

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Background:

Frequently-asked questions about Uncle Hyggly

Who is Uncle Hyggly?

Uncle Hyggly is the pen name of author/illustrator Charles Smith-Dewey. He lives in Lakeville, Minnesota with his wife Elise, daughters 14-year-old Ruairi and 10-year-old Bailey.

What else has Hyggly written?

He has published four books as Uncle Hyggly, including “Mr. Gonopolis And His 12 Holsteins -- A Christmas Story”, two other Gonopolis books and “Subordinate Claus, Santa’s Younger Brother.”

Who are Hyggly’s influences

Many! First of all, St. Paul native Charles Schulz, creator of Peanuts -- when Hyggly was a child he used to hold the Sunday funnies up to the frosty window of his Minnesota farmhouse and trace the characters, finally learning to just look at them and draw them freehand when all the blood would sink to his elbows!

Secondly, children’s author Dr. Seuss, whose unfettered imagination remains an inspiration. Seuss’s use of rhyme is unparalleled, and Hyggly is humbled to have been described by one newspaper as the rural pretender to Seuss’ throne.

Third, the witty wordplay of the Jay Ward Studio creations such as Bullwinkle Moose and Rocket Jay Squirrel (interestingly enough, from the fictional town of Frostbite Falls, Minnesota). Ward’s creations could be enjoyed on several levels -- kids got the basic jokes but there was a whole other level aimed at the grownups. Hyggly aspires to that same multi-level approach.

Fourth, Superman. Seriously. “Truth, justice and the American Way” rang true to this farm boy while he was growing up, and still informs his life today -- that, and an admiration for the late actor Christopher Reeve. He has tried to convince his daughters that the

WB show “Smallville” is about him growing up on the farm, but they got wise around season 3. He turns pale around rocks painted green. The flying cows come from his obsession with Superman.

Did Hyggly have cows growing up? Does he have cows now?

Hyggly grew up on a hog farm in the central Minnesota town of Ashby, and his family only had one milk cow to provide for the family’s own needs, but he still remembers the daily aroma of the milk his mom would pasteurize. Whenever he got too close to his brothers while they were milking, he got blasted by a teat misused as a squirt gun!

Hyggly has petitioned his neighborhood association unsuccessfully for permission to have a holstein in the backyard of his suburban home, even offering to share the milk. He briefly considered getting one anyway, calling it “spot” and telling the neighbors it was a dalmatian.

Does Hyggly ever read his books to kids at schools?

Yes, Hyggly has visited many, many elementary schools over the years, garbed in a full-length holstein-print coat (cape?), visiting with kids on his experiences in writing, illustrating and publishing books. He’s even worked as an author-in-residence at a number of schools, helping kids write and illustrate their own books, telling them how he started cartooning and making his own characters while in 5th grade in a small K-12 school.

What does Hyggly do when he’s not writing books?

In his secret identity of Charles Smith-Dewey he is a Website designer, graphic artist, Mac guru and all-around marketing communications guy. His Web site for that is at www.pounce.com.

Who does Hyggly blame for the outing of his secret identity?

Karl Rove. Scooter Libby was just the fall guy. That, plus the fact that Hyggly chose to mask his secret identity with contact lenses instead of glasses.

For more information, visit the Web site at www.woundedcoot.com.