

Dr. Seuss, Grinch creator, dies at 87 in California

LA JOLLA, Calif. (AP) — Theodor Seuss Geisel, the Dr. Seuss whose rhyming children's classics delighted generations of children and parents — on a train, in the rain, here or there or anywhere — has died. He was 87.

Geisel, author of *The Cat in the Hat*, *Green Eggs and Ham*, *How the Grinch Stole Christmas* and dozens of other books, died Tuesday night at his home with his family at his bedside. He had been ill for several months.

He wrote 47 books and illustrated most of them, selling more than 100 million copies in 18 languages. He was awarded a 1984 Pulitzer Prize for his contribution to children's literature.

Geisel's works were journeys into nonsense, magical worlds of truffula trees, ziffs and zuffs and nerkles and nerds, where top-hatted cats run rampant through youngsters' homes while parents are away — despite the best efforts of scolding fish.

But they often included subtle messages on issues important to him, from internationalism to environmentalism.

In his 1984 best seller, *The Butter Battle Book*, he offered a parable for the atomic age. It chronicled the escalating arms race between the Yooks, who eat their bread butter side down, and the Zooks, who do just the opposite.

It ends with the two sides at the Yook-Zook border, each armed with the ultimate weapon — a Big-Boy Boomerang bomb.

A boy asks his grandpa, "Who's going to drop it. Will you? Will he?"

"Be patient," grandpa says. "We'll see. We will see."

Born March 2, 1904, in Springfield, Mass., son of a brewer who ran a zoo during Prohibition, Geisel graduated in 1925 from Dartmouth, where he drew cartoons for the humor magazine, *Jack-O-Lantern*.

It was on a spoof of scientific developments that he first used the name that would become his trademark. He added "Dr." to his middle name to sound more scientific.

Through the 1950s, Geisel wrote a couple of children's books a year, capped in 1957 by the publication of *How the Grinch Stole Christmas* and *The Cat in the Hat*.

Grinch, made into a cartoon with Boris Karloff reading the title role, was a stark critique of the commercialism that had befallen Christmas, a 20th century version of Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*.

The Cat in the Hat revolutionized children's reading habits.

"That is what I am proudest of; that I had something to do with getting rid of Dick and Jane," Geisel said in 1982.

"His philosophy was to try to give the kids as many good laughs to get them over the hump to learning to read," Berenstain said.

Of all his books, *The Lorax* was his favorite. His last book was *Oh, the Places You'll Go*, published in 1990; it has been on *The New York Times*' best-seller list for 78 weeks.

Geisel is survived by his wife, stepdaughters, Lea and Lark, his niece, Peggy Owens, and her son Theodore Owens, of Los Angeles.

When asked two weeks ago whether he had any final message, Geisel told the San Diego Tribune: "Whenever things go a bit sour in a job I'm doing, I always tell myself: 'You can do better than this.' The best slogan I can think of to leave with the U.S.A. would be: 'We can do and we've got to do better than this.'"

Seuss taught kids joy of reading

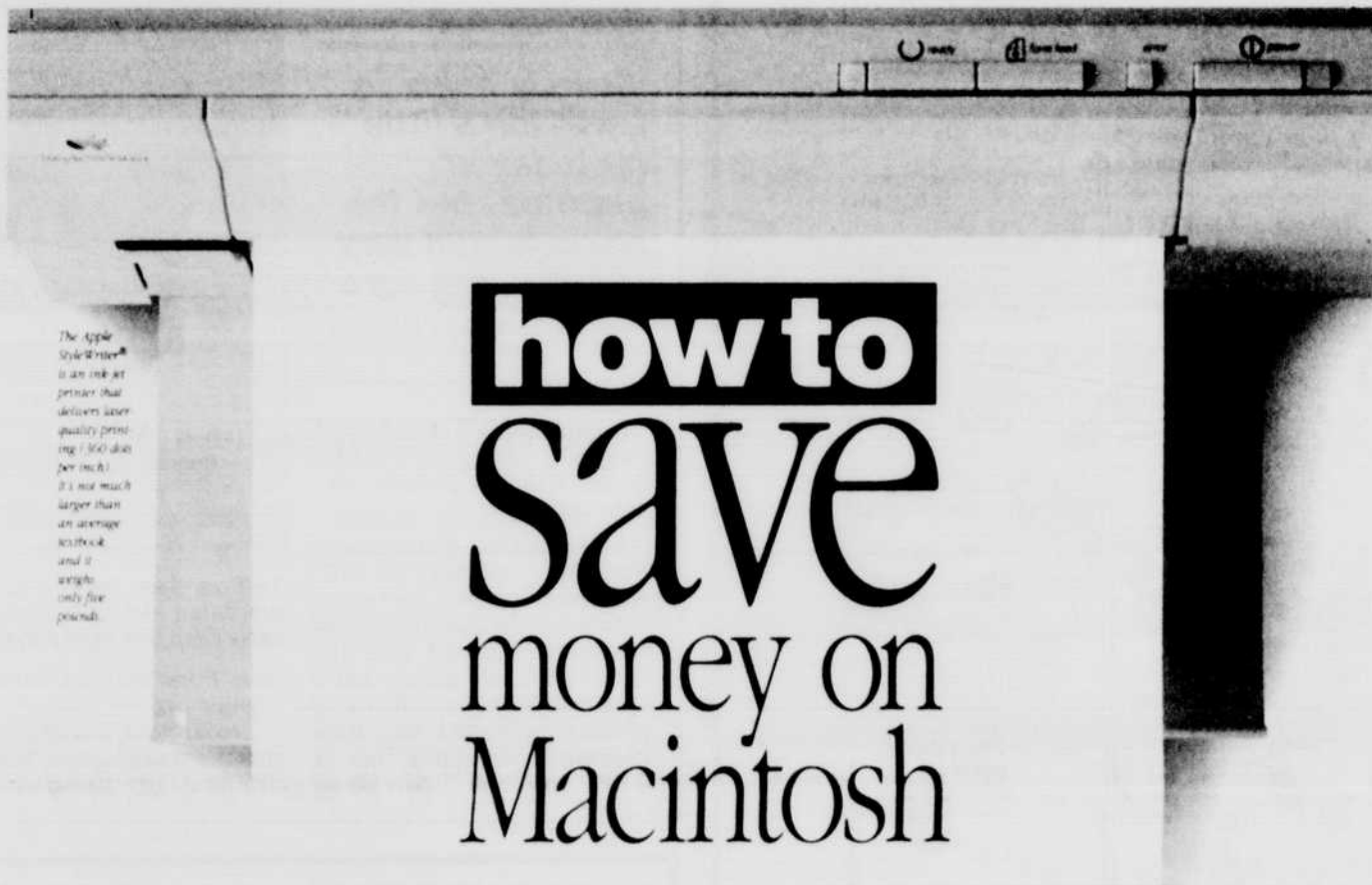
SAN DIEGO (AP) — Children's author Theodor Seuss Geisel, better known as Dr. Seuss, left behind a legacy of learning coated in wildly rhyming, candy-colored fun, admirers said Wednesday.

"In his own innocuous way, without ever hitting anybody over the head, he taught children the joy of rhythm, that words can bring great joy to your life," said cartoonist Chuck Jones. He directed and produced television specials based on Geisel's *How the Grinch*

Stole Christmas and *Horton Hears a Who*.

Jones said the same lilting style and nonsense words that introduced children to poetry also made it fun for parents to read the books over and over.

"He had a way of treating issues, emotions and problems that were valid whether you were 5 or 50," said Jeff Moss, one of the original creators of Sesame Street. "Very few writers could do that."



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