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Sent: Thursday, April 10, 2008 9:30 PM
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Subject: The Big Read Keynote Address

News Release: The Big Read Keynote Address Is April 19

On Saturday, April 19, the Massillon Museum, with the collaboration of the Massillon Public Library, will present "Celebrating Jack London," the keynote address of the month-long project, The Big Read: Western Stark County Reads The Call of the Wild. The free event will be held at Fairless Middle School. The program is open to the public and no reservations are required.

The evening will begin at 7:00 p.m. with selections of Scott Joplin music performed by musicians from the Canton Symphony Orchestra. State Representative Scott Oelslager will introduce the keynote speaker at 7:15 p.m. Jeanne Reesman, a nationally recognized London expert, will talk about The Call of the Wild by Jack London as a slave narrative. The evening will conclude with a 20-minute performance of movements from Antonin Dvorak's American Quartet.

Reesman, who holds a Ph.D. in English from the University of Pennsylvania, an M.A. in English from Baylor University, and a B.A. in English from Centenary College of Louisiana, has written and co-authored several books about Jack London and his work. She serves on the Advisory Board of the Jack London Foundation, and is Executive Coordinator of the Jack London Society. She has presented her thoughts about Jack London and other American authors at conferences across the United States.

London's adventure novel was selected for western Stark County's National Endowment for the Arts granted program, The Big Read, because the author's mother, Flora Wellman, grew up in Massillon.

The Massillon Museum sought the NEA grant to unite the community in an activity that everyone can enjoy together. About 1800 books, bookmarks, and readers' guides have been distributed free throughout western Stark County, and 19 events have been slated to enhance readers' experiences. Anyone who completes the

book is invited to sign a “dog tag” to be displayed at the Massillon Museum or the Massillon Public Library.

Local organizations and individuals collaborating with the Massillon Museum include: the Massillon Public Library; the Lions Lincoln Theatre; Mayor Francis H. Cicchinelli; John Kiste; Massillon Parks and Recreation Department; Rotary Club of Massillon; the Massillon Area Chamber of Commerce; The Independent, the Massillon Commission to Advance Literacy; the Fairless, Tuslaw and Massillon school systems; State Representative Scott Oelslager; Massillon Cable TV; the Chit Chat Coffee Shoppe; Canal Fulton Public Library; the Canal Fulton Senior Center; Ashland University; George Nicholis; Eric Myers; Richard Gercken; The Canton Symphony Orchestra; The Wilderness Center; Bocca Grande Restaurant; Kozmo’s Grille; and many community volunteers.

Copies of *The Call of the Wild* may be checked out at the Massillon Public Library. Books may be purchased inexpensively at the Massillon Museum (121 Lincoln Way East in downtown Massillon), the Massillon Public Library (208 Lincoln Way East in downtown Massillon), and The Village Bookshelf (746 Amherst Road Northeast in Massillon).

The Big Read is an initiative of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) designed to restore reading to the center of American culture. The NEA presents the Big Read in partnership with the Institute of Museum and Library Services and in cooperation with Arts Midwest. The Big Read brings together partners across the country to encourage reading for pleasure and enlightenment. Western Stark County is one of 127 communities nationwide participating in the Big Read from January through June 2008.

For more information about western Stark County’s Big Read project, call the Massillon Museum at 330-833-4061 or visit www.massillonmuseum.org or www.NEABigRead.org.

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