

Regional Library to begin overdue fines

On July 1, Yakima Valley Regional Library will begin charging fines for overdue materials. Why? "The honor system for returning materials is not working," says Amy Ravenholt, Community Services Manager. "Currently, there are over 29,000 items overdue in the system of nineteen libraries. In fact, 49% of the materials checked out are long overdue. This makes it frustrating for customers. We have frequent complaints from them when they can't find materials on the shelf," Ravenholt says.

Many of the long overdue materials are high demand items. This means that others often have to wait a long time for popular books, videos, and audio books. "It is disappointing to have to wait and wait for *A Child Called It*, or *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*," says Ravenholt. "Also, people need materials such as legal and medical advice or the GED exam guides, at a certain time. It is hard for us to help them because these materials are so often overdue."

The Regional Library decided to start the overdue fines now because their new circulation system can track circulation simultaneously for all branches. This means that you can return materials to any of the nineteen libraries. Your record will be cleared quickly, and the materials returned to the appropriate library.

The loan period for videos is one week. All other materials circulate for four weeks. This includes books, magazines, audio books, and music cassettes and compact discs. Overdue notices will be sent on a regular basis. You may also get a refrigerator magnet to use as a reminder to bring your materials back on time.

The fine schedule will be ten cents per day, up to a maximum of \$2.50 for each item. If you have material two or more weeks overdue, you will not be able to borrow from the library again until you return the overdue items. You also need to keep your library account balance under \$10 to continue borrowing materials.

Anyone with overdue materials is urged to return them before July 1 to avoid fines. Customers who have questions about their library account can inquire at their local library, call 452-8541, ext 710, or check their account online at www.yvrl.org.