

Victor students' haiku book raised eyebrows, concerns

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A nearly 300-page book of allegedly offensive poetry was published by Victor Senior High School students on Amazon earlier this year.

The book, titled "Super Team Haiku," was composed of haiku poems, some of which made fun of district teachers by name in offensive terms. The book may have contained other vulgar or crass language or subject matter, students say.

Word about the book spread around the school a few months ago, but many hadn't read the book personally, said Andrew Russell, a junior at Victor.

A group of students had a shared document on Google several months ago where they wrote the poetry, and that document morphed into an eventually published book, said Carrie Stewart, also a junior, who never saw the book or its contents.

Students say many of the involved students were at the top of their classes.

It was supposed to be a joke, but a group of students were called to the principal's office after the administration found out about the publication, she said.

"There are a few students who were pretty offended by it, especially the ones who were close to the teachers who were in the book," she said.

To her knowledge, none of the students have been expelled or suspended because of the book, she said. They were asked to apologize to teachers in some form.

Victor schools said administrators became aware of the book last month and started an investigation. "During the investigation it became evident that the intent of the students' work, while highly inappropriate, was not meant to hurt or harm, rather it was intended to be humorous and satirical," a release said.

The students have been disciplined. The district didn't say how the students were disciplined.

Principal Yvonne O'Shea said in a release that "the incident, while disturbing, proved to be a difficult but teachable moment for students and adults alike."

She said students involved "are remorseful and have written a letter of apology."

The book is still searchable on Amazon but is listed as “not available” and “Out of Print — limited availability.” There are several book reviews posted on the page, many of which say the book is “disgusting” and contains “vulgar and hateful language.”

Other reviews tout the students’ right to free speech. It is listed as being published on CreateSpace, an independent publishing platform.

It is mentioned that the book was written by Victor Senior High School students. The 21 authors listed on the page include names such as “Broomab Bong Rip spudboy” and “Gaylord Prosciutto.”

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The advertisement features a vertical image of a salmon and scallop dish on the left. The right side has a white background with a maroon header that reads "OpenTable Diners' Choice Award". Below this are the logos for "portico BY PABLO VIVIANI" and "LAGO RESORT-CASINO". The text in the center says: "Whether celebrating a night out, a big win or simply enjoying the finest that the Finger Lakes region has to offer, Portico has your table waiting." Below the text is a maroon button with the text "MAKE RESERVATIONS". At the bottom of the ad, a maroon banner contains the text: "Must be 21 or older. For help with problem gambling call 877.8.HOPENY or text HOPENY (467369)." There is a decorative floral pattern in the bottom right corner of the white area.

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