

Author to sign copies of new book 'Alabama Moon' at Chatom library

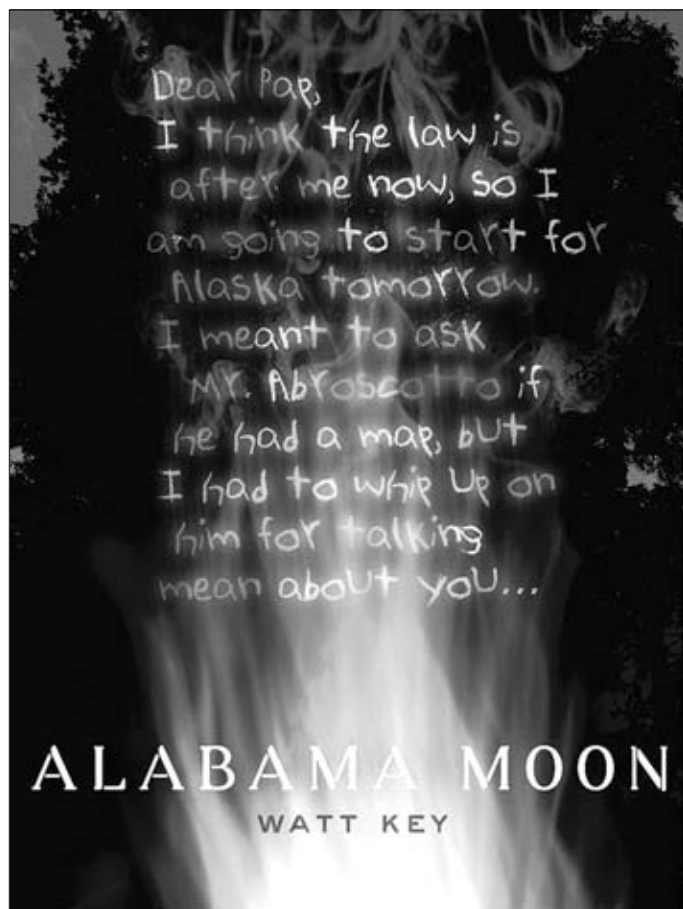
"You see, there's this boy who's raised out in the woods and doesn't know a thing about the world but what he's seen within a couple of miles of his stick hut. One day this kid pops out of the woods, ten years old, and starts walkin' down the blacktop. We automatically think we got to put him in the system. Get him in the boys' home. Make him property of the state. Well, everybody can't fit that slot."

—From ALABAMA MOON, by Watt Key

CHATOM — Moon is an outsider. Ostracized from the larger world, his life changes forever when his fervently anti-government, live-off-the-land pap dies and leaves him alone — not only parentless but convinced that there is no one to turn to for help. Before he died, Pap had instructed Moon to head to Alaska to find other like-minded people, but can a ten-year-old accomplish this on his own?

When readers meet Moon in ALABAMA MOON (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, September 2006, \$16.00) by Watt Key, they find a boy who seems tough as nails, able to skin a deer, build a shelter out of palmetto roofing, and rely on natural resources to survive in the wilderness. But beneath this veneer is a boy who is lonely and confused and in search of his own path.

Cinematic in scope, this gripping debut novel is both an in-depth look at what it takes to exist in the wild and the poignant story of an



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orphaned child and his assimilation into society. Set in 1980s central Alabama, it has the feel of a classic work and will please fans of Louis Sachar's Holes, Gary Paulsen's Hatchet, and Mark Twain's The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn.

Cast in the mold of a modern-day Huck Finn, Moon is wily and thoughtful but has a lot to learn when it comes to society and people's prej-

udices. As soon as he sets off for Alaska, he is caught by the law in the person of one ridiculous yet vengeful Constable Sanders, who views Moon as "militia trash." Moon cannot abide being forced into a boys' home and escapes with a couple of newfound friends, Hal and Kit. In the process, Moon becomes something of a legend, portrayed on the local news as a wild child and lawbreaker who must be captured and

tamed. To his surprise, Moon finds that surviving in the woods with Hal and Kit is not as easy as past experience would have him believe. His friends are used to urban conveniences and Kit requires modern medicine. Moon begins to realize that society may have some things to offer him, including companionship and comfort, and that Pap may have been misguided in leading such a solitary existence, even negligent.

Thirty-five-year-old Watt Key, the oldest of seven children, was raised in Point Clear, Alabama, where, he spent his winters building tree forts, hunting, fishing, and trapping in the swamp. As an adult, his affinity for swamping led him to buy a thousand-dollar piece of swampland five miles into the Alabama River delta, accessible only by small boat, where he built a "swamp lodge," as he explains, and now entertains friends by "catching alligators, running catfish lines, and generally getting away from it all." Watt Key currently lives in Mobile, with his wife and children.

Key will be reading excerpts from the book and autographing copies (which will be for sale) at the Washington Co. Public Library in Chatom on Thursday, Feb. 15 from 4 to 6 p.m. Refreshments will be served and the public is cordially invited to attend.

Readers may call (251) 847-2097 for more information.

AMSTI

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Alabama High School Graduation Exam. In the first year of implementation at other AMSTI schools, 2.38% more students were reported to have passed the math portion of the AHSGE in the 11th grade, and 2.62% more students passed in the 12th grade. In science, 2% more students passed that portion of the test in the 11th grade, and 2.62% more students passed in the 12th grade.

Because of the obvious increase in assessment scores, the December/January edition of the national educational journal Educational Leadership chose AMSTI as a national model for other states to follow.

The research-based initiative will provide SCHS with three basic services, including professional development, equipment and materials, and on-site support by math and science specialists. Students will learn math, science, and technology through activity-based, inquiry approaches consistent with the latest research on effective math and science instruction.

As an AMSTI school, SCHS will also receive over 7,000 different items to use as resource materials in the classroom. Included in the materials are such items as math materials, lab ware, chemicals, graphing calculators, global positioning devices, and weather monitoring equipment. The equipment and resources arrive packaged in "kits" ready for immediate use by the teacher and students.

Each participating school is assigned to a regional site at a college or university for training and materials. AMSTI sites supply teachers within their geographic region with all of the equipment and materials needed to engage their

students in hands-on learning of math and science. To receive the resources, schools must send their math and science teachers and their administrators to two-week summer institutes for two consecutive summers where they learn the latest methods of instruction and receive training on the use of the equipment and materials.

Currently, there are nine such sites across Alabama, which serve participating AMSTI public schools across the state. AMSTI sites include Auburn University, Jacksonville State University, The University of Alabama/The University of West Alabama; The University of Alabama in Huntsville, The University of Montevallo, The University of North Alabama, University of South Alabama, Troy University, and Alabama State University/Wallace Community College-Selma.

The AMSTI site for SCHS is the University of Alabama/University of West Alabama.

SCHS is currently the only school in the county to be selected to participate in the program. But according to Governor Riley, the state hopes to put AMSTI in every school in Alabama within the next few years.

"I have made AMSTI a priority because I know it works," stated Riley after announcing the AMSTI expansion last week. "With AMSTI, students don't simply read about math and science; they experience it in the classroom. AMSTI brings a higher level of enthusiasm to students and helps heighten their interest in learning. That's especially important when it comes to math and science, because these two areas of study are essential if our children are to compete for the jobs of the 21st century. AMSTI will continue to be a priority in the education budgets I propose, and my goal is to put AMSTI in every school in Alabama."

SCHS names honor roll students

GILBERTOWN -- The following are honor roll listings for the 2nd 9-weeks grading period at Southern Choctaw High School:

7th Grade -- "A" Chelsa Jarman, Taylor Phillips and Rayshaun Maurice Reed. **"B"** -- Brittany Anderson, Molly Bonner, Jonathon Booth Mallary Boykin, Raven

Davis, Mellisa Grayson, Cassandra Mazingo, Samantha Miller, Shaquille Pearson, and Piper Shepherd.

8th Grade -- 'A' Jennifer Carlisle, Kaitlin Hare, Samantha McDougal, and Tabitha Wilson. **"B"** -- Bittany Allemand, Dominique Hill, Chelsea Kelly, Berneika Napier, Marquez Pickens, and

Demetrius Powe. **9th Grade: "A"** -- Kristen Campbell and Glen Phillip Turner. **"B"** -- JaQuisha Goines, Arthur James Hudson, Christian Loftis, Porchia McLaughlin, and Jasmine Thornton.

10th Grade -- "B" Keith Coker, Paige Dempsey, Angelica Gibson, Jade McIlwain, and Amanda Williams.

11th Grade -- "A" Andrea Clanahan, Brit-tany Miller, Bonnie Morgan, Amber Rankins, and Samantha Sims. **"B"** Steven Gibson.

12th Grade : "A" Phillip Philon, Andrew Sikes, and Trent Singley. **"B"** Amanda Allemand, Whitney Frost, Samantha Johnson, Emerald Kirksey, Kim Thornton, and Brittany Turner.

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Happy 50th Birthday Michael Ray
You are our camping buddy and our fishing friend. We will always love you till the very end. You are nice and you are kind but we are sorry to say you can't always be 49.
We Love You!!!!
Ole Bud, JoeJoe, TreTre, & Papa

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