Braille Promotions: Brailler and Braille Devices Maintenance-Meeting Notes

November 19, 2022

Presenter: Rick Chant

## Contact information for Rick

Email address: **chaostech@shaw.ca**[**​​​​​​​**](http://mailto:chaostech@shaw.ca)

Toll Free Phone: 833-508-6840, local phone: 778-847-6840

Mailing Address: Chaos Technical Services

3622 Maginnis Avenue, North Vancouver, BC V7K 2L6

## Perkins Brailler Discussion

1. Best way to sustain the health of a manual Perkins Brailler is to use it at least once a month, don’t leave it languishing on the shelf. Rick suggests rolling in a 11x11.5 piece of paper and brailling a complete line of every character of the alphabet, 25 lines of letters a through to y, completing the full page. This should be done once a month. Frequent use will keep the internal mechanisms well lubricated, and avoid sticky keys and sticky carriage return.

The cause of sticky keys is due to the hardening of the lithium grease used to lubricate the internal moving parts. Resulting with keys and space bar sticking and the carriage stops moving.

1. Should your brailler have the beginnings stages of becoming sticky, Rick suggests that you exercise the carriage return a number of times, by actuating it, move it to the right and return to the left. Do this a number of times but be sure NOT to force, but to release it gently, urge it forward and gently return it to the left margin. Easy does it. This will help to loosen up the main spring.

The same goes for the key action. Should the keys shows signs of sticking, again exercise them repeatedly with caution, gently without force.

1. Often the o-rings on the brailler roller become cracked or dried out. They need to be supple in order to efficiently roll in the paper. As a preventative measure for maintaining o-ring health use a product called [Rubber Renew](https://www.amazon.ca/MG-Chemicals-Rubber-Liquid-Bottle/dp/B008O9X3KS/ref=sr_1_1?gclid=EAIaIQobChMInYupk-27-wIVDhOtBh1wbwBvEAAYASAAEgIBHvD_BwE&hvadid=605121347416&hvdev=c&hvlocphy=9001596&hvnetw=g&hvqmt=e&hvrand=13147647068973422691&hvtargid=kwd-303345694057&hydadcr=27649_14531770&keywords=mg+chemicals+rubber+renue&qid=1668916156&qu=eyJxc2MiOiIxLjE3IiwicXNhIjoiMC4wMCIsInFzcCI6IjAuMDAifQ%3D%3D&sr=8-1). This is available through Amazon, and distributed by MG Chemicals. Size: 125 ml, approx. $16.00

To apply Rubber Renew, use a Q-tip and be sure to rotate your roller in order to apply to the complete o-ring.

1. The best thing you can do for maintaining a manual brailler is to use it – they don’t do well when left sitting on a shelf.
2. Brailler covers: where do we source them?

* Howe Braille Press: [Leather Dust Cover](https://brailler.perkins.org/collections/all-accessories/products/leather-dust-cover-for-perkins-braillers), approx. $30.00 USD
* DIY options include: homemade fabric covers, a tea towel over top, large-sized shower cap (slipped onto roller handles)

1. Use of dust cover helps to keep out dust, especially if you have some home renovations happening. Also keeps out random items from ending up in the brailler…crayons, paper clips, etc
2. Servicing of a brailler should be done by someone who is trained and experienced with this work. (RICK!)
3. To clean the inside of a manual brailler, turn the brailler over, remove the 11 screws on the bottom. Use a small paint brush; the type used for trim, ½ inch brush, then do a good rigorous brushing of the interior parts. The brush will pick up loose dirt. Don’t use a silicone brush.
4. If you are up to the challenge of applying the lithium grease yourself, follow these steps

Purchase lithium oil through Canadian Tire: [Lucas White Lithium](https://www.canadiantire.ca/en/pdp/lucas-oil-white-lithium-grease-multi-purpose-8-oz-0280877p.html?loc=plp) Size: 8 oz, approx. $9.00 or 500 g tub

* Remove the covers, and the front end casing
* Using a Q-tip, apply the oil to little rings on the keys and where the keys fit into the chassis slot, and on the bottom there are 2 fingers on either side with a little wheel. Look to see where the ‘old lithium’ is placed and lubricate there, using a Q-tip carefully apply.

1. Where to send a brailler for servicing? There are a few folks who service braillers in Canada, Rick’s contact information follows.
2. How often should a brailler be serviced?

Every three years.

1. Electric Perkins braillers require the same sort of care and servicing.
2. How to ship a Perkins brailler at no cost.

With manual Braille devices (not with braille displays as they have a battery), place the brailler in a cardboard box, wrap it in bubble wrap or with a couple of towels. The ideal sized box is the cardboard box used to purchase printer paper (good dimensions) and it has a secure lid. Once wrapped in layers of bubble wrap, boxed and securely taped, take the brailler to the post office and request it to be shipped Materials for the Blind, Postage Free. Some postal outlets have difficulty processing Materials for the Blind, but persevere, braillers are allowed. It should be sent Express and a tracking number will be provided for you.

1. How to reduce the noise of a brailler.

Several options for pads to be used under the brailler

* [Felted brailler pads](https://brailler.perkins.org/collections/brailler-accessories/products/felt-pad); 9x14x3/4inches from Howe Press, approx. $14.00 USD These are dense, firm felted pads.
* Cut down a gym mat, made of dense foam from Canadian Tire
* Gardener kneeling pads, available from dollar stores
* Carpet samples, available from carpeting stores
* Kickboards used by swimmers that have been cut down

1. How to deal with paper that keeps loading and won’t stop, and then gets jammed

* Caused by the paper check spring, located in the back left corner of the brailler if you have is facing towards you. The fix could be done by someone using sight; remove 4 screws along the back edge of the cover, and take them out. If you are looking at it from the backside, on the top right hand side/corner there is a spring. Bend the spring so it provides more tension on the gear head lock that is on that side. Put everything back together and check it.

## Refreshable braille displays

1. If you have weak braille happening on your display, Rick suggests following

* Make sure that the pins are retracted on the display panel
* Use a tooth brush and dip it into [Fantastic with Bleach](https://www.scjp.com/en-ca/products/fantastik-all-purpose-cleaner-bleach).
* Then flick the brush a few times to take off the extra liquid, all of the residual
* Use the flicked tooth brush to rub back and forth on the display, you can be quite vigorous with this action

MAKE SURE that the display pins are retracted.

* Once you have really cleaned well using the toothbrush, use a Q-tip with 99% alcohol (available at any pharmacy) and use the Q-tip to go over it line by line, each cell. Shake off any excess liquid before cleaning with the Q-tip
* Again make sure that the display pins are retracted

1. Cleaning using the above manner, may help to clean off surface dirt or a sticky pin. This method works well with any of the displays.
2. The Fantastic floats the dirt off the display, and the rubbing alcohol removes it.
3. Proactively, always make sure your hands are clean before you use your display. Dead skin and dandruff are both culprits in gumming up the works.
4. Rick cleans and repairs displays of all makes of refreshable devices, older models are sometimes harder to find parts. The users’ habits often determine the longevity of the devices. Clean hands are super important.
5. Hand cleaners or sanitizers do not harm the use of the braille device, evaporates off of fingertips.
6. Oxidation of a device can happen randomly,
7. What do you do if your device gets wet? Accidents happen!

* Immediately turn off the device
* Towel dry the device with an absorbent towel
* Put the device into a large ziplock bag along with a silica gel pack
* Seal the bag and leave it on a shelf for 3-4 days.

To source silica gel packs you can get them from local computer stores, or found in the sporting goods section of Canadian Tire. The silica gel packs should be about the size of the palm of your hand or a compact mirror.

1. Braille displays can be used while reading in bed, so long are no animals with dander, or long fur in close proximity.

## Braille Embossers/Printers

1. Rick services all makes and types of brailler printers, even those from Norway. He has parts for older models and will help you figure out how to use those older printers with parallel converters to work with USB. Older working printers are can still be used with adaptive connectors.
2. No need to used canned air to clean out embossers, as they are quite ineffective. Better to remove the upper cover and go to the local tire shop and ask that they use their compressor (air hose with nozzle) to blow the heck out of it… it will remove the paper shavings/dust that come off of the tractor feed paper.

## What you need to do to contact Rick

Cell phone number: 778-847-6840 please leave a message and Rick will get back to you.

Before you ship something to Rick he needs the following information:

1. Who you are
2. What your address is
3. How to get hold of you (phone and email)
4. What type of device/equipment you are have
5. What the issue/problem is with the equipment
6. Serial number of the equipment
7. And if you have must have it back by a certain date

Once you have contacted Rick, he will draw up a work order for you and email it to you. Then you should print the work order and put into the box along with the equipment/device being mailed.

Rick’s usual turnaround time on equipment is 2-5 days. He will contact you before he sends it back.

Rick also repairs all book players, CCTVs, all braillers, braille devices, augmentative communication devices, etc.