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Notes from the Branch Manager’s Desk

It is hard to believe that we are already in February 2019. The New Year has begun and as usual, many of us have an endless list of resolutions, while some are done with the idea of making decisions that are yardsticks for the rest of the year.

Last year, Fairfax County Public Library released its 2018 - 2022 strategic plan. Our goal is to:

1. Expand access to library services.
2. Foster an environment of innovation.
3. Design events and services that engage our diverse and dynamic community.
4. Integrate technology that will enhance and expand the library experience.
5. Provide literacy services and material across all age ranges.

In line with these goals, it is my hope that 2019 will be an excellent year for Access Services. By refocusing and envisioning our role in Fairfax County and the cities of Fairfax and Falls Church, we can bridge the digital divide, promote early literacy, and enable lifelong learning and independence for older adults and individuals with disabilities.

Here is to a wonderful New Year!

Sincerely,
Rose Asuquo
Branch Manager,
Access Services, Fairfax County Public Library
Daniel’s Retirement

On Friday, December 7, 2018, Access Services wished Daniel Ramos, Talking Book Manager, a wonderful future life with no Talking Book machines and plenty of unscheduled time as he retired from the Fairfax County Public Library (FCPL). Daniel planned to fill this days making music, drawing and pursuing various computer projects without being interrupted by his ‘work schedule.’

Daniel worked for FCPL for 24 years and had spent the last 18 as the Talking Book Manager; ushering the branch as a whole and each of us an individuals through the many electronic processes and changes that have taken place in the last decade plus. (And there have been many!) Daniel we miss your knowledge, your leadership, your tuneful whistle when a project neared completion, and your gentle humor.

My friend, we will always, ‘see you tomorrow’.

Duplication on Demand—Next Steps

First, we want to thank all of you who have helped us begin the transition to the Duplication-on-Demand (DOD) process. With this process our Talking Book (TB) customers can receive multiple books on a single cartridge. If this is the first time that you receive a DOD cartridge your machine will automatically be upgraded and this will be announced by a series of beeps. Once the machine has been updated and a cartridge is inserted into the machine, the machine will announce how many books are on the cartridge. When the first story is completed, the customer can advance to the next story by tapping the green play/stop button (sequential play).

Readers can also ‘navigate’ between book titles by depressing the large, square green play/stop button until they hear the word ‘bookshelf’. Then they can hear the different titles on the cartridge by using the ‘fast forward’ and ‘rewind’ buttons. When a person hears the title they want, they press the large, square green play/stop button again to hear that book.
As a staff, we have introduced this new process in our telephone conversations with customers. Many people have found this to be a process that works well for them. By design, the duplication-on-demand process enables us to serve our TB customers in a quicker and more efficient manner.

Soon (by March 15) we will be updating everyone’s account to this new system. We will make the changes electronically and it does not affect the way that books are ordered. However, as more customers are converted to this system there is one major glitch that customers have experienced: they are receiving too many cartridges. If this happens please call us at 703-324-8380. The problem is generally resolved by making an electronic adjustment. Please know that the Access Services team is always available to help you or answer your questions.

Two other notes as we move forward with this different process.

1.) With the DOD system, you do NOT have to return the postal card. Please throw it away. Our address is already on the plastic mailing container.

2.) If after trying multiple titles on one cartridge you find that it is just not your cup of tea, call Access Services and we can adjust your account to reflect that you want one book on one cartridge.

Audio Described DVDs Available for Checkout

Did you know that Access Services has an audio-described DVD collection? Anyone who is a Talking Book customer may borrow our DVDs by calling the library. We will then mail the movies to your home.

Our audio-described DVD collection has expanded to include many new popular movies and animated films that are fun for the whole family. We have the Marvel superheroes film *Black Panther* (DVD 00079), which is about the conflict King T’challa faces when an old foe puts his homeland, Wakanda, and the entire world at risk. This film was nominated for 7 Academy Awards in the 91st Oscars, including an award for Best Picture.
For a thrilling scare, try *A Quiet Place* (DVD 00082), wherein a family must navigate their lives in absolute silence to avoid mysterious creatures that hunt by sound.

If you would like to try out a musical about the history of the Barnum and Bailey circus, *The Greatest Showman* (DVD 00071) may be the movie for you. Inspired by the story of P.T. Barnum, the film follows the visionary who rose from nothing to create a mesmerizing spectacle.

You will need a DVD player or a computer that plays DVDs to watch these movies. To activate audio descriptions on the movie, go to the DVD’s Title Menu, then select “Languages.” On the Languages screen, select “English Descriptive Audio.” When you return to the Title Menu and press Play, the DVD should start using descriptive audio.

If you would like to order an audio-described DVD, or would like a full listing of all the movies in our collection, please call Access Services Library at 703-324-8380.

### Income Tax Help

Tax season is upon us. This year’s tax filing date is April 15, 2019. There are a number of FREE resources available at various branches of the Fairfax County Public Library to assist customers in preparing and filing their taxes.

One program is VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance), which will be offered at several branches of FCPL through April 13, 2019. Internal Revenue Service (IRS) certified volunteers will assist taxpayers, who earned a maximum of $54,000 in 2018, in preparing their tax returns.

Also, the AARP Tax Aide program at Centreville Regional Library and Sherwood Hall Regional Library is offering free, individualized tax preparation for low to moderate income taxpayers, particularly those who are ages 50 and older. This program runs through April 10 at Centreville Library and through April 13 at Sherwood.

Please call Access Services Library at 703-324-8380, or your local branch, for specific dates and times of these programs. Information about
these events is also available on the library calendar, within the tax help category.

**Tax Relief for Seniors and People with Disabilities**

Real estate and vehicle tax relief is available for those who are over 65 years of age and for people with disabilities who meet certain qualifications. To learn more, you can attend one of the free tax relief workshops where staff members from the Department of Tax Administration will be present to assist in filling out application forms and to answer questions. These workshops will be hosted by the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors in late February through March 2019.

For exact times and locations of the workshops, please call the Tax Relief office at the Government Center at 703-222-8234, TTY 711. The office is open from 8 AM to 4:30 PM, Monday through Friday. The schedule for free tax relief workshops in 2019 is also available on the Tax Relief website.

**Access Services Advisory Group (ASAG): Friends Helping Friends**

The members of ASAG are Access Services customers and other interested parties who provide advice and support to the Access Services branch of the Fairfax County Public Library. They meet quarterly, exchange practical and useful information, and believe that other AS customers may also benefit from their discussions. One of the ways they share information is by submitting articles to the *Loud and Clear* newsletter.

For this issue the Advisory Group wanted to share some of their experiences using smartphone applications. In the course of their research and communal sharing they also discovered a website with a wealth of information for those with vision loss. The pleasant result is a brief
overview of applications that members find useful and a more in-depth article highlighting the Hadley Institute.

**Applications**  
(Compiled by Kathleen Tozer)

As many of us know, it can often seem overwhelming, frustrating, scary and, nearly impossible to even begin to try to navigate through life’s challenges, especially when it comes to technology. I don’t know about you but, all these “smart devices” can make me feel downright stupid and just wishing for a simple on/off button. The fact is that they all come with a so-called learning curve, requiring various levels of persistence, determination, effort and time and a super abundance of patience with oneself.

Every device isn’t for everyone. When it comes to technology, there is no such thing as one size fits all. But, there is no doubt that there are an innumerable number of products and technologies available that can enhance our lives, whether in small or dramatic ways. In my own experience, as a blind person, I am eternally grateful for the individuals who have been willing to share their own experiences and useful information with me. Continuing with that thought, this issue contains several ways individuals are using their smartphones to help them in practical ways. Thank you to the individuals who have contributed the following information with us.

For those who do not know, ‘apps’ stands for applications and are programs that are used on computers and smart phones. Many ‘apps’ come already built into the device; such as contacts, a web-browser, text messaging or screen readers. This is why they are called “smart” devices. Then, there are, literally, hundreds of other applications that can be downloaded by the user. Some applications are free, while others must be purchased.

In the mobile world, there are two main operating systems: one is IOS (I-phone) and the other is Android (google). While many ‘apps' are available for both of these systems, some are specific to one or the other. Many of these Apps can be purchased easily right on your phone. If you have the I-
phone use the “App Store” and if you have an Android phone use “Google play” (reference: AFB Access World, February 2018).

Here is a sampling of some popular apps being utilized, on a regular basis, by some low vision/blind individuals of the Access Services Advisory Group.

Name of application: Siri
Availability of app: Use with IOS products
What does the App do: A voice assistant feature that is already installed on the I-phone.
Uses/user quotes: "Quite frankly, I'd be lost without it. I depend on it to make phone calls and to send texts. It is dependable and the only problem I have with it is that it sometimes doesn't quite understand my Virginia accent. “
EDITORS NOTE: Similar apps are available for Android devices.

Name of application: Be My Eyes
Availability of app: Both IOS and Android systems
What does the app do: Be My Eyes is a free app that connects blind and low-vision people with sighted volunteers and company representatives for visual assistance through a live video call.
Uses/user quotes: “I have utilized this app to call a volunteer requesting frozen food packages to be read, describe earrings in detail so that I can make braille labels for them, see if there were any spots on the floor after a cup of coffee was spilled, look at my mac charger to see if any light was on and confirm the color of a shirt.”

Name of application: Uber
Availability of app: Both IOS and Android systems
What does the app do: Taxi cab service.
Uses/user quotes: “Since I haven't driven in more than 15 years, I find it most convenient when I can't get a ride”.

Name of application: Seeing AI
Availability of app: IOS products only
What does the app do: A free app that narrates the world around you. Designed for the low vision community, this is an intelligent camera app. By selecting different ‘channels’ the app can use the phone's camera to audibly describe people, text and objects.
Uses: The channels include short text, documents, product identification, recognizing friends including their emotions, currency, color and handwriting.
User quotes: “I have used this app to scan mail and other short documents, see if a light was on in my condo, and identify a product by the bar code.”

Name of application: DoorDash
Availability of app: Both IOS and Android systems
What does the app do: Order meal deliveries from a variety of local restaurants. You can search by restaurant name or see an available list by area or zip code.
User quotes: “I have found that the ordering process and menus are accessible. I have ordered food a couple times using door dash and the service has been very good.”

The Hadley Institute
Members of the Access Services Advisory Group, while researching for information about applications, came upon the Hadley Institute for the Blind and Visually Impaired. This is an educational institution that is both the largest provider of distance education for people who are blind or visually impaired and the largest Braille educator worldwide. While tuition
is charged for some courses, many course listings, instructional videos, audio recordings, and low vision webinars are presented free of charge. For example, if you need help learning how to use the vision accessibility features in your iPhone or iPad, or if you have difficulty doing such everyday things as taking the proper medications, eating out in public, navigating around your home, cooking in the kitchen, and going out with friends, the Hadley Institute has instructional videos that can assist with these tasks.

The online courses are divided into three general categories: Adult Continuing Education Programs, Family Education Programs, and Hadley Institute for Professional Studies. The main video categories are: instructions on accessibility features for Apple devices (which includes a section on using Bard Mobile), Microsoft Office, Technology in the kitchen, a Digital Talking Book Player guide, and Abacus, which is a companion guide to the Hadley Abacus course. There is also a Web Directory that lists blindness related organizations by topic.

The Hadley Institute for the Blind and Visually Impaired has started a new discussion group, “Tech it Out”. These regularly scheduled discussions offer a chance to learn a few tips from a technology expert, ask your questions and share your experiences. These programs can be accessed via the web or by conference call and previous discussions are archived so, you can listen at a later time. To receive e-mail notifications about up-coming events, go to the Hadley newsletter and join the Hadley mailing list.

For more information and to explore the website follow these links:

Hadley homepage
Find a course

(The Friends Helping Friends column has been appearing in LOUD AND CLEAR since 2014 and has touched on a variety of topics. We hope you have found them as interesting and informative as we all have. You can give us feedback about an article, suggest a topic or, even send in a contribution yourself on something you feel is in keeping with the spirit of this column. If you are a new customer or, have not had a chance to read
past issues, you can find previous issues of Loud and Clear here. The issues are available in both audio and PDF formats.

Please send your comments and suggestions to: access@fairfaxcounty.gov, ATTN Ken, or, if using, regular mail send items to Access Services, Ken Plummer, 12000 Government Center Parkway, Suite 123, Fairfax, VA 22035.)

Audio Described Theater

The 1st Stage Theater, located at 1524 Spring Hill Road in Tysons, Virginia, is a small, professional and unique theater that has recently started offering audio described performances. There are two remaining shows in the 2018-2019 season.

Columbinus is a docudrama that combines fact and fiction to illuminate the dark realities of adolescence. This performance coincides with the 20th anniversary of the tragic 1999 massacre at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado. The audio described performance is scheduled for Saturday, April 6 at 2:00 p.m.

And the second performance will be The Member of the Wedding by Carson McCullers. In 1946 rural Georgia, the long, hot days of summer bring struggle, longing, and opportunity for 12-year-old Frankie Addams and her family’s housekeeper Bernice Sadie Brown. Frankie longs to escape with her newlywed brother on adventures in the Alaskan wilderness. Bernice struggles to balance enduring the deeply entrenched racism of the rural South with her role as surrogate mother to Frankie and her 6-year-old cousin. The audio described performance will be Saturday, May 18 at 2:00 p.m.

For further information please contact 1st Stage at (703) 854-1856 or via email at 1ststagetysons website
Reading Roundup

What books had the largest circulation in 2018 in FCPL? I thought you would never ask. How many of these titles have you enjoyed?

Fiction

The Rooster Bar by John Grisham  DB 89359

Three close friends and third-year law students realize they have been duped. They all borrowed heavily to attend a third-tier, for-profit law school so mediocre that its graduates rarely pass the bar exam, let alone get good jobs. But maybe there’s a way out. Unrated. Commercial audiobook. 2017.

The Great Alone by Kristin Hannah  DB 90090

1974. Former Vietnam prisoner of war, Ernt Allbright, moves his family, including his wife, Cora, and their thirteen-year-old daughter, Leni, north to Alaska. While the weather is temperate, the family survives on the generosity of locals. But when winter descends, Ernt’s mental health fractures. Unrated. Commercial audiobook. 2018.

End Game by David Baldacci  DB 89412

Will Robie and Jessica Reel are the people the government calls when the utmost secrecy is required to take out those who plot violence and mass destruction against the United States. And one man has always had their backs: their handler, code-named Blue Man. But now, Blue Man is missing. Unrated. Commercial audiobook. 2017.

Non-Fiction

Educated: A Memoir by Tara Westover  DB 90188

This memoir explores the author’s path from being raised in a fundamentalist, paranoiac Mormon family where she was homeschooled to eventually working her way to graduate degrees at Cambridge and Harvard. Discusses hardships faced by the family, abuse at the hands of a sibling, and more. Unrated. Commercial audiobook. 2018.
Hillbilly Elegy: A Memoir of a Family and Culture in Crisis by J. D. Vance  DB 85796

This is a memoir of growing up in the Ohio Rust Belt in a family culture rooted in Scots-Irish Appalachia. Explores political themes affecting these community cultures through the lens of personal and familial experiences. Discusses what it took to go from nearly failing high school to graduating from Yale Law School. Some strong language. Bestseller. 2016.

Killers of the Flower Moon: The Osage Murders and the Birth of the FBI by David Grann  DB 87767

An examination of the 1920s murders of wealthy Osage Indian Nation members in Oklahoma. When the newly-formed FBI bungled the investigation, young Director Hoover turned to ex-Texas Ranger Tom White, who put together an undercover team, including one of the only American Indian agents in the Bureau. Unrated. Commercial audiobook. 2017.

What about the most popular e-books and e-audiobooks in Fairfax County Library?

E-Books and eAudio (Fiction)

The Handmaid’s Tale by Margaret Atwood  DB 24695

Set in the future, the United States of America is now the Republic of Gilead, a fundamentalist Christian theocracy that arose after fanatics shot the president, machine-gunned the Congress and forced the army to declare a state of emergency. To reverse the declining birthrate, women are forcibly recruited into the ranks of Handmaids and are assigned to the Commanders of the Faithful, whose wives are barren. Some strong language and explicit descriptions of sex. Bestseller. 1986.

Truly Madly Guilty by Liane Moriarty  DB 85100

Sam and Clementine lead a pleasant, if busy, life of work and raising their two daughters. When Erika, Clementine’s oldest friend, invites them to a barbeque, however, their lives will change forever. Even months later, Clementine and Sam ask themselves how life might have been different if they hadn’t gone. Unrated. Commercial audiobook. 2016.
There have also been questions about books that have been turned into films. The following are some of the many book titles that were made into movies this past year.

**The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society** by Annie Barrows and Mary Ann Shaffer  **DB 67526**


**Queen of Scots** by John Guy  **DB 64666** (Movie title:  *Mary, Queen of Scots*)

University of Cambridge history fellow reexamines the life of Mary, Queen of Scots (1542-1587), using original documents and archives. Guy lets Mary speak through her letters and she details the reasons that her versions of events differ from the accounts of others, and Guy presents her as an innocent victim. Whitbread Award. 2004.

**Crazy Rich Asians** by Kevin Kwan  **DB 77099**

Nicholas Young brings his girlfriend, Rachel Chu, home to Singapore to meet his wealthy family. But Rachel finds herself unable to cope with his rich and spiteful relatives--especially his mother. Strong language and some descriptions of sex. Bestseller. 2013.

**Save the Date: Sunday, May 5**

**Foundation Fighting Blindness VISIONWALK**

The Foundation Fighting Blindness is having their Fourteenth Annual Northern Virginia VisionWalk at Cameron Run Regional Park on Sunday May 5, 2019. The park is located at 4001 Eisenhower Ave., Alexandria VA 22304. Registration begins at 9:00 a.m. and the walk starts at 10:00 a.m.

VisionWalks are the signature fundraising events of the Foundation Fighting Blindness and are held throughout the country. Over 10 Million Americans are affected by blinding retinal diseases that include macular
degeneration, retinitis pigmentosa and Usher syndrome. The Foundation Fighting Blindness is working to find treatments and cures for these devastating diseases. This event provides support, information and resources to community members.

To register as a walker, to create your team for the event, or to learn more visit the website,

For further information contact
Connor Archibald
Phone: (410) 423-0168
Email: carchibald@fightingblindness.org or

Kelsey Miller
Phone: 410-423-0645
Email: KMiller@FightBlindness.org

Foundation Fighting Blindness Website
VisionWalk Registration Page

Book Club News
Well, I’m not sure if ‘no news, is good news’ applies in this situation but there is little news. In the last issue of ‘Loud and Clear’ I mentioned that Access Services would attempt to start a book club and offered three titles that people could read and share their reactions to any of the books.

The books were All the Light You Cannot See by Anthony Doerr DB 79182, The Wright Brothers by David G. McCullough DB 82175 and Jane Eyre by Charlotte Bronte DB 10886. I asked readers to think about these questions:

1.) What did you like or dislike about the book? (For example think about settings, characters or narrative style.)

2.) Complete this sentence. “After reading the book, I felt …”

3.) What rating would you give the book (1 -5 bookmarks, 5 bookmarks being the highest rating).
We received one review on the Wright Brothers. I share the following answers to the posted questions:

1. This is another wonderful book by McCullough. He takes the reader on the Wright Brothers incredible journey, as they turn their dream of building and flying an airplane into a reality. The characters come alive as one is transported right into the story by the author’s easy style.

2. After I finished the book, I felt awed by their accomplishments and would like to have met them.

3. I would give it a 5.

Web Corner: Three to See

National Federation of the Blind (NFB)  [www.nfb.org website](http://www.nfb.org)

The National Federation of the Blind is the oldest and largest nationwide organization of blind Americans. The organization coordinates many programs, services, and resources to defend the rights of blind Americans, provide information and support to blind children and adults, and build a community that creates a future full of opportunities.

Specific NFB pages—

NFB-Newsline  [https://www.nfb.org/nfbnewsline web page](http://www.nfb.org/nfbnewsline)

NFB-NEWSLINE is a free audio news service for anyone who is blind, low-vision, or otherwise print-disabled that offers access to more than 500 publications, emergency weather alerts, job listings, and more including Talking Book Topic from NLS.

Free White Cane  [https://www.nfb.org/programs-services/free-white-cane-program web page](http://www.nfb.org/programs-services/free-white-cane-program)

The National Federation of the blind Free White Cane Program. Since 2008 the NFB has distributed more than 64,000 White Canes. It is their belief that a white cane gives the ability to ‘achieve a full and
independent life.’ Any blind individual in the fifty states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico can request a White Cane. Requests can be made as often as once per year. For more information or call 410-659-9314.

Free White Cane online application
Free White Cane PDF

Bookshare  https://www.bookshare.org website.
Bookshare is the world’s largest accessible library for people with print disabilities. With membership, comes access to more than 625,000 titles via your computer or electronic device. Bookshare books, however, are not human narrated audio but have an electronic voice. This is a free service for US students and there is a $50.00 annual membership fee for non-students. Some customers may find that this additional service may be beneficial.

InfoEyes: ASK ANYTHING!  www.infoeyes.org website

InfoEyes is a question-and-answer service provided by professional librarians at braille and talking book libraries to people with visual or other print limitations. You can email a question or schedule an appointment to talk live with a librarian on the internet. The service is available Monday through Friday during normal business hours, with the exception of holidays.

To schedule an online chat, visit the website’s help page and fill out the online question form. Once you submit the form, an InfoEyes librarian will send you an email with a link to an online chat room. You will then use the link to connect with the librarian at the scheduled time. Or, if you prefer, you can simply email your question to InfoEyes. Follow these links for more information or to submit a question to an InfoEyes librarian.

Help page
Email a question
Positive Aging Fair

On Monday, April 8, the Northern Virginia Positive Aging and Wellness Fair will be held at the Fairfax County Government Center from 8:45 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. This fair is powered by the Jewish Community Center of Northern Virginia (JCCNV) and Celebrate Fairfax Inc. (CFI) and it is opened to the community.

Pat Collins from NBC4 will be the Keynote Speaker. There will be professionally led workshops for participants to attend and 50 exhibitors and vendors to visit. Access Services has participated in this fair for several years and it is informative and educational. For more information and to register please visit the website positiveagingfair.com.

Did You Know…Keeping You Informed

Online Public Access Catalog (OPAC)

Did you know that in the near future, Access Services will be exploring the use of an online public access catalog (OPAC)? An OPAC will allow customers the opportunity to do a number of Talking Book functions that are now made with the assistance of a staff member. These activities may include placing HOLDS, renewing material, requesting an address change or viewing either the current items you have on your account or the ones you have previously had on your account. At the moment, there is no time table for the implementation of this service but the exploration has begun.

VIP Support Groups

Did you know that there are two active Vision Impaired Persons (VIP) support groups that meet in two separate FCPL libraries? The support groups are for adults who are losing or have lost their vision. The support groups understand that learning to cope with vision loss is a process and
they support each other and share valuable information. VIP Reston meets at the Reston Regional Library on the first Friday of the month from 2:00 p.m. until 4:00 p.m. and the VIP Vienna meet at the Patrick Henry Library in Vienna from 10:30 a.m. until 12:30 p.m. on the 3rd Monday of the month. You are invited to join these support groups. Please call Access Services at 703-324-8380 if you have any questions.

Ambassadors All

Did you know that many people in Fairfax County are unaware of Access Services? This is true. One of the main ways that people learn about us is from all of you telling other people. Thank you! You are our best ambassadors! We want you to keep up the good work. Our telephone number is 703-324-8380, we are at the office Monday through Friday 8:00 am. - 5:00 p.m. but one can always call and leave a message. Our electronic address is access@fairfaxcounty.gov. Ken Plummer, Outreach Manager is glad to speak to groups that you may belong to and share information about Access Services. Once again, thank you for all your help.

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.