

## Tustin author surprises family with book debut

On a spectacular, sunny day in Tustin, Robert Hill was disappointed to see that his two children preferred to play video games and watch YouTube. Observing his tweens, in fifth and eighth grade, on their devices, oblivious to the beautiful weather, gave him the genesis of an idea: what would happen if they suddenly had no technology?

His debut novel, "Alone Together," is the result. A finance professional in the banking industry, Hill toiled secretly at night and on

weekends, trading spreadsheets for word documents. A "pretty solid reader" all his life, Hill taught himself about character development, plot and dialogue. He enjoyed tapping into his creative side to craft the story of a Tustin family suddenly forced to survive in a world without electricity.

The book was written for his kids, with exciting themes but without inappropriate language. It was hard to contain his excitement about the story's progress, but after six months of clandestine writing,

Hill surprised his family, giving each a copy of his novel after their Thanksgiving dinner. They were amazed at this completely unexpected turn from the "numbers guy," and searched for their actions, dialogue and friends in the pages.

After another six months of revisions and proofing, "Alone Together" was published on June 9. The proud author thoroughly enjoyed the process, and has other ideas floating around – perhaps a sequel, a series, or something entirely different. The active dad, de-

spite being a quadriplegic after a swimming accident 25 years ago, coaches little league, skis, scuba dives, placed first in the wheelchair division of the New York Marathon, and enjoys off-roading with his family. He also hoped to pass along a love of reading to his children. He and his wife have read to the two boys since they were tiny. Did reading his book lure them away from their devices? "They loved the book," he said, "but, no, they haven't stopped with their devices."



*Robert Hill uses his computer to write a book about the world with no computers.*