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LOUD and CLEAR

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Access Services- What We Do

As we have mentioned in other issues of Loud and Clear, YOU are the best ambassadors for Access Services. YOU are one of the best sources of people hearing about our services and our programs. Thank you for all your hard work! However, since we want YOU to remain our best resource

I want to ensure that all ambassadors have the complete and latest information. Are your pencils sharpened? OK, here we go.

The two main programs of Access Services are the Talking Book Program and the Home Delivery Service. Both programs are offered FREE of charge to our customers. There will be more about each of these programs below. We also provide mini-collections to several retirement communities and senior centers where the collections often enrich the centers' own library. The books are exchanged on a quarterly basis.

The staff of Access Services provides assistance to 14-plus facility-centered book clubs throughout the county; from selecting titles, gathering copies in a variety of formats, and mailing the books to the facilities. Janice Kuch, Branch Manager, and Ken Plummer, Outreach Manager, are also available to speak to groups and organizations, promoting Access Services.

Home Delivery Service

The Home Delivery Service is for the residents of Fairfax County who can no longer visit their local library due to disability, frailness or age-related issues. We send Fairfax County library material to them through the United States Postal Service. We try to replicate the library visit, obtaining favorite titles, authors or subjects.

How does one get started? An application can be found at: <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library/branches/as>. Click on 'Home Delivery of Library Materials'. An interested person can also call Access Services at 703-324-8380. Ken Plummer will double check that the Home Delivery Service is appropriate and he will inquire what genres of material the customer likes, what format works best, and how many books they want sent at a time. There are limited resources at the Access Services offices but the collections of all the other branch libraries are available. That's a lot of books!

We mail the books right to the customer's doorstep in a blue canvas pouch. When the last book is being read, a Reader Advisor can be contacted and the next batch of books is ready to go. When the books

have been read, replace them in the pouch, turn over the postal card, slip it into the plastic sleeve and give the pouch to the local postal carrier.

Talking Book Program

This is a program that many of you are familiar with. This program is officially called the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS) and is under the direction of the Library of Congress. Two thousand books a year are recorded digitally. Since blindness and vision issues can happen to anyone from 6 to 106, a wide variety of titles are recorded; from Children's Books to the latest bestselling Mystery, Romance and Suspense novels.

NLS is a national program so if you have a sister in South Dakota or an aunt in Albuquerque who cannot read regular print books or cannot physically hold onto a book they could be eligible for this program. Access Services can provide you with the 1-800 numbers of the other NLS libraries in the country.

Once certified and registered in the program, Access Services provides both the Talking Book machines and the book cartridges to our customers. We can send you an application or the application is available on our Webpage:

<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library/branches/as/talkingbook.htm>. Click on 'download an application'.

A catalog with the latest recordings is published bi-monthly. Titles can be ordered via phone, via email or by returning the order form. There are over 60,000 titles that have been recorded and are there for you to enjoy.

A NOTE ABOUT THE BARD DATABASE

Those 60,000 titles are collected in the BARD (The Braille and Audio Reading Download) database. You or a family member can utilize this resource from your home and have access to the recorded titles 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

To use this database and download books a computer with a high speed Internet connection is needed, as well as an email address and a blank cartridge or a storage device called a 'flash' or 'thumb' drive.

A SECOND NOTE: THE BARD MOBILE APP

With the BARD Mobile app, readers may download and play audio materials on an iPhone, iPad, or iPod touch (NLS is working on an Android app).

There are always questions raised when people discover our services. We like questions. Please contact us or have your friends contact us via telephone at 703-324-8380 or via email at access@fairfaxcounty.gov. We are here to keep you (and your neighbors, friends and family members) reading. Thank you, again, for helping us spread the word about Access Services.

Foundation Fighting Blindness VisionWalk

VisionWalks are the signature fundraising events of the Foundation Fighting Blindness and are held throughout the country. The mission of the Foundation is to further research providing preventions, treatments and cures for people affected by blinding retinal diseases. This event provides support, information and resources to community members who are affected with vision impairment due to retinal diseases such as age-related macular degeneration (AMD), retinitis pigmentosa (RP) and related conditions.

This year the walk takes place at Cameron Run Regional Park on Sunday May 3, 2015, The park is located at 4001 Eisenhower Ave., Alexandria VA 22304. The event opens at 9:00 a.m. and the walk starts at 10:00 a.m. For more information contact Jo Adams at (703) 437-1935.

Staff News

Congratulations to **Daniel Ramos**, our Talking Book Manager and **Ken Plummer** our Outreach Manager. They each are being recognized for twenty years of service to Fairfax County. Here, here!

Beginning with this issue of Loud & Clear we are happy to welcome volunteer, **Vince Griffin**, to Access Services. Vince is the new narrator of this newsletter. He comes to us with experience reading for the Washington Ear. Confetti and party horns. Thank you, Vince!

Friends Helping Friends

The Friends of Access Services is a group of customers and other interested parties who serve as an advisory panel for Access Services. They exchange practical and helpful information and believe that this information may also benefit other AS customers and/or Loud and Clear readers. In this continuing column, 'Friends Helping Friends', the Friends share helpful tips and experiences from the viewpoint of a user.

This energetic group always welcomes new members. For more information contact Access Services at 703-324-8380.

Mike Eaton, former president of the Friends group, shares his observations on the new Contents page of Talking Book Topics. Talking Book Topics is the catalog listing of newly recorded material. It is available in printed format or it can be located online at the NLS website: <http://www.loc.gov/nls>. Scroll down to 'What's New at NLS' and click on Talking Book Topics.

Changes to Talking Book Topics

by Mike Eaton

Ever since I became a Talking Book user nearly ten years ago, I have eagerly awaited the arrival, every two months, of Talking Book Topics (TBT), which lists all the newly recorded titles available for borrowing. Gratitude is not sufficiently descriptive to describe what I feel toward the program.

I read for pleasure much more now than I did when I had no vision loss. And yet, something was wrong. My hard copies of Talking Book Topics began to pile up unread. It simply took me too long and too much effort to read the listings on my closed circuit TV. This lack of effort explains how I missed the discussion, a year ago in the January - February 2014 issue, of how each issue of Talking Book Topics would now be organized by subject matter categories.

The first page of the issue, in the Table of Contents, lists the categories and the pages on which they begin. There seem to be between 20 and 40 separate categories for Adult Fiction books, depending on the offerings in the particular issue, and a like number of Non-Fiction categories. I like the change, which has probably cut in half the time I spend reviewing the fiction listings. The loss of the index to each Talking Book Topics is notable, but those indices could run to 40 pages. The loss of the index by author is significant, but hopefully an occasional search by author on BARD will fill that void.

Now, as I struggle to keep my pledge that I will not fall behind in constructing my "To Read" wish lists, a new conundrum surfaces -- how to maintain those usually lengthy lists. We surveyed some of our Friends group on this question and found that no two members used exactly the same approach. I use a Luddite's approach, a hand-written list from which I can talk to a reader adviser or attempt a download. Another user, totally blind, recorded his wish list on a hand held device as he listened to the new book descriptions. Another user checked off and mailed in her requests on the forms provided in Talking Book Topics. I have made a note to myself to try that approach. Other users rely more on BARD than TBT. Their methods range from checking the newly available titles list daily to periodically perusing the list of most popular titles. If you have built a better mousetrap, please let us know about it. In the meantime, I urge you to explore and enjoy the new organization of TBT.

Currency Reader Update

All individuals who are interested in receiving a currency reader will now need to complete and submit a BEP (Bureau of Engraving and Printing) application. If you have questions, please contact Access Services at 703-324-8380 or you can email us at access@fairfaxcounty.gov.

Reading Roundup

During this time of Valentine's Day where love is everywhere I have diligently turned to romance. This is a list of the BEST ROMANCES OF 2013 from Library Journal. (I checked for information for titles published in 2014 but none of the 'best of' had been recorded or, in some cases, been selected to be recorded yet. Ken). These are the recorded books from that list with annotations by Library Journal staff members. Note that no exclusion criteria have been included.

Strong heroines are a must in most of today's romances, and, with few exceptions, brave, goal-oriented, resourceful heroines are the norm for the year's Best Romances of 2013. Although they display different strengths and use them in a variety of ways, these women have one thing in common: they achieve their goals and find love at the same time. Naturally!---Library Journal

The Arrangement by Mary Balogh **DB 77497** HISTORICAL

A war-blinded nobleman, frustrated by his family's coddling, escapes to the country village where he grew up and is rescued from a disastrous marriage trap by a resourceful young woman with whom he ultimately strikes a life-changing bargain. Funny, heartwarming, and beautifully written.

The Wanderer by Robyn Carr **DB 76634** CONTEMPORARY

A footloose former helicopter pilot inherits an old army buddy's property on the Oregon Coast and struggles to reconcile his responsibility to his late

friend and his growing feelings for the townsfolk, including a lovely search-and-rescue helicopter pilot and her son, with his aversion to settling down. This beautifully set story focuses on real problems and features a dash of mystery, as well.

Any Duchess Will Do by Tessa Dare **DB 77410** HISTORICAL

In an attempt to thwart his mother's mission to force him to choose a bride, a duke takes the overbearing dowager up on her challenge that she can turn any girl into a duchess and selects a country barmaid who just wants to own her own bookstore. A funny, delightfully unexpected tale.

The Best Man: A Blue Heron Novel by Kristan Higgins **DB 76409**
CONTEMPORARY

After being spectacularly jilted at the altar and fleeing to San Francisco, a landscape architect heeds a family distress call and returns to her rural New York home only to be unexpectedly attracted to the local police chief, her former fiancé's best man—and the person she still blames for the wedding debacle—in a sassy, upbeat romance rife with both humor and heart.

One Good Earl Deserves a Lover by Sarah MacLean **DB 76466**
HISTORICAL

A brainy bluestocking engaged to a sweet but rather dim earl needs to learn all she can about the physical side of marriage before the big day. She chooses her brother-in-law's seductively charming business partner at the Fallen Angel to be her research assistant, and they both learn more than they expect in this witty, offbeat story that sparkles despite its dark undercurrents.

The Luckiest Lady in London by SherryThomas **DB 77716**
HISTORICAL

Emotionally scarred by the toxic environment in which he was raised, a love-averse nobleman is caught off guard by an uncommon woman who

puzzles and fascinates him and changes his life in this deeply insightful and exquisitely crafted tale. Unforgettable.

And then in a completely opposite direction, we want to tempt you with THE 5 BEST THRILLERS OF 2014 (according to a Washington Post article dated November 20, 2014). Annotations are by Washington Post staff. PLEASE NOTE: Some titles are in the process of being recorded. Note that no exclusion criteria have been included.

Gray Mountain by John Grisham DB 79768

Grisham's latest novel opens with the kind of life-altering scene we have come to expect from him, wherein a world of privilege — in this case that of a young Wall Street lawyer — takes a sudden turn for the worse. Grisham's tale evolves into something serious and powerful: muckraking of the highest order. His protagonist, sent to work on cases in Appalachia after being laid off from her high-powered job, provides a window to the plight of miners. The result is a novel that offers both superior entertainment and a powerful case against Big Coal. — Patrick Anderson

Hyde by Daniel Levine DB 78992

This spellbinding first novel is an ingenious revision of a classic Gothic tale, "The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde." Here, Hyde remains Jekyll's creation, but he is less a devil than a confused, increasingly angry agent of the doctor's secret desires. Narrated by Hyde, the book delivers a new look at this enigmatic character and intriguing possible explanations for Jekyll's behavior. "Hyde" is a sometimes demanding novel, as we move between one man's warring minds, but it offers many surprises and rich, often intoxicating prose. — Patrick Anderson

The Long Way Home by Louise Penny DB 79627 (In process)

Retired from his longtime job as chief inspector of the Sûreté du Québec, Penny's beloved character Armand Gamache is enjoying life with his wife in a quiet village outside Montreal when a neighbor's husband, a painter, goes missing. Alas, Gamache is pulled back into solving another crime. But Penny's novel — her 10th — is not just a missing person's case; its larger subject is how artists can pursue greatness or, alternatively, lose their souls. — Patrick Anderson

The Secret Place by Tana French **DB 79576 (In process)**

French's fifth Dublin Murder Squad novel centers on a year-old case of a boy found murdered on the grounds of a girls' boarding school. As the detectives search for answers, French lures readers into the toxic stew of hormones and homicidal rivalries roiling within the hermetically sealed world of teenagers at the school. French provides an exquisitely sensitive look at the mean-girl world: the mocking stares, the whisper campaigns, the machinations of cliques. By story's end, she simultaneously makes you wistful for the galloping intensity of lost adolescence and grateful to have left it with mind and body intact. — Maureen Corrigan

You Should Have Known by Jean Hanff Korelitz **DB 78498**

There's a whole subgenre of novels that leaves a good wife abandoned and deceived on Page 1. In her smart new mystery, Korelitz has taken this plot one step further. The good wife in this case is a successful New York couples therapist and author of "You Should Have Known," a book that castigates women for not paying attention to the possibility of male deceit. It seems its author should have paid more attention to her own title. There are even more surprises for our heroine — a murder, grand larceny and an appalling media circus — in this culturally astute tale in which nothing is exactly as it seems. — Carolyn See

Two Upcoming Events

The Foundation Fighting Blindness is presenting a free seminar on Wednesday, April 18, 2015 beginning at 10:00 a.m. at NOVA Community College, Alexandria Campus, Donald L. Bisdorf Building Auditorium, Room AA196 on Age-Related Macular Degeneration. Dr. Timothy Schoen will share his knowledge and expertise and answer your questions. There will also be a patient ambassador who will speak on eye disease from a personal perspective. For more information or to register for this program call 410-423-0624 or go online at KAult@FightBlindness.org. The auditorium is located at 5000 Dawes Avenue in Alexandria, Virginia.

The Vienna/Oakton Vision Impaired (VIP) Resource Group meeting held on Monday, May 11, 2015 from 10:15 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. at the Patrick Henry Library will feature Dr. Wanzhu Hou, CMD, L Ac, CH. The library is located at 101 Maple Ave. East, Vienna, Virginia. Dr. Hou will discuss the difference between traditional western medicine and eastern medicine, i.e., acupuncture, food & herbal medicine as it relates to vision loss. Please contact Chato Carter at 703-938-1533 or chatovcarter@yahoo.com for further details. This is a free program.

Enhance Your Library

In recent months, Access Services has received several gifts that we are very grateful for. We use these to support our programs, outreach efforts and services. We thank you for thinking of us and for your kind generosity.

Please consider the Access Services branch as part of your charitable giving. 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.

Web Corner: Four to Remember

These organizations and agencies offer support and information.

American Council of the Blind. <http://acb.org/>. The American Council of the Blind strives to increase the independence, security, equality of opportunity, and quality of life, for all blind and visually-impaired people.

National Federation of the Blind. <https://nfb.org/> The purpose of the National Federation of the Blind is two-fold—to help blind persons achieve self-confidence and self-respect and to act as a vehicle for collective self-expression by the blind.

Disability Services Planning and Development. <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dfs/disabilities/>. This Fairfax County web page contains information on several county agencies and resources. Their newsletter, Disability Services E-News, is a weekly publication featuring the latest information, community events, resources, and job opportunities in the Fairfax area. Sign up for the newsletter at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/email/lists in the Health and Human Services section.

Fairfax County Family Caregiver Support Program. <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dfs/olderadultservices/>. In the first column click on 'Caregiver Support'. For information on public and private pay services for older adults, caregivers and people with disabilities, call 703-324-7948, TTY 711 between 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday-Friday. One can request "*caregiver consultation*" for an in-depth consultation regarding a caregiver issue.

IRS Services for People with Disabilities

Hundreds of accessible federal tax forms and publications are available for download from the IRS Accessibility web page, located at www.irs.gov/uac/IRS.gov-Accessibility. You can choose from large-print,

text, accessible PDFs, e-braille, or HTML formats that are compatible with screen readers and refreshable braille displays.

People who are unable to complete their tax returns because of a physical disability or are age sixty or older may get assistance through the IRS Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) or Tax Counseling for the Elderly (TCE) programs. You can find a nearby VITA or TCE location by calling 1-800-906-9887. Publication 907, *Tax Highlights for Persons with Disabilities*, explains the tax implications of certain disability benefits and other issues and is available at www.irs.gov.

There are VITA and/or AARP tax assistance programs at several branch libraries and other locations throughout the region. The hours vary from location to location. For a complete list please visit <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library/internet/taxforms.htm#help>. Click on 'Free Tax Preparation Help'.

ONE OTHER TAX PREPARATION NOTE. The Internal Revenue Service has informed Fairfax County Public Library that due to federal funding cuts, public libraries will not receive the full array of printed tax forms for tax year 2014. Each library branch will have a set of reproducible copies of tax forms. Copies can be made for 15 cents a page.

Audio Described Performances Alden Theater

The Alden Theater at The McLean Community Center will present an audio described performance on the final Saturday evening of every show this season. This is done through a cooperative agreement between The Metropolitan Washington Ear and The McLean Community Players, (MCP) along with the support of the Center. Upcoming performances: Neil Simon's **Barefoot in the Park**, May 1- May 16 and **Jesus Christ Superstar**, July 10 – July 26. For more information visit the website www.mcleanplayers.com.

Ten Tips About Federal Government Employment

Disability.gov has released their latest issue of the newsletter *Disability Connection*. It is entitled “[10 Things You Want to Know about Federal Government Employment](#)”. The article includes several suggestions on best practices when applying for jobs, places to look for federal employment and resources to assist with job accommodations.

Disability.gov serves as a resource to individuals with disabilities, their families and organizations that provide information regarding disability benefits, employment, health care as well as a variety of other topics. For more information, please visit www.disability.gov.

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 him at access@fairfaxcounty.gov



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