

# Spanning the globe with literature

**MAPS Middle School students review Irish author's book**

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 STAFF WRITER

MANISTEE — If you are going to write a book geared toward middle school aged children then it is best to get feedback from the people in that age bracket about it.

Irish author Olive Mooney, whose book "The Chronicles of Cadaver College — The Book of Ornis" thought that would be a good idea. Mooney has it placed in 13 schools in Ireland and 18 bookshops, but expressed an interest in expanding to the United States market.

That was where Manistee Middle School entered the picture. Mooney is the daughter of a cousin of former Manistee Area Public Schools Superintendent Tom Culbert.

"She is my first cousin's daughter in Ireland, and wrote me that she had written a children's book," said Culbert. "She was promoting the book in Ireland to school children and in the book stores. I thought it would be nice if I could get a hold of some of those books and have students in the Manistee schools reading it. She sent me 10 books for the classroom and when I got them I contacted (Manistee Intermediate School District consultant/former teacher) Dency Lippert."

Lippert passed the idea along to middle school teacher Sandy Slawinski, and she jumped at the chance for her students.

"Dency approached me in August about Olive; she is a new author who was trying to get her book out more in the United States," said Slawinski. "One day Dency and Mr. Culbert came in to talk about what (Olive) was looking for us to do. Olive wanted the kids to critique it and to give her some feedback."

Culbert's cousin sent him 10 books and Slawinski selected an equal number of students that she felt would give honest feedback.



Ken Grabowski/News Advocate

Manistee Middle School teacher Sandy Slawinski leads a discussion among students about the book "The Chronicles of Cadaver College — The Book of Ornis" by Olive Mooney. The author is a relative of Manistee resident Tom Culbert and lives in Ireland. She wanted a perspective of the book from American students and asked the local middle school students to read it and give her feedback.

and another to our school library," she said. "The students who read the books were able to keep those copies and they are just kind of spreading the word."

Students who did the reading thought the book was exceptional.

"It was a pretty good book all around, and I can see it going a lot of places from where it is right now," student Logan Miller. "The next book and the ones after that should be good, so if you want something you can stick to a while. I like how the book had ghosts and things like that in it, as she added some new things in there."

Erin Dorn said she found the characters in the book interesting.

"They were all people completely different, so they each had their own unique traits and it made the story more interesting," she said. "I think it will have a good string of more books."

Heather Antal liked the way the book kept her thinking throughout.

"I really like all the things she included all these ideas, because I don't think I have ever read a book about the ghost world and when you are dead," she said.

Haley Johnson felt Mooney took a subject line that is quite familiar with this age group thanks to the Harry Potter books and worked in a new twist

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— Heather Antal



*"She was able to add some new life into some of these ideas and each character had its own story. One character who thought he was a pirate."*

— Haley Johnson

"The Chronicles of Cadaver College — The Book of Ornis"

book. The author was in an automobile accident recently and it has temporarily limited her chances to work on future books.

"I plan to do between five and seven books with the series," said Mooney. "I am a little unclear yet, because this is my first series and am still feeling my way with it. The second book is called 'The Curse of Hablizia' and is almost finished. I am running a little behind because of the accident, so I am not certain when it will be finished."

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Mooney said the MAPS students gave her some great feedback.

"They have given me something to think about," she said. "Talking to students and getting their feedback is one of the really fun things about writing. Other than that, it is just me, my laptop and the characters."

Students hope to publish their review of the book in an upcoming education page in the *Manistee News Advocate*.

