

THE BIG READ IN WAYNE COUNTY

The Adventures of Tom Sawyer
by Mark Twain



News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE - - - FEB 24, 2010

Contact Robb Hyde at WCA - - - 330-264-2787 x 206 - - - robbhyde@wayneartscenter.org

LIBRARIES, ARTS CENTER AND AREA SCHOOLS LAUNCH A COMMUNITY READ OF *TOM SAWYER*

—KICK-OFF EVENT AT WAYNE CENTER FOR THE ARTS FRIDAY, MARCH 12th—

A celebration of literacy and the lasting legacy of a great American author are the focus of THE BIG READ IN WAYNE COUNTY: a County-wide community read of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* by Mark Twain set for March and April. The Wayne Center for the Arts, all seven branches of the Wayne County Public Library, the Orrville Public Library, The Wooster Book Company and area schools through the Tri-County Educational Service Center have come together to get adults as well as students to read, discuss and examine this seminal work and the life of Samuel Clemens at the one hundredth anniversary of his death. A Kickoff Event is scheduled for Friday, March 12 from 6 – 8 pm at the Wayne Center for the Arts.

The Big Read is an initiative of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) designed to restore reading to the center of American culture. Wayne County is one of 268 communities nationwide participating in The Big Read from September 2009-June 2010. To date, the NEA has funded more than 800 Big Read programs in the nation's towns and cities. The NEA presents The Big Read in partnership with the Institute of Museum and Library Services and in cooperation



with Arts Midwest. Support for The Big Read is provided by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. Transportation for The Big Read is provided by Ford. ***[SEE THE BIG READ'S HELPS A NATION REDISCOVER READING]***

Tom Sawyer was selected for THE BIG READ IN WAYNE COUNTY because of its rich connection to America's heartland experience. Wayne County in the 21st Century maintains a strong agricultural economy and has one of the largest Amish populations in the United States. There is a tremendous opportunity to connect today's Wayne County readers with the classic American novel and public figure of the 19th Century. Beginning March 8th, our community will celebrate *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* by Mark Twain with a full calendar of events geared towards a variety of audiences including speakers, theatre performances, book discussions, music, and family activity days. ***[SEE EVENT HIGHLIGHTS & CALENDAR OF EVENTS]***

The participation and enthusiasm of one northeast Ohio writer has been invaluable to the partners presenting THE BIG READ IN WAYNE COUNTY. Mark Dawidziak is a recognized scholar of Mark Twain who has published two acclaimed books about the author: *Mark My Words: Mark Twain on Writing* (1996) and *Horton Foote's The Shape of the River: The Lost Teleplay About Mark Twain* (2003). He will be the Keynote Speaker for THE BIG READ IN WAYNE COUNTY at the Wooster Library and will take the role of Twain in the Largely Literary Theatre Company's presentation of *Twain by Three* at Wayne College. He also has supplied many of the artifacts and memorabilia in the Wayne Center's *Mark Twain in Wooster* exhibition. Dawidziak is the television critic for *The Plain Dealer*. ***[SEE MARK DAWIDZIAK BIO]***

Getting lapsed and infrequent readers to once again pick-up a book is central to the goals of The Big Read. Copies of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* are available at local libraries, at The Wooster Book Company and are also available for purchase at the Wayne Center for the Arts. In addition, thousands of Reader's Guides will be distributed throughout the community at local eateries, doctor's offices, the libraries, laundromats and other locations. ***[SEE READER'S GUIDE]***

THE BIG READ IN WAYNE COUNTY has also secured over 1,300 copies of the book and distributed them, along with Reader Guides, Teacher's Guides to over 30 classrooms in 19 schools around the County. Tri-County ESC coordinated the distribution and worked with curriculum advisors in each district. ***[SEE BOOKS IN SCHOOLS LIST]***

THE BIG READ IN WAYNE COUNTY has been organized by the Wayne Center for the Arts and is being presented in partnership with the Wayne County Public Library, Orrville Public Library, The Wooster Book Company and the Tri-County Educational Service Center. Committee

members include Linda Davis, Manager of Adult Service at WCPL; Leslie Picot, Director at Orrville; Bobbie Singleton, Director of Curriculum and Instruction and Gary DeVault, Fine Arts Coordinator of Tri-County ESC; David Wiesenberg, owner of The Wooster Book Company; and Robb Hyde, Director of the Wayne Center. Additional information about The Big Read is available online through the NEA website, www.neabigread.com and through the Wayne Center for the Arts website, www.wayneartscenter.org.

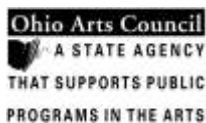
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About the Wayne Center for the Arts

The Wayne Center for the Arts has been offering culturally stimulating arts experiences to Wayne County residents for over 31 years. The center, formerly known as the Wooster Arts Center, was founded in 1973 on the campus of The College of Wooster. In 1984, through a gift from the Rubbermaid Foundation and with the support of the community, the Arts Center was able to move into the newly renovated Walnut Street School at 237 South Walnut Street, Wooster. Since its beginning in 1973, the center has continued to grow offering numerous activities throughout the year including classes, special events, performances and exhibits. In June of 1999, The Rubbermaid Foundation donated the Walnut Street building to Wayne Center for the Arts assuring the community that a cultural arts center would continue to thrive in the downtown Wooster area.



The Ohio Arts Council helped fund this program or organization with state tax dollars to encourage economic growth, educational excellence and cultural enrichment for all Ohioans.