



Assistant Librarian Karen White is recording a duplicate of a Western novel — one of 17,000 talking



Sue Van Vleet, assistant librarian, fills a reader's mailed request for talking books. The selections will be mailed free of charge.

## The blind needn't depend on Braille

By Craig Plechura  
staff writer

When it comes to western novels, George T. Abel reads every one he can feast his ears on — particularly the ones by Louis L'Amour.

Abel, an 80-year-old resident of Farmington Hills, was declared legally blind three years ago after cataracts and molecular deterioration of his retina took their toll on his eyesight.

A resident of Kendallwood Apartments in Farmington Hills, Abel walks every day with special glasses to the Oakland County Library for the Blind and Handicapped, located in the basement of the 12 Mile Road branch of the Farmington Community Library.

The library is the county headquarters for talking books recorded on special cassettes and records.

More than 17,000 "talking book" titles are available at the library for persons who are blind, unable to hold a book or physically read properly. In addition, the library has more than 75 magazines available on floppy disc records; as current as one week old in the case of Newsweek.

A bigger booster of the program and the staff than Abel would be hard to find.

"I like to talk," Abel said. "I spend a lot of time with these people and I see how they serve other people. I sit here

and hear phone conversations (between the librarians and the blind). The librarians are very considerate of the people on the other end of the phone line which is a big asset to people in my situation."

LEADER OF the Oakland County Library for the Blind and Handicapped is Carole Hume, assistant librarian. Sue Van Vleet and Karen White. Deaf library patrons, including some who are deaf and blind, get help from Jean Jambas, a student assistant who works at the library when she isn't attending classes at Madonna College.

In the past fiscal year the library sent cassette tapes of printed material to 1,216 persons and mailed talking-book records to 1,231 persons.

Sight-impaired readers use free tape and record players provided by federal funding administered by the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped which is part of the Library of Congress.

The cassette tapes and records won't play on standard tape and record players. The tapes have four different tracks to them and are recorded at a slower speed to economize space. The records are recorded at 8 rpm.

Still, to accommodate whole books many tapes are necessary. The King

Please turn to Page 4



The Telephone Pioneers of America, comprised of retired Bell Telephone employees, repair audio equipment used by the blind who

borrow talking books housed at the Farmington Community Library.



RANDY BORST/staff photographer

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