



MOVIES

HAIRSPRAY HOLDS UP DON'T MISS THIS 'DO

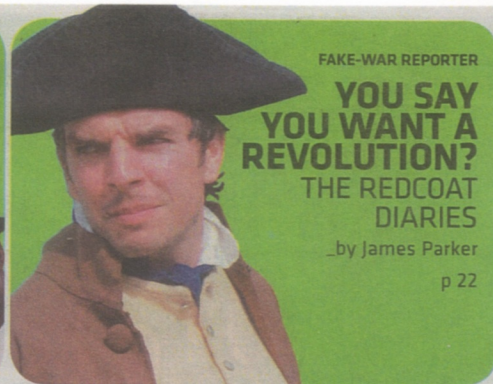
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FAKE-WAR REPORTER

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THE BOSTON PHOENIX



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**REMEMBERING
MR. BUTCH**
VIDEO TRIBUTE TO
A LOCAL LEGEND

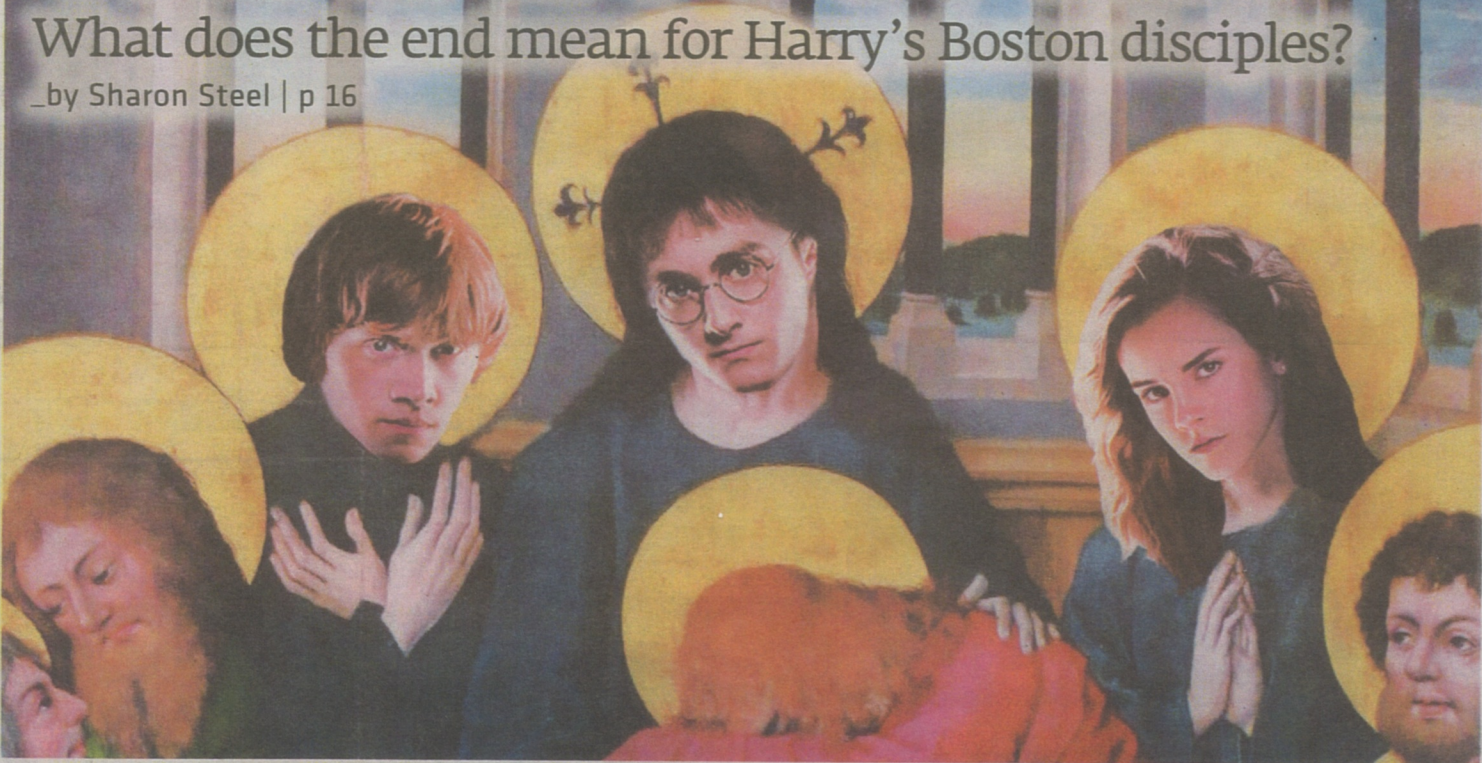
PLUS INSIDE, PAYING
HOMAGE TO
THE UNOFFICIAL MAYOR
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JULY 20-26, 2007 | BOSTON'S LARGEST WEEKLY | FOUR SECTIONS | FREE

THE LAST POTTER

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THE LAST POTTER

WHAT DOES THE END MEAN FOR HARRY'S BOSTON DISCIPLES? BY SHARON STEEL

The end is never easy, is it? When it comes to the July 20 midnight release of *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* — the last book in a series of seven that has taken author J.K. Rowling a decade to parcel out to her utterly whipped readership — the end is absolute agony.

Because, for some, the final period isn't simply a punctuation mark, it's the head of the final nail on the coffin — or the crucifix. Because Harry Potter isn't simply Harry Potter. He's also Odysseus, Don Quijote, Huck Finn, Peter Pan, Elvis, Luke Skywalker, Michael Jordan, Buffy the Vampire Slayer, and Jesus Christ rolled into one. With a scarf and a British accent.

And Harry's classic boy-versus-baddies monomyth, cliché as it may be, so resonates with some — from the white-hot fan-core to the farthest fringes of the Pottermonium — that, when the last page is turned and the book is placed, reverentially, in its hermetically sealed humidior, it will mean so much more than just the end of the series: it will be the end of a way of life. Seriously.

There are no mere readers of these books anymore: only heretics and disciples. And, for whatever reason, many of those most

prominent wizard followers live in and around Boston. Now that he's gone, what are they going to do next?

HARRY'S BLUE HELMETS

The unfortunate victims of the Darfur conflict have been ignored by President Bush, the United Nations, and, aside from a few well-meaning celebrities and local activists, the rest of the world, too.

But now Harry Potter is on the case. Potter disciple Andrew Slack of Somerville

wants to channel the forces of good, as identified in the Potter universe, toward north central Africa (among other places) to stop the killing in Sudan. Slack, 27, created the HP Alliance, the real-life equivalent of the Order of the Phoenix, which, for those not versed in the Gospel of Harry, is a squadron of good wizards created by Albus Dumbledore to fight the dark powers of Lord Voldemort.

"It was up to Harry and the young people in Dumbledore's Army to wake people up to the fact that Voldemort returned," says Slack, a sketch comedian and occasional substitute teacher at Somerville High School, who conceived of the idea two years ago. "[Now] it's up to Harry Potter fans, those who wish to learn from Harry and learn from Dumbledore and really be like them . . . to start a real Dumbledore's Army and wake the world up to something that it's not doing enough about."

Slack talks fast and with a purposeful assurance, explaining how he first came to be involved in social activism at Brandeis and missed the advocacy atmosphere of the university when he graduated in 2002. After reading most of the Potter series during a bout with mono, Slack was struck by the socio-political and psychological themes in the books that paralleled those in our own society. He wanted to mobilize Harry Potter fans, and teach them how to apply those parallels in real-world situations — everything from social justice to self-esteem to matters of international concern.

As he re-read the series, Slack saw parallels everywhere: in the pervasive prejudice against non-pureblood wizards, Voldemort's use of terrorism to rule the wizarding population, and Hermione's quest to free house

Midnight parties

Without the assistance of a time-turner, it'd be difficult to hit all of these Potter bashes at once. Choose your favorite July 20-midnight fête from the handy guide below. But remember, neither therapists nor Denial Spells will be made available if you spoil yourself with a sneak peek at *Deathly Hallows'* epilogue. Welcome back, Potter.

- 1) Harvard Book Store/Harvard Yard: Harry and the Potters, Draco and the Malfoys, and the Hungarian Horntails are booked to play a free set in Harvard Yard from 7 to 9 pm, preceded by a speech from Andrew Slack of the HP Alliance; from there, apperate to the Harvard Book Store (1256 Mass Ave, Cambridge; 800.542.READ) for their **HARRY POTTER AND THE DEATHLY HALLOWS RELEASE PARTY**, which features more music, fortune telling, and an in-store Marauder's Map.
- 2) Prizes, spellbinding crafts, and an HPIQ scavenger hunt are among the many activities filling the fifth-floor reading room of the Barnes & Nobles at Boston University's **MIDNIGHT MAGIC COSTUME PARTY** (660 Beacon Street, Boston; 617.267.8484). The festivities kick off at 9:30 pm.
- 3) For a full 12 hours (1 pm-1 am) Coolidge Corner

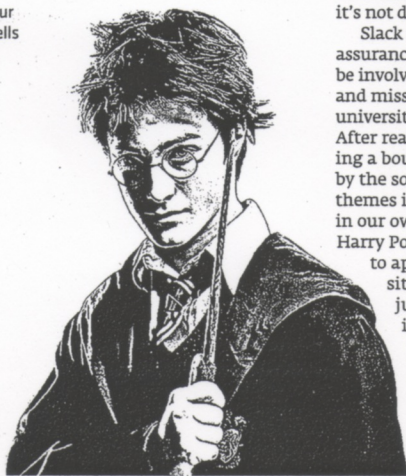
is turning itself into the Brookline version of Hogsmeade Village with its **POTTERPALOOZA**. Brookline Booksmith (279 Harvard Street; 617.566.6660) will function as your home base in an indoor/outdoor street festival, complete with Potter-themed food at local restaurants, contests, and performances.

- 4) Beginning at 11 pm, guzzle butterbeer, pumpkin juice, and treacle tarts at Porter Square Books (25 White Street, Cambridge; 617.491.2220). The Underground Railroad Theater will present an in-character, in-costume reading from the book at this **HARRY POTTER PARTY**.
- 5) Dress up as your favorite character and catch a Knight Bus to your local Borders Books and Music (bordersstores.com) for a **GRAND HALLOWS BALL** that will include a Potter spelling bee, the Great Snape Debate, and the crowning of a king and queen.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

The *Potter* series has been translated into 64 languages. Here's what the pubescent sorcerer is called in five of them:

- 1) Lithuanian: Haris Poteris
- 2) Bulgarian: Xari Potür
- 3) Arabic: Hari Butar
- 4) Russian: Garri Pottyer
- 5) Japanese: Harii Pottaa





UNITED WE'RE FANS Members of the Harry Potter Alliance include (l-r) Sarah Newberry, Nicole Greenhouse, and Andrew Slack.

elves from slavery. Currently, Alliance's stated primary goal is to end the genocide in Darfur.

The Sudanese government and Janjaweed militia leaders don't have to start looking over their shoulders just yet. At the moment, the HP Alliance exists solely online, and its "membership" is equivalent to the number of MySpace friends it has (9852 at press time).

But the Alliance is serious about rallying legions of Potter fans to fight evil and injustice around the world.

its Web site (thepalliance.org) very sweetly and naively, in a treacly, well-meaning ceremony, marries Doug Henning and Madeleine Albright:

Did you ever wish that Harry Potter was real? Well it kind of is. After all, both our worlds face "dark and difficult times":

Genocide, Poverty, AIDS, and Global Warming are ignored by our media and governments the way Voldemort's return is ignored by the Ministry and Daily Prophet.

People are still discriminated against based on sexuality, race, class, religion, gender, ethnicity, and religion just as the Wizarding World continues to discriminate against Centaurs, Giants, House Elves, Half-Bloods, Muggle borns, Squibs, and Muggles.

Our governments continue to respond to terror by torturing prisoners (often without trial) just as Sirius Black was tortured by dementors with no trial.

A Muggle Mindset pervades over our culture... a mindset that values being "perfectly normal, thank you very much" over being interesting, original, loving, and creative.

So Harry's world is not very different than ours. ... And so the HP Alliance is dedicated to bringing together Harry Potter fans from everywhere to spread love and fight the Dark Arts in the real world and we need your help! ... Help us create an Alliance in the name of Harry Potter.

"Throughout the books, we're told you should do what is right versus what is easier," notes Jenn Fauls, 25, the Alliance's assistant director. "I think that makes this community ripe for the work of this organization."

"We are a different kind of activism," adds Slack. Then, abruptly, he confesses something. "My secret, private, ridiculous dream," he admits, "has always been to be a sort of Mr. Rogers for teenagers."

With the assistance of his all-volunteer staff, Slack is tapping directly into the global Harry Potter neighborhood to carry out his mission. He regularly sends out "action alerts" via the Alliance's MySpace page to further draw out the allegories between the cosmic battle Harry is about to fight in the seventh book and the slow genocide that is occurring in Darfur. The Alliance has also teamed up with The-Leaky-Cauldron.org (150,000 unique hits per day) and Mugglenet.com (170,000 unique hits per day), widely recognized as

The great debate

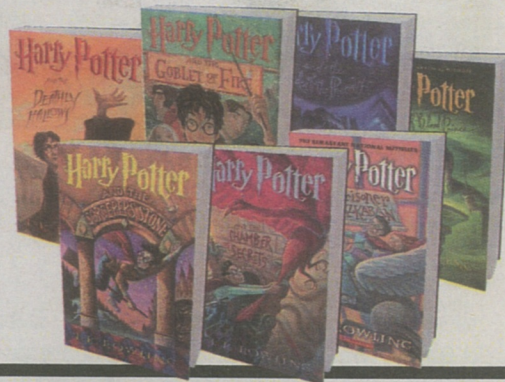
➤ In 2000, Harold Bloom wrote a piece for the *Wall Street Journal* with the headline **CAN 35 MILLION BOOK BUYERS BE WRONG? YES.** "I feel a discomfort with the Harry Potter mania," Bloom mused, deriding Rowling's prose style and announcing it made no demands on readers. When the *Phoenix* reached Bloom for a comment on his observations about Pottermania since his piece was first published, his response was brief: "I have made a vow never to say a word for public purposes about this phenomenon."

WAS HARRY POTTER A GOOD THING OR A BAD THING?

1) Simon Lipskar, literary agent for Christopher Paolini (*Eragon*), Writer's House: "All I can tell you is that... what I've seen is the absolute flowering of excitement and energy within the children's publishing business, with a tremendous feeling that there are opportunities to sell books of all kinds to all kinds of readers, and that there is going to be an enthusiasm and an opportunity for them that never existed previously. I think that the frank fact of the matter is that we think we are selling more copies of our books, which means that someone's got to be reading them. All you can do is accept the fact that that's happened."

2) Amanda Darling, marketing manager, Harvard Book Store: "I think that people are book lovers or not book lovers. Sometimes you need that one book that gets you to be a book lover but stays with you for your entire life. For many people [Harry Potter] is the book that made them love reading... or taught them where books can bring you."

3) Professor Robert Thompson, professor of pop-culture, Syracuse University: "When one is looking back at the various cultural experiences of the last part of the 20th century and the first part of the 21st century... I think *Harry Potter* is going to be one of things that we will really remember as having gripped the population."



THE \$10 MILLION QUESTION: CAN HARRY POTTER BE REPLACED?

Three upcoming books with both the potential to fill the void and produce Bookscan numbers that won't embarrass publishers:

- 1) The third book (as yet unnamed) in the *Inheritance Trilogy* by Christopher Paolini (author of *Eragon* and *Eldrest*)
- 2) *Inkdeath*, the third book in the *Inkheart Trilogy*, by German fantasy writer Cornelia Funke
- 3) *Main Street*, a new series by Ann M. Martin (author of *The Baby-Sitters Club* series)

the two best sources for Harry Potter news and information.

Slack produced an HP Alliance podcast that Leaky's webmaster agreed to make available on its PotterCast iTunes feed (of late, PotterCast downloads have averaged about 40,000 per episode). It features interviews with such Sudan experts as John Prendergast and Joseph C. Wilson (the latter also known as ousted-CIA spy Valerie Plame's husband). As part of its first concrete step toward meeting the Alliance's Sudanese objective, Slack and his team have asked their membership to host and attend house parties during the week leading up to *Deathly Hallows*' release. Ninety such parties will be held throughout the US, as well as in Australia, the UK, Brazil, Venezuela, and Mexico.

Slack's vision for the organization is a grand one: he has plans to apply for nonprofit status, and a rough proposal of forming local HP Alliance chapters in cities and schools. But he's convinced that the end of Harry's journey doesn't equal the end of his own.

"It's always been so exciting, reading these books and a story that's so alive that it's not even finished being told," says Slack wistfully. "Now it will be. And that's really sad." But he remains confident that the energy and strength of Rowling's myth can outlast its finale and transform the current international climate. "It's so lofty," he says. "But I really do believe that there is this tremendous power in story, that it heals us on a personal level."

VOLDEMORT CAN'T STOP THE ROCK

Paul and Joe DeGeorge spent their Fourth of July holiday driving through rural Oregon, heading to the Eugene stop on their 70-show summer-library tour. This would be a tight schedule for any band, but for the DeGeorges, it's become something of a summer tradition.

The brothers, who grew up in Norwood, Massachusetts, played their first gig as Harry and the Potters five years ago, when a band they booked for a backyard get-together didn't show up. So they both dressed up as Harry (Paul is Harry in his seventh year, Joe

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By the numbers

➤ Vital stats for *Harry Potter* and the *Deathly Hallows*

1.5 MILLION+
AMAZON.COM PRE-ORDERS

12 MILLION
COPIES, INITIAL PRINT RUN
BY SCHOLASTIC

784
PAGE COUNT (US VERSION)

17
HARRY'S AGE

2
MAJOR CHARACTERS KILLED



POTTERMANIA Paul DeGeorge makes the little girls scream

Lyric sheet

FROM HARRY AND THE POTTERS'
"MY WIZARD SCAR STILL BURNS FOR YOU"

Oh, Ginny Weasley
You're so dreamy
Ginny Weasley
Ron's gonna kill me

So you know that Voldemort is trying to kill me
And I don't want you caught in between
Like Sirius Black and my mom and my dad
I don't want to lose you
So I can't see you
I don't want to lose you
So you know I can't see you

But my wizard scar still burns for you

FROM HARRY AND THE POTTERS'
"THE FOIL (MALFOY)"

Your blood may be pure
But your heart is spoiled
You wouldn't be so tough
Without Crabbe and Goyle
Malfoy wouldn't be so cool if I wasn't around
I'm his enemy at school
He really wants to get me down

Draco Malfoy what's your problem?
All your friends think you're bad
'Cause you treat me so bad
Draco Malfoy what's your problem?
All your friends think you're bad
'Cause you treat me so bad

Continued from p 17

in Harry's fourth), wrote a few songs over the course of an afternoon, and played them for a small audience. It was supposed to be a joke, a "weirdo side-project" they could indulge in every once in a while, says elder brother Paul, 28.

That is, until Harry Potter enthusiasts discovered them, at which point the quasi-celebrity status of their jangle-rock duo exploded. Suddenly, the DeGeorges were the Pink Floyd of Potterdom, selling out venues such as the Middle East and amassing nearly 100,000 friends on their MySpace page (myspace.com/harryandthepotters). No surprise, four of their songs, including "Dumbledore" and "The Weapon We Have Is Love," are streaming on the HP Alliance's MySpace page.

Noted Web music 'zine *Pitchfork Media* even hailed Harry and the Potters as having one of the best five live shows in 2005. "The Decemberists wish they could lit-rock like this," that review said. Says Paul: "It's totally changed our perspective on life, in a way."

Another set of brothers, this one from Woonsocket, Rhode Island, soon followed suit. Brian Ross, 32, and Bradley Mehlenbacher, 27, also started their Potter-esque band in jest. Bent on punking Harry and the Potters at a shared-bill gig, Ross and Mehlenbacher decided to outfit themselves as and perform songs from the perspective of Harry Potter's nemesis: a toe-headed, nasty Slytherin named Draco Malfoy. (Both bands are playing a free show on July 20, in Harvard Yard in "Hogwarts Square" at 7 p.m.)

Today, what began as a couple of accidental jokes and pranks has erupted into a full-blown scene. There are now more than 200 bands channeling various Potter themes and characters into their music. The genre? Wizard rock.

And neither the Harrys nor the Dracos think of the burgeoning community as a joke, or even as some bastard-dork cousin of indie-rock. Both groups take their efforts quite seriously, especially at this juncture. Amidst the fervor leading up to the release of *Deathly Hallows*, wizard rockers seem to be drawing bigger and better crowds at every show. Most of their audiences of late, says Paul, are "in a total panic and frenzy."

For Draco and the Malfoys, the band is an escape from the humdrum pressures of hipster irony — like the Potters, they're prone to rocking out in libraries. In this venture, says Ross, he and his band are just a pipeline for Pottermania. "With this, we're all fans of something much larger," he says. "Everyone shows up to have a good time, never to be a snob about the music, ever, ever, ever."

"There will always be room in the world for kids with guitars who want to play silly songs inspired by books they read," says Dave Maher, a writer for *Pitchfork Media*. "Harry and the Potters fit in with how I imagine the origins of a band like They Might Be Giants, i.e., a couple of dudes writing songs based on nerdy things like the books they like and wizards and monsters and general good vs. evil situations. But, in a way, Harry and the Potters have an edge on the rest of the indie-music world, because they actually have a

concept instead of being just another group of boys with guitars and nice haircuts and no direction."

In spite of fully booked calendars, no wizard rocker is ignorant of the fact that his genre is about to reach its climax. Each of their musical identities is, after all, contingent on the lasting success and popularity of a book series. How long will that last once there are no new stories to riff on?

"In some ways," says Paul, "we want to tie things off and consider it a done deal. We've always viewed this as a project that had a finite life and end point." Of course, Harry and the Potters have been at it the longest, and thus have had more time to make peace with the idea.

Not everyone has accepted the end with such ease. Ross sounds almost tearful, in fact, when he professes his faith that the Potter phenomenon will outlast *Deathly Hallows*. He and his brother have both been in bands where, "if you go four hours away from your hometown, nobody comes to see you." When the wiz kid is involved, they have a built-in fan base wherever they go.

"Our experience with wizard rock has been the best musical experience of our lives," says Ross. "We don't really have any interest in stopping at all."

CLASSICS

Do you prefer a bit of the old magic with your YA novels? Here are a few tried-and-true classics (besides *The Lord of the Rings*, obvs) that weave the supernatural into their narratives.

- 1) *The Secret Garden* by Frances Hodgson Burnett
- 2) *The Egypt Game* by Zilpha Keatley Snyder
- 3) *Tuck Everlasting* by Natalie Babbitt
- 4) *The Giver* by Lois Lowry
- 5) *The Wonderful Story of Henry Sugar and Six More* by Roald Dahl

REWRITING THE CANON

Okay, so you just sat down and read *Deathly Hallows*, and you're underwhelmed. "I thought Harry and Voldemort were going to take it all off," you say to yourself, not loud enough for anyone to hear you, "and explore each other's nether regions on a beach in St. Martin, all to the soundtrack of Nelly's 'Hot in Herre.'"

Um, probably not going to happen in the work of J.K. Rowling, a woman who knows where her bread — and Harry's — is buttered. But that's not to say it won't happen to Harry and Vol in someone's fiction plane.

The fan-fiction universe is teeming with steamy, dreamy, and creamy Potter plots that are entirely inappropriate for the series' original core audience of kids. (Slash fiction is the genre of fan-fiction that dreams up character hook ups.) And then again, there is Potter fan-fic that is entirely tame and

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THE MANIPULATOR Fan-fic author Lee Hillman, a/k/a Gwendolyn Grace, has the power to make Harry do whatever she wants.

Berklee's 2007 Free Summer Concert Series

Kendall Square Concert Series

All shows are on Thursdays, 12:00 p.m.—2:00 p.m.
Kendall Square, 300 Athenaeum Street,
Cambridge, MA

- July 19—Tiwa Savage
- July 26—Eleonora Bianchini
- August 2—Daniel Ori
- August 9—Zili Misik
- August 16—Ricardo Vogt
- August 23—Berklee Monterey Quartet
- August 30—Tantanakuy
- September 6—Alex Terrier
- September 13—Juan Ospina

Harborwalk Sounds: Berklee at the ICA

All shows are on Thursdays, 6:00 p.m.—8:00 p.m.
Putnam Investment Plaza,
100 Northern Avenue, Boston, MA

- July 19—Tiwa Savage
- July 26—Eleonora Bianchini
- August 9—Zili Misik
- August 16—Ricardo Vogt
- August 23—Berklee Monterey Quartet

Get all the latest news and events information from Berklee. Sign up for our monthly newsletter at berklee.edu.

Swingin' in Mothers Rest

All shows are on Wednesdays,
6:30 p.m.—8:00 p.m.
Mothers Rest, Back Bay Fens,
Boston, MA

- July 18—Josh Connolly Band
- July 25—Berklee Jazz Workshop directed by Terri Lyne Carrington and Rick DiMuzio

Tito Puente Latin Music Series

All shows on Thursdays, 7:00 p.m.—9:00 p.m.
O'Day Park, 85 West Newton Street,
Boston, MA

- July 19—Oscar Stagnaro and Peru Mestizo
- July 26—Gonzalo Grau y Su Clave Secreta (formerly known as La Timba Loca)
- August 2—Nu Guajiro

Jazz at the Fort

5:00 p.m.—7:00 p.m.
Highland Park, Fort Avenue,
Roxbury, MA

- Sunday, August 5—Gabrielle Goodman

Berklee college of music

THE BOSTON PHOENIX



GET THAT "NEW HAIRCUT" FEELING.

THE BOSTON
PHOENIX
READ IT.

Throwback

People did enjoy reading serials before that Potter kid showed up. Here are five vintage titles:

- 1) *The Time Quintet* by Madeleine L'Engle: from *A Wrinkle in Time* to *An Acceptable Time*, Meg, Charles Wallace, and the rest of the Murray kids saved everyone, from their own father to entire planet.
- 2) *Sweet Valley High* by Francine Pascal: oh, those Wakefield twins. Did anyone actually care what Elizabeth thought?
- 3) *The Fudge Books* by Judy Blume: we like to think of Peter Hatcher as the Woody Allen of kid-lit.
- 4) *The Baby-Sitters Club* by Ann M. Martin: raise your hand if Stacy McGill was your favorite sitter. Yeah, us, too.
- 5) *The Hardy Boys* by Franklin W. Dixon: god, Nancy Drew was so much cooler than those bozos.



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gentle — it's just not written by Rowling.

People write fan-fic (as it's called) for all kinds of phenomena — there's *Dr. Who*, *X-Files*, and *Star Wars* fan-fic, and fanfiction.net yields a wealth of other forums. But Harry Potter is the most searched-for fan-fic topic, and Heidi Tandy, the executive producer of FictionAlley (fictionalley.org), estimates that there are between 10 and 11,000 Potter stories posted on the site, making it one of the world's largest homes of Potter fan-fic.

Lee Hillman — a founding administrator and moderator of the Fiction Alley Potter site — doesn't hesitate to acknowledge that she's obsessed with Harry Potter. When her obsession first began, she turned to the Internet for more information, namely, sources where she could read and write Harry Potter fan-fiction in between the Rowling-issued books. Hillman had dabbled in fan-fic before, though it wasn't until she started writing about the little wizard that she fell head-first into the fan-fic rabbit hole.

"[Rowling] puts a lot of ingenuity into the world," says Hillman, who posts her fics under the handle Cwendolyn Grace. "Because it's so accessible, it's in between the cracks and we can't see it. It kind of teases us, tantalizes us, and tempts us in and says 'Come on in and play!' And that's very fun."

There are no set rules or restrictions in fan-fic: plotlines can be taken in surprisingly different directions. A wizard who has made a brief appearance in the books can become a protagonist, prologues are invented, dead characters are resurrected, and even romantic relationships that Rowling has both implicitly and subtly implied can be completely reversed. As compelling as Rowling's story is, some readers disagree with the way she's chosen to tell it. "I believe deeply, in my heart," says Hillman, "that J.K. Rowling got it wrong and Remus and Sirius were lovers."

And slash-fic is one of the ways the fandom shakes things up. Slash links two or more characters who are not connected romantically in the "canon" (Rowling's universe), and can, though doesn't always, involve sexual content. If you search an online fan-fic database, you'll find any number of

pairings, or "ships," short for "relationships." There's plenty of Remus/Sirius fics — this ship being one of the more ubiquitous pairings in the "fanon" (the fan-fic universe). Other prevalent couplings include Harry/Draco, Neville/Luna, Draco/Hermione, and, astonishingly enough, Harry/Snape.

"If you're invested in the books enough to be part of the fandom," says Hillman, 35, who lives in Waltham and works as an administrative coordinator at the Beth-Israel Deaconess Medical Center, "then you can help but have opinions." Hillman asserts that her confidence soared after she penned

her version of Harry's fifth-year novel, entitled *His Majesty's Secret Service*, which she produced during the lull between the publication of *Coblet of Fire* and *Order of the Phoenix*. The accomplishment of completing a novel-length work pushed her to pursue writing projects outside of the Harry Potter universe.

Hillman has been writing since she was six, though it wasn't until recently that she began seriously pursuing it as a vocation. In between her regular Fiction Alley duties and serving as the president of HP Education Fanon, Inc., a nonprofit Harry Potter convention organizer, Hillman got an original story ("Mak Love, Not War") published

in the fantasy anthology *Bad-Ass Faeries* (Mariet Publishing). She also became a freelance editor, something she says she never would have had the nerve to take up had it not been for flexing her prose muscles within the fandom.

Even so, Hillman declares that the series finale comes as something of a relief. Once the speculation around the exact circumstances of the conclusion Rowling has chosen for the series is brought to a close, the fandom, Hillman says, can then decide what it wants to do with her ending. If they don't like it, they'll rewrite it.

"I'm not of the opinion that, if you don't like a fan of something, you have to love every aspect of it," she says. "You can just as passionately love to hate something. I think it's passion that really brings people together." ☺

To see videos and slide shows related to this article, read it online at thePhoenix.com. Sharon Steel can be reached at ssteel@phx.com.