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FUNNEL FLYING

his freshman year in high school rolled around, Rosenquist and his best friend, Larry, had created an office in his basement for their story writing company, Adventure Stories, Inc.

"Larry would write stories about The Avengers or the X-Men and I would draw the cover because I was the artist," Rosenquist said.

"When they finally decided to 'get serious,'" Rosenquist and his friend transformed the corner of his basement into their very own office.

Today Rosenquist's office is an eerily similar reminder to those days of old, as he spends countless hours toiling away in his basement. Right next to that sign that reminds him to make the experience as real as possible for the reader.

Seeing books on the shelves

In February of 2001 Rosenquist's first book hit the virtual shelves. The Opening and Closing of the Moon, although not sold in bookstores, was available over the internet, and to Rosenquist, it was a start.

"There is no doubt the first book helped me get the second one published," he said.

That second book, The Funnel Flyer, hit bookstore shelves earlier this summer.

"It was based off a dream a friend of mine had," Rosenquist said.

In the dream, his friend was in the middle of a field, on a gurney, with doctors all around her. Off in the distance she saw several tornadoes and her arms and legs started to fall from the sky.

"I thought, man what a cool dream," he said.

Rosenquist has also been into parachuting, and quickly his creative mind began to spin a tale of a parachuter who could jump into tornadoes and fly from town to town.

As of 2000, The Funnel Flyer was merely a short story, but after one of his writing teachers suggested turning it into a novel, Rosenquist really let his creativity flourish.

"I really stretched the story adding characters and creating an entire town," he said. "I even made a big map so I could get a perspective of what it looked like."

By the spring of 2003 he was sending the story to any publisher that would listen, and eventually he had five lined up that were willing to give him a chance. Publish America won out and Rosenquist released the book in June of 2004 after more than a year's worth of work.

Hearing the buzz

"They all love the idea. The first thing they always say is 'it's a great idea!'" Rosenquist said.

There is no doubt that Rosenquist's ability to conjure up tales of intrigue is his greatest asset. The length

or style of writing may not always work with what the publishers are looking for, but they can never deny the man's creative mind.

Now that Rosenquist has two books to his name, cementing a deal is becoming a little bit easier. He currently has two books in the works that may not be far from the bookstores themselves: Evermore and Second Coming. The first is a Civil War ghost story and the second is about a genius scientist who witnesses the Second Coming of Christ.

"I just want to be able to support myself with the writing," he said. "It's not too big of a goal. I don't want to sell 8 million copies. I just want to do it for a living; every writer wishes that."

In all, Rosenquist has four or five manuscripts he's pitching to publishers, along with his work promoting The Funnel Flyer.

Smelling success

Rosenquist continually lives by the code that stares at him everyday as he scribbles away at his desk.

"What do you see? What do you hear? What do you smell?"

For him, it's all about keeping that passion alive and letting the readers feed off it.

"I'm just trying to keep it interesting for me," he said. "If it's interesting for the writer, the reader will be interested."

Rosenquist's goal hasn't been about appealing to the readers' needs or trying to sculpt himself around the demands of others. It has been about writing from deep within and letting it connect.

He hopes his new project, a collection of stories about growing up in Lake County, will have no problem doing just that.

"I'm bringing up all these memories and I am sure they are iconic," he said. "People can relate and say, 'hey, I have the same story like that.'"

The book will be comprised of roughly 20 humorous, mysterious and touching tales about everything Lake County. Ranging from adventures at the Lake County Fair to the world of mystery wrapped around the bug spray truck that came every summer.

"I want the readers to finish and feel like they have been to Lake County," Rosenquist said.

Rosenquist easily gives the reader the sense of sight, sound and smell in his novels, but the real difference in his writing comes from an emotion rather than a sense. Maybe one day, Rosenquist will be able to make a new sign for other young writers that simply reads, "What do you feel?" For Rosenquist's novels are far more than simply extended sights and sounds, they are extensions of himself.

"Even if I never sell another book in my life," he said. "I will still be writing, because I love it so much."



Gregg Rosenquist signs a copy of his most recent book, The Funnel Flyer, during an appearance at This Old Book in downtown Grayslake. Rosenquist, a resident of Round Lake, also signed copies of his first book, The Opening and Closing of the Moon.— **Photo by Sandy Bressner**

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