

Jason Olsen Featured at Local Authors Night

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Last semester, English Department Associate Professor Jason Olsen was featured by the USU Eastern Library and Learning Commons at their Local Authors Night. He was joined by librarian Michael Harris, and the two engaged in a conversation about Jason's writing process, his published works, and the process of publication.

"It was great being able to sit with a friend and talk about my processes and creative work," Jason reflects. "And it was especially exciting to have students and colleagues present to ask questions and talk about writing."

Local Authors Night is an annual event at the library that started twelve years ago. Every year is different, with writers reading, discussing their writing, and giving advice on different parts of the writing world. Jason decided to discuss a range of topics to keep it engaging for the students, including his own writing and teaching. Michael suggested the informal "interview" style so the event would feel more like a conversation. In their discussion, Jason talked about how in teaching writing, he emphasizes the best thing that writers can do is play.

"I think of a writing class as an experimental space — we're not here to immediately create perfectly constructed pieces of writing," Jason explains. "Instead, we're in a class to try things and experiment. Sometimes things don't turn out the way we want to, but that's okay! Everything you write is a step toward the next thing you write after

that. So, everything — good and not so good — is a pivotal part of a writer's development."

Additionally, Jason talked about how teaching writing informs his personal writing. "My writing classes inspire my own work," he comments. "There are very few things as inspiring as really good workshop class. It makes me want to dive into my own writing."