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A NOVEL APPROACH

Local writer Richard Rose works in new genre

By Doug Rapp
Staff Writer

Local writer Richard Rose thought his screenplay, “Comic Crusaders,” would never get off the ground. It had been optioned twice by movie producers but never made.

Then Savant Books reached out, looking for works to publish as screenplay novels, which Rose describes as a bridge between novel and screenplay. He offered up “Comic Crusaders” which was released last November.

Rose described the plot in two sentences, likening his summary to the logline for a movie in TV Guide: “A teenage cartoonist uses a magic pen to bring a superhero to life to help him find his father who has mysteriously disappeared. In so doing, he unwittingly unleashes a grotesque supervillain and his

dark legions challenging him to find a way to save his father while preventing the dark legions from taking over the world.”

To read a screenplay novel, “the reader has to use his or her imagination,” the semi-retired financial advisor said. “The action and the dialogue move the story forward at a much faster pace.”

Whereas a novel or story might describe a scene in several paragraphs, Rose said he opens a scene in “Comic Crusaders” in an adolescent’s bedroom with a simple, “A teenage junkyard.”

The longtime Streeterville resident had been thinking of ways to reach today’s readers after observing people in bookstores.

“Kids don’t read like we did,” Rose said. “They’re very impatient. They’re looking at



Richard Rose

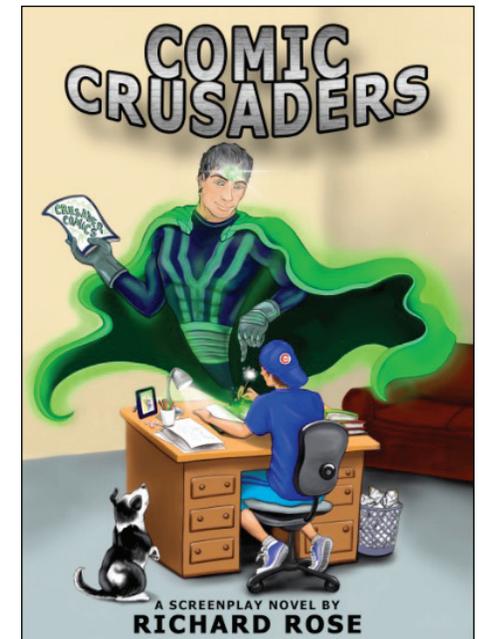
video games and movies.”

Rose, who has also published several novels and short stories, thinks screenplay novels like “Comic Crusaders” are one way to reach them.

“It’s a revolutionary way to beget a new genre and attract a much younger audience,” he said.

The roots of “Comic Crusaders” go back to Rose’s childhood in Kokomo, Ind. He and his brother Charlie would create comic strips with superheroes and villains parodying well-known citizens of his north-central Indiana hometown. Over time, Rose said, it morphed into a story.

“It’s lighthearted and a fun read,” he said, contrasting it with contemporary superhero stories that he characterized as violent and lacking humor.



Rose said he is working on “Redemption,” a sequel to his novel “The Lazarus Conspiracies,” about a maverick Chicago cop who uncovers a deadly conspiracy.

“Comic Crusaders” is available at Amazon.com

One Earth Film Festival connects people to the planet



One Earth Film Festival Screening at Northwestern. Photo courtesy of One Earth

By Elisa Shoenberger
Staff Writer

The One Earth Film Festival hopes to change hearts and minds about the environment, sustainability, and climate change through the power of film. The festival will be presenting 48 films throughout Chicago from March 6-15.

“I think film presents us with stories,” said festival president Ana Garcia Doyle. “These are mostly documentaries. They put people into a place where they can connect with someone’s story or a story of a group of people.”

But the festival screenings include more than just the movies. Each show has action partners related to the

documentary. Action partners include the Nature Conservancy and the Natural Resources Defence Council who provide additional information and help people who want to get more involved, said Cassandra West, publicist for the festival.

“We want them to take something from the film and inspire them to look around their community to see how they can make the environment they live in more sustainable,” West said.

Each year’s festival presents a broad spectrum of films covering areas of conservation, climate change and sustainable agriculture. Several films highlight issues in Chicago and Illinois. “It personalizes the issues in a

way that few other things can,” Doyle said.

Director Ines Sommer will be showing her film “Seasons of Change on Henry’s Farm” at Patagonia, 48 E. Walton, from 5:30-9 p.m. on March 12. The film is about Illinois organic farmer Henry and Brockman who takes a fallow year. His former apprentices take over the farm but end up facing unexpected consequences—notably flooding.

“I think as the climate is changing, our food production will absolutely be impacted, farmers are already struggling now. Ultimately it will impact what we see on food shelves,” Sommers said.

Many films take the story of climate change and conserva-

tion and add the human element to them. “When people find out we are doing environmental work, they think we are talking about lightbulbs, not driving... we are, but it’s so much deeper than that. I do hope people will think it’s a human issue,” Doyle said.

The festival started when a group of people met after an event with community organization Green Community Connections in 2012, West said. Now in its ninth year, the festival has expanded from Oak Park to Chicago and other suburbs. There’s also a youth filmmaking contest with entries from all over the US.

For more information, visit oneearthfilmfest.org