

One Book One Aurora wraps this weekend with author talk



By Brock Weir

Over the past 10 months, Aurorans have had the opportunity to all get on the same page, reading from Brian Francis' poignant novel *Natural Order* as part of the Aurora Public Library's One Book One Aurora Campaign.

Now, to mark Ontario Public Libraries Week, Mr. Francis is set to hit the Aurora Public Library (APL) for an afternoon of readings, along with a question and answer session.

Getting underway at 2 p.m. in the Library's Living Room, this will serve as the grand finale for the 2017 One Book One Aurora project.

Ahead of the 2017 Campaign's launch, Mr. Francis spoke with *The Auroran* of his eagerness to share his book, in turn, with local readers.

"It is exciting for me and it is rewarding for me as an author," he said. "Really all I have ever tried to do when someone picks up a book is engage them emotionally. There are a lot of books that you read that you don't connect with for whatever reason and then there are books which, for some reason, just hit you at the right time or open your eyes up to things you hadn't considered before. For me, as an author, it is really rewarding that your book could spark a conversation and that your book can go in a bunch of different directions in terms of themes and topics."

And there has certainly been no shortage in themes this book has generated within the Aurora Community.

Natural Order is the story of Joy Sparks, left searching through her past, encountering "unsettling" memories of her son John and the secrets about him she has kept hidden from everyone around her – including herself. When she discovers a horrible lie about a treasured childhood friend, her carefully constructed world begins to unravel, revealing the devastating consequences of choices she made long ago.

Since then, the themes of the book have sparked a number of outreach opportunities with the local LGBTQ+ communities, with workshops on how APL can best serve the needs of this community, as well as an In Conversation roundtable on "LGBTQ+ Culture, Diversity and Inclusion," which stirred up passionate discussions on these issues not only in York Region but around the world.

"Family" was the theme of this year's One Book One Aurora writing contest, along with an "Alive" themed photography contest hosted by *The Auroran*, the winners of both contests having been awarded this past Monday at an Open House to mark the kick-off to Ontario Public Libraries Week.

Theatre Aurora has participated, hosting a live reading of the play *Visiting Mr. Green* as part of Culture Days, as has Amnesty International with a writing campaign.

Creative juices have also flowed through discussions on aging, currently represented through the Aurora Public Library Camera Club's photography exhibition "Age is Just A Number."

On Saturday, however, Francis, the man responsible for spurring such a lively ongoing discussion will take centre stage.

"For me, *Natural Order* was about looking back and reconciling yourself," says Mr. Francis. "I think all of us feel that sometimes we're making a decision that is right for us at the time. What I was trying to get across in *Natural Order* is we make decisions at

points in our life and time and history shows us that sometimes those decisions weren't the best ones.

?How do you reconcile yourself with those choices that you make when you thought you knew better but time reveals you didn't make the right decision? How do you reconcile with who you used to be or your past, and if you need forgiveness from somebody and that person is no longer there, how do you find that forgiveness?

?I am excited to see how Aurora responds to the book.?