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“Adirondack Green” to Debut at Earth Day Celebration
by Judy Routson

“No soldier ever went to war over a wind turbine.” A controversial statement, perhaps, but it’s the premise on which author John Slade bases his latest novel. Slade firmly believes that the coming generation “can take up a hammer and beat the blades of our myriad swords into the blades of wind turbines.”

In “Adirondack Green” he weaves a tale of a small Adirondack town that decides to put a single Danish-built wind turbine atop the local ski mountain. The turbine provides enough power for the entire town, including the ski life. A skilled storyteller, Slade capably combines the account of the turbine’s construction with the coming-of-age experiences of five high-school seniors. The students are among the class of 2004 who have learned that in order to graduate they must each do 100 hours of community service. Incorporating the issues of acid rain and the war in Iraq as background settings, this thought-provoking tale can sometimes take the reader on an emotional roller-coaster ride.

A resident of Little Log Lake in Woodgate, Slade earned a doctorate in literature from Stanford University in 1974. He has taught at both the high school and college levels in the United States, the Caribbean, Norway, and Russia. His novels, stories, and non fiction “enable the American reader to visit other lands, and to look upon contemporary America with a keener eye.”

Slade has many explanations for why he admits not everyone will agree with.

“I see that America is pursuing oil,” he says, “and not clean energy, like the rest of the world.” Clean energy, he believes, is something “we don’t have to fight for”

“We will send more soldiers into the wars,” he continues. “They’re defending our oil, not out borders.”

Economics is another reason for writing the book. Slade feels that clean energy is the economy of the future. “Why do we import wind turbines from Denmark,” he asks, “when we could build them in Utica? I want to help provide jobs for people in Bookville, Rome, and Utica.”

He wrote the book for veterans, too. Several characters in the story are veterans of three different wars. One of them narrates a detailed, moving account of his traumatic wartime experience to the senior high school class. “I interviewed an actual veteran, and his family supplied me with much background material,” said the writer. “Every word ... is real.”

“Russian veterans are treated differently,” continues Slade. “Here they tend to be forgotten. Yes, we have a parade, but kids don’t know about World War II; they don’t know about Vietnam or Korea.”

Although the story is fictional, area readers will soon recognize the town of Balsam Corners as nearby Old Forge. “Old Forge is a wonderful Adirondack town, and a classic small American town, with a ski hill,” said Slade. “It was the perfect setting.”

Slade’s wind turbine research took him first to Denmark on January 3, 2005, where he visited with the CEO of the Vestas Wind Systems Company. He spent three days talking and touring the factory. He put in a hard hat and climbed to the top of a tower while spending two weeks with workers at Maple Ridge Wind Farm on Tug Hill, where over a hundred Vestas turbines were installed last summer.



Author Dr. John Slade

Slade’s latest novel took a year-and-a-half of “incredibly intense” work. Arising every morning at 4 a.m., he worked 8 to 12 hours a day. He already had thought about what he would write “in fairly extensive detail. “When I write,” said Slade. “The first draft is about 95% like the final printed books.”

His thorough research and intense work have resulted in a novel with widespread appeal. The well-written account moves quickly and is easy reading. By the time you turn to the last page, you’ll have felt that same pride, excitement, happiness, and sorrow that the story’s characters have felt. The idea of matching up high school students with senior citizens, who in turn mentor the students, is an idea that should be copied across the country. The book, which definitely send several messages, should be required reading for everyone from students to elected government officials on all levels.

“Adirondack Green” is volume one of a two-part story. Volume one follows the five high school seniors from September through December, while the second part will continue up to their graduation, when something “extraordinary” happens.

Considering the environmental theme, it’s fitting that “Adirondack Green” will “debut” at Boonville’s Earth Day Celebration. Saturday, April 22. “This is the world premier,” Slade joked. He will be at the Hulbert House from 1-3 p.m., where he will be selling and autographing copies of his book. He especially invites veterans to visit with him. If you can’t make it then, the book will be available at many area bookstores, including Barnes and Noble. It can also be ordered on Slade’s website, www.woodgateintl.com, or by calling 1-800-247-6553. “Adirondack Green” and all of Slade’s previous books can also be borrowed from Boonville’s Erwin Library.

Plan to meet author John Slade on Earth Day and learn more about this unique book. “I didn’t write it to say ‘This is the way it should be’” said Slade. “I wrote it so people would think about it and talk about it, and come up with our own community response.