



WARM WELCOMES

KTBL is excited to welcome two new employees to the team!

Librarian **Kenya Best** started in October and she hit the ground running! She provides reader advisory and account assistance to patrons and will also be our liaison to our institutional partners to help with the needs of the organizations and the people they serve.

Kenya comes to us from the Lexington Public Library's Northside Branch. She was born and raised in Lexington. She graduated from the University of Louisville in 1997 with a degree in Business Administration with a concentration in Computer Information Systems. During her time at UofL, she worked for two years at the Kornhauser Health Sciences Library.

She got her Masters of Library Science from the University of Kentucky in 1999 and then worked for several years in various positions at UK. Following that, she spent 17 years at the Lexington Clinic, where she also ran the business office's medical library.

Additionally, our new Studio Coordinator **Kali Mattheus** started on December 1. She will take on the role of coordinating our volunteers as they create our locally recorded books, as well as managing the equipment, computers, and software that makes production possible.

Kali comes to KTBL originally from Jacksonville, Florida before moving to the Bluegrass to attend the University of Kentucky, where she received her Bachelor of Arts in Video Production and News Broadcasting. She has worked on film sets, the sidelines of UK football games for ESPN, in a myriad of newsroom roles, as well as studios for audio production.



Photo above: KTBL Librarian Kenya Best.



Photo above: KTBL Studio Coordinator Kali Mattheus.

KTBL WELCOMES LOCAL AUTHOR

On October 23, the Kentucky Talking Book Library was proud to host Kentucky author Kim Michele Richardson.

Kim Michele, the author of *The Book Woman of Troublesome Creek* and *The Book Woman's Daughter* stepped into the KTBL Studio to record her children's book *Junia, The Book Mule of Troublesome Creek*!

Kim and her husband also received a tour of our library, got to see a copy of *The Book Woman of Troublesome Creek* in braille, and sat down with KDLA Commissioner and State Librarian Denise Lyons.



Photo left: Kentucky author Kim Michele Richardson holding her children's book *Junia, the Book Mule of Troublesome Creek*.

Photo right: (L-R) KTBL Manager Jenny Smith, Kentucky author Kim Michele Richardson, and KDLA Commissioner Denise Lyons.



NEED HELP WITH YOUR DA-2?

Many of you have received the new DA-2 next generation Digital Talking Book Machine. However, we know there can be a learning curve to the device.

Thankfully, if you have questions about your DA-2, NLS has the answers! They developed a series of how-to videos designed to help you learn the basics of the DA-2. Topics include power management, how to use text input mode, how to use the menus, how to log into BARD, and much more.

The videos are hosted on the Library of Congress' YouTube page and a link to them can soon be found on our website at ktbl.ky.gov.

If you are interested in receiving a DA-2 give us a call at 800-372-2968 or 502-564-5791. You can also send us an email at KTBL.Mail@ky.gov to express your interest.

Features new to the DA-2 include Wi-Fi capability and access to BARD to download books directly onto the machine's internal storage in addition to playing books from a cartridge. The DA-2 also allows users to connect Bluetooth devices such as speakers, headphones, and even some hearing aids.



Photo above: An NLS DA-2 Digital Talking Book Machine.



THE FUTURE OF TALKING BOOKS

The My Talking Books Amazon Alexa skill is now widely available!

Anyone who participated in the My Talking Books beta program before October 2025 will have their accounts retained and will be able to login as before.

The My Talking Books Amazon Alexa skill allows users to listen to their talking books through voice commands on their Amazon Alexa smart speaker devices. Please contact KTBL at 800-372-2968 for more info.

Note: the My Talking Books Skill is exclusive to Alexa-powered devices and is not available for Apple, Google, or any other smart speaker devices.



JOIN US ON FACEBOOK!

The Kentucky Talking Book Library is on Facebook! Our page, **Kentucky Talking Book Library**, provides updates such as service interruptions, weather and holiday closures, and the latest in Talking Books technology from the National Library Service.

You can also get to know your librarians and the volunteers that narrate your Talking Books with our staff and volunteer spotlight series. Looking for a good book? We also feature book recommendations curated by our staff.

Join the fun and like our page **Kentucky Talking Book Library** today at [Facebook.com/KDLA.KTBL](https://www.facebook.com/KDLA.KTBL)!



TAKE YOUR TALKING BOOKS WITH YOU!

Don't forget about the NLS **Braille and Audio Reading Download** service or **BARD**!

While we're proud of the portability of our digital talking book players and cartridges, we're committed to making sure our patrons can use their talking books where and whenever they want.

If you have a valid email address, and a smart device such as a phone, tablet, or even a computer, you have access to talking books without having to use a cartridge!

The BARD Mobile application is available for free in the Apple App store for iPhones and iPads, and the Google Play store for Android phones and tablets. If you have a Windows PC, the BARD Express application allows you to download and listen to talking books on your Windows desktop or laptop computer.

For more information on BARD, including how to sign up, please call KTBL at 800-372-2968, 502-564-5791, or email us at KTBL.Mail@ky.gov



Image above: The Braille and Audio Reading Download application icon. It has a blue background with two curved lines indicating sound waves on the left and a depiction of a braille cell in light blue, with the braille for the letter "B" in white.

**DBC 17668 | *An Appalachian Summer*
by Ann H. Gabhart | Narrated by Lane Jacobs**

Piper Danson makes her debut into Louisville society in the spring of 1933, but only to please her parents. She is not ready to marry the rich man her father has picked for her because her heart belongs to lifelong friend Jamie Russell, whose family has lost their wealth. A chance encounter leads Piper to spend the summer working as a courier for the Frontier Nursing Service, where nurses on horseback provide medical care to remote mountain areas. She meets every new challenge and loves her work and independence. But her biggest challenge is when the two men in her life both show up to win her. 2020. Adult. Approximate Reading Time: 10 hours, 28 minutes.

**DBC 17630 | *A Bride for Noah*
by Lori Copeland and Virginia Smith | Narrated by Lane Jacobs**

It's 1851 and Evie Lawrence is penniless and heartbroken after a failed romance. When a kind elderly man announces his plan to move west and make his fortune, Evie jumps at the chance to go with him and start a new life. She says goodbye to the only home she's ever known and sets out for the Northwest. There she meets Noah Hughes, a handsome young man who has gambled everything he owns on the chance to make a fresh start. Living the rugged life of a lumberjack, he too is determined to one day make his fortune. The last thing he's looking for is a bride so why can't he get Evie out of his mind? 2013. Adult. Approx. Reading Time: 8 hours, 50 minutes.

**DBC 17603 | *The Bluegrass Conspiracy (Updated Edition)*
by Sally Denton | Narrated by Bill Van Arsdall**

In 1985 Kentucky Blueblood and former Lexington Police Officer Drew Thornton parachuted to his death carrying thousands of dollars in cash and 80 pounds of cocaine. His death unleashed an investigation that would eventually reach the highest political and social circles of Kentucky. Policeman Ralph Ross would fight against an international web of corruption to disband the criminal organization known as "The Company." Includes an afterword with updates on key individuals. Adult. Some strong language. Approximate Reading Time: 14 hours, 20 minutes.

**DBC 17652 | *Just A Breath Away*
by Carlene Thompson | Narrated by Lynda Sherrard**

Interior designer Kelsey March's world is shattered when a stalker murders her beautiful model sister while they're strolling together one balmy evening in Louisville, Kentucky. But there's far more to this murder than first appears and it may have something to do with a young boy who walked away from an accident that killed his abusive mother some twenty years ago. 2018. Adult. Unrated. Approximate Reading Time: 9 hours, 17 minutes.

**DBC 31225 | *Junia: The Book Mule of Troublesome Creek*
written and narrated by Kim Michele Richardson**

Junia, the beloved, spunky mule from the bestselling *The Book Woman of Troublesome Creek* series, comes to vivid life for young readers in this picture book tribute to Kentucky's Great Depression Pack Horse Library Projects. For grades K-3. Approximate Reading Time: 25 minutes.

DBC 31252 | *Next Door to the Dead* Written and Narrated by Kathleen Driskell

When Kathleen Driskell tells her husband that she's gone to visit the neighbors, she means something different than most. The noted poet lives in an old country church just outside Louisville, Kentucky. Next door is an old graveyard that she was told had fallen out of use. *Next Door to the Dead* transcends time and place, linking the often disconnected worlds of the living and the deceased. Just as examining the tombstones forces the author to look more closely at her own life, Driskell's poems and their muses compel us to examine our own mortality, as well as how we impact the finite lives of those around us. Read by the author. Adult. Some descriptions of sex. Some strong language. Approximate Reading Time: 55 minutes.

DBC 29388 | *Weedeater* by Robert Gipe | Narrated by Bill Van Arsdall

This is a contemporary story of love and loss told by a pair of Eastern Kentucky mountaineers. Gene is a lovelorn landscaper who bears witness to the misadventures of a family entangled in drugs, artmaking, and politics; a family beset by both environmental and self-destruction. Dawn Jewell is a young mother searching for lost family members, lost youth, lost community, and lost heart. Picking up six years after the end of *Trampoline* (DBC 15946), Canard County is living through the last hurrah of the coal industry and the most turbulent and deadly phase of the community's battle with opioid abuse. 2018. Adult. Some explicit descriptions of sex. Some strong language. Some violence. Approximate Reading Time: 8 hours, 39 minutes.

PARTNER SPOTLIGHT: NFB-NEWSLINE®

The National Federation of the Blind is one of the many fantastic partner organizations who share in our mission That All May Read.

You may have read before about their newspaper and magazine reading service NFB-NEWSLINE®. Did you know that everyone who uses Talking Books is also eligible for NFB-NEWSLINE®?



Image above: The logo of the National Federation of the Blind along with the organization's tagline "live the life you want."

NFB-NEWSLINE® provides access to more than 500 publications, including major Kentucky newspapers, Spanish newspapers, and more than 80 magazines. NFB-NEWSLINE® is available on landline telephones, through the internet, on Apple smart devices, Amazon Alexa smart speakers, and more!

Additionally, NFB's Kentucky Chapter is debuting a new virtual monthly meeting for NFB-NEWSLINE® subscribers called Newsflash Kentucky Connections! This meeting is scheduled on the fourth Thursday of every month at 8:00 p.m. Eastern Time or 7:00 p.m. Central Time on Zoom.

For more information about NFB-NEWSLINE® Or Newsflash Kentucky Connections, contact Lora Stephens at lora.stephens@nfbky.org.

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 234 books in 14 languages, including:

- Popular audiobooks in Croatian, Italian, Russian, and even Greek (by patron request).
- Twenty new Spanish braille books, all thoroughly tested on NLS' braille eReaders
- Another installment of Hidden Gems: books in French, German, Portuguese, and Spanish that deserve a second look!

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

TELL US YOUR TALKING BOOKS STORY

Many of you have shared your talking book stories with us over the years. We've appreciated every phone call, letter, and email and would love to share your Kentucky Talking Book Library stories on our social media platforms and in our presentations as we continue to spread the word about our services.

If you are interested in sharing the ways that talking book service positively impacts your life, please drop us a line. You can send an email at KTBL.Mail@ky.gov or email Evan, our Outreach Specialist, directly at evan.hatter@ky.gov.

Letters may be sent to:

Kentucky Talking Book Library
PO Box 537
Frankfort, KY 40602

You are also always welcome to call us at 1-800-372-2968 or 502-564-5791.

KTBL BOOK CLUB



Photo Caption: The KTBL Book Club logo

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!

February 17, 2026

DB 104892, BR 24019 | *The Love Hypothesis*

By Ali Hazelwood | Narrated by Callie Dalton

To prove to her friend that she is dating, PhD candidate Olive Smith kisses the first man she sees. Hotshot professor Adam Carlsen may be a jerk, but he agrees to pretend to be her boyfriend. Even though their fake relationship has a deadline, real feelings develop. Unrated. Commercial audiobook. 2021. Approximate Reading Time: 11 hours, 10 minutes.

March 17, 2026

DB 69906 | *The Cold Dish*

By Craig Johnson | Narrated by Jim Zeiger

Absaroka County, Wyoming. Sheriff Walter Longmire investigates the shooting death of Cody Pritchard, who was convicted of raping a young Native American girl two years ago. As tensions rise in the community, Walt begins to fear his friend Henry Standing Bear may be involved. Strong language and some violence. 2005. Approximate Reading Time: 14 hours, 13 minutes.

April 21, 2026

DB 97372 | *The German Midwife*

By Mandy Robotham | Narrated by Erin Jones

1944. Anke Hoff is imprisoned in one of the many German concentration camps for political activity. Her work as a midwife is noticed and she is summoned for work by the Führer's office. His mistress is pregnant, and Anke's ethics are challenged. Violence. 2018. Approximate Reading Time: 9 hours, 40 minutes.

May 19, 2026

DB 48924 | *Crimes of the Century: From Leopold & Loeb to O.J. Simpson* By Gilbert Geis and Leigh B. Bienen | Narrated by Bill Wallace

Discusses five of the most publicized trials of the twentieth century: Leopold and Loeb, the Scottsboro affair, the Lindbergh baby kidnapping, the Alger Hiss spy case, and the O.J. Simpson murder trial. Examines sensational legal dramas within the social and political climate of the times. Approximate Reading Time: 10 hours, 13 minutes.

June 16, 2026

DB 129483, BR 26313 | *My Friends*

By Fredrik Backman | Narrated by Marin Ireland

"Most people don't even notice them--three tiny figures sitting at the end of a long pier in the corner of one of the most famous paintings in the world. Most people think it's just a depiction of the sea. But Louisa, an aspiring artist herself, knows otherwise, and she is determined to find out the story of these three enigmatic figures. 25 years earlier, in a distant seaside town, a group of teenagers find refuge from their bruising home lives by spending long summer days on an abandoned pier...These lost souls find in each other a reason to get up each morning, a reason to dream, a reason to love. Out of that summer emerges a transcendent work of art, a painting that will unexpectedly be placed into Louisa's care. She embarks on a cross-country journey to learn how the painting came to be and what to do with it. The closer she gets to the painting's birthplace, the more nervous she becomes about what she'll find. Louisa is proof that happy endings don't always take the form we expect in this stunning testament to the transformative, timeless power of friendship and art."-- From publisher. Unrated. Commercial audiobook. Approximate Reading Time: 13 hours, 9 minutes.

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

Kentucky Talking Book Library
PO Box 537
Frankfort, KY 40602

Free Matter for the Blind and
Physically Handicapped
DMM 703.5



Our *New*
Kentucky
Home

This project was made possible in part by the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

