Jim Thornton’s a fast-track kind of guy. He’s frequently busy volunteering as an advisor to aspiring entrepreneurs. Or devoting time to his Richland, Washington, Kiwanis Club. There is one thing, however, that slows Jim down.

Reading.

Thornton has macular degeneration. He still has peripheral vision, but he needs a magnifying glass to read … one … word … at … a … time.

He estimates it takes him about 12 minutes to read one page in Kiwanis magazine. But lately, he’s picked up the pace by becoming one of the first Kiwanians to receive an audio-recorded version of Kiwanis International’s official publication.

The recordings are the result of a Kiwanis International partnership with the Kiwanis Club of Athens, Georgia, and the Georgia Unit of Recording for the Blind and Dyslexic (RFB&D). Kiwanis magazine subscribers who have difficulties reading the printed magazine now can receive the recordings on disk. (For more details, see “Listen In” on page 30.)

With locations across the United States, RFB&D is a nonprofit organization that provides recorded reading material for students of all ages—preschoolers through doctoral candidates. So Kiwanis volunteers find themselves working on everything from The Mixed-Up Chameleon to Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Chronic Illness and Disability.

They also record other publications, such as Lions Magazine, which prompted Athens club member and veteran RFB&D volunteer Bill Peters to suggest taping Kiwanis’ periodical. (Sadly, Peters died this past July, just a couple weeks prior to the first recording of Kiwanis.)
Athens Kiwanian Larry Dendy directs a recording of Kiwanis magazine. After orientation, new volunteers start working as directors. When they and RFB&D production manager Eleanor Cotton are comfortable with their progress and reading skills, they can move into the recording booth.

Before it can be recorded, a magazine must be marked up with page breaks, pronunciation keys and other notes.
The Athens Kiwanis Club’s recording team currently consists of Meg Brya, Claire Swann, Bob Burton, Larry Dendy and project chairman Mac Rawson. (RFB&D has discovered that listeners prefer hearing different voices.) Though Rawson’s 300-plus recording hours are nowhere near Peters’ impressive 1,263 hours, the retired biologist is rapidly adding to his résumé, volunteering an average of two days a week at the Georgia Unit.

To record the August 2009 issue of Kiwanis magazine, Rawson and Dendy select a corner booth—a four-by-five-foot cell enclosed by white acoustic tiles and a solid soundproof door. Rawson goes first, but later, before his voice tires, he’ll trade spots with Dendy, who initially will assist him as director.

Rawson climbs atop a stool and pulls the microphone to a position about two feet in front of his face. To his right is a bowl of mints to keep voice and throat clear. To his left is a computer, which is synched with Dendy’s station outside the booth’s window. The monitor reads: “KI0809 – KIWANIS MAGAZINE, Pg 0001.”

“Ready?” Rawson asks Dendy through the booth’s microphone.

“Ready!” Dendy replies.


With those words, Kiwanis magazine goes audio. km

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**Listen in**

Kiwanis magazine subscribers can now hear their magazine on audio CDs. Here are the details:

- The disks are formatted for CD players and computers. There’s no cost to subscribers who have reading impairments. (Mail for people with impairments qualify for special postage rates. Kiwanis is investigating ways to make audio recordings available to other subscribers.)
- CD customers will continue to receive printed magazines.

To order Kiwanis magazine on CD, e-mail magazine@kiwanis.org and provide the subscriber’s name, address and member number.

**ON THE WEB**

Sign up for a CD at www.kiwanismagazine.org.