

CIRCLE OF HECK

Young Writers Association's Scare-A-Thon hosts Portland author

Eugene will soon be graced with the presence of an author so clever, elaborate and terrifying that he has channeled his talents into writing some of the most interesting and "obstinately obscure" books you'll ever read. Dale Basye, an author from Portland, will be a featured speaker at the Young Writers Association (YWA) Scare-A-Thon FUNdraiser on Saturday, Oct. 27. Basye will be reading excerpts from his *Heck: Where the Bad Kids Go* book series.

Reading *Heck*, you have to ask yourself: "Who exactly is this intended for?" Basye doesn't sidestep the truth of his storyline, which is that two children, Milton and Marlo Fauster, have died and gone to the kid equivalent of hell. That might seem unsettling to the parents out there supervising reading for the tween-and-under set, but *Heck* isn't the kind of book that will send kids into a frenzy of nightmares, rather it will encourage them to search out all of the allusions Basye interjects into his captivating storyline.

"It's interesting when people ask me why I choose to write for children, and I have to say, I really don't. I may tone down the off-color nature or innuendo-rich witticisms that often spring up naturally, but other than that, I

write to amuse or engage me and don't think too much about the reader. That may sound terrible, but I mean it in a good way: I don't pander or assume I know what's in the head of that wonderful young person on the other side of the page. I just naively hope that they enjoy the ride as much as I," he says.

Like Dante's *Inferno*, *Heck* has multiple circles, and each of Basye's books tells the story of that circle, starting with *Limbo*. The most recent book published is *Snivel: Where the Whiny Kids Go*. In each circle Marlo and Milton encounter an array of interesting historical figures who have been sentenced to an eternity in Heck where they act as teachers, torturers or in most cases, both. Just a few

of the characters in the story include Edgar Allen Poe as "Vice Principal Poe," Orpheus as "Mr. Orpheus, professor of Music Deprecation" and Van Gogh as "Mr. Van Gogh, Art Teacher." The references are just another touch Basye added that only contributes to the detail in his series, "It helps me, when creating a story, grabbing a lot of arcane bits here and there so it seems real to me. Ideally, kids will be able to read my books and get one experience, while adults will be able to read them and get another."

Whether you get his books for the kids in your life, or for yourself, *Heck: Where the Bad Kids Go* is an extremely intellectual, entertaining series that anyone can enjoy.

Dale Basye is speaking at the YWA Scare-A-Thon FUNdraiser, 11 am to 2 pm Saturday, Oct. 27, at Barnes & Noble; free. ■



SCHEDULE:

11 am Not too scary (for kids under 7)

Rich Glauber leads a disquieting sing-along/move-along. Winners under age 7 are read. Enter a "Horribly Haunted" design contest.

12 pm Gettin' scarier (elementary school)

Bary Shaw reads the elementary-age winning entries and storyteller, Robert Rubinstein, tells chilling folktales. Enter a dreadful "Instant Writing" contest. Get your fill of midday terror and afternoon frights with author Dale Basye.

1 pm Flat-out fright (middle & high school)

Bary Shaw reads teen and adult winners. Dale Basye entertains with his *Circle of Heck* books. Adults and teens enter a chilling "Instant Writing" contest.



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