

The Ironton Tribune



photo by [Jessica St. James](#)

The Timeless Stories of Mark Twain

'Author' teaches teens to value their own opinions

By [Benita Heath](#) | The Tribune

Published Saturday, September 12, 2009

ROME TOWNSHIP — A visitor from another century gave some modern-day teens lessons in creativity, independence and individuality.

The instructor was that famous humorist in the white three-piece suit, Samuel Clemons, aka Mark Twain. His channel to the 21st century was actor Alan Kitty, who has spent decades sharing the wisdom of Twain in his one-man show.

Kitty, in the area this week for performances at the Paramount Arts Center in Ashland, Ky., brought his show to Fairland High School Friday afternoon. The actor started impersonating Twain in 1979 and maintains the author's words are as relevant today as they were 160 years ago.

“The commentaries that Twain was responsible for are still valid today. The only thing that changes are names, dates and places,” Kitty said.

Like many, Kitty became enchanted with Twain when he first read “Tom Sawyer” as a child. That first love has developed over his lifetime into a deeper appreciation for the writer-humorist who was unafraid to ruffle the establishment, albeit with more than a touch of humor.

Admittedly following in the footsteps of the quintessential Twain impersonator, Hal Holbrook, Kitty said he did take notes of what Holbrook came up with. But Holbrook was only a tangential influence.

“I was interested in his look and I was interested in the fact he did what he did, even the way he did it,” Kitty said. “ But my main influence was Sam Clemons himself. I was so moved by his characters’ interest in making it a better world to live in.”

In a country that revels in divvying up viewpoints as red or blue, conservative or liberal, would Twain find his own niche in the 21st Century?

“He would have passed the fine line between left wing liberal and revolutionary. He would have crossed over the line,” Kitty said.

“He was already fairly far but he did it through humor. His viewpoint was managed by his need to acquire money and therefore it would have mitigated his ire to some degree. But he was on the verge of preaching revolution.”

As for what this modern-day Twain wants his youthful audiences to take away from his performances, the answer would resonate with the white-haired humorist himself.

“Don’t listen to someone else giving you their opinion and take it for fact,” Kitty said. “Read it yourself. Find different points of view so you can guide your own path.”

WOULD YOU LIKE TO SHARE THIS STORY?



[Mark Twain Library](#)

Only \$5.95 for Quality Editions of Mark Twain's Greatest Works!

www.LOA.org



Ads by Google

FREE What is your credit score? See your score in seconds! [FREE score.com](#)

Excellent	750 - 840	<input type="checkbox"/>	Fair	620 - 659	<input type="checkbox"/>	I Don't Know	???	<input type="checkbox"/>
Good	660 - 749	<input type="checkbox"/>	Poor	400 - 619	<input type="checkbox"/>	Find out FREE!		

Comments

Posted by [mickakers](#) (anonymous) on September 13, 2009 at 5:25 p.m. ([Suggest removal](#))

"Don't listen to someone else giving you their opinion and take it for fact" Kitty said. "Read it yourself. Find different points of view so you can guide your own path." How true!

Post a comment ([Terms of Use Policy](#))

(Requires free [registration](#).)

Username:

Password: ([Forgotten your password?](#))

Comment: