

And the winners are ...

Librarians and statistics go together like Bob Barker and "The Price is Right." It would be hard to imagine one without the other.

As the library looks for the best ways to serve the community, statistics provide a valuable guideline for what services are popular and what items are trendy. Looking back over the course of each year, I am always interested to know which items the public finds to be the most popular.

Filtered through our statistics for the last year to pull up the most popular items of 2006. (Keep in mind that books are checked out in two-week increments whereas videos are only checked out for three-day increments)

Naturally, literature is what we do best. There are however, many sub-categories of literature with the most popular being our general adult fiction titles. The competition was tough between the 7,372 adult fiction books on our shelves. There were three books that ended in a three-way tie for first with 31 checkouts each: "The 5th Horseman" by James Patterson, "At First Sight" by Nicholas Sparks, and "Chill Factor" by Sandra Brown.

Other more defined genres of our literature include westerns (401 titles), science fiction (617 titles), and mysteries (1067 titles). Unfortunately, Western books appear to be going through a slump right now. The most popular Western book for the year with an underachieving four checkouts was "The Daybreakers" by Louis L'Amour.

Science Fiction/Fantasy on the other hand has experienced a major surge in popularity over the past



Jeff Friesen, library link

● Pioneer Memorial Library director

few years thanks to the Harry Potter/Lord of the Rings phenomenon.

The most popular science fiction/fantasy title of the year with a stellar 22 checkouts was the book "Eldred" by Christopher Paolini. (Eldred is the second book in the Inheritance Series coming on the heels of Paolini's first bestseller Eragon).

Mysteries however, are by far our most popular genre of books. It comes as no surprise then, that the overall best circulating book in the entire library with 35 total checkouts for 2006 was "S is for Silence" by Sue Grafton.

Delving deeper into our statistics, I searched for the top circulating children and young adult titles. We carry a total of 4,834 fiction titles in our children's section of books. Two books tied for the honor in this category with 30 checkouts each: "Dinosnores" by Kelly DiPucchio and "The Deep Blue Sea: A Book of Colors" by Audrey Wood. Of our 3,087 designated young adult titles, only one very eye-catching book held the top honor of most circulated book: "Angus, thongs and full-frontal snogging: confessions of Georgia Nicolson" by Louise Rennison.

Although books are our pride and joy, movies have proven to be an increasingly popular service of the

library. A total of 352 DVDs are currently available in our collection. Many of those have been checked out well over 50 times during just this year. However, one item held the title for most popular video and that honor goes to the movie "Walk the Line" with a total of 90 checkouts for 2006!

We have many more statistics that I could share but, due to space limitations, that will have to wait for another day. I'll end with the top statistic for best circulating cake pan. We have 93 cake pans available for checkout with the most popular for 2006 being the football cake pan with 10 checkouts.

Statistics are only fun to analyze when I know they are justifying the needs of the community. This has been another great year for the library, and the staff of Pioneer Memorial Library would like to thank you for making all of this possible!

Pioneer Memorial Library is located at 375 West 4th and open seven days a week. Winter hours are as follows: Monday through Thursday, 9 a.m. - 8 p.m.; Friday, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.; Saturday, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.; and Sunday, 1 p.m. - 4 p.m. For more information contact the Library at 460-4470 or visit our web site at www.colbylibrary.com. As always, we are here to serve you.

Governor, staff adopts Army unit in Iraq

TOPEKA (AP) — Gov. Kathleen Sebelius and her staff are sending some holiday cheer to U.S. troops in Iraq.

The governor's office is focused on Bravo Company of the 15th Sustainment Brigade from Fort Hood, Texas, which has been stationed in Al-Taji, Iraq, since August. One of its members is 1st Sgt. Robert E. Knight Jr., a 1989 graduate of Washburn Rural High School in

Topeka. Knight's family sent the governor's office his letter that included a list of needs by the 60-member company, including everything from toothpaste to coffee pots, fruit snacks to bed sheets.

"Every Christmas we try to find something we can do. This year we decided to do something for the troops," Sebelius spokeswoman Nicole Corcoran said Thursday. "When she saw it, she said abso-

lutely, let's do it."

A detailed list went out to the governor's staff shortly after Thanksgiving and the items will be sent to the unit in late December.

"As we gather with our loved ones in the safety of our homes, we must remember our soldiers and their families' sacrifices," Sebelius said in a statement. "This small gesture is but one of the many ways we can say thank you."

Breast cancer cases dropping

SAN ANTONIO (AP) — The millions of women who quit taking menopause hormones after a big federal study found that the pills raised the risk of breast cancer now have more reason to be glad they stopped.

A new analysis reveals that U.S. breast cancer rates plunged more than 7 percent in 2003 and strongly suggests that the reason is less hormone use.

"It's a big deal ... amazing, really," said one of the researchers, Dr. Rowan Chlebowski of Harbor-UCLA Medical Center in Los Angeles. "It's better than a cure" because these are cases that never occurred, he said.

About 14,000 fewer women were diagnosed with the disease than had been expected, researchers reported Thursday at the San Antonio Breast Cancer Symposium.

Cancers take years to form, so going off hormones would not instantly prevent new tumors. But tumors that had been developing might stop growing, shrink or disappear, so they were no longer detected by mammograms, doctors theorized.

Cases dropped most among women 50 and older. The decline was biggest for tumors whose growth is fueled by estrogen.

When both factors were com-

bined the drop was 12 percent.

The decline was seen in every single cancer registry that reports information to the federal government, and no big change occurred with any other major type of cancer. These are strong signs that the breast cancer decline is no statistical fluke or error.

A separate study by the American Cancer Society, currently in press with a medical journal, also documents the drop in cases.

Lead author Ahmedin Jemal attributes two-thirds of it to a decline in hormone use and the rest to mammography use leveling off, resulting in fewer tumors being detected.

"We are really trying to look at the big picture," he said. "You cannot rule out the effect of screening."

Breast cancer is the most common major cancer in American women and the second leading cause of cancer deaths in women. About 213,000 new cases are expected to occur in the United States this year and more than 1 million worldwide.

Incidence in the United States rose almost 2 percent per year from 1990 to 1998, then began to slightly decrease, said Dr. Peter Ravdin of the University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center in Houston, who led the analysis presented at the Texas conference.

In July 2002, the federal Wom-

en's Health Initiative study was stopped after more breast cancers and heart problems occurred among women taking estrogen-progestin pills.

That led to new warning labels on the drugs and doctor groups urging women to use the lowest dose for the shortest time possible for hot flashes and other menopause symptoms.

Within a year, about half of women who had been taking hormones stopped. Prescriptions had been steady at around 22 million each quarter, but plummeted to 12.7 million in the last quarter of 2003, according to IMS Health, which tracks drug sales.

Breast cancer rates declined, too. In 2002, there were roughly 134 cases per 100,000 women — a 2.5 percent drop from about 137 the previous year. In 2003, there were only 124 cases per 100,000 women — about a 7 percent drop over 2002.

That is the most significant decline in the breast cancer rate since records have been kept beginning in the 1970s.

Researchers saw an even stronger trend when they looked month-to-month.

Cases dropped 6 percent in the first half of 2003 and 9 percent in the second half.

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