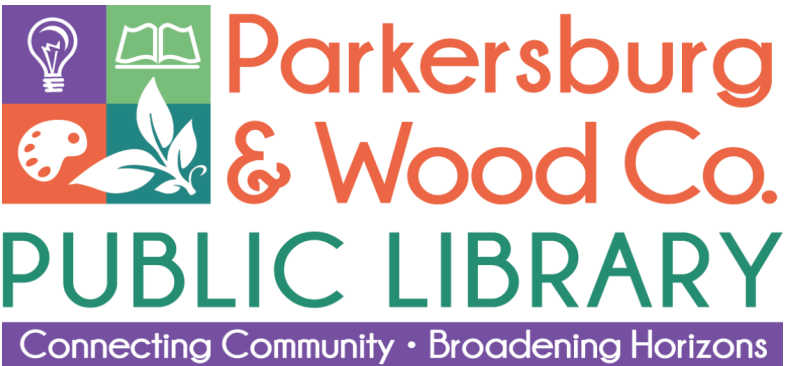


Don't forget about the *insights Book Club*!

We meet at the Parkersburg & Wood County Public Library every **4th Wednesday** of the month in the Board Room located on the Lower Level.

Call Michal Ann at 304-420-4587 Ext. 4 for more information or to register for the Book Club.

January 28th	April 22nd	July 22nd
February 25th	May TBA	August 26th
March 25th	June 24th	September 23rd



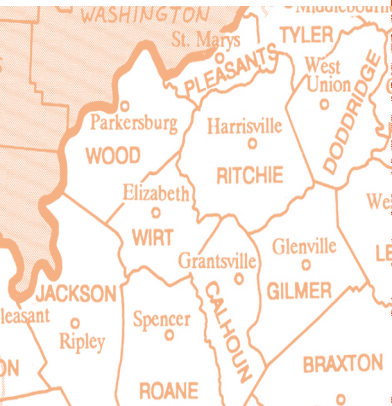
insights
Winter 2026

One of the most checked out items during the Fall 2025 was:

Lightening Down: a World War II

Story of Survival by Thomas Clavin!

- Talking Books patrons have more than 100 copies of the Bible checked out!



This Issue:

- How Come? (1)
- Contact (3)
- Extra Supplies (4)
- Updates (5)
- Scanners (6)
- Snakes? (7)

Each season when I prepare and mail out the Insights Newsletters, I get asked: *Where do you get all of your stories from, Michal Ann?* Life! I always hope that my giggles over the memories, and the smiles at the tough lessons I have learned over the past 36 years comes across through the ink on these pages.

Growing up in a rural tourist area of West Michigan, I had an unusual but wonderful childhood. My Dad was a Professional Land Surveyor for 40 years who retired in May 2023 at age 70. Mom held a degree in Medical Technology until we kids came along and Dad's business took off. Mom was Dad's office manager, fulltime stay-at-home mom, and also homeschooled all 5 of us kids! My parents wanted us to experience things, have character, and learn how to work. They made some unpopular choices for us for those days. We raised steers for beef. We gardened and preserved food. We cleared land, and steadied the marshland around our home. My parents did all of that on their own while raising 5 young kids, working long hours, improving their business, and managing anywhere between 1 to 4 employees. Our family was also deeply involved in church ministries.



Talking Books
Parkersburg & Wood Co. Public Library
3100 Emerson Avenue
Parkersburg, WV 26104
Free Matter For The Blind
And Handicapped

(Continued from page 1)

My parents encouraged me to read from a very young age. By 8 years old, I was reading Louis L'Amour adventures. When I was done with a book I would act out the stories I had read! I was running through the woods, chasing down bandits with Chick Bowdrie the Texas Ranger! I would be push mowing the lawn, but I would be driving a stagecoach—or with the wagon train headed West on the Oregon Trail! I was exploring new trails in the Michigan State Forest Land, and I was exploring America with Jubal Sackett! My imagination was also fueled by Children's Radio shows like Ranger Bill and the Sugar Creek Gang. On Saturday evenings, my family would sit together and listen to old time radio: The Whistler, Suspense, the Jack Benny Show, Fibber McGee and Molly!

In 2007, I moved to Chicago to attend college where I pursued a degree in Teaching English as a Second Language. My brother and his family were English teachers in China near Beijing and I thought that I would end up there as well...until I met my husband Ryan. Doctors had told Ryan that he was never supposed to be able to attend a formal education, but his tenacity was more powerful than a doctor's opinion. March 2020, Ryan was told that he should not go back to work. He was only 31 years old. It was very hard to hear crushing news like that, but once again Ryan dreamed big and has now found more fulfilling roles.

When I moved to WV in 2015, I fell in love with the rugged terrain, friendly culture, and the people! I soon began working at the Parkersburg and Wood County Public Library. October 2023, I was asked to fill the role of your Talking Books Librarian. Every single day I come to the office, I am excited to serve you all. I believe each crazy turn of my life has brought me to you so that I can share the wild stories, and simple lessons that I was taught. I also am thrilled to share all that I learn about the medical community as I support my husband through his trials.

One could say that my hardships have not been “that bad”, but my situation is not the same as your situation. I hope that the truths that I have learned about dealing with suicide, grief, loss, financial hardships, responding to hardship: I hope that these can help you—maybe even encourage you through a moment of time you maybe facing.

- Michal Ann



This one time on the job site with Dad.....

By Michal Ann

Dad is a retired County Land Surveyor. Each of my siblings and I were “hired crew members”, and most of us were 4 years old our very first “job”. We all earned a whopping \$1 per day! Each of us kids have stories to tell of working with Dad. Whenever we get together for a holiday, one of us will say, “Do you remember...” Dad will retell the stories and we all laugh again. Some stories are favorites: others like this one is new to some of the family.

One summer visit, one of my nephews found a snake in the pond areas at the old homestead, and was chattering away at the dinner table about it. Dad was listening to us explain the different types of snakes that we have in our area of West Michigan. I began to notice Dad starting to smirk. I asked him what was so funny....

Dad: “Wellll.... Have I ever told you about the time that Rodney (a teenager that worked for Dad in the late 80's) and I were working on Bass Lake?” Of course all the siblings know this story, but it is hilarious so we encouraged Dad to retell it! This particular day, Dad and Rodney were out just north of Pentwater near a lake called Bass Lake. The property they were working was densely wooded and wet continuously. This is perfect conditions for snakes of all shapes and sizes, but the most common being what we call a “hog-nose snake”. Hognose snakes have incredibly similar patterns to the Massasauga Rattlesnake found in areas of Michigan and Northern Ohio. When threatened, hognose snakes will hiss, flatten their necks and raise their heads off the ground like cobras. They sometimes feign strikes, but actual bites are very rare. This behavior has earned them common names such as “puff adder”, “blowing adder”, “flathead”, “spread head”, “spreading adder” or “hissing adder”. If threatened, a hognose snake will defend itself until it ‘plays dead’: rolling on its back, allowing its tongue to stick out, and secreting a droplet of blood. All to make the predator think that this snake is “dead”. Once the threat is gone, the hognose rolls over and swiftly vacates the area, hiding in dry grass, leaves, and under fallen limbs.

Rodney was a true city boy, and had never seen a hognose snake before that day. Soon after arriving in the wetlands, Rodney shouted over to Dad: “Hey! I found a rattlesnake!” Curious, Dad wandered over to the teenager. After inspecting the snake, Dad began to chuckle. “No, Rodney, that’s a hognose, leave him alone. He will leave soon.” Within a few moments of Rodney stopping his torments, the snake moved on. Now as Dad tells this story, it was only an hour later. Truthfully it could have been after lunch.

Rodney called out, “Hey! I found another one of them hognose snakes! It’s a big-un!” To a teenager, all snakes over 6 inches are big! Once again Dad wandered over to where Rodney stood poking enthusiastically at something in the tall weeds. “Oh mercy! That’s a Rattlesnake! Back away slowly, and *please* don’t poke any more snakes today!”

Dad says that to the day he retired, he saw many snakes while out in the field; but that was the *only* time he had ever seen a hognose **AND** a rattlesnake on the same job!

Scanner Machines by Michal Ann

Did you know that the Parkersburg & Wood County Public Library has **four** scanner machines? 2 of the machines are large and make excellent copies of newspaper articles, books (large and small layouts). The other 2 scanners are the standard 8 ½” size. These do an excellent job of scanning smaller items like 3X5 cards, ID’s and pictures. There are multiple media storage options to send the scanned files to: the most popular being “scan-to-USB” or “scan-to-email”. If you do not have a USB drive or what we call a “flash drive”, you may purchase one at the Library for \$5.

So what do I need to do to scan my documents or a large packet of papers?

- All paperclips and staples MUST be removed from the paper or it will jam and ruin the machines.
- All paper scraps must be trimmed away or they could jam the machines.
- * You can choose to have every piece of paper facing the same direction if you want, but that can be changed digitally later.
- * You can scan double-sided or single-sided page by a selection.
- The computer will allow you to view each page of scanned items before you hit the “next” button which will take you to the screen that shows you where to name your file. You are able to delete blank pages or rescan pages at this time.
- * You can name files as specific or as general as you want.

“Medical Documents 2024” or “Important papers 1, 2, 3....”

- ◇ If you are **EMAILING** the scanned items: I always recommend CC’ing the scanned documents to yourself, that way if the person to whom you are trying to send the file says that they did not receive your file: you can just resend the email from your phone or computer. Plus, you have the copies too!

I have personally found this free resource very helpful when turning in paperwork. I have also spent many hours at the Library on my days off, digitizing my old college class notes.

If you have questions about this amazing resource, please feel free to call and speak to any of our Reference Librarians at 304-420-4587 Ext. 16.



How to Contact West Virginia Talking Books:

Calhoun
Jackson
Pleasants
Ritchie
Roane
Tyler
Wirt
Wood

West Virginia Library Commission
Special Services Collection
1900 Kanawha Blvd E
Charleston, WV 25305
304-558-4061
OR

Parkersburg & Wood County Public Library
3100 Emerson Avenue
Parkersburg, WV 26104
304-420-4587 Ext. 4

- Ext. 4 is a voicemail box, but it is also the fastest way to reach me. Voicemails will be returned the next business day at latest.
- *If you need immediate help, please call Charleston Special Services.*
- Talking Books Office hours: Tuesday through Thursday 9 am-1 pm

Fridays 10 am to 2 pm

Are you looking for high school yearbooks from our area?

Parkersburg & Wood County Public Library has some Marietta, Parkersburg South High School, and Parkersburg Catholic yearbooks in our collection. Come in anytime to browse these yearbooks!

If you any questions our staff Genealogist would love to help you Tuesday through Thursday. Call 304-420-4587 Ext. 27 to make an appointment.

Extra Supplies part 2 By Michal Ann

This is a continued list of uses for extra medical supplies known as “lay-flat chux” that you might have had on hand from a loved one, or seen at thrift stores like Restore and Goodwill. Maybe you wondered if there was a second use for them. The previous article covered 7 ideas, and this is another set of ideas I have found.

1. Packing or moving valuables. 2 years ago, Ryan and I moved across town. While I packed up my kitchen, I used chux to protect things like my pots, pans and kitchen appliances in the boxes so they would not get damaged.
2. Baby changing pads - again it is the same product as what you would buy, just marketed for adults.
3. Baby beds. These are indeed just another layer of protection, if you wanted to put these between a baby’s fitted sheet and the waterproof barrier. My idea was that especially during potty-training these would be helpful!
4. Carpet protection. During cold and flu season, we have lined the area near the bed, just in case the trash can is not close enough. That trick has saved our carpeting more than once!
5. Garbage disposal. Place your nastiest trash in a lay-flat chux, wrap it up, and put it in the general trash. I also line the trunk of my car with chux when I take trash and recycling to the dump to keep things cleaner.
6. Traveling with dogs, kids, or adults that get car sick? Layer up the area with chux: when done, or when used, gather everything up into a tight bundle and throw away!
7. Use in the kitchen when cooking messy food or to gather scraps. I am currently trying to learn how to compost for my garden, but before I would line my sink with chux and peel things like potatoes, carrots or apples into the chux to keep the peels from flying away.
8. Large drying mat. General items like storage bins and bathroom items need somewhere to dry, but not always do I wish to pull out another towel. I will lay out a bunch of these chux on the floor to let the organizers air dry before putting items back where they belong. I wouldn’t recommend them for things you wish to keep sanitized like plates and cups.
9. Packing paper. Ok, this one might seem strange, but if you are mailing out a box of items: wrap up anything fragile with these chux. Use the chux as space filler at the top of the box, or line the box to keep items from shifting.

Have you seen these packages of “lay-flat chux” at the thrift store and come up with other uses besides the 16 or so ideas mentioned? If you have, please let me know! I would love to hear about them, and I know others would too!

Call the Talking Books Department at 304-420-4587 ext. 4.



One resource that I have been finding very helpful for the NLS BARD (Braille and Audio Reading Download) app is the NLS monthly program called **Many Faces of BARD**. The host of this program is the NLS Patron Engagement Section: each one hour monthly event covers one aspect of BARD and is open to all!

Each Zoom session begins with a brief presentation, with the remainder of the time spent answering questions about the presentation or any other questions relating to BARD or the NLS.

For more information about these monthly events, visit: <https://www.loc.gov/nls/news-and-updates/many-faces-of-bard>.



Library & Talking Books Office

Closings for 2026:

December 31st & January 1st	New Year
January 19th	Martin Luther King Jr Day
February 16th	President’s Day
April 3rd to April 5th	Easter Holiday
May 25th	Memorial Day

You may notice days when the Talking Books Office is closed for an extended time... I am on vacation those days! I try to take care of as much—and as many of you patrons—as I can before I leave town. If you experience a lapse in your deliveries or need any questions answered at any time, please feel free to call the Charleston Special Services Library. They can be reached by calling 304-558-4061.