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Books

THE WORD ON THE STREET

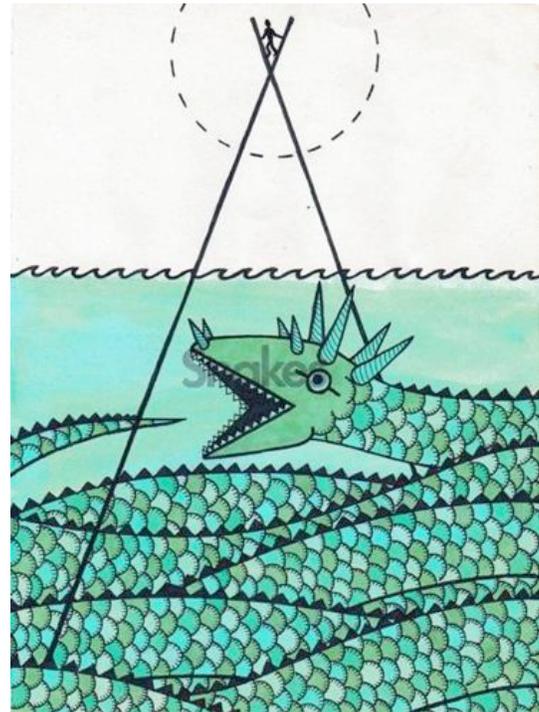
A look at book-related events

By Jan Gardner | OCTOBER 21, 2011

When Herman Melville's "Moby-Dick" was published in 1851, it was a critical and commercial failure from which the author never recovered. Now regarded as a literary masterpiece, it is the focus of a months-long celebration at the New Bedford Whaling Museum. After all, it was from New Bedford in 1841 that Melville, at age 21, set sail on the Acushnet whaling ship. Nine years later he finished writing "Moby-Dick" at his house in Pittsfield, in a room with a view toward Mount Greylock, which is said to have reminded him of a whale breaching the surface of the ocean.

The museum is hosting an "Imagining Moby!" art exhibit, a screening of the 1956 film adaptation starring Gregory Peck as Captain Ahab, and a "Stump the Scholars!" Melville quiz show modeled after NPR's "Wait, Wait, Don't Tell Me" as well as the 16th annual 25-hour marathon reading of "Moby-Dick."

If the unabridged version of Melville's Great American Novel is too daunting, there's a new book "**Moby-Dick in Pictures: One Drawing for Every Page**" (Tin House) by Matt Kish. As a young boy, he was enthralled with the 1956 film. It wasn't



Matt Kish created an illustration for every page of the paperback version of the book, paired with a quotation, for "Moby-Dick in Pictures."

until he was a high school freshman in 1984 that he read the unabridged version. Having read it nine or 10 times now, Kish describes it as being “about everything. God. Love. Hate. Identity. Race. Sex. Humor. Obsession. History. Work. Capitalism.” He created an illustration for every one of the 552 pages in the Signet Classics paperback edition and paired it with a quotation from the novel. Awash in color, Kish’s book is a trip at blur-speed.

Setting the hook

Parents often wonder “What are good books to read to my children?” so the little ones will grow to love reading on their own. First-time authors and longtime teachers Susan Marx and Barbara Kasok make 275 recommendations in “**Help Me Get Ready to Read: The Practical Guide for Reading Aloud to Children During Their First Five Years.**” The two suggest ways to respond to a child who has no interest in books, gets restless while being read to, or wants the same book read over and over again.

A poetry celebration

Hanging Loose is a magazine and a press that prides itself on publishing high school-age poets as well as established writers. The current issue features work by a Brookline teen and a New York octogenarian. The press has published close to 200 books, including works by Sherman Alexie. The press, founded in New York in 1966, now has an editorial office in Boston. To celebrate Hanging Loose’s 45th anniversary, the New England Poetry Club is hosting a poetry reading at the Cambridge Public Library at 2:30 p.m. on Oct. 30.

Coming out

- “**Spencer Tracy**” by *James Curtis* (Knopf)
- “**The Litigators**” by *John Grisham* (Doubleday)
- “**Thinking, Fast and Slow**” by *Daniel Kahneman* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux)

Pick of the Week

Caitlin Doggart of Where the Sidewalk Ends Bookstore in Chatham recommends **“Oliver Pepper’s Pickle”** by John C. Picardi (Camel): “In this vibrant, funny, and heartfelt novel, a self-described ‘boring’ 36-year-old ‘privileged white man’ named Oliver Pepper endures a stretch of failures before he’s hired as a substitute teacher in a violent New York City middle school. His new job begins as a way to catch the eye of the sexy principal but becomes an unexpected boost to Mr. Pepper as he influences his students in surprising ways.”

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