

Former Stouffville resident takes readers to other side

Even children's book project must delve into darkness

BY SANDRA BOLAN
sbolan@yrmg.com

Michael Poeltl sees the world through glasses that are a little murkier than rose coloured.

So it wasn't hard to believe his first foray into authorship would centre around a post-apocalyptic world.

Described as a hybrid between William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* and Cormac McCarthy's *The Road*, with a hint of Hunter S. Thompson thrown in, *The Judas Syndrome* is about a group of friends who just graduated from high school and celebrated by going on a camping trip.

However, upon their return to civilization, they realize there is no civilization, as the world has disintegrated and they must figure out how to survive.

15 YEARS LATER

"I've always had this story line I wanted to use and it lends itself to the end-of-the-world scenario," the transplanted Stouffville District Secondary School graduate said from his new home in Hamilton.

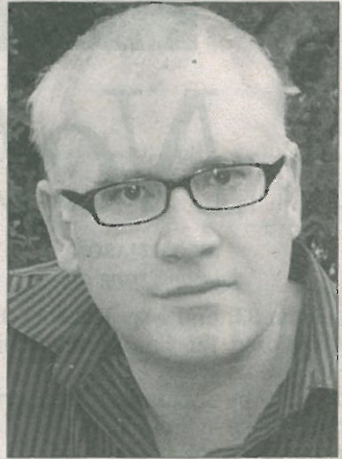
Mr. Poeltl, 37, actually started writing the book 15 years ago, but got sidetracked by a career in interpretive illustration.

"It turned out at the time, when I had to make the decision, art was more my forte," he said.

However, Mr. Poeltl spent much of his illustrating career working with authors who also thrived in the darker side of the literary scale.

"I was able to learn quite a bit from the writers I was involved with," he said. "This book almost became a graphic (novel) but it was an awful lot of work. ... (And I believed) it was a good enough book to stand on its own as a novel."

Last year, Mr. Poeltl finally finished the book, after accepting some editing help from a friend.



MICHAEL POELTL: SDSS graduate got sidetracked from writing project by doing illustrating.

"That propelled me to actually look at publishing," he said.

However, like many first-time authors these days, Mr. Poeltl opted to self-publish the book.

"The angle I'm taking is to self publish and accrue as many reviews as I can and (utilize) free marketing through the Internet," he said.

It seems to be working. On amazon.com where the book is available, reviews include: "Although I don't usually read apocalyptic fiction, the Internet buzz about *The Judas Syndrome* was so intense that I decided to check it out. I'm glad I did" and "The surprising but entirely believable ending was a big plus."

WORKING WITH WIFE

Next up for Mr. Poeltl is illustrating a children's book he and his wife, Lisa, are working on.

"It too has a dark side; I like the dark side," he said.

For more information, go to: www.the-judas-syndrome.com