



## Autumn 2025

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### HAPPY RETIREMENT!



**Captions left: KTBL Librarian Janet Chisman through the years. From left to right, Janet in 2003, 2008, 2014, and 2025.**

At the end of August, the Kentucky Talking Book Library said goodbye to another one of our longtime librarians.

Janet Chisman retired after more than 40 years in state government, the last 19 of those at KTBL.

Originally from the Hawkeye State of Iowa, Janet graduated from the University of South Dakota. After two years as a school librarian in Minnesota, she decided to get her master's degree. One of her students told her she should go to the University of Kentucky because they were the national champions in men's basketball in 1978!

Janet joined the Kentucky Department for Libraries and Archives in 1983 and spent time in various roles with the agency, including working in some of UK's campus libraries. She began working in Frankfort in 2001 and joined KTBL in January 2006.

"Getting to talk to real library users has been a pleasure and will be one of the things I will miss," Janet said. "Like many of our patrons, my vision is not what it was and I use audio books every day, a truly wonderful job benefit."

When asked about moving back to Iowa after more than 40 years in the Bluegrass, Janet just said "Go Big Blue!"



## SAY HELLO TO BARD 2!

BARD, the NLS Braille and Audio Reading Download website, now offers expanded functionality and will serve as a gateway to exciting new services in the future.

We are pleased to announce that if you use BARD on the web, you have had access to BARD 2 since late July. If you're not a BARD user, this is your chance to sign up for the service and get instant access to more than 100,000 audio and braille books for reading with an NLS digital talking book machine, a personal smart device with BARD Mobile, a Braille eReader, or your PC with the BARD Express Player. To sign up for BARD, contact us at 502-564-5791, 800-372-2968, or [KTBL.Mail@ky.gov](mailto:KTBL.Mail@ky.gov).

Features of BARD 2 include:

- Reorganization of the Wish List, Reading History, Subscriptions, and Account History under one menu.
- New sorting options for book lists. You can now search through book lists and refine the results by format, language, and subject.
- An updated search engine, so finding books is easier and faster than ever before.
- Advanced search functionality.

Access to the new and improved BARD website requires a change in your login procedures. If you have any questions, need assistance, or just want to tell us about your experience with BARD 2, let us know by calling 502-564-5791 or 800-372-2968. You can also email your feedback to [KTBL.Mail@ky.gov](mailto:KTBL.Mail@ky.gov).

NLS will also be holding "BARD 2 Office Hours" every Tuesday evening from September 16 through November 25 from 8 to 9 pm Eastern Time. For more information on how to sign up, call 800-372-2968, or 502-564-5791.

Note: This change only affects those who use the BARD website. People who use BARD Mobile or BARD Express won't see changes at this time.



## YOU'RE INVITED! KTBL OPEN HOUSE

Join us on Friday, October 10 from 1pm to 4pm Eastern Time and meet our staff and the volunteers that have worked so diligently to create our locally recorded Talking Books. You can tour the library and studio where our locally recorded Talking Books are made!

KTBL staff will also man a BARD help station if you have questions about BARD or if you want to download your favorite book to keep.

We will also have partner tables from the VA, OVR Division of Blind Services, NFB-NEWSLINE®, and Tri-State Library Users.

An assortment of accessible games including accessible cards, accessible dominoes, and even accessible dice will be available.

If you have any questions about the Open House, feel free to email us at [KTBL.Mail@ky.gov](mailto:KTBL.Mail@ky.gov) or call us at 800-372-2968 or 502-564-5791.

## KTBL WELCOMES FIRST LADY BRITAINY BESHEAR



**Photo Captions at top: Left: Kentucky First Lady Britainy Beshear sits in a booth inside the Kentucky Talking Book Library Studio while recording Dolly Parton's *Coat of Many Colors*. Right: The staff of the Kentucky Talking Book Library pose with First Lady Britainy Beshear in front of the Kentucky Wood sculpture in the lobby of the Kentucky Department for Libraries and Archives. From left to right: Evan Hatter, Jenny Smith, Britainy Beshear, Tracey Mania, and Susan McGinnis.**

The Kentucky Talking Book Library was proud to host Kentucky First Lady Britainy Beshear on Wednesday, July 30!

The First Lady stepped into the recording booth in our studio to record Dolly Parton's children's book *The Coat of Many Colors*!

She also received a tour of our library, got to check out some of our braille and tactile materials, including some of our new accessible games that we'll have available at our Open House in October.

We want to thank her and her staff for the time spent recording with us.

Look out for Dolly Parton's *Coat of Many Colors* (DBC 32781) coming soon to BARD and digital cartridge!

## STATE POET LAUREATE RECORDS COLLECTION



**Photo Caption Above:  
Kentucky Poet Laureate  
Kathleen Driskell**

KTBL was proud to welcome Kentucky's newest Poet Laureate Kathleen Driskell, who recorded her poetry collection *Next Door to the Dead* in the KTBL Studio.

In April, Kathleen was named the 32<sup>nd</sup> Kentucky Poet Laureate by Governor Andy Beshear.

Inspired by the graveyard next to her home in an old country church, Kathleen brings the old burial grounds back to life in this collection. Be on the lookout for *Next Door to the Dead* (DBC 31252), coming soon to BARD and digital cartridge.



### **DBC 17595 | *All Things Bright and Strange***

**by James Markert | Narrated by Norma Rash**

The people of Bellhaven have always looked to Ellsworth Newberry for guidance, but after losing his wife and his future as a professional pitcher, he is moments away from testing his mortality. Until he notices the changes in town. Upon the discovery of a small chapel deep in the Bellhaven woods, healing seems to fall upon the townspeople, bringing peace in the wake of WWI. But as they visit the “healing floor” more frequently, people begin to turn on one another. Ellsworth must overcome his demons and face the truth of who he was born to be by leading the town into the woods to face the evil threatening Bellhaven. 2018. Adult. Unrated. Approximate reading time: 10 hours, 12 minutes.

### **DBC 17634 | *An Uncommon Woman***

**by Laura Frantz | Narrated by Sally Smothermon**

Unflinching and plainspoken, Tessa Swan is not your typical 18th-century woman. Born and bred on the Western Virginia frontier along with her five brothers, she is a force to be reckoned with. Quiet and courageous, Clay Tygart is not your typical 18th-century man. Raised by Lenape Indians, he returns a hero from the French and Indian War. Determined to avoid any romantic entanglements as fort commander, Clay remains aloof whenever he encounters the lovely Tessa. But when she is taken captive by the tribe Clay left, his hand, and heart, are forced, leading to one very private and one very public reckoning. Adult. Approx. reading time: 11 hours, 9 minutes.

### **DBC 17651 | *The Marble Orchard***

**by Alex Taylor | Narrated by Norma Rash**

Beam, the black sheep of the Sheetmire family, a large and entrenched rural Kentucky clan, finds himself on the run after killing a man who was trying to rob him, a man who turns out to be the son of Loat Duncan, a powerful local businessman and cold-blooded killer. With Loat who is hiding a devastating secret about Beam’s past and Elvis, the local sheriff, hot on his trail, Beam leads a nomadic existence as he descends deeper into his own heart of darkness, slipping from one place to the next, each more mysterious than the last. The people he meets during his journey an enigmatic trucker dressed in a suit, a cemetery-dwelling Good Samaritan, an armless brothel owner are pieces of a puzzle that hold the key to Beam’s past, as well as his possible future salvation. 2015. Adult. Explicit descriptions of sex. Strong language. Violence. Approximate reading time: 7 hours, 44 minutes.

### **DBC 29402 | *Rhythm and Bluegrass***

**by Molly Harper | Narrated by Mary Vaughn**

Kentucky Tourism Commission employee Bonnie Turkle is up Mud Creek without a paddle. When she gets permission from the state historical society to restore McBride’s Music Hall in Mud Creek, Kentucky, to its former glory, she thinks the community will welcome her with open arms. Instead, her plans interfere with a proposal to sell the property to a factory that would bring much-needed jobs to the town. Even though Bonnie is trying to preserve Mayor Will McBride’s family heritage, he is more concerned with the welfare of his people than the past. Will finds her optimistic

sentimentality extremely annoying but that doesn't stop him from kissing Bonnie senseless. With a deadline looming and local saboteurs ruining her restoration, Bonnie must find a way to compromise with Will to save McBride's and the town, while hopefully winning a few more kisses in the process! 2013. Adult. Unrated. Approx. reading time: 7 hours, 56 minutes.

## NEW INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGE QUARTERLY

NLS continues to add more international language books to the catalog than ever before. The latest edition of *International Language Quarterly* features 132 books in six languages. Some of those highlights include

- Numerous biographies of famous singers in Spanish, including Taylor Swift and Juan Gabriel.
- The first entry in Pimsleur's "English for Spanish Speakers" audio course...more to come!
- Harry Potter in Korean!

You can find the latest and all previous issues of *ILQ* online at [www.loc.gov/nls/ilq](http://www.loc.gov/nls/ilq). The *ILQ* webpage features a print button that generates a customizable, printer-friendly version for the convenience of users.

## MEET YOUR KTBL STAFF: SUSAN MCGINNIS



**Photo Caption Above: KTBL Librarian Susan McGinnis. She is smiling at the camera in front of a quilt inside the KTBL office.**

Susan McGinnis is a librarian here at KTBL. She was born in Lexington, raised in Versailles, and lived in Central Kentucky before moving to Harrodsburg in 2015. She earned both her Bachelor of Arts and Masters of Library and Information Science from the University of Kentucky. We asked Susan a few questions to get to know her better.

### **How long have you worked for the Kentucky Talking Book Library?**

I started at KTBL in 2015, and am celebrating my 10 year anniversary here in September."

### **What is your favorite part of working for KTBL?**

There are so many things to love about working here, but what I treasure most are the connections that I'm able to form with our patrons. I talk daily

with people who are handling visual or physical conditions with strength and hope, and their zeal for continued learning, growth and engagement inspires me. It's a pleasure to be able to provide the materials they need and want to read.

### **What led you to KTBL? Where have you worked in the past?**

I worked for 16 years in a variety of capacities in public libraries in both Lexington and Danville, including technical Services, circulation, reference, and bookmobile services. I earned my Masters of Library and Information Science degree in 2006, and determined early in my education that what I enjoyed most were elements of my job that incorporated outreach. A move to Talking Books seemed ideal, and I'm so happy to be here.

## What do you like to do when you're not at work?

I enjoy spending time with my family. My husband and I have two adult children who we love to see when possible, and three cats who enjoy our attention otherwise! Most recently I've been busy developing a new hobby – Revolutionary War/Colonial history reenactment and related activities in recognition of Revolutionary War veterans and other influential figures at the dawn of American history. You may see me at area historical events or parades in colonial attire, and occasionally firing a 1770s era musket. I also enjoy playing drums in my spare time. I played trumpet in my high school marching band and still pick it up from time to time.

## VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT: RICHARD FEINDEL



**Photo Caption: Richard Feindel sits in a chair inside the KTBL Studio. He is looking at the camera, wearing a blue checkered shirt and blue jeans.**

Richard Feindel is likely a familiar name to many of our patrons and staff.

Richard joined KTBL in 1976 and retired as Branch Manager in 2005. However, he wouldn't leave Talking Books behind, as he began volunteering his time in the KTBL Studio shortly after retiring...and he has been at it ever since! We asked Richard a few questions as part of our Volunteer Spotlight series.

### **How long have you been volunteering for the Kentucky Talking Book Library? How did you get involved?**

"I worked for the Kentucky Talking Book Library from 1976 to 2005, so it was a natural transition to volunteer for the library after my retirement."

### **What do you do as a KTBL Volunteer?**

"I do both monitoring [reading along with the narrator to make sure the recording goes smoothly] and proofreading [post production to make sure what the narrator said is accurate to what's printed in the book.]"

### **What is your favorite part about volunteering with KTBL?**

"My favorite thing about my work is taking the raw recording and improving it with edits and tweaks to get it to near professional quality. Our software allows us to virtually do word processing in sound."

### **What is your favorite project that you've worked on?**

"My two favorite books that I have worked on are the classic *River of Earth* by James Still and a more modern novel *Weedeater* by Robert Gipe. They both tell of the hardships experienced in eastern Kentucky, the former in the 1930s and the latter in the 2000s."

### **What do you do when you're not volunteering?**

"In my spare time I enjoy reading (of course), gardening, fishing and watching baseball games on television [editor's note: can confirm! Richard and I have had many conversations about the Cincinnati Reds]."

We would like to thank Richard for not only taking the time to answer our questions, but also for his countless hours in and out of the studio over the years to make KTBL the best it can be!

## **KTBL BOOK CLUB**



KTBL hosts a monthly virtual book club on the third Tuesday of each month at 3:30pm Eastern Time. Books are selected by KTBL staff members and we take suggestions from regular book club attendees!

**Photo Caption: The KTBL Book Club logo**

**September 16, 2025**

**DB 66791 | *Still Life, Chief Inspector Gamache Series, Book 1***

**by Louise Penny | Narrated by Anne Hancock**

**October 21, 2025**

**DB 112120 | *How to Sell a Haunted House***

**by Grady Hendrix | Narrated by Jay Aaseng and Mikhaila Aaseng**

**November 18, 2025**

**DB 110790 | *Boldly Go***

**by William Shatner with Joshua Brandon | Narrated by William Shatner**

**December 16, 2025**

**DB 43546, BR 17785 | *A Christmas Carol***

**by Charles Dickens | Narrated by Clark Niederjohn**

Our librarians will be selecting books for next year's Book Club over the next few months. If you are a regular attendee to our Book Club, feel free to send a suggestion our way at [KTBL.Mail@ky.gov](mailto:KTBL.Mail@ky.gov)!

If you would like any of these books, or would like to join the virtual KTBL Book Club, call 800-372-2968, 502-564-5791, or email [KTBL.Mail@ky.gov](mailto:KTBL.Mail@ky.gov).

**Book Selections** All of the books in this newsletter are available for download on BARD. If you would like to request any of these books on cartridge, please contact us at 800-372-2968 or 502-564-5791. You can also email us at [KTBL.Mail@ky.gov](mailto:KTBL.Mail@ky.gov).

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