



## RiverRun’s 24-Hour Reading Marathon

By Allyson Parks

**RiverRun Bookstore in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, plans to take its concept of 24-hour reading marathons on the road to other bookstores nationwide and turn October into a month of read-a-thons.**



Last February, Michele Filgate, events coordinator at RiverRun Bookstore, and Liberty Hardy, manager of its sister store, SecondRun Bookstore, initiated the event to highlight the importance of local independent bookstores and to celebrate books and reading. Inspired by a poll by Associated Press-Ipsos that found that one in four adults read no books at all last year, Filgate and Hardy decided to use the read-a-thon as a way

of promoting books after reading Internet blogs about 24-hour read-a-thons in the bloggers’ homes.

Filgate and Hardy named their read-a-thon Great Expectations: A Reading Marathon because “We know a lot of people won’t make it the full 24 hours. The name ‘Great Expectations’ comes partly from the fact that it’s a lot to expect from people. We won’t make anyone stay for the full time if they don’t want to,” Filgate told the *Portsmouth Herald*.

They interspersed the original marathon with pizza, local authors giving readings, midnight snacks, grand prizes, and literary trivia games. Sixteen readers began at the 6 pm start time, and 13 were still reading 24 hours later. Each reader found a sponsor, and the original marathon garnered RiverRun \$500 to donate to the Portsmouth Middle School homework club.

Jenn Northington, events and marketing manager at The King’s English Bookshop in Salt Lake City, Utah, signed on to run a similar event at her bookstore and to help Hardy and Filgate with the publicity.

“I thought it was a really fun idea, especially to attract younger

readers,” she said, as reported by *Publishers Weekly*. “High schools and middle schools do lock-ins for 12 to 24 hours. This is not an uncommon event in teens’ lives, and that’s the generation we’re worried about reading.” Northington plans to hold the marathon at her store on October 3<sup>rd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> to coincide with Banned Books Week, which runs from September 27<sup>th</sup> to October 4<sup>th</sup>.

Hall Book Exchange in Gainesville, Georgia, and The Galaxy Bookshop in Hardwick, Vermont, have also signed on to have October read-a-thons, and other independent booksellers are looking into hosting similar events.

“The Read-A-Thon is meant to promote and foster the love of reading in a time when many surveys and statistics show a grim forecast for the future of reading as a primary recreation in this country. According to the National Endowment for the Arts [report] ‘Reading at Risk: A Survey of Literary Reading in America,’ ‘The percentage of adult Americans reading literature has dropped dramatically over the past 20 years. Less than half of the adult American population now reads literature. The decline in literary reading parallels a decline in total book reading. The percentage of the US adult population reading any books has declined by seven percent over the past decade,’” the marathons’s website cites.

Many blame television, movies, the Internet, and video games for society’s shortened attention spans and the decline in reading, yet the recent *Harry Potter*, *Spiderwick*, and *Twilight* series’ successes demonstrate that young readers can be hooked by a story that is fun and impossible to put down.

“The idea was to give people who don’t normally have a chance to just pick up a book and read an opportunity to do so,” Filgate said. “It might be crazy, but we think reading is important.”

EmploymentCrossing is the largest collection of active jobs in the world.

We continuously monitor the hiring needs of more than 250,000 employers, including virtually every corporation and organization in the United States. We do not charge employers to post their jobs and we aggressively contact and investigate thousands of employers each day to learn of new positions. No one works harder than EmploymentCrossing.

Let EmploymentCrossing go to work for you.