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The Newsletter of
Webster Groves Public Library, v. 2 n. 7,
April, 2007

April Fool's Day

April, specifically April Fools Day, has me thinking about humor. One of my favorite areas of the library is the American Humor section (817). Maybe I try too hard to overcome the stereotype of the dour, shushing librarian by wanting to know new jokes all the time or being able to quote famous humorous quips. Or maybe I just like a good laugh.

Recently we have been re-cataloging the humor so it is arranged in chronological order. What is striking to me is how much of what we own is from the second half of the twentieth century, in other words, the most recent stuff. Wasn't there funny stuff being written before that? Yes, of course, but if any type of literature has a short shelf life, it's humor. Today's topical jokes about politicians or hot issues will be meaningless tomorrow. Some of the best humorists we grew up with, like Erma Bombeck and Art Buchwald, may not resonate with people reading them even today, let alone ten years or more from now.

If a work of humor endures and is still funny a hundred years after it is written, you know it has to be good. There are the works of Will Rogers (Prohibition is like communism, he once said, it's a good idea, but it won't work). There's Mark Twain, whose work defies categorization – it's surely funny, but it's also some of our best literature, and books like *Roughing It* and *Life on the Mississippi* are as full of real information as many books of a more serious nature.

One I pulled off the shelf is *The Devil's Dictionary* by Ambrose Bierce. In it the famous storyteller of the Civil War takes his whole society and culture to task by writing a dictionary in which he slyly redefines many words, giving them a more realistic meaning. He defines 'honorable' as 'afflicted with an impediment in one's reach,' and 'diplomacy' as 'the patriotic art of lying for one's country.' Either of these quips and a good deal more of Bierce's *Dictionary* could have been written today and enjoyed the same knowing recognition in readers. So it sits still on the library's shelf (817.52), one of the rare examples of humor that persists.

Next time you're in the library and find yourself in need of a good laugh, check out the American Humor section. And if you come across a good joke, share it with us.

tcooper@wgpl.lib.mo.us

TRIVIA QUESTION

Last Month's Question:

Is there any logical meaning to the phrase 'open sesame'? According to Kenneth Kiple's *A Movable Feast*, sesame oil was one of the first oils used, and not just for culinary purposes. Applying 'sesame' to a door may actually have helped to open it.

This Month's Question:

What 19th century author grew up just 1 mile south of Webster Groves, wrote only one book, and died a month after he finished it? Hint: the book has never gone out of print.

National Library Week Food Drive

HELP US BEAT KIRKWOOD!

The theme for this year's National Library Week (April 15-21) is *Come Together at Your Library*. We are coming together with Kirkwood Public Library, one of our partners in the Municipal Library Consortium, to hold a food drive. The drive will run from the beginning of April until April 21, so when you visit the library, please bring a canned good or other item appropriate for a food drive, and put it in the barrel in the foyer.

In the end, we'll see who collected more – Kirkwood (boo!) or Webster Groves (yeah!). We will give our donations to Webster-Rock Hill Ministries, and Kirkwood will give theirs to Kirk Care, Inc.

For more information, please call 314 961-3784.

April in the Children's Room

Tuesday, April 10: Storytime & crafts with Miss Phyllis – 10 a.m.

Wednesday, April 11: Storytime & Crafts with Miss Phyllis – 10 a.m.

Thursday, April 12: Storytime & Crafts with Miss Phyllis – 10 a.m.

Monday, April 16: Storytime & Crafts with Miss Michelle – 2 p.m.

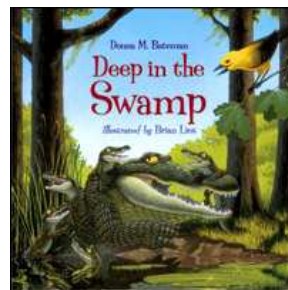
Wednesday, April 18: Storytime & Crafts with Miss Michelle – 2 p.m.

Tuesday, April 24: Storytime & Crafts with Miss Phyllis – 10 a.m.

Wednesday, April 25: Storytime & Crafts with Miss Phyllis – 10 a.m.

Thursday, April 26: Storytime & Crafts with Miss Phyllis – 10 a.m.

Saturday, April 28:
Author Donna Bateman
will read her book *Deep in the Swamp*. 10:30 a.m.,



appropriate for ages 2 and up.

Library Hours

Monday-Thursday 9 am to 9 pm

Friday and Saturday 9 am to 4:30 pm

Sunday 2 pm to 5 pm

The library will be closed Sunday, April 8 for Easter

This Month's Most Requested Books:

1. *The Secret*, Rhonda Byrne
2. *Nineteen Minutes*, Jodi Picoult
3. *Step on a Crack*, James Patterson
4. *Plum Lovin'*, Janet Evanovich
5. *The Spellman Files*, Lisa Lutz
6. *Grace (eventually): Thoughts on Faith*, Anne Lamott
7. *6th Target*, James Patterson
8. *Daddy's Girl*, Lisa Scottoline
9. *Dust*, Martha Grimes
10. *High Profile*, Robert B. Parker
11. *Lean Mean Thirteen*, Janet Evanovich
12. *Next*, Michael Crichton

Celebrate National Poetry Month with Carlos Pappalardo

Carlos Pappalardo, a local physician and poet, will visit the Library on Tuesday, April 24 at 7 p.m. He will read from his new book *Ahimsa (Against Violence)*. A devoted pacifist, his poems are, in his words, 'a cry for peace and understanding.' During his career, Dr. Pappalardo worked often with Doctors without Borders, and the proceeds from the sale of his book will benefit that organization. For more information call 314 961-3784.



Friends of the Library Book Fair Date is Set

The Friends of Webster Groves Public Library Book Fair will be held on the last weekend in April. It will be held in a storefront in Crestwood Square, 9051 Watson Road, just behind the Applebee's Restaurant.

Volunteers are always welcome to help sort and display books, manage the crowds, and clean up after the event. It's hard work, but usually pretty much

fun, especially if you love books. If you are interested in volunteering, contact Nancy Hiatt at 962-4846 or Debbie Ladd at 968-8759. The hours for the sale are:

Thursday, April 26	4 to 9 pm (\$7 admission)
Friday, April 27	10 am to 8 pm (free)
Saturday, April 28	10 am to 8 pm (free)
Sunday, April 29	10 am to 5 pm (free)

Webster Groves
ONLINE

If you haven't visited the library's Web site lately, you may have missed a great new feature. Webster Groves Online is designed to organize every Web site in town in one convenient place. Businesses, schools, churches, service organizations, clubs and more – if it has a Web site, and if it's in Webster Groves, it's at Webster Groves Online. A handy subject index helps you find exactly what you're looking for. Go to www.wgpl.org/wgonline, and check it out. Bookmark it on your home or office computer for handy reference to a wealth of community resources. Let us know what you think, and how we can make this new service even better.

Rule Change Allows for Renewal of Videocassettes

Ever since the library added videocassettes to its collections, there has been a rule that they may not be renewed. This sort of rule was how libraries handled videos in the early days. Since they were just building the collections, there weren't enough of them, so they either checked them out for shorter periods, or did not allow renewals so they could keep some on the shelf. But now we have pretty many videocassettes, and since many people have switched to watching DVDs instead, it's time to relax that rule and allow video renewals. This should be especially welcome to families with small children, who check out stacks of easy readers, and a few videos, and have had to make the trip back to the library before they were ready because those few videos couldn't be renewed.

The no renewal rule still applies to DVDs.



Webster Groves Public Library 301 E. Lockwood Webster Groves, MO 63119
(314) 961-3784 www.wgpl.org
A Member of the Municipal Library Consortium of St. Louis County