

SPECIAL EVENTS

Adventure follows boys seeking 'The Secret Shortcut'



Author: Magical children's book author Mark Teague will be at OshKosh B'Gosh's newest store in the Somerset Collection North, Aug. 17-18.

BY KEELY WYONIK
STAFF WRITER

On his way to school, Mark Teague never encountered aliens or pirates like the characters in his newly published book, "The Secret Shortcut," (copyright 1996, Scholastic Press, \$14.95), but he did look for shortcuts with his best friend.

"This book focuses on friendship, it's almost a tribute to friendship," said Teague who will be at OshKosh B'Gosh's newest store with renowned storyteller Dinghy Sharpe 11 a.m. and 3 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 17, and 1 p.m. Sunday, Aug. 18, on the third level of Somerset Collection North, 2800 West Big Beaver Road, Troy.

Teague, author/illustrator of eight books including "Piggy," "The Iguana Brothers," and "The Field Beyond The Outfield," will be reading and signing copies of his books.

Childhood memories inspire him. "I try to remember things that happened when I was a kid," he said.

Teague's illustrations are bold

and colorful, they draw readers into the story, good for children ages 5 to 12. "It's a cute back to school story," said Hally Burak, Scholastic Inc. publicist.

"The Secret Shortcut," is about two young boys — Wendell and Floyd — who are always late for school. It's not their fault. One day they are confronted by space creatures, then pirates who are loose in the neighborhood. Despite their best intentions, something keeps getting in the way, causing them to be late to school.

Wendell and Floyd work

together to find a solution to their problem. Wendell suggests they leave earlier for school. So the next day, Floyd shows up at his doorstep very early in the morning, before Wendell is dressed. Wendell gets dressed quickly, and they follow his "secretest shortcut of all" to school.

The boys find themselves in a jungle, and encounter sleeping crocodiles. Determined not to be late, they overcome many obstacles that block their way to school, and arrive before the school bell rings.

"Without over-sentimentalizing, I show how my friendships work. We could annoy each other, but there was a bedrock of loyalty, and we were always playing make-believe games. The book plays off of that," said Teague.

Boys will especially enjoy this story. The space creatures look like big bugs, one of the pirates has a peg leg, Wendell and Floyd get muddy, and swing from vines like monkeys. That's not to say girls won't like the story too. I don't want to give it away, but the ending is surprising.

"It's open ended," said Teague, the father of a 16-month-old girl. "I want my stories to be an invitation to readers to let their imaginations grow. Kids have imagination naturally. We should encourage children not to lose their imagination and creativity, and not dampen their enthusiasm. We can learn a lot from our children."



Whimsical tale: "The Secret Shortcut," by Mark Teague, is about two boys who can't make it to school on time because space aliens and pirates keep getting in the way.

MOVIES

Directors making movies in Motown

PRNewswire — First, Tim Allen made a fictitious Detroit-area suburb the set for his runaway ABC hit, "Home Improvement." That show continues to promote Michigan in a positive way and now more cameras and stars are rolling into town to take advantage of Michigan scenery.

The Michigan Film Office, part of the Michigan Jobs Commission, has announced an unusually large number of projects shooting here in the coming months.

This fall, CBS will air a new police drama, "EZ Street," on Wednesday nights at 10 p.m. Eastern time.

Starring Ken Olin ("thirtysomething") and Jason Gedrick ("Murder One"), the series will shoot in Detroit five to six times a year to provide realistic footage to complement studio filming done in Los Angeles.

John Hughes — director of "Home Alone," "Ferris Bueller's Day Off," "Planes, Trains and Automobiles," and much more — will bring his cast and crew to the Berrien Springs area for about a week in August to shoot his latest project — "Reach the Rock."

Another new feature film is now in pre-production in Detroit. "Polish Wedding" will star Gabriel Byrne ("The Usual Suspects," "Little Women") and Lena Olin ("Unbearable Lightness of Being," "Havana") and will film in Michigan from late August through early October.

Filming will be in both Hamtramck and Detroit, and the film will be the first feature to shoot entirely in Michigan since late 1994.

Hoover, an independent film from Helicon Productions, will also shoot entirely in Michigan beginning in mid-September. The family film about a talking vacuum cleaner will star at least one big name, but actors have yet to be officially announced.

These projects — combined with a variety of television Projects (A&E Network, QVC, EBC), music videos and an increased number of non-automobile related commercials — mean both money and exposure for the state of Michigan.

"As fun as it is to watch the stars come in to film, these projects also have a much more tangible impact on the state," said Doug Rothwell, CEO and Department Director of the Michigan Jobs Commission. "They have an obvious tourism value as people see the variety that Michigan has to offer, and the production pumps millions of dollars into the local economy. The last feature film to shoot entirely in Michigan put over \$1 million into our economy, and that was for an HBO production. We expect theatrical releases to spend even more."

The Film Office works with production companies to coordinate film projects throughout the state of Michigan. It also works to encourage increased numbers of projects to select Michigan.



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Somerset Collection on August 15th!



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Color this picture and fill in the entry form above. Then bring your entry to the Somerset Collection's Sneak Preview celebration on August 15th. You'll have a great time -- and a chance to take your family to Paris.

Place your entry in the box located across from The Disney Store on the third level of Somerset North the evening of August 15th, before 8:45 p.m. No purchase necessary.

Grand prize drawing at 9:00 p.m. on the Somerset North main stage. There will be additional drawings for prizes from The Disney Store and The Walt Disney Gallery.

During The Somerset Collection's Sneak Preview Celebration on Thursday,
August 15th, Disney Entertainment will be performed
throughout The Somerset Collection, beginning at 6:30 p.m.

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