

'Hurricane Code' carries climate change message

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Body

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Author James Aura's latest novel, "The Hurricane Code," is a futuristic look at the present-day issue of **climate change** against the backdrop of the Midwest.

Dubuque is a prominent stop along the way for **climate** refugees in the year 2099 who are trying to escape the everyday storms that now dominate the Earth.

Aura, who lives in Raleigh, N.C., said he was impressed with Dubuque during his travels.

"We were traveling through to visit in-laws," he said. "I have a friend in Des Moines who said we should go through Dubuque. I played tourist for about two days. Took lots of pictures and lots of notes. I thought it would be a beautiful setting for a book."

Aura also has a solid Midwest background. He grew up in north central Missouri, and called Quincy, Ill. home for a number of years, where he was a journalist from 1971 to 1979. All told, he spent 40 years covering news before retiring and turning to novel writing.

In "The Hurricane Code," Aura combined his interest in sci-fi, weather and artificial intelligence to weave a cautionary tale exploring the future of life on Earth.

"I've been interested in weather for a long time," he said. "I took scientific principles that a lot of scientists use now, and thought about what might happen."

Aura set his novel in the Midwest because he believes the center of the country is often overlooked when it comes to national news coverage.

"A lot of novels about **climate change** are set on the coasts," he said. "So I wanted to do a little illustration of what might happen in the Midwest and how Midwesterners would react to those kinds of **changes**."

As Aura's refugees are bombarded with daily hurricanes and wicked blizzards, the novel also explores socio-economic classes, and how the divide between the "haves" and "have nots" affects the standard of living when the world is experiencing an extended crisis.

"I took current sociological and economic trends, and explored what might happen," he said. "I tried to look at it from the point of view of the rich and the not-so-rich."

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While "The Hurricane Code" is a fictional future, Aura is concerned about the present state of **climate change** and how it is affecting all living beings.

"We're starting to see **changes** in animal migration and patterns," he said. "Reptiles are moving north because of how cold it's getting in the south at night. We're seeing pythons as far north as Georgia. Is it possible that pythons could be visiting Kansas in the future? Yes, it's possible."

While **climate change** is the star in Aura's novel, fans of science fiction will find plenty to love, from an AI-led government to electromagnetic pulse cannons.

"I've been fascinated with AI for some time," he said. "I'm a long time science fiction fan. A lot of the things that are in the book, like AI robots and EMP cannons, are based in reality and are happening right now."

"The Hurricane Code" is an entertaining read, but is also a cautionary tale.

"I did a lot of projection," Aura said. "But weather on a daily basis could become a life or death proposition. We're looking at not if it might happen, but when it will happen if we continue to do nothing."

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