

Young writers can win for climate change ideas

The Times

Friday, March 05, 2010

The school district's intermediate and secondary students have been invited to participate in a writing contest sponsored by the Golden Ears Transition Initiative (GETI) and the CEED Centre that offers \$1,300 in cash and prizes to young writers in three grade categories.

The contest is intended to promote creative writing by students while getting them to explore ways local communities can adapt to climate change, a focus of GETI. Their challenge is to write a sequel to a story by local author and educator, Jack Emberly.

According to Emberly, the *Giant with Two Heads who Hated Being Big* is about a giant with two heads whose gluttonous appetite threatens the well-being of people living in an imaginary place called Westville.

"But, we don't want it to end where I've left it," Emberly said. "What do you do with a troublesome giant? Problems need to be resolved. Student writers will know how to do that within their follow-up story."

GETI and the CEED Centre have a clear objective in offering the contest. CEED Centre director Gerry Pinel said that "GETI's main objective in promoting the writing contest is to create awareness that peak oil and climate change are issues that will force change upon us. To prepare for those changes, GETI's mandate is to build resiliency into our area through grassroots-driven, community-based initiatives. We have a positive vision of our community's future, and this writing contest is a great start in that direction."

Emberly hopes students have fun writing their follow-up story. "Kids have always loved giants. On one level, my tale is about a largely misunderstood, oversized guy without friends who stomps around making a lot of noise and raiding people's gardens to satisfy an ever-increasing appetite. I'm hoping students will write sequels that help Peak and Climo get along better with everybody else in a changing world."

Emberly hopes students will also explore the tale's symbolic connections to the world's need to decrease its carbon footprint while reducing its dependence on fossil fuels for energy. "Peak and Climo, the two heads of the giant, represent the world's insatiable appetite for oil and the negative effects associated with climate change. Students may research those ideas and work them into their story. The degree to which that happens will depend on the grade level of the youngsters, and that fact will be factored into the judging of stories submitted. We're not looking for experts on climate change and peak oil here, but we will acknowledge efforts to learn more about the topics."

School District 42 facilitators Suzanne Hall, Lisa Jakeway and Rory Payment have supported the contest with advice, resources and technical expertise. They sent the contest information to teachers and arranged for Emberly to provide an auditory rendition of the tale to which students will be able to listen on the district website or download onto MP3 players. Emberly will also be available to recite the story to students in their classrooms over the next few weeks.

Winning stories will be posted at Black Bond Books and Jack will also record them; these auditory versions will be accessed through the school district's website.

Teachers wishing to schedule a storytelling visit may arrange a time and date by contacting Emberly as soon as possible at jemberly@telus.net.

- For more about GETI and the worldwide transition town movement, google 'transition towns' or contact the CEED Centre at info@ceedcentre.org.

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