

Dear Northwest Academy Middle School students and parents,

This coming school year, as part of our Middle School Visiting Writer Program, we will again be reading the work of a professional author who will visit Northwest Academy to interact with students. We are pleased to announce the 2020 title and author!

The Visiting Writer Program addresses a growing concern among U.S. educators that students too often associate book-reading solely with papers and tests. The Visiting Writer book and reading experience allow the students to enjoy reading and discussing works with peers and teachers, much like one might experience in a book club. But the Visiting Writer Program is much more than a book club. It provides our students and faculty with a unique opportunity to share in the same texts, interact with a diverse array of authors, engage in shared cultural experiences, and perhaps become inspired to read and write fiction or poetry outside of class. It is also a great opportunity for 6th and 7th graders to listen to how 8th graders respond to the text and the author. This type of meaningful peer experience is an important component of a Northwest Academy education.

During the author visit (in the fall), students will have the opportunity to ask a variety of questions about the artistic process, literary subjects and themes, and experiences that have influenced the author's writing. The students may also have the chance to have their book signed and speak with the author further.

This summer, we are proud to announce that we will collectively read the book Finally, Something Mysterious, published in 2020 (see below for more information). Author Doug Cornett will be "visiting" the Middle School in the fall (he is a high school teacher at Northwest Academy!).

Incoming 6th, 7th, and 8th grade families should purchase the book and students should read the book over the summer. Students should also bring the book with them to school when they bring their other required texts (usually the second or third day of school). *Please consider purchasing this text from your favorite local bookstore!**

Should you have questions about the Middle School Visiting Writer Program, please feel free to reach out to me.

Sincerely,
Andrea Van Hagen
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*Awesome local bookstores!

Green Bean Books: greenbeanbookspdx.com

Powell's: powells.com

A Children's Place: achildrensplacebookstore.com

Broadway Books: broadwaybooks.net

Dickens Children's Books: dickenskids.com



ABOUT FINALLY, SOMETHING MYSTERIOUS

The best mysteries can only be solved with your best friends.

Paul Marconi has always thought that Bellwood was a strange town, but also a boring one. Not much for an eleven-year-old to do. Fires are burning nearby, Paul's parents are obsessed with winning a bratwurst contest, and his best friend, one of the founding members of their only-child detective club, the One and Onlys, is about to acquire a younger sister, sort of undoing their whole reason for existing. But then! Hundreds of rubber duckies have appeared on the lawn of poor Mr. Babbage without any explanation. Finally! There is something that Paul and his friends can actually investigate.

In the face of all these bizarre occurrences, Paul is convinced that uncovering who deposited the duckies will finally bring some sense to what has become an upside-down world. Soon the three friends have a long list of suspects, all with their own motives, but no clear culprit. When everything comes to a head at the town's annual Bellwood Bratwurst Bonanza, Paul discovers that some things don't have an easy explanation and not every mystery can be solved. A perfect summer story about friends, amateur sleuthing, and a whole lot of rubber duckies.

"The perfect mix of hilarious and heartwarming—kids won't be able to get enough of Paul and his friends' Bellwood adventures."—Elsie Chapman, author of *All the Ways Home*

"Delightful fun for budding mystery fans."—Kirkus

"A diverting mystery with clever misdirection that will keep readers guessing until the end."—The Bulletin

"The quirkiness of the premise and the light, punny humor give the narrative its momentum."—Booklist

"The One and Onlys seem primed to become a popular trio among readers who enjoy an old-fashioned whodunit."—Publishers Weekly

About the author:

When he was a kid, Doug Cornett aspired to be an all-star point guard in the NBA. When he realized that probably wasn't going to happen, he turned his attention to writing and never looked back. He earned his BA in English from Skidmore College, and his MFA in Creative Writing from Portland State University. His writing has appeared in *McSweeney's Internet Tendency*, *New Flash Fiction Review*, *Ruminate Magazine*, and elsewhere.

Now, in addition to writing middle grade mystery novels, he likes playing ping-pong, noodling on the guitar, and rooting for the Portland Trail Blazers and Cleveland Cavaliers. He also teaches high school English and History at Northwest Academy. Originally from Cleveland, Ohio, he lives in Portland, Oregon with his wife and two children. *Finally, Something Mysterious* is his debut novel.