

Adirondack Express  
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Book Review – Adirondack Green  
By M. Lisa Monroe

Adirondack Green is a heartwarming and hopeful new novel from local author John Slade. The story is set in a fictionalized Old Forge, called Balsam Corners. It focuses on a group of teenagers who learn that one of the best ways to receive is to be involved in giving. An optimistic tale about the value of community and pulling together, the book leaves you feeling like the world is full of possibilities.

Set in current troubled times, the book addresses issues like the war in Iraq, the problems of global warming and pollution. It even offers some solutions.

By introducing a group of very different characters and the intriguing premise of a wind turbine on “Bobcat Mountain,” Slade keeps his reader interested in what happened to these people, while also educating about the value of “green” energy and the dangers of pollutions and dependence on foreign oil.

The book begins after the town of Balsam Corners, after much debate, has decided to install a wind turbine at the top of Bobcat Mountain. This installation serves as the backdrop for the adventures of the senior class of Balsam Corners Central School. Dale Shepherd, the school’s principal, has become dismayed at the direction the lives of young people in this country have taken. Convinced that the students are the future, he has decided to require 100 hours of community service from each member of the senior class.

After some initial griping, the teenagers all take to their tasks. The assignments were hand-picked for them by the principal and his wife, with an eye toward rounding out the youngsters as citizens. As the students accrue the required hours of service, they learn valuable lessons about life, and teach the reader some lessons about global responsibilities.

As the wind turbine goes up, the town makes plans about what to do with the extra income from selling the energy left over after powering the town. There are plans to light the ski trails, and one to develop a winter sports program for the handicapped. Since one of the best skiers from Balsam Corners is currently serving in the war, the town wants to do something to welcome back the soldiers who are disabled in the war. The profits from the wind turbine will help make their plans a reality.

Slade is obviously very concerned with the direction the planet is taking, and makes a confident bid to both educate and entertain. The novel answers a lot of questions and presents a few as well: the most important being, “Why not?”