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The Newsletter of
Webster Groves Public Library, v. 3 n. 1,
September, 2007

Child Safety in the Library

A few weeks ago a local TV reporter did a story on safety in public libraries. He waded around police reports of crimes, largely of a sexual nature, that had recently been reported at County Headquarters, other St. Louis County locations, and at St. Louis Public's Central Library. He also had internal library memos about people performing lewd acts and accessing pornography at public Internet terminals.

The general consensus among librarians is that the story, like most local reporting, was sensationalized and exaggerated, but there is still no reason to be complacent about such things. Although the reporter did not visit Webster Groves – or any other Municipal Library Consortium location – these are problems that all libraries must think about and take steps to prevent. Safety, especially child safety, is a great concern to us.

First of all, everyone should bear in mind that Webster Groves Public Library is a much smaller venue than County Headquarters, or most of the St. Louis County Library branches, and it is easier for staff to keep an eye on what's happening.

Second, our Internet content is filtered, according to federal requirements, and it is difficult at best to turn up obscene content on one of our terminals. Not impossible, mind you, but difficult enough that most people interested in such things are better off looking elsewhere. And since our terminals sit in the middle of our reading room, it is nearly impossible to do anything of an inappropriate nature that won't immediately be noted by staff.

Third, we are a library blessed with many involved parents. Over the years I have found that problems with child safety usually originate with kids who are dropped off or sent unaccompanied to the library. At most libraries the staff is way too busy doing reference, circulation and reader's advisory to spend time watching out for unescorted kids. Any librarian's first response, when asked whether kids are safe in their library, is 'They are if they come with their parents.' The library is the ideal family place – welcoming, with something for everybody, and free; but you shouldn't send children here unaccompanied any sooner than you'd send them alone to other places open to the public.

At our recent staff in-service day we discussed our policy on Child Safety and Supervision. We also went over a new document called the Library Code of Conduct. It is a list of mostly long-established, common-sense rules by which visitors to the library must adhere. Among them are rules against adults being in areas meant for children if they are not parents, guardians or teachers; rules against using the Internet to access obscene content; and rules against leaving children alone in the library who cannot abide by the rules. We take these steps in working to remind ourselves that the safety of all library visitors is always first in our minds. Both the Library Code of Conduct and the policy on Child Safety and Supervision are available to read at our Web site, www.wgpl.org.

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Mysteries Revealed, Thugs Disarmed!
On Saturday, August 18th mystery writers Jo A. Hiestand and Paul Hornung visited the library to read from and sign copies of their new book, *Horns of a Dilemma*.



Authors Jo A. Hiestand and Paul Hornung speak to a rapt crowd. They described their working relationship in which Hiestand, a writer with several published mysteries to her credit, and Hornung, a police detective with an interest in writing, work to craft realistic procedural stories.



Detective Hornung disarms a 'suspect'

In their presentation, Hiestand would read an excerpt from the story, and Hornung would describe (or demonstrate) the actual police procedure that informed the writing.

Audience members asked many questions and seemed to enjoy the talk. *Horns of a Dilemma* and other books by Jo A. Hiestand are available at the library.

September in the Children's Room

Are you ready for school?

- * Pencils? * Notebooks?
- * Backpack? * LIBRARY CARD?

- * Tuesday, September 11: Storytime – 10 a.m.
- * Wednesday, September 12: Storytime – 10 a.m.
- * Thursday, September 13: Storytime – 10 a.m.
- * Tuesday, September 25: Storytime – 10 a.m.
- * Wednesday, September 26: Storytime – 10 a.m.
- * Thursday, September 27: 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 Sunday September 3 and Monday September 4 for Labor Day.

This Month's Most Requested Books:

1. *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, Khaled Hosseini
2. *Lean Mean Thirteen*, Janet Evanovich
3. *Eat, Pray, Love*, Elizabeth Gilbert
4. *Water for Elephants*, Sara Gruen
5. *The Secret Servant*, Daniel Silva
6. *High Noon*, Nora Roberts
7. *Bones to Ashes*, Kathy Reichs
8. *Killer Weekend*, Ridley Pearson
9. *Double Take*, Catherine Coulter
10. *The Tin Roof Blow Down*, James Lee Burke
11. *The Wheel of Darkness*, Douglas Preston & Lincoln Child
12. *Three Cups of Tea*, Greg Mortenson

Next Month's Book Discussion Selection:

***The Ruby in Her Navel*, by Barry Unsworth – Tuesday, October 2nd at 6 p.m.**

Staff Favorites: August, 2007

1. *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, by Douglas Adams (Science Fiction Series)
2. *Mortal Sins*, by Penelope Williamson (Adult Fiction)
3. *Wages of Sin*, by Penelope Williamson (Adult Fiction)
4. *Invader Zim* (TV Series on DVD)
5. *Save the Green Planet* (DVD)
6. *Firefly* (TV Series on DVD)
7. *Catch-22*, by Joseph Heller (Adult Fiction)
8. *Life of Pi*, by Yann Martel (Adult Fiction) – multiple recommendations!
9. *Hocus Pocus*, by Kurt Vonnegut (Adult Fiction)
10. *The Heart is Lonely Hunter*, by Carson McCullers (Adult Fiction) – yes! And then read *The Member of the Wedding* . . .

Summer Reading Club Roundup

Our summer reading club this year had the theme Get a Clue @ Your Library. It was a great success, with 777 young people signing up to participate. We even had a 25% surge in participants in the 9-18 age range, mostly due to the Get a Clue in Webster Groves contest. Nearly 150 young people signed up to locate all the local landmarks, and an amazing 62 turned in correct, complete answers. The winners of the digital cameras, selected by random drawing, are shown below.



Alex Wiesselman with her camera



Danielle Matthews with her camera

We kicked off the Summer Reading Club with a coloring contest, which was won by **Blake Johnson** (ages 2-4), **Benjamin Greenberger** (age 5-6), **Jennifer Edwards** (age 7-8), and **Andrea Hawkins** (age 9-12).

We had several wonderful programs. One of the best was a visit by Bongo Barry, whose group participation musical entertainment filled the whole library for an afternoon with drumming, singing and laughter. We also had a Harry Potter party to welcome the final book in

the famous wizard series.

In the end many young people reached reading goals, had a lot of fun, and won wonderful prizes in summer reading club. We gave out over 70 sets of Cardinal baseball game tickets, books, book sets and other prizes.

We can't talk about summer reading club without mentioning the **Friends of Webster Groves Public Library**, who provide support every year for programming, prizes and more. Anyone looking to volunteer or to join a community group that makes a real difference on a daily basis might want to consider the Friends of the Library.



Bongo Barry leads the conga line.



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