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The Newsletter of  
Webster Groves Public Library, v. 2 n. 12,  
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## Too Busy to Be Irrelevant

I participate in an online public library discussion group, where librarians share information and seek answers to problems from their peers across the country. Last week a librarian asked for advice in dealing with a popular radio host in Alabama who was suggesting that the state stop funding libraries because, he claimed, 'they are irrelevant. Everything's on the Internet.'

Yes, the Internet has changed much of what we do, but it has no more made libraries irrelevant than the VCR put movie theaters out of business. Remember those predictions? As we in the business like to point out, libraries distribute more cards than Visa, and have more outlets than McDonalds. There must be many people working in other professions who wonder why, if they are being made obsolete by easy access to digital information, they are so busy all the time. I think it's a question of a little information being a dangerous thing.

People hear on TV that kids can do their homework from a laptop these days, using the resources of the World Wide Web, or that the average householder can get the news from Google or Yahoo! as easily as from a newspaper. So they assume that nobody's using the library. Wrong. Since the advent of new information sources, attendance and circulation at most libraries has increased steadily. Libraries all across the country are expanding to facilitate all the new roles they are taking on – computer centers for people who don't have access at home, computer training classes, meeting spaces for public groups, more space for large print book collections and for equipment to aid people with various disabilities.

And amid all this innovation and ferment, about 70% of what we do is still checking out books to readers. That's right. All the predictions about the end of the book as a format have so far been totally off the mark. I hear that e-books are on the horizon, but as far as I can tell they are at the end of a tunnel whose light has yet to show.

Here at Webster Groves Public Library we are still busy all the time, still giving out scores of new library cards every month, still greeting new families every week who have brought their youngsters in to start a lifelong love of reading. Programs like the Harry Potter Party or poetry readings still pack people in, and on most afternoons every computer in our reading room is busy. I have trouble finding the irrelevance in that.

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## TRIVIA QUESTION:

Last Month's Question:

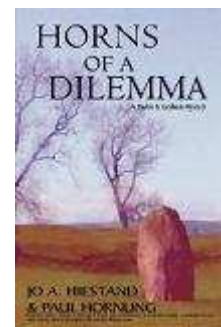
Is there any 'fun' in Shakespeare?

**No. In his book *Happiness: a History*, Darrin M. McMahon notes that the word 'fun' did not enter the English language until late in the 17<sup>th</sup> century; thus it never occurs in the works of Shakespeare.**

**WE ARE GOING TO TAKE A BREAK FROM OUR MONTHLY TRIVIA QUESTION OFFERINGS, WHILE WE READ SOME MORE AND TRY TO FIND NEW INTRIGUING FACTS.**

## Mystery Writers Visit Library

On Saturday, August 18<sup>th</sup> at 1:30 p.m. mystery writers Jo A. Hiestand and Paul Hornung will visit the library to read from and sign copies of their new book, *Horns of a Dilemma*. This is the fifth mystery for Hiestand, and the first in which she collaborates with Hornung, whose career as a police detective make him the ideal partner to add a touch of realism to a taut, intriguing procedural tale.



There will be a drawing for one lucky attendee to have lunch with Hiestand and Hornung. For more information call the library at 314 961-3784

## PARKING LOT REPAVING

The library's parking lots will be repaved on Wednesday, August 8<sup>th</sup>. Parking that day will be limited mostly to street parking and whatever is available on the west parking lot. The job is supposed to take just one day, but as always, it could easily take more than that.

We're sorry for the inconvenience, but it will be nice to have the lots back in good shape.

## August in the Children's Room

Last Day to turn in Summer Reading Club

Log Sheets -- August 4<sup>th</sup>

- \* Wednesday, August 15: Storytime – 10 a.m.
- \* Wednesday, August 22: Storytime – 10 a.m.
- \* Wednesday, August 29: Storytime – 10 a.m.



## Library Hours

Monday-Thursday 9 am to 9 pm  
Friday and Saturday 9 am to 4:30 pm  
Sunday 2 pm to 5 pm

The Library will be closed on Thursday, August 23<sup>rd</sup> for our annual Staff In-service Day.

## This Month's Most Requested Books:

1. *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, Khaled Hosseini
2. *Lean Mean Thirteen*, Janet Evanovich
3. *High Noon*, Nora Roberts
4. *Killer Weekend*, Ridley Pearson
5. *The Quickie*, James Patterson
6. *Nineteen Minutes*, Jodi Picoult
7. *Eat, Pray, Love*, Elizabeth Gilbert
8. *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle*, Barbara Kingsolver
9. *Water for Elephants*, Sara Gruen
10. *Middlesex*, Jeffrey Eugenides
11. *New England White*, Stephen Carter
12. *The 6<sup>th</sup> Target*, James Patterson

### Next Month's Book Discussion Selection:

***No Country For Old Men*, by Cormac McCarthy**    **Tuesday, September 4 at 6 p.m.**

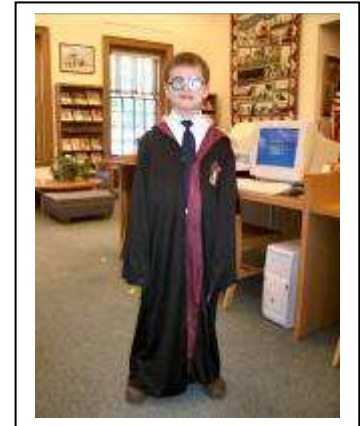
## Staff Favorites: August, 2007

1. *How I Became a Pirate*, by Melinda Long (Juvenile Fiction)
2. *The Pact*, by Jodi Picoult (Adult Fiction)
3. *World War Z: an oral history of the Zombie War*, by Max Brooks (Adult Fiction)
4. *Heart-Shaped Box*, by Joe Hill (Adult Fiction)
5. *American Gods*, by Neil Gaiman (Adult Fiction)
6. *Neverwhere*, by Neil Gaiman (Adult Fiction)
7. *The Handmaid's Tale*, by Margaret Atwood (Adult Fiction)
8. *Oryx & Crake*, by Margaret Atwood (Adult Fiction)
9. *Brazil*, directed by Terry Gilliam (Adult DVD)
10. *To Say Nothing of the Dog*, by Connie Willis (Adult Science Fiction)

## Our Harry Potter Party Pulls in Myriads of Muggles

On Saturday, July 21 we took part in the worldwide frenzy that accompanied the release of the final book in the Harry Potter series, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*. Our Morning of Enchantment was attended by a large crowd of young Potter fans and their parents. Many of them wore costumes to participate in our Costume Contest. We also had a Guess the Any Flavor Bean Contest, in which kids enjoyed sampling flavors like earwax, soap and earthworm. Mm-mm. One young lady's favorite, though she thought it was chocolate, turned out to be dirt. We also had a Harry Potter Bingo and other activities. Everyone seemed to have fun while welcoming the newest chapter in the saga of their favorite magical hero.

We want to thank the Rahmoeller family, who created our Hogwarts Express and the wonderful house banners that are still on display in the Science Fiction and Fantasy area of the library.



Here are the winners of our Harry Potter Costume Contest. From left they are first place winner Colton Kovell-Bratton as Professor Quirrel/Voldemort (yes, if you turn him around there's another face . . .); second place winner Natalie Cohen sporting a bit of the right attitude as Hermione; and third place winner Sam Thater who was the best of many young men who came dressed as Harry.



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