Happy 2018 Everyone! 2017 was a bit of a bumpy ride, but we have much to celebrate as we kick off the new year. Grant funding from the Ethel and Raymond Rice Foundation has allowed us to maximize our impact when it comes to volunteer coordination and training—and that means new resources for all of you.

One of those resources is a series of training videos designed to help support you in your volunteer work. From scheduling studio time, to recording on the digital and Telephone Reader systems, to setting up audio description equipment, these videos will give you access to training resources 24/7—not just when staff is here to assist you.

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The other resource we’re excited about is a second set of audio description equipment. Prior to purchasing this equipment, we had to shuttle our suitcase full of receivers, transmitter, antenna, headphones, and other necessities back and forth between Lawrence and Kansas City—sometimes with a very tight turnaround! Now, we have some breathing room when we have back-to-back performances in different cities, as we did the weekend of December 16-17 when we audio described A Charlie Brown Christmas at the Lied Center one day, and The Nutcracker at the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts the next.

We are also able to serve two theaters on the same day, even at the same time, as we will on January 28 when we audio describe the Moscow Ballet’s performance of Cinderella at the Lied Center and Miracle on South Division at Theatre Lawrence. And, if something goes wrong and a set of equipment doesn’t make it back in time for turnaround to the next venue, we’re covered.

So, as we welcome 2018, we can be thankful for the supporters who make our work more efficient and effective. Happy New Year!
Make sure your parking info is up-to-date!

By Jennifer Nigro,
Coordinator of Volunteers

If you have had any changes to your vehicle information, now is the time to submit that! KU Parking and Transit moved to license plate recognition two years ago. Now, they are ready to launch a portal that will allow me to update your information independently. I suspect that will lead to more frequent checking of our lot, so I want to be sure everyone understands the regulations. They are as follows:

If you are NOT a KU employee or student OR do not have a KU permit: in order to get in their system you need to provide us with your name, vehicle color, year, make, model and license plate number (along with the state of issue). Most of you should have already done this, but if you aren’t sure and want to double check, please see me.

If you ARE a KU employee or student with a KU parking permit: your vehicle will be registered under your KU permit and you do not have to register with us. However—you have to then park according to that permit. That means if you have a permit for a student housing lot, the closest parking spot for you will be GSP/Corbin or street parking in the neighborhoods. If you have a yellow permit, you will have to park in the slots as you come down the driveway. Red and higher are fine in our lot.

If someone else in your family has a KU permit on one vehicle and you drive it to our lot, you have to park according to that permit. We cannot register it as a volunteer vehicle.

Unregistered vehicles could receive a $25 ticket. If you regularly drive a vehicle other than your primary vehicle you will need to register that as well.

If you come in a borrowed or rented car, or have sold or traded your vehicle, you have to register it within an hour of arrival or you risk a ticket. We encourage you to send this information to us in advance in the event staff isn’t able to assist you on arrival.

Now might also be a good time to update any other pertinent information: emergency contact, primary phone number, email, etc.

If you have any questions, please let us know!

Save the Date: Audio-Reader’s 9th Annual Golf Classic

By Meredith Johanning,
Development Assistant

Make plans to tee-off for Audio-Reader at our 9th annual golf classic on Monday, June 4, 2018 at the Eagle Bend Golf Course in Lawrence, KS. Erin O’Neil, KU Women’s Golf Head Coach, will be joining us again as the event chair. This golf classic continues to grow each year and bring in crucial funds for Audio-Reader. We are looking forward to another fun and successful event for 2018. You can help support Audio-Reader by sponsoring the tournament, signing up to play, and/or letting your golf friends know about it! This is a wonderful opportunity to show your support for Audio-Reader and KU Women’s Golf. Contact Beth McKenzie for more information at 785.864.5336 or bethmckenzie@ku.edu.

Audio-Reader volunteers Feloniz Lovato-Winston, Brenda Berg-Dyck, and Kendra Kuhlman help set up at last year’s golf classic with Development Director Beth McKenzie. Last year’s event grossed over $25,000!
Happy Birthday to the following volunteers and staff!

January:
- January 1: Jayne Boggs Varney
- January 3: Mark Hutchins
- January 5: Darcy Schild
- January 6: Carol Beth Whalen
- January 7: Anne Burgess
- January 9: Linda Manley
- January 10: Les Carlson and Elwyn Davis
- January 11: Ray Wilbur
- January 13: Dean Bevan
- January 16: Lyn Fields
- January 18: Marilyn Bradt, Donna Riehm, and Jeri Safarik
- January 21: Molly Mulloy
- January 22: John Fogarty and Amy Pesek
- January 23: Diana Kerle, Cindy Koester, and Keith Sevedge
- January 26: Nancy Colyer
- January 27: Jane Pennington
- January 28: Carl Graves
- January 29: George Norton
- January 30: Lucy Bednekoff

February:
- February 2: Susan Elkins and Jonathan Haynes
- February 3: Bob Casino, Betty Kline, and Jake Waters
- February 4: Diane Carnell
- February 8: Harold Riehm and Melissa Warren
- February 9: Bill Vermooten and Paula Winchester
- February 11: Christy Allie, Bruce Frey, and Heather Nelson
- February 12: Bud Jacobs
- February 13: Maggie Carttar
- February 15: Bob Gent
- February 17: Rozanne Stringer
- February 18: John LaGesse
- February 20: Frank Ybarra
- February 21: Pam Houston, Martha Kehr, and Peggy Prince
- February 22: David Dunford
- February 23: Bob Hohn
- February 25: Mary Hamler and Austin Turney
- February 27: Jeff Vincent
- February 29: Becky Janzen

Staff Birthdays:
- January 2: Nicole Banman, business manager
- January 5: Dan Skinner, director
- January 8: Steve Kincaid, chief engineer, and Joe Penrod, student announcer
- February 8: Vickie Roush, contractor
Volunteer Published

Congratulations to Ann Cobb, whose illustrations were recently published in a picture book! *Nana-Hugs-a-Lot* was written by Ann’s friend Sandra Hazlett, and explores the idea that hugs are a special kind of language. The book is available on Amazon. Ann is an Audio-Reader book reader.

Active Seniors Wanted

Former Audio-Reader volunteer Ally Wilke is now working in marketing, and is looking for active, healthy people age 60+ who do something cool and fun to keep themselves physically and mentally healthy and active to appear in a series of videos for Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas. You can see an example of previous videos at https://vimeo.com/170654132, https://vimeo.com/177111263, and https://vimeo.com/165189609. If you are interested in getting involved, contact Ally directly at 785-228-0900 or awilke@jhpadv.com.

January Holiday Hours

Audio-Reader will be on holiday hours Monday, January 15 in recognition of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. Building hours will be 7 a.m. to Noon. Please contact us to reschedule afternoon readings or if you need a sub to cover your assignment that day.

Condolences

Our condolences go out to the following volunteers and their families:

- The family of Audio-Reader friend and supporter Bob Laushman, who died October 27. Bob’s wife Donna was a longtime volunteer.
- The family of former volunteer Neil Salkind, who died November 18.
- George Smith and his wife Terry on the death of Terry’s mother.
- Sarah Thomas on the death of her stepfather.

Greeting Cards Needed

Audio-Reader sends out a lot of sympathy and get well cards in support of our volunteers. If you’d like to donate some cards for the cause, please drop them on Jen’s desk. Thank you!

Tips for improving your vocal delivery

By Jennifer Nigro, Coordinator of Volunteers

If I had a dollar for every volunteer who came into my office asking me how to sound more like the pros on NPR, I’d be a rich woman. Well, as luck would have it, NPR actually has someone who coaches their reporters—and she recently shared some of her secrets. Jessica Hansen is “the voice” you hear between news stories on NPR, thanking supporters and telling you about their products. She has tips for addressing some of the most common issues. This month, we’ll start with low energy, which is often the culprit behind a flat, monotone delivery. Hansen says improving breath support can lead to a more energetic delivery. She recommends a couple of exercises.

The first asks you to channel a few well-known dog breeds to open up your ribcage. Start by panting like a Chihuahua, focusing your breath at the very top of your ribcage. Then, channel your inner Labrador to work the ribs right under your armpits. It’s a deeper, slower pant, and it should make those ribs open and close (place your hands just below your armpits to feel the movement). Finally, get on your feet and picture a St. Bernard. Pant more deeply and more slowly, with the breath coming from your belly and lower ribs. All of this panting helps your breath move more freely, allowing you to get deeper breaths before beginning each sentence.

For the second exercise, hold out your finger like a birthday candle. Take a deep breath in then try to blow the flame out five times, making each breath equal in length and power.

Hansen recommends practicing these exercises every day to help you sustain breath and energy throughout each sentence. In our next issue, I’ll share Hansen’s tips for curing yourself of vocal fry!
As Audio-Reader readers, we know our voices are valuable to our listeners. VocalID is another way to make a contribution to those who might need our voices in a different manner.

People who cannot speak, or whose voices are in some way impaired, often use special text-to-speech machines for verbal communication. But these machines usually sound mechanistic and non-human, and the range of possible voices is small. (Stephen Hawking uses this technology.) Imagine, for example, an elderly woman having to sound like a voice-mail menu, or a shy young boy using the impersonal voice of a middle-aged man.

Rupel Patel, a speech professor at Northeastern University, has developed a method to use recorded human voices to create more natural sounding computer voices. She started VocalID, a company that uses a voice bank of donated recordings. The recordings are then combined with text-to-speech technology to create a wide variety of normal-sounding voices, taking into account age, gender, and various other factors.

In addition to providing voices to those with no speech, VocalID can use the real voice of a person with a speech impairment if that person is able to record three seconds of sound. Then they create a personalized voice by matching the three seconds with a donated voice. They also allow people to “bank” their voices if they are in danger of losing the ability to speak (such as receiving a diagnosis of laryngeal cancer or ALS).

To donate your voice, you go to the VocalID website (vocalid.co). The requirements are:

- You can record in a quiet room
- You have a headset microphone
- You are using a laptop or desktop computer with the Google Chrome browser installed.

The login and profile setup is very simple. A series of screens leads you through the steps to make sure you meet the requirements. You can choose the kinds of stories you’d like to read, and set the reading level. Then you record a short series of sentences as an audition. VocalID sends you an email with the results of the audition.

I had to do my audition three times. The first time, my microphone was not connected. In the second audition, they could hear my mouse clicks, and suggested I use the touchpad on my laptop. The third time was just fine. To me this means they are very careful about the recording quality.

Reading for VocalID is not quite like reading for Audio-Reader. You’re shown each sentence in the story, one at a time. You record the sentence and then play it back. At that point, you can move to the next sentence, or re-record. Also, unlike Audio-Reader, where our projects are ongoing for years, the donation is a total of six or seven recorded hours, done in sections at your convenience.

VocalID is a for-profit company. As a voice donor you don’t receive compensation for recording, and voice recipients must pay for their voices. The current cost for a personalized voice is $1,249, with an annual update fee of $240, and it is not yet covered by insurance. (They’re working on that.) But it’s a breakthrough technology that would likely be even more expensive if the company had to pay for voice recordings. I find it to be an excellent way to help people with vocal deficits lead more comfortable lives.

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**Volunteer opportunity**

A listener is looking for someone with internet research skills to perform a few searches for specific topics and key words and compile a master list of sources and links.

Word document copy to include:

1. Title, author, and copy of the article.
2. Copy and paste the link to the article below the title.
3. Include pictures related to the story.
4. Do not include advertisements.
5. Include a copy of all comments from readers that appear below the article.
6. Save as: year/month/day LJWorld [or other publication] Example: 2006-1-12 LJ World

If you are interested in taking on this project, contact Lori Kesinger at 785.864.4625 or lrk@ku.edu.
Did you know? With your help, Audio-Reader broadcast just shy of 200 books in 2017!

It was a good year for new literature, and with connections to visiting authors, Kansas Notable Books, and the KU Common Book, we were able to share lots of new books with our listeners. Through Lawrence Public Library and our friends at KPR, we were even able to share some additional programming to complement our book readings.

For example, when Geraldine Brooks visited Liberty Hall as the 2016 Beach Author, Audio-Reader was able to share her hour-long interview with KU’s Laura Moriarty as the final broadcast of her book The Secret Chord, read by Darcy Schild. Incidentally, the 2017 Beach Author George Saunders won the Man Booker Prize for his debut novel, Lincoln in the Bardo, so this author series is certainly something to watch in the future, and a partnership with Lawrence Public Library we hope to be able to continue!

Other visiting authors whose books aired on Audio-Reader include Zadie Smith, whose novel White Teeth inspired a British TV series and aired in The Book Was Better (read by Betty Baron), and Kansas native Candice Millard. Her historical non-fictions Hero of the Empire: The Boer War, a Daring Escape, and the Making of Winston Churchill (read by Harlan Roedel) and Destiny of the Republic: A Tale of Madness, Medicine and the Murder of a President (read by Marilyn Epp) shared historical events and characters in colorful and engaging detail.

With a new political landscape dominating the news in 2017, a number of books in our History and Non-Fiction Book categories had special relevance. Reader Bev Wilson tackled Elizabeth Drew’s Washington Journal: Reporting Watergate and Richard Nixon’s Downfall as well as The Last of the President’s Men by veteran investigative journalist Bob Woodward. What I Saw at the Revolution: A Political Life in the Reagan Era by Wall Street Journal columnist Peggy Noonan (read by Marilyn Epp) offered an inside view of another White House administration, while biographies on Jimmy Carter, Samuel Adams, and Max Cleland, a Silver Star veteran and former U.S. Senator, shared yet further insight from the political sphere.

In the fiction categories, new novels from Kate Atkinson, Jennifer Weiner, and Alexander Chee whisked listeners away with some of the best new reads, while Nathan Hill’s acclaimed novel The Nix (read by Maureen Guth) and the Pulitzer Prize-winning novel The Underground Railroad by Colson Whitehead (read by Betty Baron) continues brings the very best of critically acclaimed new books to our listeners.

Thank you to all our book readers, and here’s to sharing another great literary year in 2018!

Audio Description Events

Congratulations to Audio-Reader’s newest crop of audio description trainees! Dean Bevan, Jenni Frangos, Rachel Gadd-Nelson, Pat Hamarstrom-Williams, Ivy Knight, Tracy Russo, Julian Silverman, and Rachel Straughn Navarro all took part in our November training. We also heard from AD consumer Patti Wilson and seasoned describer Charles Decedue. We’re excited to see them take the next steps in putting their knowledge to use. Special thanks to The Sandwich Bowl and Slim Chickens for donating lunches.

Also, special thanks to Charles Decedue for getting a new audio description sign printed! Our new, sturdy signs will help us promote the availability of audio description at the theaters we serve.

For those of you who have yet to experience audio description, any ticketholder is welcome to check out an audio description headset and listen in at the following performances:

**Miracle on South Division**: Saturday, January 27 (7:30pm), and Sunday, January 28 (2:30pm), Theatre Lawrence

**Moscow Festival Ballet: Cinderella**: Sunday, January 28, 2:00pm, Lied Center

**The Wizard of Oz**: Wednesday, January 31, 7:00pm, Lied Center

**Jersey Boys**: Tuesday, February 13, 7:30pm, Lied Center

**The Sound of Music**: Tuesday, February 20, 7:30pm, Lied Center

Performances and exhibits are updated regularly at www.reader.
Please give a warm welcome to the following new volunteers!

**David Buck** is a documentary filmmaker who enjoys reading history, non-fiction, news, and short stories. He joins our Alphapointe team as a substitute reader.

**Joe Friskel** joins our team of readers broadcasting regional news from the Pittsburg, KS, area from 2-4 weekday afternoons.

**Kelly Gibson** was a student announcer for Audio-Reader back in her college days, and is excited to return as a substitute reader. Kelly is an editor for Sunflower Publishing. She enjoys writing, playing with her dogs, and watching KU basketball with her fiancé, Brad, whom she met while working here! She also enjoys yoga and crochet.

**Ivy Knight** is a residential supervisor at Cottonwood, Inc. by day, improv comedy performer by night! Ivy studied film and media at KU and loves watching movies in her spare time. She took our audio description training in November 2017, and begins her audio description journey as a listener liaison.

**Todd Nixon** works for KBEQ radio in Kansas City. He’s volunteered for many local and national non-profits, including March of Dimes, St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital, American Cancer Society, and Toys for Tots. He enjoys spending time with his family, hiking, camping, going to concerts, and playing video games in his spare time. He begins by helping with outreach.

**Shaunna Price** is a department manager in special education at KU. She has worked with the Arizona Braille and Talking Books Library as a director for readings. She enjoys RVing, motorcycling, and getting together with friends in her spare time. Shaunna will be helping with projects related to special events, marketing, and clerical work.

**Tracy Russo** is a retired associate professor in KU’s Communication Studies department. She serves on the board of the Lawrence Civic Choir. She enjoys singing with the choir, as well as theater, literature, music, and art. She also spends her spare time traveling, knitting, and cooking. Tracy begins as an audio description listener liaison.

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**NEW FACES**

*By Jennifer Nigro, Coordinator of Volunteers*

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**Five Questions:**

**Name:** George Smith

**Current reading assignment:** The Man Cave (men’s magazines)

**Years of service:** 2 years, 7 months

**Q: Where did you grow up?**

A: I grew up in Kansas: Kingman, Wichita, Emporia, and Kansas City, KS.

**Q: What is your favorite book?**

A: My favorite book is the Nevada Barr’s Anna Pigeon mystery series because I love the national parks and we try to visit as often as we can.

**Q: How or why did you get involved with Audio-Reader?**

A: I became a volunteer because my mother-in-law has very low vision and I thought I should contribute to the program.

**Q: What is your favorite or most unusual reading assignment?**

A: My first assignment was to read Field and Stream, but I didn't know one end of a gun from another.

**Q: What is your favorite thing about volunteering for Audio-Reader?**

A: I was offered Man Cave and that has been a lot of fun reading magazines that I had never read before, but that are full of adventure, politics, and music.
Audio-Reader volunteer Lisa Beck trains service dogs for KSDS in Washington, KS, and recently brought her current student, Twilight, to Audio-Reader for a socialization visit. Twilight will spend up to two years with Lisa before moving to the next phase of training, where she will specialize in assisting someone with a physical disability, vision disability, or as a school therapy dog. Lisa, who is an audio describer and reads the Seneca Courier-Tribune for Audio-Reader, has trained one other service dog.