



A World of Knowledge

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BIG Read '09 features civil war novel

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NEWTON--*March* by Geraldine Brooks is the county-wide BIG Read pick for 2009.

Project kickoff is at 2 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 31, at the SALT Block Green near the Arts & Science Center in Hickory. Now in its fourth year, The BIG Read is a collaboration of Catawba County Library System, Lenoir-Rhyne College, Catawba Valley Community College and Hickory Public Library System, which is this year's lead agency. The mission of The Big Read is to promote the power of books and the importance of literature.

The key event will be an appearance by the author on April 24. All BIG Read programs are free and open to the public.

Brooks' novel is based on the life of Bronson Alcott, father of author Louisa Mae Alcott, who served as an Army chaplain during the war. *March*, an international best-seller, won the Pulitzer Prize in 2006. Multiple copies of the novel are available for checkout. Free copies of the book will also be available.

Born in Australia 54 years ago, Brooks has worked as a journalist for the *Wall Street Journal* and covered crises in the Middle East, Africa and the Balkans. She is married to fellow journalist Tony Horwitz, author of the best-selling *Blue Latitudes* and *Confederates in the Attic*, among others. Together they received the Overseas Press Club's Hal Boyle Award.

Brooks' first best-seller, *Nine Parts of Desire* (1994), was based on her experiences among the Muslim women of the Middle East, was an international bestseller, *Foreign Correspondence* (1997), is a memoir and travel adventure about a childhood enriched by pen pals from around the world, and her adult quest to find them. Her first novel, *Year of Wonders*, was set in 1666, and follows villagers battling the plague in the English Midlands. *People of the Book*, published in January 2008, is a fictionalized account of the history of the Sarajevo Haggadah, an ancient Jewish manuscript.

For availability of these and other books, call any library branch or log on to <http://www.catawbacountync.gov/library/>.



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