

Tools for blind explained

SOME OF the newest equipment for use by blind persons was shown at Twentieth Century Study Club in a recent meeting in the home of Kathleen Hand. Doris Bozman, Becky Theis and Dorothy Ashenurst were co-hostesses.

May Beth Smith, president, asked for roll call which included member's grandmothers' favorite recipes. Members voted to have a gift exchange at the December meeting in the home of Zoie Skinner.

Suzanne Pilgrim, a teacher for the blind for nine years in the Garland schools, displayed sketches of the Optacon machine which Garland will soon have. The apparatus will enable blind persons to read regular writing but, she said, will never replace Braille.

Mrs. Pilgrim introduced Kenny Gattis, 18, a senior at South Garland High. He is a member of a swim team and has attended the School for the Blind in Austin. He demonstrated the

Braille machine and talking calculator. Kenny plans to major in woodworks after graduation.

Twenty-one members attended.

Calculator talks back

A surprise presentation of a \$400 "talking calculator" was made last week at South Garland High School to Kinney Gatteys, son of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Gatteys, 5022 Highridge.

Gatteys, a junior, is blind and could not function in math class with a normal calculator. This calculator responds verbally to input from the braille keys.

Coach Raymond Haas, Kinney's business math teacher, first conceived of the idea of the calculator for Kinney and contacted Bob Hazelwood, SGHS counselor, to see if one could be requisitioned for the youth.

Hazelwood contacted Mrs. Suzanne Pilgrim, a resource teacher,

and she contacted Mrs. Orveta Lewis, board president of a group known as Visual Aid Volunteers, and Mrs. Ed King, VAV executive manager.

Immediately, plans were made to provide the calculator for Kinney from a small fund VAV has available for specific items needed by visually impaired students in Garland schools.

VAV, working under the Texas Education Agency, is a local volunteer organization concerned mainly with teaching sighted persons braille so they may transcribe state adopted textbooks into braille for Texas public schools.

Gatteys is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Gatteys, 5022 Highridge.

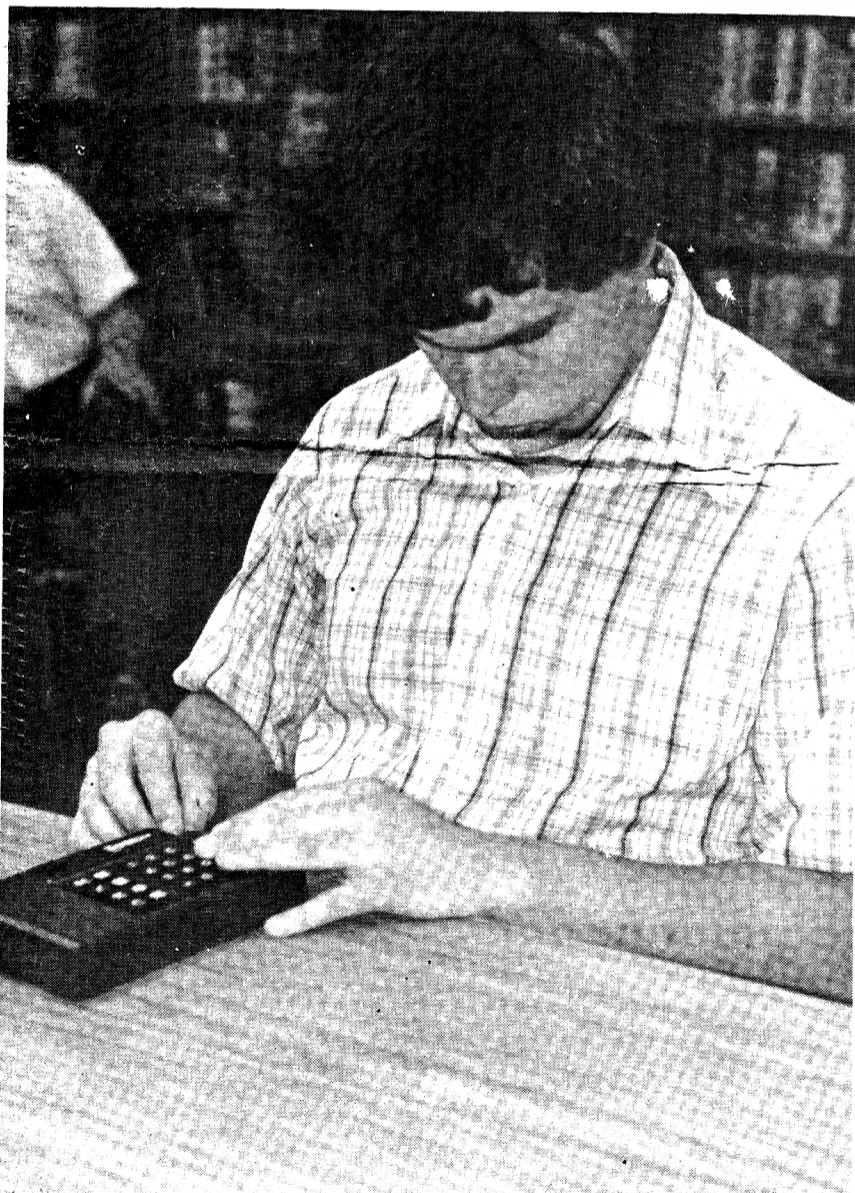


Photo by Jim Willis

TALKING CALCULATOR — Kinney Gatteys, a blind student at South Garland High School who has been assimilated into regular classrooms, receives help from a special "Talking Calculator," which was given to him last week by a volunteer group known as Visual Aid Volunteers. Gatteys is one of the disabled students now enrolled in Garland schools who receives help while staying in the mainstream of regular classroom work.

Awards go to VAV volunteers

Several persons received awards recently at the annual meeting of the Visual Aid Volunteers in the Gold Medallion Room, 203 N. Fifth Street.

President Mrs. Orvetta Lewis presided at the session at which new board members were elected. They included Mrs. Lewis, president; Mrs. Audra Hnrst, vice president; Mrs. Jo Sharp, secretary; Mrs. Frances Brown, treasurer; and Steve Fledman, trustee. Other members of the board are Mike Hayslip and Lillialma Bradfield, trustees; Helen Nelson, PTA Council president; Suzanne Pilgrim and Sue Brook, resource teachers for the Garland School District.

Mrs. Ed King, executive manager and director of the braille program, made the awards presentation. Six persons were presented pins for having completed 1,000 or more braille pages since the last annual meeting. They were Lois Buchanan, Evelyn Covington, Elise Kleuser, Brenda Martin, Carol Peryam and Betty Shafer.

JANIS FALK and Barbara Simmons were presented engraved plaques for the 5,000 or more braille

page award. Roberta Williams was awarded a trophy for having completed 10,000 or more braille pages.

Special awards were presented to two of the men volunteers. One went to Lee Covington who helps with the proofreading and to Chuck Gatteys who serves and repairs the Brailwriters which are used to transcribe the books.

About 99 percent of the work brailled by Visual Aid Volunteers consists of state adopted textbooks which are in current adoption by Texas. Assignments are received each year in November at a meeting with the Texas Education Agency in Austin. Even though there are six transcribing groups doing textbooks for TEA, VAV consistently brailles 50 to 60 percent of all that is brailled each year.

VAV is brailing all the mathematics which are being done in Texas. Virginia Cook, a math brailist, does the majority of the math, working five days a week in the VAV office. She is the only salaried, full time, math brailist in the state. Two volunteers are also working on the math

texts.

KENNY GATTEYS was introduced to the group to give a demonstration of the Talking Calculator that VAV presented to him about a month ago. Kenny is a blind student attending South Garland.

Each person present was given a print copy of several math problems from Kenny's high school math book. He had a braille copy of the same problems. He worked the problems on the calculator as each one listened attentively to the calculator speak the numbers as he pushed the keys.

The film "What Color Is the Wind" was also presented.

Seven women who have just completed a braille course taught by Mrs. King were introduced. They are Marcia Beaty, Ayleen Burden, Joan Fleeker, Diane Hudson, Chris Miller, Sharon Nowlin and Kathy Rucker. The workers will braille supplementary material needed by Garland students until early in the fall, and then they will braille a 35-page manuscript which is graded by the Library of Congress for

Certification. Then they will be given a five to six weeks class in textbook format so that they may be equipped to braille some of the work which will be adopted in November of 1977 by the State Commission of Education.

VAV CURRENTLY has 17 Certified braillists working on the textbooks. The deadline each year for all assignments is Oct. 31. VAV is the only group working with TEA who has completed their work on time every year since they began working with TEA in

1966. All masters that the braillists produce are sent to the Texas Department of Corrections in Huntsville where the copies are made and then sent to students all over the state as well as throughout the nation whenever they are requested. All the masters of the six brailing groups are stored in the depository at Huntsville.

The VAV office is in the old Bank Building on the downtown square in Garland. Anyone wanting to more information about our work may call Mrs. King at 272-1615.



Photo by William Lamb

AWARDEES — Barbara Simmons, left, and Janis Falk have been awarded by the Visual Aid Volunteers for brailing at least 5,000 pages since the last meeting. A trophy went to Roberta Williams for completing at least 10,000 pages.



VAV WORKERS — Visual Aid Volunteers, whose processing of braille textbooks for blind children in Texas has topped production of all other volunteer groups in the state, include, left to right, front row, Mary Kelsoe, Ina King, Jane Storey, Joyce Feagin, Helen Campbell; back

row, Glenna Sivley, Eleanor Svoboda, Dorothy McAllister and Gina Cook. JoAnn Clopton, Rosina Lohrenz, Martha Richard and Dinah Goodwin also are brailist volunteers, not pictured.

Talking books now at local library

GARLAND, TEXAS—SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 28, 1971

By DAN WATSON

Books are beginning to talk at Garland's Nicholson Memorial Library. They are telling their stories for the blind and those not physically capable of holding reading material.

The talking books are actual records, played on a phonograph (talking book machine). The records and machines are available in emergencies for anyone who suffers from visual impairment, muscle impairments or confinement in respiratory devices. Besides the Dallas Public Library, Garland's library is the only one in the county offering the service.

Robert Clark, assistant director of Nicholson Memorial Library, said the service was

made available because of storage problems at the state library. Presently, about 250 titles are available, ranging from sports topics like "Instant Replay" by Jerry Kramer, to Ray Bradbury's work of the imagination, "I Sing the Body Electric."

"Our service is not designed to replace the use of the state library or the Library of Congress," Clark pointed out. "We're here to provide emergency supplies. We will loan records and machines to those qualified while they are waiting for their machines to come from the state commission for the blind or be repaired."

Clark explained that people interested in the existing talking book program could pick

up a form at the library. This form is signed by a competent authority such as a doctor, registered nurse or optometrist. In the case of total blindness, a statement by a prominent member of the community is acceptable.

The form is then mailed to the Library of Congress. If the person qualifies, he will be sent a record player to use at no charge. Records may be ordered from the state library, the county library or the Library of Congress itself.

"The materials are mailed free," Clark explained. "So far about 10 people have taken advantage of the service."

Jim Holland 15th anniversary. Storewide sale now on. Adv.



TELL ME A STORY. . . Robert Clark, left, assistant director of Nicholson Memorial Library, and Terry Tule, assistant adult services librarian, examine pages of a "talking book" system now available at the library for the blind and physically handicapped.

Garland's VAV is top braille group in Texas

Visual Aid Volunteers emerged this year as the largest producing volunteer braille group in the state of Texas.

Representatives of VAV — Mrs. Ed King, executive manager; Mrs. Glenn Cook, math brailist; and Steve Feldman, trustee — met with The Texas Education Agency Nov. 15 to report on the past year's work and to receive braille assignments for the coming year of newly adopted textbooks which will go into use in the public schools in September, 1972.

As reports were made, Dallas reported that their 18 braillists had done approximately 10,000 braille pages. Houston's 30 braillists reported approximately 12,000 braille pages and VAV with 15 volunteer braillists and one salaried math brailist reported 28,065 braille pages during the same period of time.

This was the largest amount of braille ever produced by any one braille group in Texas in one year. These 28,065 braille pages represented 26 textbooks in 277 braille volumes. All but three of the books were junior high and senior high level.

The braille groups meet each November the next day after the state board of educa-

tion approves the new adoptions for the coming year. This year VAV was able to report that their previous assignment covering textbooks which went into adoption September, 1971, was complete and had all been shipped to the central depository at the prison in Huntsville. Since the braille groups began working with TEA in 1965 no one has ever been able to complete their assignment before going to the November meeting for new assignments.

When assignments are not completed on time or there are more books than the groups can agree to braille, then the blind child goes without a book until someone is able to catch up with the braille.

Mrs. King, coordinator of the braille program, called a workshop of textbook braillists in the VAV Room (Old Bank Building on the square) Nov. 23 to discuss Textbook format, to make assignments of the 43 textbooks brought back from the Austin meeting, and to congratulate the volunteers on their outstanding accomplishments for the past year.

The volunteer braillists who did such an outstanding job with the assignment just completed include: Mary Kelsoe, JoAnn Clopton, Betty Patrick,

Dorothy McAllister, Jane Storey, Dinah Goodwin, Sally Williams, Martha Richard, Eleanor Svoboda, Janie Davis, Helen Campbell, Roberta Williams, Glenna Sivley, Rosina Lohrenz, Joyce Feagin.

Mrs. Cook, a salaried math brailist who works in the VAV Room completed 9,183 braille pages herself totaling 89 volumes of braille. (It is considered by national standards that anyone producing one volume of braille a month is doing a pretty good job.) Mrs. Cook brailles 50-70 braille pages a day maintaining an average of two volumes of math a week, by having help with proofing and raised line drawings needed in each volume.

Math braille takes additional training other than what is needed to transcribe literature or straight reading matter. Three of the Garland volunteers are math braillists: Dorothy McAllister, Jane Storey, and Roberta Williams. There are less than 10 math braillists in Texas.

VAV's textbook assignment this November includes 10 math books and it is the only one of the braille groups who accepted any math to braille for the coming year. So the

blind children in Texas will depend heavily on VAV for their math books in the near future, members observed.

"There is still another "first" for VAV. This year for the first time all the textbook braillists will be certified by the Library of Congress. To receive this certification they must pass a rigid grading of a 35-page braille manuscript entirely of their own work. A passing grade is 80 or above. This certification is highly coveted and anyone holding it is recognized anywhere in the nation as one who does acceptable braille.

Mrs. King begins a braille class each September for volunteers. It takes about six months to complete with the students giving approximately two hours a day to keep up with one lesson a week. Anyone interested in being added to the waiting list for a new class next September may call 272-1615.