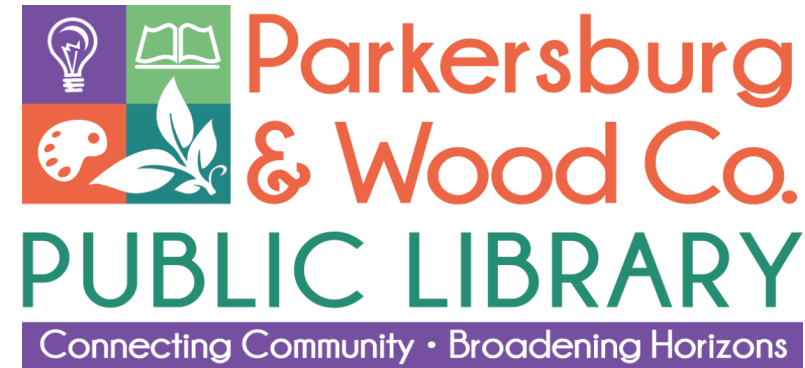


Are you a musician?

Do you enjoy music?

The National Library Service offers music scores & music textbooks in both braille and Large Print! There are also special Zoom meetings throughout the year that highlight this service with different world-renown blind musicians!

Please contact us at 304-420-4587 ext. 4, and ask about the *Music is for Everyone* program offered by the NLS & Talking Books!



# insights

## Fall 2024

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HOW DID BLIND & HANDICAPPED SERVICES BEGIN?

The very first blind & handicapped department was established in 1868 at the Boston Public Library when someone donated eight embossed volumes.

The whole concept of a “national library” for the blind was developed in 1897 by John Russell Young, the Librarian of Congress, when he established a reading room for the blind with nearly 500 books and music items in raised characters.

When Thomas Edison invented the phonograph in the 1870s, he quickly realized it held potential for improving the lives of the

blind. Edison published a list of uses in the North American Review in June 1878, and the second item on the list was: “Phonograph books, which will speak to blind people without effort on their part.”

In 1913, Congress provided that one copy of each book in raised characters be made for educational purposes under the government subsidy by the American Printing House in Louisville, KY, was to be deposited into the Library of Congress.



**The original Main Entrance facing Emerson Avenue & bus stop. Renovations in 2017 installed an entrance directly to the parking lot for our patrons.**

**A digital sign was ordered & installed in the front lawn May 2023.**



Free Matter For The Blind  
And Handicapped

Talking Books  
Parkersburg & Wood Co. Public  
Library  
3100 Emerson Avenue  
Parkersburg, WV 26104

My Dear Patrons,

**This newsletter has some very important announcements!**

⇒ Talking Books is beginning to plan events again! We are looking forward to meeting in an Open House style event with hot tea, refreshments, and games: Mexican Train Domino's, Bucket Yatzee, Connect 4, and Puzzles. Our gathering will be on November 20th at 10 AM. Please let us know if you plan on attending by October 31st. **Call 304-420-4587 ext. 4 to RSVP.**

⇒ I will be travelling soon to our eight counties of service. I am planning a very tiny version of these "open houses" at each of those Libraries for those of you whom cannot travel all the way into Parkersburg – although it would be beautiful to have everyone together!

To reiterate in previous newsletters, there was much information lost. If you have a preferred method of contact or if you received a Talking Books Magazine in the mail every two months, *please* let me know! I deeply apologize for any lapse in shipments you may be experiencing.

I am in the office: Tuesday –Thursday 9AM to 1PM, Fridays 10AM -2PM. If you need to reach out, please feel free to do so at any time: 304-420-4587 ext. 4. That is a direct line to my voicemail but it is also the fastest way to contact me!

We at the Library are so excited to see you all on November 20th at 10 AM!

*Michal Ann Lamb*

My husband Ryan came home one day and said that he heard a statement that changed his life: "Just give 30 to 60 seconds." It took me a long time to fully understand what was meant by that, but basically, people just want to be heard. If you can stop and listen to what people have to say for 30 to 60 seconds, you can turn someone's whole day around. In my darkest days, even when I didn't feel like listening: I was the one who got the blessing, because I needed to hear what that person had to say more than they needed to "just talk".

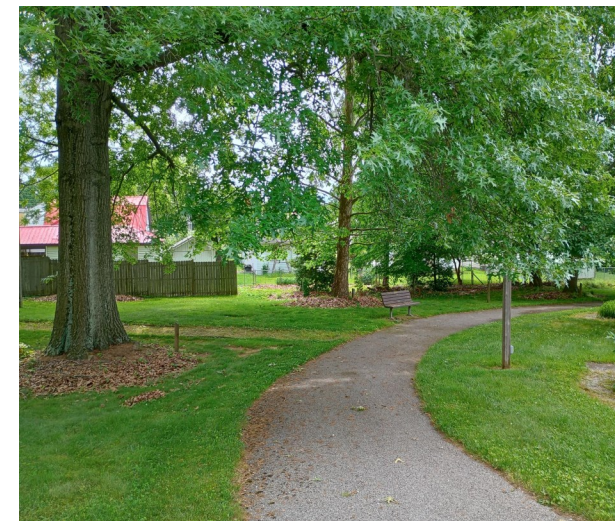
4. Find joy in animals.

Do you own a pet? If not, or if you are not able to have one, donate your time and love to fur babies at the local animal shelter. Can you ask a friend or a neighbor if you can borrow their pet for a couple of hours? Studies have shown over and over again that pets can make a world of a difference in your life.

5. Find joy in what you have.

Minimalism has taken America by storm in the last few years. Personally, Ryan and I have found that the less we possess, the less that possesses us. Meaning we just *need* less: and we love what we have more. 6 years ago, I was spring cleaning our home, and I decided to pretend like I was moving. I asked myself about each stored possession. We were able to have 2 yard sales that summer and made enough money to have our mechanic repair our car in ways I could only wish months before. 9 months ago, I found out that I had 6 weeks to pack and move our whole apartment. Because of what we had done, it was a far less overwhelming process. When my grandpa was still alive, my parents helped him go through his most prized possessions, and helped him split them between the 4 sons. Grandpa was far happier knowing that his boys had his World War II treasures and prized carpentry tools to use and enjoy before he died.

I really hope that these lessons that I learned – though some through hard times – were a help to you somehow. Please know that if you, my readers, ever need someone to talk to, you can reach out at any time. Please call anytime at 304-420-4587 ext. 4.



A quiet park bench in the John Blomberg Arboretum at the Library has provided shade, comfort, and solace for many people over the years.





## What I have Learned from Loss *By Michal Ann*

**Loss.** No one wants to think about losing a friend, sibling, spouse, but the reality is that it happens: to each of us. But it is how we handle the situation that is the truest test of our strength.

In August of 2016, my oldest brother went missing. We did not know for 9 months that he had indeed taken his own life in the very area that his vehicle was found. That next year was very difficult for me. Processing a loss that was more difficult than any I had ever faced. In 2018, I lost two nieces to stillbirth. Another difficult loss to process: another emotional battle. I have lost family members—and just recently a very dear childhood friend—to acute leukemia, cancer, multiple sclerosis. I have watched my mother struggle with metastatic breast cancer for 19 years – in and out of remission, radiation, pills, and surgeries. Some of you, my readers, have felt the same loss: loss of children, spouses, parents, and siblings. Loss also includes loss of health.

Eventually, I was able to get through those valleys. For over 30 years I had believed that emotions were for weak people. Only the strong ones “get through”. Oh, how wrong I was! I travelled thousands of miles for help and counsel. I allowed myself to cry, to grieve, to feel emotions, trauma, feelings. I allowed myself to get physical help from my doctors for pain management. Routines and lifestyle changes were implemented with help and blessing from both my counselor and my pain management team. I felt happier, freer, more at peace with my world. Now, if I am not careful, I will begin this downward spiral into pain, tears of self-pity, and grief again; but I believe that I am more equipped this time. If you will allow me, I would love to share with you some of the lessons that I have learned – the hard way at times— over the past few years:

1. Find or rediscover spiritual help.

Church attendance is so helpful in hard times. It is comforting to be around those that are like-minded in faith.

Counseling.

Meditation.

2. Find joy in nature.

Sit on the front porch and listen the birds chirp.

Get some natural Vitamin D for 10 or 15 minutes each day.

3. Find joy in children.

Is there a neighborhood family that you can adopt if your own children and grandchildren are far away?

Is there a neighbor that is having a hard time that you can give a smile, wave or even a card too?

## Ok: that's Cool *by Michal Ann*

Are you someone that enjoys *Sudoku*? There is a FREE generator of accessible *Sudoku* puzzles available at: [www.sudokutodo.com/generator](http://www.sudokutodo.com/generator). There are multiple styles, levels and game types!

Are you someone who enjoys board games, but with today's economy—cannot afford retrofitted board games? *Mancala* is already an accessible game! When pieces get too crowded, an agreement may need to be made, or maybe pennies could be used instead of the marbles? Either way—genius!

Ryan & I recently played *Skipbo* for the first time in years, and I was pleased at how large and colorful our cards were. Again, slight modifications might need to be made if it was for someone who had a difficult time holding playing cards. Has anyone tried using those taco shell stands as a card stand as well?

A few weeks ago, I was able to purchase a giant set of tumbling blocks (off-brand Jenga) for the Library for the Talking Books department: these blocks are large to hold, well-made, and sturdy. I am looking forward to playing some games with you all soon!

More ideas like this can be found at the National Federation for the Blind:  
[www.nfb.org](http://www.nfb.org)



The National Library Service has announced that the 2025 calendars are available! The wall calendar has both print & braille type, while the pocket size calendar sports braille print only! To subscribe to these calendars: Call 304-420-4587 ext. 4 as soon as possible to reserve your copy!

## Contact Information for West Virginia Talking Books

**Parkersburg and Wood County Public Library** serves the following counties: Calhoun, Jackson, Pleasants, Ritchie, Roane, Tyler, Wirt, and Wood Counties

Voicemails will be returned the next business day at latest. *If you need immediate help, please call Charleston Special Services*

**West Virginia Library Commission Special Services** in Charleston serves the state of West Virginia.

**Phone:** 304-558-5061

**Office:** 1900 Kanawha Blvd E, Charleston, WV 25305

- Please call the Library before visiting Talking Books to make sure someone is available to help you.
- Talking Books are **NO longer** available on the shelves to browse and check-out at this location.

Talking Books Office is now located & staffed Tuesday through Thursday 9 am-1 pm: Fridays 10 am to 2 pm at the Lower Level Reference area. Please feel free to ask any staff member for a tour of the Library.



Our Library has most of the Parkersburg City Directories dating back to 1870!  
Come to the Library & find where your family lived in Parkersburg during any year after that timeframe!

If you have any questions or wish to make an appointment with the Genealogist:  
call 304-420-4587 ext. 27

## Unused Machines?

If you are using your Talking Books player, this message is not for you.

Please continue to use and enjoy your machine—and we will keep sending you new titles and books to enjoy as often as you want them.

However: if you have seen the ads for our BARD (Braille & Audio Reading Download) APP and are now using that exclusively: Do you still have your Talking Books player kicking around the house somewhere collecting dust bunnies? We would love to have it back!

Simply put the player and cord back into the box it came in and mail it back to Charleston Special Services. IF you no longer have the box—we can send you one! Just call us at the Library, or call Charleston Special Services, and tell us that you need a box to return your player.

Thank you! :)

## UPDATES FROM THE NLS:

NLS has learned that *Outdoor Life* and *The Writer* are no longer available for our producers to narrate. Therefore, we will not be able to provide them as audio magazines to our patrons going forward.

The following magazines have ceased publication, so our producers can no longer narrate them. Patrons who are subscribed will not receive any additional issues. Past issues will remain available on BARD and for duplication:

*Magazine of the Month, Popular Science, and Vanidades.*

*We apologize if this inconveniences any patrons, please let us know if there are other items that you would like to see added! - Michal Ann*