

Students read Seuss' stories to celebrate his 82nd birthday

By Marianne Kerrigan
Of the Emerald

Dr. Seuss's 82nd birthday was celebrated on campus with a tribute to his children's stories. Students Rob Mertz and Christine Mitchell honored Dr. Seuss, whose real name is Theodore Seuss Geisel, by reading his stories in front of the EMU Friday. Geisel's birthday was Sunday.

Geisel's first book, "And To Think I Saw it on Mulberry Street," was published in 1937. He has since written more than 50 children's books under the names Dr. Seuss and Theo Le Sieg, which is his name spelled backward.

According to "From Dr. Mather to Dr. Seuss," a book by Mary Lystad, he chose the name Dr. Seuss when he wanted a series of articles to appear as if they had been written by a wise old man.

Mertz, a 24-year-old geology student, and Mitchell, a 21-year-old theater arts major, launched their tribute with "Green Eggs and Ham," while volunteers from the audience blew bubbles.

They took turns holding the book so the crowd could see the pictures.

"The pictures are most of the story," Mertz said. "Reading it is fun, but sitting and listening and remembering all of the stories is better. Some of the stories are really funny when you actually say them. And they're meant to be read aloud," he added.

For some people, the stories rekindled memories of favorite childhood games. Others cheered for the characters as if it were the first time they had heard the popular stories. As one woman walked by, she asked her friend, "I haven't heard that one. Can we stop?"

"Dr. Seuss forever, yeah!" yelled one man who peddled by on his bike.

K.C. Conner brought children from the EMU Child Care Center.

"I saw the ad, and they



Photo by Ross Martin

Some spectators helped by blowing bubbles while listening to Dr. Seuss stories.

thought it was a good idea," she said. While Mertz was reading "One Fish, Two Fish, Red Fish, Blue Fish," 4-year-old Salem Asudairy yelled, "I can read 'One Fish, Two Fish, Red Fish, Blue Fish!'"

Claudia Bertolane, an elementary education major, said, "I think Dr. Seuss is the key to a good childhood and the key to a good life as you grow older."

"It's a lot more pleasant to hear people reading Dr. Seuss than people screaming 'I'm holier than thou!'" student Dan DeBenedett said.

Many spectators requested their favorite stories.

"Hop on Pop" didn't seem to go real well. People wanted stories with morals and messages," Mertz said.

"I think he's (Geisel) a real humanitarian. Children's books are everything. They ingrain so much about our attitudes and behavior. They almost teach people the way they should live," said student Peter Gray, who especially liked the book "Butter Battle."

"They keep building bigger machines to fight each other with, just like us and the Russians. If children understand

this is not a good thing, maybe they won't do it," he said.

James McMurray, a lab technician at the University, read Dr. Seuss when he was younger.

"The very first thing I learned how to read was 'Green Eggs and Ham.' If you go through some of his books, they were really particularly relevant to what was going on," he said.

Mertz and Mitchell met a few years ago while they were coordinators of the New Student Host Program (NSHP). Mitchell was with other coordinators on a retreat when they began to read "On Beyond the Zebra," a Dr. Seuss book.

They agreed to read Dr. Seuss books on Geisel's 80th birthday. This is the third year they have commemorated Geisel's birthday.

One of Mitchell's favorites is "I had Trouble in getting to Solla Sollews." Her father gave the book to her brother when he was having difficulty in college.

"It kind of has personal meaning to me," said Mitchell. "It talks about how to deal with problems, and that nothing is perfect. A lot of Dr. Seuss has something to say and is really educational for people of all ages."



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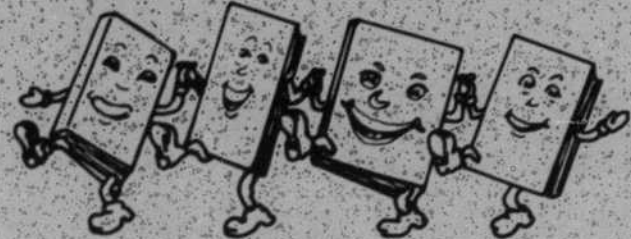
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