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BANA Dialogues about Braille at Spring Board Meeting

The Braille Authority of North America (BANA) held its spring meeting on April 1 – 3, 2011, in Cincinnati, Ohio. This meeting was hosted by The Clovernook Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired (CCBVI), a BANA member organization.

The Board Meeting was preceded by its traditional open forum on the evening of Thursday, March 31, at the Hyatt Regency. This round-table meeting provided an opportunity for participants to learn more about the workings of BANA and to offer feedback about issues surrounding braille and its future.

The BANA Board welcomed two new participants. Friday morning, at the opening session of the business meeting, Chair Judy Dixon introduced Kim McEachirn, Clovernook's new representative to the BANA Board. Later in the business meeting, the Board voted unanimously to accept the application of Crawford Technologies to join BANA as an associate member. Congratulations to both Mr. McEachirn and Crawford Technologies.

Topics on the agenda included tactile graphics, foreign language braille, strategic planning, and the recent review of the formats guidelines. Pete Osborne, Chair of the United Kingdom Association for Accessible Formats (UKAAF), attended the full meeting and provided a helpful international perspective. UKAAF was formed in 2009 when the Braille Authority of the United Kingdom merged with two other industry organizations.

The Board participated in lengthy and thoughtful deliberations as they explored the evolving ways in which braille is produced and used. These essential considerations have been spurred by the rapid changes and impact of technology as well as the escalation of changes in print materials.

The Board approved a code change recommended by the Braille Mathematics Technical Committee. This change to Rule XXV Sections 191a(v) and 191b(vi) in the Nemeth code is effective as of April 3, 2011. The change – which is posted at <http://www.brailleauthority.org/nemethupdates2011/rule25/index.html> – eliminates the blank line between a cell-5 heading and directions that immediately follow the heading.

For additional information and resources, visit www.brailleauthority.org

The mission and purpose of the Braille Authority of North America are to assure literacy for tactile readers through the standardization of braille and/or tactile graphics. BANA promotes and facilitates the use, teaching, and production of braille. It publishes rules, interprets, and renders opinions pertaining to braille in all existing codes. It deals with codes now in existence or to be developed in the future, in collaboration with other countries using English braille. In exercising its function and authority, BANA considers the effects of its decisions on other existing braille codes and formats; the ease of production by various methods; and acceptability to readers.