

# Puppets preach the power of reading

By Bobbie Hayse Messenger-Inquirer Photos by Alan Warren Messenger-Inquirer

Cincinnati puppeteer Terrence Burke on Wednesday brought his troupe of handcrafted puppets to the Daviess County Public Library.

Cyril the Sea Serpent, Coleman the Sasquatch, G'Wizzl G'Wook, Kitty Quo Quo Quo Qua, Unka Unka the caveman, Reg the Loveland Frog and Jacqui the Jackalope are the Wump Mucket Puppets who came to visit a group of about 60 children and their families to present a variety show of puppetry featuring several skits.

Puppets have been a lifelong passion of Burke, who is the creative director and principle puppeteer for the Wump Mucket Puppets. He is a member of the Puppeteers of America and the Cincinnati Area Puppetry Guild. His interests began in 1969 with the first season of Sesame Street.

When his daughter was born, he began performing skits for her, and eventually expanded his hobby into a puppet show and business. His wife Lara Rumizen is the artist and puppet builder of the duo.

"I drove 211 miles to be here with you today," Burke told the crowd in the first floor of the library. "I have one of the happiest jobs because I get to hear your laughter and applause every day."

He said he loves his job because it combines his passion for puppetry and for making children smile.

The puppets talked about how important reading is in a child's life, which is something Ryan Henry, the youth services librarian at DCPL, says has been a major push this summer.

The summer reading program will continue through July 31. This year's theme is Choose An Adventure and is for all ages. Children who participate in the program can sign up online at [dcplibrary.org](http://dcplibrary.org) to win prizes for reading books.

Children who don't read in the summer, Henry said, have been shown to lose reading skills.

"The best way for them to take the time to read is to encourage them to read what they enjoy," he said. "As long as they are reading for pleasure in the summer, it helps."

That's one of the reasons that libraries across the country do summer reading for young people, and why every Wednesday through the summer the library has brought free programming for children of all ages centered around the importance of reading.

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