

Loud & Clear

SPRING 2008 • Volume 20, No. 2

Come to VisionQuest: A Technology and Resource Fair!

Come one, come all to VisionQuest, our exciting and free assistive technology and resource fair, located this year in the southern part of Fairfax County. We are bringing the 2008 fair to you in proud partnership with the Hollin Hall Senior Center and the Prevention of Blindness Society of Metropolitan Washington.

Date: Monday, May 12, 2008
Time: 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Place: Hollin Hall Senior Center
1500 Shenandoah Road
Alexandria, VA 22308

At VisionQuest you will have opportunities to become acquainted with the latest technologies for people with vision impairment and learn how people with disabilities can continue to enjoy reading and other pleasures of daily life. You can participate in equipment demonstrations, ask questions and gather information and handouts. Exhibits will include technology vendors, service organizations and, of course, the Access Services library branch.

■ continued on page 2

**Fairfax
County
Public
Library**

Access Services

Fairfax County Public Library • 12000 Government Center Pkwy., Suite 123 • Fairfax, VA 22035-0012 703-324-8380 • TTY 703-324-8365
FAX 703-324-8386 • e-mail: access@fairfaxcounty.gov

www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library

Hollin Hall Senior Center is conveniently located near the Beltway, the George Washington Memorial Parkway and U.S. 1 in the Mount Vernon District, just off Fort Hunt Road. It is a lively and spacious facility with lots of free parking and a variety of restaurants nearby. For driving directions, please call the center at 703-765-4573 or TTY 711. The center's Web site is http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/rec/Senior_Ctr/Hollin_Hall.htm.

We look forward to seeing you at the fair!

First Cell Phone Reader: See It at VisionQuest!

Among the many exciting products on display at the May 12 VisionQuest tech fair will be the very first cell phone designed to read to individuals with vision impairments, dyslexia, or learning disabilities. The knfbReader is a joint venture of Kurzweil Technologies and the National Federation of the Blind. It is the smallest text-to-speech reading device in history. It combines many functions in a lightweight cell phone, making access to print much easier for anyone who has difficulty seeing or reading print.

The knfbReader weighs 4.2 ounces and can store thousands of printed pages with easily obtainable extra memory. Users may take pictures of and read most printed materials at the touch of a button and hear the document read aloud in clear synthetic speech. Those able to see the screen can enlarge, read, track and highlight printed materials using a large, easy-to-read display. Files can be transferred easily to computers or Braille notetakers. The device also features all current cell phone functions including video and music playback, GPS, wireless communications, calendar and tasks, photography, e-mail, text messaging and more.

If you can't wait until May 12, more information about the knfbReader is available from Envision Technology by phone at 1-800-582-5051 or 301-654-3568, or at www.knfbreader.com.

Accessible Digital Books from Bookshare.org

Bookshare.org is a Web-based system supplying accessible books in easy-to-use digital formats designed for people with disabilities. Students in the U.S. with qualifying print disabilities can ask their school for a free membership through new federal funding for student access. Other individual subscriptions cost \$50.00 plus a \$25.00 sign-up fee the first year.

Books and periodicals from *Bookshare.org* contain the full text of the publication, not prerecorded audio. Over 30,000 scanned titles are available, supplied by volunteers and publishers. The books can be read with the adaptive technology of the reader's choice. A talking software application is included with membership, providing members with one option for reading the books. The publications are also available in contracted digital Braille. Access to copyrighted books from Bookshare.org is limited to people with bona fide print disabilities and to schools and nonprofit organizations serving them.

For full information, visit www.Bookshare.org or send an e-mail to info@bookshare.org.

Books, I found, had the power to make time stand still, retreat or fly into the future.

– Jim Bishop

Low-Vision Support Groups

The Access Services library branch sponsors free support groups for adults who are coping with the loss of their sight. The meetings are also open to families and friends. The groups meet monthly and hear speakers, exchange news, recommend good books and enjoy interesting conversations.

Currently there are three groups meeting at the following locations and times:

VIB (Visually Impaired or Blind) Little River Glen

2nd Friday of the month 10 a.m. - noon

Little River Glen Senior Center

Craft Room

4001 Barker Court, Fairfax

VIP (Visually Impaired Persons) Reston

1st Friday of the month 2 p.m. - 4 p.m.

Reston Regional Library

11925 Bowman Towne Drive, Reston.

VIP (Visually Impaired Persons) Vienna

3rd Thursday of the month 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Patrick Henry Library

101 Maple Avenue East, Vienna

If you would like to join a group or volunteer to help, call Beena Pandey, AS volunteer coordinator, at 703-324-8388 for details about becoming involved in your local area support group.

Low Cost Home Repair Options

The Home Repair for the Elderly and/or Disabled Program of the Fairfax County Redevelopment and Housing Authority provides minor home repairs to eligible low- and moderate-income older homeowners residing in the property, as well as accessibility modifications for homeowners with disabilities. Fairfax County will provide a crew to do up to one week's labor and provide up to \$500 in materials to complete necessary repairs and maintenance. Materials are paid for by county and federal funds. All materials and labor for the work done under this program are provided completely free of charge to eligible homeowners.

For more information or to request an application, call 703-246-5154, TTY 703-385-3578 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/rha/seniorhousing/hrep.htm.

The Fairfax County Redevelopment and Housing Authority also has a Home Improvement Loan Program (HILP) which helps county homeowners make home improvements. Homeowners are provided technical assistance in determining what improvements need to be made and low-interest loans to help pay for these improvements. For more information, please call 703-246-5155, TTY 703-385-3578 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/rha/hilp.htm.

Hearts and Hammers and Rebuilding Together are programs of RPJ Housing which address a variety of repair needs ranging from code violations to preventative maintenance that if unmet could lead to more costly repairs. To apply for these free home repair programs call 703-528-5606, extension 16 and ask for Patty Klein. RPJ Housing also has a Web site at www.rpjhousing.org/

From Our Friends at the Northern Virginia Resource Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Persons

On Saturday, May 10, NVRC will sponsor Celebrate Communication, a fair for the deaf and hard-of-hearing, at George Mason University, Center for the Arts from 10 p.m. – 3 p.m.. For more information call 703-352-9055 or visit their website at www.nvrc.org

Free fact sheets about buying and making the most of hearing aids from NVRC are available online at www.nvrc.org/content.aspx?page=2537§ion=6

The NVRC also lists these local resources for the deaf/blind: Virginia Association of Deaf-Blind, Jenny McKenzie. E-mail her at jmckohs@juno.com

Metro Washington Association of Deaf-Blind, Karen Bailey. Contact Ms. Bailey via e-mail at karen.bailey@gallaudet.edu or TTY at 202-484-9022.

Enhance Your Library

Please consider the Access Services library branch as part of your charitable giving. Private donations are critically needed to maintain high-quality library services. Contributions in any amount are welcome and are tax deductible.

Checks may be sent to Access Services, made payable to the Fairfax Library Foundation with "for Access Services" specified in the memo line or cover letter. For more information, contact Access Services or call the foundation at 703-324-8300.

Reading Round Up

Spring into some fresh reads.

Non-Fiction for Adults

New Orleans, Mon Amour:

Twenty Years of Writings from the City

by Andrei Codrescu. *RC 62097*

Essays from a National Public Radio commentator about his adopted city of New Orleans. Some pieces written after Hurricane Katrina in 2005. Describes the Big Easy and its inhabitants, food, cemeteries, eccentrics, neighborhoods, Mardi Gras and crime.

Discover America:

A Comprehensive Travel Guide to Our Country's Greatest Destinations. *RC 60160*

Travel guide arranged by geographical region describes cities, towns, national parks and monuments in all fifty states. Outlines each state's history, culture and economic features.

The Life and Times of the Thunderbolt Kid: A Memoir

by Bill Bryson. *RC 63131*

Travel humorist and author of *A Short History of Nearly Everything* (*RC 56241*) reminisces about growing up in 1950s America, the simple pleasures of family life, and teen culture under the shadow of the Cold War. Available from FCPL as a CD and as an e-book.

Man O' War: A Legend Like Lightning

by Dorothy Ours. *RC 63399*

Recounts the early 20th-century career of an illustrious thoroughbred racehorse, including profiles of his owners, jockeys and trainer, and descriptions of his record-breaking races.

Fiction for Adults:

Murder at the Opera: A Capital Crimes Novel

by Margaret Truman. *RC 63774*

When a promising young Canadian singer is murdered backstage at the Kennedy Center, law professor Mac Smith and his wife Annabel investigate. Available from FCPL as a CD and in large print.

Magic Street

by Orson Scott Card. *RC 61713*

Thirteen-year-old Mack Street slips through a secret house into Fairyland, where time and reality are skewed. Struggling to understand himself and his special powers, Mack engages in a battle between good and evil. Some descriptions of sex, some violence, and some strong language. Available from FCPL as a CD and as an e-book.

Vanished

by Karen Robards. *RC 62482*

Assistant District Attorney Sarah Mason rescues 9-year-old Angie during a convenience-store robbery. Later Sarah receives disturbing phone calls about her daughter, Lexie, who vanished seven years ago. While PI Jake Hogan races to find connections and Lexie, Angie disappears. Strong language, some explicit descriptions of sex, and some violence. Available from FCPL as a CD, as an e-book and in large print.

Suite Française

by Irène Némirovsky. *RC 62505*

When the Germans invade France in 1940, Parisians flee to the countryside amid chaos. The following year, the Nazis occupy a provincial village, where a woman, who is hiding another villager wanted for the murder of an enemy soldier, falls in love with a German officer. Available from FCPL as an e-book.

Water for Elephants

by Sara Gruen. RC 62718

1931. Veterinary student Jacob Jankowski's world comes crashing down when his parents die in a car accident. Broke, Jacob joins the circus, falls for Marlena, a married circus star, and cares for animals like Rosie the elephant. Strong language, some descriptions of sex, and some violence. Available from FCPL as a CD and in large print.

Fiction and Non-Fiction for Children and Teenagers

Chief Sunrise, John McGraw, and Me

by Timothy Tocher. RC 60399

In 1919 scruffy 15-year-old Hank runs away from his mean father, hops a freight train, and meets Chief Sunrise, immortal baseball pitcher in the making. For grades 5-8.

Cowgirl Kate and Cocoa

by Erica Silverman. RC 62685

Kate and her chocolate-colored horse, that is always hungry, share a story, surprise each other, count cows and help each other fall asleep. For grades K-3. Available from FCPL as a CD.

Do You Remember The Color Blue? And Other Questions Kids Ask About Blindness

by Sally Hobart Alexander. RC 50319

A writer who went blind at age 26 answers questions that children have frequently asked during visits to schools, including reading, working with her guide dog, meeting her husband, and parenting her two children, as well as her reactions to being blind. For grades 4-7.

Low-Cost Equipment and Technology Loans for Virginians

The Virginia Assistive Technology Loan Fund Authority has changed its name to the New Well Fund. The mission of the New Well Fund is to promote alternative funding resources for Virginians with disabilities so they can acquire assistive technology that will enhance their independence and improve their quality of life. The New Well Fund can help eligible applicants obtain low-interest loans for a wide variety of special equipment (i.e. assistive technology). This includes loans for wheelchairs, motorized scooters, Braille equipment, hearing aids, low-vision aids, communication systems, environmental control devices, building and home modifications for accessibility, or telecommunication devices for the deaf as well as other assistive technology.

Contact the New Well Fund at 1602 Rolling Hills Drive, Suite 107, Richmond, Virginia 23229 or via telephone at 804-662-9000 or online at www.newwellfund.org

Staff News

A Legacy of Service

Rosemary Hilsabeck VIB Little River Glen, **Thelma Sheridan**- Dimview and **Hannah Lederman** VIP Greenspring Village, three volunteer leaders of the Access supported vision support groups, have retired and we will miss them. They, along with **Gloria Sussman**- Reston VIP and **Rhoda Stevens**-VIP Vienna, have embodied the spirit of the Access Services mission which is to make library service accessible to individuals with disabilities.

According to **Beena Pandey**, AS Volunteer Co-ordinator, the first vision support group was started in 1980 under the stewardship of **Thelma Sheridan**. The group originally formed to discuss talking books but quickly developed into a self-help group. Members exchanged information and resources concerning vision loss and contacted outside speakers to keep up with technological developments in the field. As more citizens became interested other groups were formed throughout Fairfax County.

We, at AS, honor these leaders for providing fresh hope to others who are blind or have low vision and we thank them for their time, expertise, and leadership to better the community.

New Opportunity

The Little River Glen VIB is seeking an individual to lead its support group. Duties include: set the meeting agenda, arrange for speakers, lead the meetings and serve as a liaison to Access Services. Interested persons should contact Beena Pandey at 703-324-8388 or via e-mail at beena.pandey@fairfaxcounty.gov

Service Milestones

Mr. Wellington Machmer or 'Mr. Mac' as he is known by one and all at AS, will be recognized as a Star Volunteer at a library-wide dinner held in April to celebrate National Volunteer Month. Mr. Mac has donated 5,000 hours of service to Access Services. We salute you and humbly thank you for this remarkable contribution.

AS staff members **Susan O'Boyle** and **Sandy Japikse** recently were recognized by the county for reaching service milestones. Susan has worked for Fairfax County for 20 years and Sandy has worked for the county for 30 years. Congratulations, ladies.

Using MetroAccess Web Booking

Registered MetroAccess customers may now use the Internet to book or cancel trips. You may use your MetroAccess customer ID number to login and your password is your 8-digit date of birth.

<https://macs.mvwmata.mvtransit.com/passweb/> is the standard Web-booking site. <https://macs.mvwmata.mvtransit.com/508/> is the accessible Web-booking site.

Free Caregiver Seminars

Every fall and spring, the Fairfax Caregiver Seminar Consortium sponsors a series of free programs for caregivers of older adults. Presentations by expert speakers are scheduled at a variety of times and places throughout the county and topics range from how to navigate financial and legal challenges to tips on creating an accessible home environment for independent living. For information about the latest seminar series, call 703-324-7948 or TTY 703-449-1186. To register online go to <http://www.farifaxcounty.gov/aaa/>. To register via telephone call 703-324-5205.

Consortium members are AARP Virginia, Alzheimer's Association, Alzheimer's Family Day Center, Thomas West Financial Services, and the following county agencies: Community and Recreation Services, Family Services, the Health Department, and the Fairfax County Public Library. (Access Services manager **Starr Smith** represents the library at Consortium meetings.)

Fairfax County Disability Services Board

The Fairfax Area Disability Services Board, established in 1992, is comprised of 15 representatives appointed by the elected officials of Fairfax County and the cities of Falls Church and Fairfax. The mission of the FA-DSB is to include people with disabilities into mainstream community life by identifying, communicating, and advocating their diverse capabilities and needs to state and local governments and the private sector, and to help and provide resources to meet the needs of persons with physical and sensory disabilities. The FA-DSB publishes a free semi-annual newsletter. A free weekly e-mail newsletter is also available.

FA-DSB meetings are generally held on the second Monday of each month at 7:30 p.m. in the Fairfax County Government Center, 12000 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax, VA 22035. The public is welcome to attend.

For more information about the FA-DSB and about local disability services, call 703-324-5421 or TTY 703-449-1186, or visit *www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dsb*. FA-DSB offices are located in the Pennino Building, Suite 708, 12011 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax, VA 22035. Hours of operation are Monday - Friday, 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

A great book should leave you with many experiences, and slightly exhausted at the end. You live several lives while reading it.

– William Styron

Web Corner: Three Sites to See



<http://www.seniornavigator.com>

SeniorNavigator is an organization that provides free information about the health and aging resources available to Virginians. The information focuses on senior-related issues such as health and aging, financial concerns, legal questions, health facilities and more.

www.fairfaxcounty/library/bookcast/

Fairfax County Public Library director Sam Clay interviews interesting authors for the library's podcasts.

<http://www.HearingExchange.com>

A site for people with hearing loss, parents and professionals founded by Paula Rosenthal, J.D. Ms. Rosenthal, has had a lifelong hearing loss and is a bilateral cochlear implant recipient as is her daughter. She speaks around the country to organizations and parents about hearing loss and related issues. She recently launched a site for kids with hearing loss called HearingExchangeKids.com.

Authors like cats because they are such quiet, lovable, wise creatures, and cats like authors for the same reasons.

– Robertson Davies

Contact Us

If you have questions, comments or suggestions concerning the Loud & Clear newsletter, please call Ken Plummer at 703-324-8389. You may also e-mail us at access@fairfaxcounty.gov.

Loud & Clear

www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library

Loud & Clear is published quarterly by the Access Services branch of the Fairfax County Public Library, 12000 Government Center Parkway, Suite 123, Fairfax, VA 22035.

703-324-8380; TTY 703-324-8365

©2008 Fairfax County Public Library.



A publication of Fairfax County, Virginia



Reasonable accommodations will be made upon request
Call 703-324-8380 or TTY 703- 324-8365.