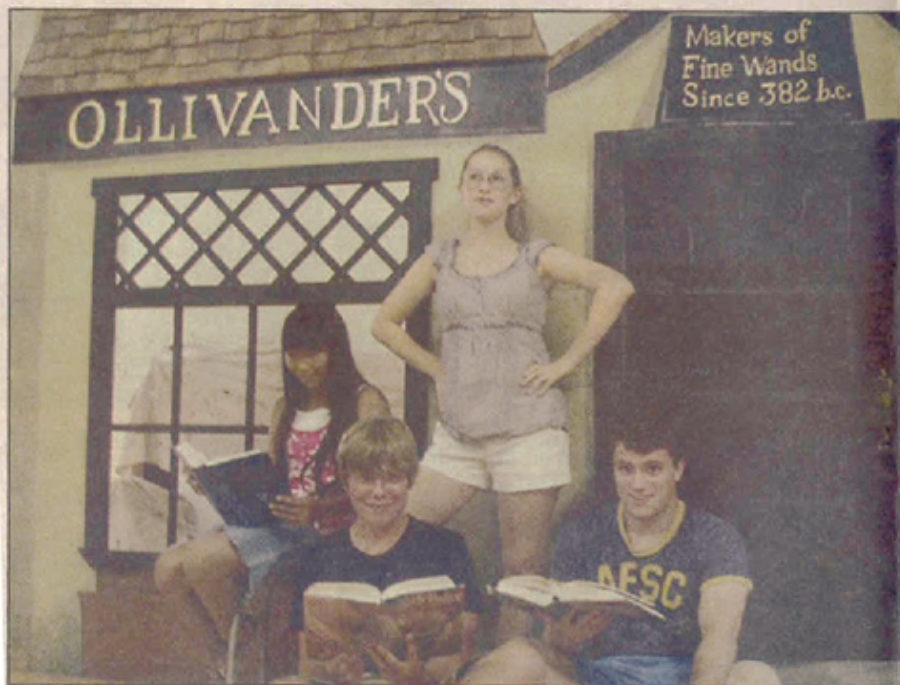


Observer

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Lambertville conjures Harry Potter's world



Observer Zach Hill

Members of the Downtown Performing Arts Center in Lambertville — Catherine Weerts, Alex Hill, Jaelyn Ross and Sam Lewis — catch some last-minute Harry Potter reading in front of a piece of the set created for PotterPalooza. Lambertville library's book release party for *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* will be Friday night, July 20 and will feature a DPAC performance of "Aladdin."

By Renee Kiriluk-Hill

As even most muggles (a.k.a. non-magical people) know, Friday, July 20 is D-Day. *Deathly Hallows* day, that is.

When the clock strikes midnight, the seventh and last Harry Potter novel will be released to the world. Hunterdon kids and adults alike are counting down the minutes to find out what will happen to the 17-year-old orphan wizard and his nemesis: He-must-not-be-named.

If you love Harry like we love Harry, you have a few choices around the county for a magical good time, but the folks at the Lambertville Free Public Library may win the prize for the most elaborate release party — PotterPalooza.

"We wanted a Harry Potter theme park," said Sara Scully, Friends of the Lambertville Library president, the force behind the city's summer outdoor Nickelodeon Nights film series. An artist and designer, she

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created sets featuring scenes from Harry Potter's world for PotterPalooza along with fellow artist and designer Brad Sanford of Flemington and faux painter Sean Mount of Lambertville.

The extravaganza starts at 7 p.m., allowing five hours of partying before the book hits shelves.

PotterPalooza is more than paper crafts. Fans can learn if the Sorting Hat dubs them a Slytherin or Gryffindor, make a magic wand and stroll through Diagon Alley.

Among the adventures visitors will experience are snatching a golden egg from

beneath a dragon and "diving" under the lake in a recreation of the Triwizard Tournament. Any age is welcome to make a hat-or-a-wand.

At 9 p.m. fans can watch a film of Harry's earlier days at Hogwarts School, "Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire," in the library parking lot on South Main Street or, if the weather's stormy, inside the wide open spaced shared by Downtown Performing Arts Center and Bach Ballet on Mount Hope Street, across from Cavallo Park.

Adults who have fallen under the spell of Rowling's writing decided months ago to plan a magical evening for

children of all ages. Sponsored by the city library and the nonprofit Friends, the community has rallied around organizers. Niece's Lumber donated materials, DPAC and Bach donated space to craft and store sets, NT Callaway donated printing and AT&T gave the group set forms used at events.

"Who doesn't love Harry Potter?" said Scully, "Harry Potter has really been a phenomenon, switching kids onto reading again, turning on their imaginations. We wanted to reach them where they live, which is with Harry Potter."