

Oh, the pages you'll know

By BOB STUART
The News Virginian
Thursday, March 3, 2005



Waynesboro City Manager Doug Walker reads 'The Sneetches' to Leslie Rueff's fourth-grade class Wednesday at Westwood Hills Elementary in celebration of Dr. Seuss' birthday. (Photo by ROSANNE VISCUSO/Staff)

Waynesboro's Westwood Hills Elementary became a ubiquitous shrine to Dr. Seuss on Wednesday.

The occasion was the birthday of Dr. Seuss author Theodore Geisel, America's most-famous children's writer.

Geisel's birthday was celebrated across the country as Read Across America Day.

A large mural of Dr. Seuss covered a Westwood Hills cafeteria wall. It was surrounded with cards of various colors representing the books students had read during the past week.

"I challenged kids to read 300 books, and they read 324," said school reading specialist Sharon Leech.

Leech said city officials such as Schools Superintendent Lowell Lemons and City Manager Doug Walker read to Westwood Hills students Wednesday.

Cafeteria staff even joined in the occasion. Leech said workers made 560 cupcakes, enough for every student in K-5, and decorated the cupcakes with Seuss-like red sprinkles and white icing.

Geisel, who died in 1991 at age 87, wrote almost 50 books, including "Green Eggs and Ham," "The Cat in The Hat" and "How the Grinch Stole Christmas."

Leech said the Seuss books encourage a joy of reading because of their rhymes.

"The students memorize the words and then begin to read," she said.

Students need a chance to focus on reading as fun, Leech said.

Lemons told Westwood fifth-graders that reading is a skill he needs to survive in his job.

"Every job requires some ability to read," he said. The superintendent told students the best way to improve their skill is to read for pleasure first.

Wilson Elementary Principal David Shriver said Read Across America is a complement to his school's year-round efforts to encourage student reading.

On Friday, Wilson Memorial High students will read to Wilson Elementary students as part of a

belated Read Across America celebration.

"These are students our younger kids look up to," Shriver said. "But we do things throughout the year. This is part of a yearlong effort."

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