Fall 2010

Fall 2010: "Playaway" the Holidays

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“Playaway” the Holidays

With the holidays approaching and many taking long trips, readers may be interested in an old idea that has been recast in a new garb. The road is long, as the song has it, and if you have young children in the car, it may seem even longer.

You can’t always get the radio station you want, and there are only so many songs you can sing-along with. Or maybe you’re flying, and you only want to lean back and enjoy the flight but can’t, what with that screaming baby beside you. So, what can you do, I mean, apart from going stark raving mad?

Why not try a Playaway?

Playaway? What in the world is it and why should you care? Put simply, Playaways are a relatively new form of the old audiobook, but they’re aren’t CDs, nor are they cassettes, (assuming you’re old enough to remember what a cassette player is.) Playaways involve no downloading, no fuss, and no bother.

The unit (pictured below) is a small recorder containing either in whole or in part (some texts are abridged) a new or classical text of a book.

What makes Playaways popular is their versatility. In addition to the usual functions of an audiobook, they are also iPod compatible. And they are very small and compact.

Coming in at slightly larger than a credit card, Playaways fit conveniently into your hip pocket or purse, are compatible with standard earbuds (though they come with their own) and can go wherever you want to go, with the possible exception of the shower (though one might wish to attempt a bath with lighted candles, Bach playing in the background and—well, you get the picture).

The “library” of titles is fairly extensive, and more titles are being added daily. To date, Dacus has added the following for checkout: Sara Gruen’s novel, “Ape House,” Tony Blair’s controversial memoir, “A Journey: My Political Life;” the late Steig Larsson’s “The Girl Who Played with Fire;” Muriel Barbery’s “The Elegance of the Hedgehog;” Rhoda Janzen’s “Mennonite in a Little Black Dress: A Memoir of Going Home;” Paul Greenberg’s “Four Fish: The Future of the Last Wild Food;” the ever provocative Nicholas Carr’s “The Shallows: What the Internet Is Doing to Our Brains;” and “Voices of Black America,” recordings made between 1908 and 1947 of speeches, writings and more of Langston Hughes, Booker T. Washington, Paul Laurence and others. If your taste tend more classical, we have “James Joyce in 90 Minutes;” “Kafka in 90 Minutes;” Kate Chopin’s “The Awakening” and Voltaire’s “Candide.”

If you’re looking for something that can go when you go, pause when you pause, and resume when you’re ready, then Playaways may be just the thing you’re looking for. Whether you’re running on a treadmill, dreading that trip over the hills and through the woods, or just want to unwind before going to bed, Playaways provide a delightful way for you to explore yet another way of “reading.” Like most new technologies—and this particular format is new—Playaways aren’t exactly cheap. We bought a few to test them out. But if you like them and want us to purchase more of them, just let someone in the library know. You can view the possible titles here http://library.playaway.com/ and can always find how many titles Dacus owns by doing a subject search using the term “playaway.”

At first blush, it might seem silly to record one text per unit. But audiobooks have posed a problem for libraries—as do e-readers—if they contain multiple texts. Once that unit is checked out, so are all the titles. Instead, these audiobooks have only one title, so keeping it out as long as you need it isn’t the problem it would be if multiple texts were contained on each one. Titles do vary in price, with the most recent titles costing the most, and the more “classical” texts costing only a fraction as much as their “just released” brethren.

So drop by and check out a Playaway and, well, play away. (A version of this text appeared on the library’s blog at http://dacuslibrary.wordpress.com/. )

Mark Y. Herring
Dean of Library Services
Winthrop’s Army Era: Army Air Corps Cadets at Winthrop

In 1942, during WWII, the U. S. War Department approved Winthrop as a training facility for cadet aviators enlisted in the Army Air Corps. President Shelton Phelps signed an agreement with the War Department that Winthrop would house, feed, and teach the cadets. The War Department paid Winthrop approximately $180,000 per year for cadet maintenance and instruction. All of the funds had to be used for the cadets. The college could not make a profit. The contract was signed on February 23, 1943 indicating that the program would begin on March 1, 1943 and end on June 30, 1944.

Groups of 160 aviation cadets were to be stationed on Winthrop’s campus for five months receiving academic instruction and flight training. When Winthrop first investigated participation in the program, they believed they would be training women cadets. However, it was determined that complications between students and cadets were not to be expected due to the strict Army discipline over the cadets and the amount of study and training they would endure.

The detachment that Winthrop housed was the 41st College Training Detachment. The school was expected to furnish textbooks, teachers, classroom facilities, food, housing and entertainment. Ralph Blakely and Mrs. W.M. Patrick taught physics; Francis E. Harrison and Elwood I. Terry taught geography; Blanche W. Wisner taught Civil Air Regulations. Cadets were required to take a course in first aid which was taught by Frances Cake of the P.E. department. The courses were arranged by block scheduling, allowing five course combinations. Cadets were to have Saturday & Sundays for recreation, ceremonies, open-post privileges, and dating.

The cadets were housed in Bancroft Hall, which was immediately dubbed “Fort Bancroft,” and were enthusiastically welcomed by the whole Winthrop community. An editorial in The Johnsonian on February 26, 1943 stated:

“We’ve looked forward to ‘Winthrop’s cadets’ quite enthusiastically. In fact, not only the campus, but the whole college community has looked forward to your coming. Your arrival is something new for us. It gives us a reason for existing. . .a more active part in this war in which we’ve all wrapped up. And we like the idea of being able to do a little more.”

The first cadets arrived on campus on Sunday night, March 7, 1943 at about ten o’clock. They marched in formation from the train station downtown to Winthrop’s campus. They arrived at “Fort Bancroft” and were assigned rooms. The army atmosphere became apparent overnight. A waving American flag flew atop the new home of the cadets. Inside Bancroft the walls were bare and the furniture plain and serviceable. They set up a mail room, an infirmary, and the parlors became reading, writing, and smoking rooms (Winthrop students were not allowed to smoke on campus). The Winthrop campus realized that Winthrop would be making a major contribution to the war effort. A piece in The Johnsonian of March 12, 1943 states: “It gives one a good feeling to see ‘Old Glory’ flying high over Fort Bancroft and over Main Building (now Tillman).” It’s funny how you just notice something, but we think it took the flag over the 41st Detachment College Training [sic] Aircr of really bring our attention home to the United States and State flags flying high over our Main building.”

Winthrop showed movies, had dances, and gave other entertainments for the cadets. These events gave the cadets and Winthrop students a chance to interact with each other. Many of the students dated the cadets.

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A Tricky Treating Halloween at Dacus

Since Winthrop University has been horrifying students for 125 years, Dacus Library decided to pay them back.

On October 28th and 29th, the Library Outreach Committee compensated by scattering over 1,800 pieces of candy throughout the building for our Tricky Treats event.

Students began arriving as soon as the doors opened at 8 am. They were greeted with small Halloween bags for the candy and instructions to win the prizes.

To receive one of the prizes, the students had to find five pieces of candy and one small plastic skull.

The students had no problem locating the five pieces of candy; the difficult and challenging part was finding the small skulls.

All the students had positive remarks about this ‘break from studying’ activity. One student even commented that it was the most fun she had ever had at Halloween.

Tricky Treats was a great opportunity for the students to explore different areas of the library collection, to make new friends as they paired up to search for the elusive skulls, and to beg librarians for hints.

Not only do the students enjoy these activities, it was fun for the library staff as well.

Susan Silverman
Head of Public Services

Active People

Spiro Shetuni, database management, has written a manuscript titled *Albanian Traditional Music: An Introduction*, which was officially accepted for publication by McFarland Press on Monday, October 4, 2010.

Dr. Ronnie Faulkner, technical services, attended two conferences this fall. The first, the South Carolina Library Association Meeting, was held at Myrtle Beach, S.C. on October 20-23, 2010. The second conference was a grant writing workshop held in Asheville, N.C. on November 3-4, 2010.

Gale Teaster, head of serials, attended the North American Serials Interest Group conference (NASIG) in June 2010.

Jackie Mcfadden, government documents, attended the South Carolina Library Association Meeting at Myrtle Beach, S.C., in October 2010.