is published by JBI

1960: JBI begins recording Talking Books and inaugurates its audio magazine, The JBI Voice
1992: JBI begins recording in Russian, Romanian and Hungarian and extends its program to the FSU and Eastern Europe

1993: JBI supports development of the Central Library for the Blind in Israel

1998: JBI begins recording major Jewish journals and the JBI website brings library catalog online
Key moments in JBI's history


2005: JBI begins recording in Spanish and expands its programs into Latin America

2008: Completion of the renovation and expansion of JBI’s East 30th Street international headquarters

2009: Large Print Hebrew/English Traditional and Reform Haggadot available for download on JBI website

2011: Large Print Hebrew/Russian and Hebrew/Spanish Haggadot available for download and JBI initiates expanded reciprocal arrangement with the Central Library for the Blind in Israel.

2012: JBI periodicals available for download on JBI website.
With 60 volunteers, we have completed 24 books this calendar year (as of June 1\textsuperscript{st}, 2023.) There are currently 44 books in production.

In 2022, we provided patrons with:

- 7000 thousand audio books
- 2500 braille and large print compilations of articles
- 25 special individual project materials
- 1600 Calendars/Luachs
- 1545 Haggadot (2232 in 2023!)
JBI, here and now, and the future

We can provide BRF files for refreshable braille devices. We can send audio files electronically (device must be encrypted). We are increasing our Braille production significantly to meet demand, especially around liturgical materials. We are updating our capacity to provide on demand services for audio books, braille and large print.
Samples of our materials—print, braille and audio
To become a patron—fill out an application on our website or printed out and return to JBI.

Next, JBI arranges for the patron to get a refreshable braille reader and/or an audio cartridge reader (now with Wi-Fi) from NLS.

Then, the patron can start ordering books by calling one of our librarians, or by searching our catalogs on our website and ordering books.
Application for Free Library Service: Individuals
Please complete this application and submit to the library serving blind and print disabled individuals in your state. To find your local cooperating library, go to www.loc.gov/nls/braille-audio-reading-materials/find-a-local-library or call 1-888-NLS-READ (1-888-657-7323). The application may be sent by email, fax, printed and mailed, or printed and hand delivered.

Please print or type
Name (Last) (First) (Middle)
Street Address
City County State Zip
Primary Telephone Date of Birth
Alternate Telephone Email Address

Alternative contact if you cannot be reached for an extended period:
Name Telephone Email

Veterans: Persons who are blind or have a print disability who have been honorably discharged from the United States military receive preference in the lending of books, recordings, playback equipment, musical scores, instructional texts, and specialized materials (Public Law 89-522).

☐ Check here if you were honorably discharged from the United States military.

Indicate the primary disability preventing you from reading printed material.
☐ Blindness ☐ Physical Disability ☐ Deaf/Blindness
☐ Visual Impairment ☐ Reading Disability

If you also have a hearing impairment, please indicate the degree of hearing loss:
☐ Moderate – Some difficulty hearing and understanding speech
☐ Profound – Cannot hear or understand speech
Eligibility of blind and other print-disabled persons for loan of library materials

The following people are eligible for service: residents of the United States, including territories, insular possessions, and the District of Columbia, and American citizens living abroad, provided they meet one of the following criteria:

1. An individual who is blind or has a visual impairment that makes them unable to comfortably read print books.
2. An individual who has a perceptual or reading disability.
3. An individual who has a physical disability that makes it hard to hold or manipulate a book or to focus or move the eyes as needed to read a print book.

Please see [www.loc.gov/nls/about/eligibility-for-nls-services](http://www.loc.gov/nls/about/eligibility-for-nls-services) for the full eligibility terminology.

Certifying Authority

Eligibility must be certified by one of the following: doctor of medicine, doctor of osteopathy, ophthalmologist, optometrist, psychologist, registered nurse, therapist, or professional staff of hospitals, institutions, and public or welfare agencies (such as an educator, social worker, case worker, counselor, rehabilitation teacher, certified reading specialist, school psychologist, superintendent, or librarian).

To be completed by Certifying Authority

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☐ I certify that this applicant is eligible for NLS services.

Signature ____________________________

Date ____________

A typed or handwritten signature is acceptable after certifying data is completed.
What qualifies someone to become a patron?
You need to be visually impaired and have a doctor sign off on the application. Also, there is no age limit, young or old, to become a member. We will help anyone.

Do you have to have your own book catalog?
You can check out our full catalog on-line at www.jbilibrary.org. You will receive a “sample” catalog with Library request cards when you send in your application. When you are done looking at the “sample” catalog, we will send you another catalog and so on and so forth.
How many books can be ordered at a time?
You will only receive up to 3 books at one time, but you can order many more and they will be on your wait list.

How do you order books?
Order cards (postage paid) come with the catalog (you can always ask for more cards). You can also email or call.

How are books returned?
Each cartridge comes with an address card on the outside. Take the card with the patron’s name on it, flip it over so that JBI's name/address appears and drop it in the mailbox!
Our Library Services

JBI International
110 East 30th Street
New York, NY 10016

JBI Library Request Card

Please list the catalog numbers and titles of up to 5 books you would like us to send to you (see example). Then just drop this card in the mail.

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☐ Please check here if you need more of these cards.
☐ Please subscribe me to The JBI Voice Plus magazine.

Sample Catalog of JBI Talking Books
arranged alphabetically by author

Published by
JBI International
110 East 30th Street
New York, NY 10016
Phone: 212-889-2525
1-800-433-1531

e-mail: library@jbilibrary.org
Website: www.jbilibrary.org
Annual Campaigns with Special Materials

- Calendar in Large print (English and Russian)
- Braille Calendars
- High Holiday Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur Machzorim
  - Large print and braille
Annual Campaigns with Special Materials

**Haggadot**
- Traditional
- CCAR
- Reform
- PJ Library
- Sephardi
- Chabad
Liturgical Materials

Large print, braille and audio (not every liturgical book in every format)
Torah: Hebrew, English and Russian
Haftorah: Hebrew, English and Russian
Siddur: Hebrew, English and Russian
Megillot: Hebrew, English, and Hebrew/English
Our Patrons
Our Sound Studio and our Volunteers (Jane)

We only record books that have not been previously recorded.

Our collection encompasses:

- Fiction
- History
- Biography
- short stories
- periodicals
- humor
- liturgical texts
- poetry
- Jewish studies
- memoirs
- cookbooks
- and more...
New volunteers are constantly in demand and they come in all shapes and sizes. We train and ask them to participate in three equally important ways:

- Quality Control
  - Narrator
  - Director

None of our books can be completed without the work of each of these volunteers.
Our Sound Studio and Volunteers

We require some familiarity with computers (keyboards) and a literary bent – volunteers must be comfortable with different types of literature. If there are unfamiliar words in different languages, we are here to help with pronunciations and definitions.

We ask everyone who wishes to narrate to audition. That entails a 3-minute piece that they have prepared and privately recorded. We listen for quality of voice, pronunciation, breath control and ease of expression.
Finished DTBs (audio books) and NLS Reader
Special Projects and braille work (Jennifer)

Types of projects brailled at JBI:

• calendars & magazines
• sifrei kodesh
• textbooks
• Bar/Bat Mitzvah preparation materials
• personalized booklets
• songsheets
• correspondence
• programs for the ReelAbilities Film Festival
• children’s combination books (print with braille overlay)
Special Projects and Braille work (Jennifer)

Transcription process: PDF or DavkaWriter → Word → Duxbury

Equipment used:
• High speed embosser for lengthy books
• Juliet embosser for shorter jobs and adhesive sheets
• Everest embossers for magazines and calendars
• Perkins Brailler (a manual Braille typewriter) for cardstock book covers, etc.

Finishing touches: binding options, labeling, print title pages and labels
# Hebrew Braille Alphabet

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Samples of JBI’s work
JBI provides students with the materials they need to be called to read torah
How can we help?

- Religious school materials in braille
- Jewish interest materials in audio, braille and large print
- Liturgical materials in audio, braille and large print
- 16-month large print and braille calendars with Jewish holidays and candle lighting times
- Specialized projects for students and institutions
- Special requests and support to make institutional materials accessible to your members/clients
Questions?
Our Staff

Livia Thompson, President - lthompson@jbilibrary.org
Beth Rudich, Director of Development & Engagement - brudich@jbilibrary.org
Arlene Arfe, Head Librarian - aarfe@jbilibrary.org
Inna Suholutsy, Russian Reader Advisor - isuholutsky@jbilibrary.org
Jane Blecher, Volunteer Coordinator and Sound Studio Manager - jblecher@jbilibrary.org
Jennifer Horowitz, Braillist – jhorowitz@jbilibrary.org
Our contact information

www.jbilibrary.org

1-212-889-2525
1-800-433-1531

Follow us on Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/JBILibrary/