

By Christopher Burnett | Staff Writer

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Little pirates invade CARL for annual event

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Clad in pirate costumes, 130 children and some parents took part in the Ike Skelton Combined Arms Research Library's annual "International Talk Like a Pirate Day" activities Sept. 22.

"This is an excellent way to augment our storytime themes because it is such fun for everyone," said Dan Barbuto, a library technician specializing in children's literature at CARL. "We decorate the library with pirate-themed items, tell pirate jokes and pirate stories called yarns — everyone enjoys it."

Library staff credits Reference Librarian Theresa Taylor with initiating the pirate tradition at CARL 13 years ago. She said a primary purpose of the event is to animate the spaces in a fun way with community patrons.

"Our preschool and toddler programs are well-attended, and an event like this is suitable for the entire family, which is good too," Taylor said. "We chose an early school release day for the pirate day this year so that both older and younger children could come to the library and participate in the fun."

Tiffany Konczey, chief of the Access and Technical Services Division, said CARL staff and volunteers produce all aspects of the event activities. She said event this year included the staff breaking open a ship-shaped pinata filled with treats.

"It's enjoyable for everyone, including the staff," Konczey said. "We read stories using pirate-speak, award door prizes and judge costumes by age groups."

"A program like International Talk Like a Pirate Day' lets young people experience our resources in ways not typically associated with a library," Konczey said. "It's purposely loud — and that's OK today. It also involves reading yarns and learning new things."

Deanna Ryberg and her husband Jaysen, an Army captain attending the Command and General Staff College, brought their three children to the event.

"I think this is a fun idea and our children Arrrrr having a great time," Ryberg said in a pirate voice. "Our boys are likely wondering how it is possible to have something so loud in a library."

Jaysen echoed his wife's appreciation of the concept of the event. He said it provided an opportunity to spend some time with his family during the school day.

"This event provides an excellent chance for our children to learn about the resources of the library creatively," Jaysen said. "I was able to take a break from studying on an upper floor of the library and enjoy this event with them for a while."

CARL Director Beata Moore, who served as one of the costume contest judges, said the Command and General Staff College Foundation supports programs like "International Talk Like a Pirate Day" at the library. She said the CGSC Foundation supplied the prizes and goodie bags for the children.

Barbuto said the pirate day at CARL has grown in its scope.

"It's gone from a simple acknowledgment of the day to the full-blown event you see this year," Barbuto said. "We all have enjoyed preparing for the children."

Barbuto, who previously worked at the public library in Leavenworth, Kan., said a library becomes another resource for the community through its programs.

"Offering programs like this with such fun themes are engaging," Barbuto said. "Having the actual focus being on reading pirate stories is a creative way to augment awareness of the library's collection, too."

Konczey said the growth of the program at CARL is in keeping with the story of "International Talk Like a Pirate Day" originators, John Baur and Mark Summers. She said Baur and Summers eventually contacted syndicated columnist Dave Barry in 2002 and told him about their idea.

"We just started following their page on the Internet several years ago," Konczey said. "Their official day is Sept. 19, but we usually schedule ours on the closest Friday to that date for logistical reasons."

Barry ultimately wrote humorously about the pirate day in his column in the Miami Herald, thus contributing to the tradition becoming a phenomenon.

Volunteer Katy Touysinthiphonexay, whose spouse is CGSC student Capt. Dan Wagner, has been volunteering at the library for three weeks.

"I am helping today at pirate day wherever I am needed," Touysinthiphonexay said. "I like the Fort Leavenworth community, and I'm taking advantage of opportunities during the year we have here."



Four-year-old Ashlynn Clements and other children at the International Talk Like a Pirate Day celebration listen to pirate stories, including "Pirates Love Underpants" by Claire Freedman and Ben Cort, Sept. 22 at the Combined Arms Research Library. Photo by Prudence Siebert/Fort Leavenworth Lamp

The Ike Skelton Combined Arms Research Library is a comprehensive military research center supporting the Command and General Staff College. CARL is also the Fort Leavenworth post community library and its weekly storytime is every Wednesday at 9 a.m. Call (913) 758-3001 for more information. Visit <http://usacac.army.mil/organizations/cace/carl> to access the library's digital resources.

<http://www.ftleavenworthlamp.com/article/20170928/NEWS/170928651>

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