

Texas Reads: 'Dixie Pig' boys reunite 40 years later in novel

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ABIENE, Texas - Colorado physician-turned-author Stacy Childs, who grew up in Abilene, has published his second novel. It has its roots in Abilene, as you might deduce from the title, "The Boys of the Dixie Pig" (Crossroad Press Publishing, \$26.99 hardcover, \$15.99 paperback).

The fast-paced mystery revolves around five men who became best friends in junior high in Abilene 40 years ago. The guys get together for a reunion in Colorado, where brainy pal Ace has established a lucrative futuristic enterprise freezing bodies so they might be brought back to life someday when cures are found for the diseases that plagued them.

The lives of former football star Willie, arms dealer Mack, and devoted family men Goody and Donnie soon become intertwined with Ace's increasingly bizarre ideas, motives and morals.

Mack is dodging would-be assassins, Willie is dealing with alcoholism, depression and a failing marriage, and Donnie and Goody have more-or-less normal lives in Texas, until they come under Ace's spell.

Meanwhile Ace, who wasn't much of a ladies' man in high school, has a hot new girlfriend who turns out to have an Abilene connection of her own. And Ace has business dealings with a Las Vegas mobster who is determined to kill Mack over a bad debt that has escalated into a full-fledged feud with international ramifications.

"The Boys of the Dixie Pig" will keep you turning the pages as you follow the fates of the five friends.

Civil rights: The University of Texas Press has published an impressive full-color coffee table book celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the 1964 Civil Rights Act.

The book, "Destiny of Democracy" (\$39.95 hardcover), grew out of the Civil Rights Summit held last April at the Lyndon B. Johnson Presidential Library at UT. Speakers at the summit included Presidents Carter, Clinton, George W. Bush and Obama as well as numerous pioneers and leaders of the civil rights movement.

Mark Updegrove, director of the LBJ Presidential Library and host of the summit, wrote and produced "Destiny of Democracy," pulling together remarks and excerpts from the many speeches, Q-AND-A conversations, and panel discussions at the summit.

The summit, Updegrove writes, not only looked back on "the most important domestic movement of the twentieth century," but also looked ahead at some of the issues facing the nation today, such as gay marriage, immigration, and education.

"Destiny of Democracy" also includes photos and text from the 1964 Civil Rights Act and the 1972 Civil Rights Symposium which also was held at the LBJ library.

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