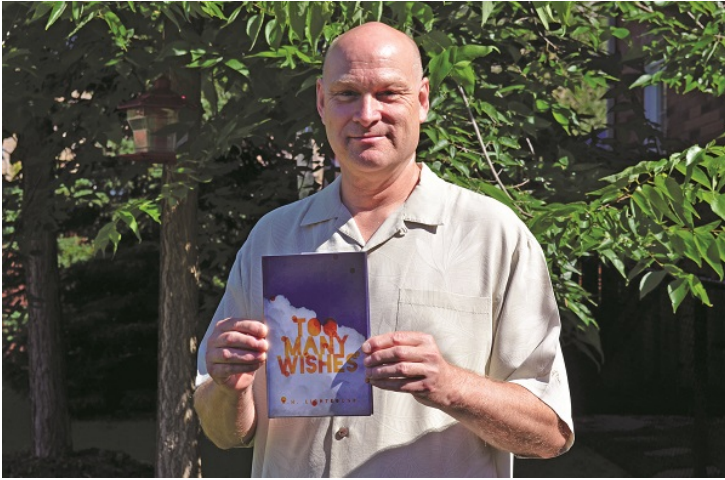


School caretaker pens novel for kids and young adults



By Brock Weir

Summer is winding down and as kids gear up for a return to school, they will do so chock full of memories ? and maybe a secret or two ? collected during the season that will have to sustain them until next June rolls around.

But the secret's out for Bob Lightbound, caretaker at Northern Lights Public School. As the kids return to this northeast Aurora school in September, they will have an author in their midst.

Mr. Lightbound, an Aurora resident writing as R.H. Lightbound, recently published his first novel, *Too Many Wishes*.

Too Many Wishes follows teenage brother and sister Richard and Lorali who happen upon an ex-genie and find themselves on an adventure replete with wishes ? and the dangers of ?those willing to stop and nothing to get their hands on the secrets behind unlimited wishes.?

?This book has been in my head for 30 years,? says Mr. Lightbound. ?I just had to get this idea out of my head. I sat down in front of my computer and started to type. My wife, Judith, didn't even know. After a year, I said, ?Well, I've finished my book!' and her response was just, ?What book?!

?Before I started to write, I just kept having the same dream over and over. The dream was only the idea of what the book should be about, but that is why it took a year to write ? you need to dream more.?

After finally getting the story of Richard and Loralli out of his head, and bouncing a few further ideas off his family, he made the bold step of printing off the manuscript and mailing it off to Friesen Press. Then, it was time to play the waiting game.

It was a game he was familiar with. 20 years ago he sent another book to a publishing agency in New York. Although their interest was piqued, Mr. Lightbound said they found it too short. Given the option to extend it into a fully-formed book or shorten it to be a magazine feature, that particular story was shelved. It was a different story altogether, however, for *Too Many Wishes*.

?Right away they said they liked it and with a little bit of revision said they could make a good story out of it,? says Mr. Lightbound. ?I made four revisions to it over four months, sent it back, [and] this is the version we all like the most.

?Working in an elementary school, I see the books they read and sometimes I read them too. If it looks like a good story, I'll pick them up and read them during my breaks. Eventually I thought I could write a book somewhere along those lines, a book I knew kids would love.?

As the wheels start turning on a new school year, Richmond Hill kids at Crosby Heights Public School, a school at which Mr. Lightbound used to work, will find *Too Many Wishes* on their library shelves and that is just the start of what the author hopes will come. The book is currently making the rounds of literary agencies with the hopes it will catch the eyes of players in the film and television industries.

An action-packed adventure, Mr. Lightbound says his story would make an ideal movie or TV show.

‘I hope kids take away a sense of adventure [and a way of looking at the world],’ he says. ‘Coincidences aren’t coincidences. They are meant to happen. There are people you are meant to meet. By meeting that person they put you on a different direction of your life without even realizing it. It will move you in a different direction, if you heed it.’