

The San Bernardino Public Library presents
A One-Man Archy & Mehitabel Show!

By Actor Gale McNeeley

The San Bernardino Public Library will be hosting actor Gale McNeeley and his "Archy & Mehitabel's 100th Birthday Tour" on Saturday, May 14, 2016 at 3:00 PM. This free performance will be in the Bing Wong Auditorium at the Feldheim Central Library located at 555 W. 6th Street in San Bernardino.

Since their first appearance in the newspaper columns of satirist Don Marquis, the characters of Archy, a cockroach with the soul of a poet, and Mehitabel, an alley cat with a celebrated past - have been beloved by generations of readers. The books were originally illustrated by George Harriman, the creator of the legendary Krazy Kat & Ignatz. Their long history in American pop culture include a 1950's musical and a 1990's animated film, and their antics continue to delight audiences in McNeeley's show, which has received mention in the *Annotated Archy & Mehitabel*, published in 2006 by Penguin Classics. McNeeley's wry one-man show serves as both an introduction for newcomers to Marquis' wit, and a celebration for old fans.

It was 100 years ago — March 29, 1916 — that Archy the cockroach first spoke to the world. Don Marquis, a writer from *The Evening Sun*, introduced Archy the cockroach in his daily column in *The Sun Dial* on March 29, 1916. For six years Archy's prodigious output found a home in *The Evening Sun* (later renamed *The Sun*), and for four years after that in the *New York Tribune*. When Marquis left newspapering in 1926 he took Archy with him, to *Collier's* magazine and a handful of other publications. He wrote nearly 500 sketches in all, featuring Archy, Mehitabel, Pete the pup, Freddy the rat, and assorted fleas, spiders, ghosts and Martians. The vast majority of the sketches were written under daily deadline pressure, but the simplicity of their style and the humanness of cockroach and cat give them timeless appeal. They are the most unlikely of friends: Archy is a cockroach with the soul of a poet, and Mehitabel is an alley cat with a celebrated past — she claims she was Cleopatra in a previous life. Together, cockroach and cat are the foundation of one of the most engaging collections of light poetry to come out of the twentieth century.

1-1-1

The characters in Archy's poems are brought to life both physically and vocally in this show full of wit, philosophy and wisdom. Melodies are added to several of the poems, which Archy has rhymed and calls songs or ballads. The characters speak, dance and sing the words of Don Marquis, bringing back great memories for Archy lovers, and introducing others to Don's word magic.

Gale McNeeley is an actor, singer, dancer, and clown whose 45-year career has taken him from Broadway to Circus, T.V. and Movies to regional theatres, Street Theatre to Commedia Dell'Arte in Italy. Gale's experience from Shakespeare to Musical Comedy, Clown to Commedia make him the ideal actor to bring a literate cockroach and morally careless alley cat to life for audiences of all ages. Gales show is featured in the "Annotated Archy and Mehitabel" by Penguin Classics, at galemcneeley.com, and on John Batteiger's web site donmarquis.com.

This program is sponsored by the Friends of the San Bernardino Public Library. For more information call 909-381-8238 or visit www.sbpl.org ; www.facebook.com/SBPLfriends/ ; or www.facebook.com/sbcitylib/

