

Woonsocket author, North Providence illustrator pair up to publish 'Where's Owen Goin'?'

By **PATRICIA A. RUSSELL**
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WOONSOCKET - Christina Lauzon of Woonsocket and Jason LeClair of North Providence had something in common: she wanted to write a children's book and he wanted to illustrate one.

Last week, each of their dreams became a reality.

It all started when Lauzon's husband put their then-4-month-old son, Owen, on the back of the family dog, Dakota.

It was an inspirational moment for Lauzon, although it did take three years for her story to evolve.

"I did a lot of talking about writing a book before I actually wrote it," acknowledged Lauzon, holding the recently printed copy of "Where's Owen Goin'?"

It is a story about a curious little boy who sets off to explore while riding on the back of his dog.

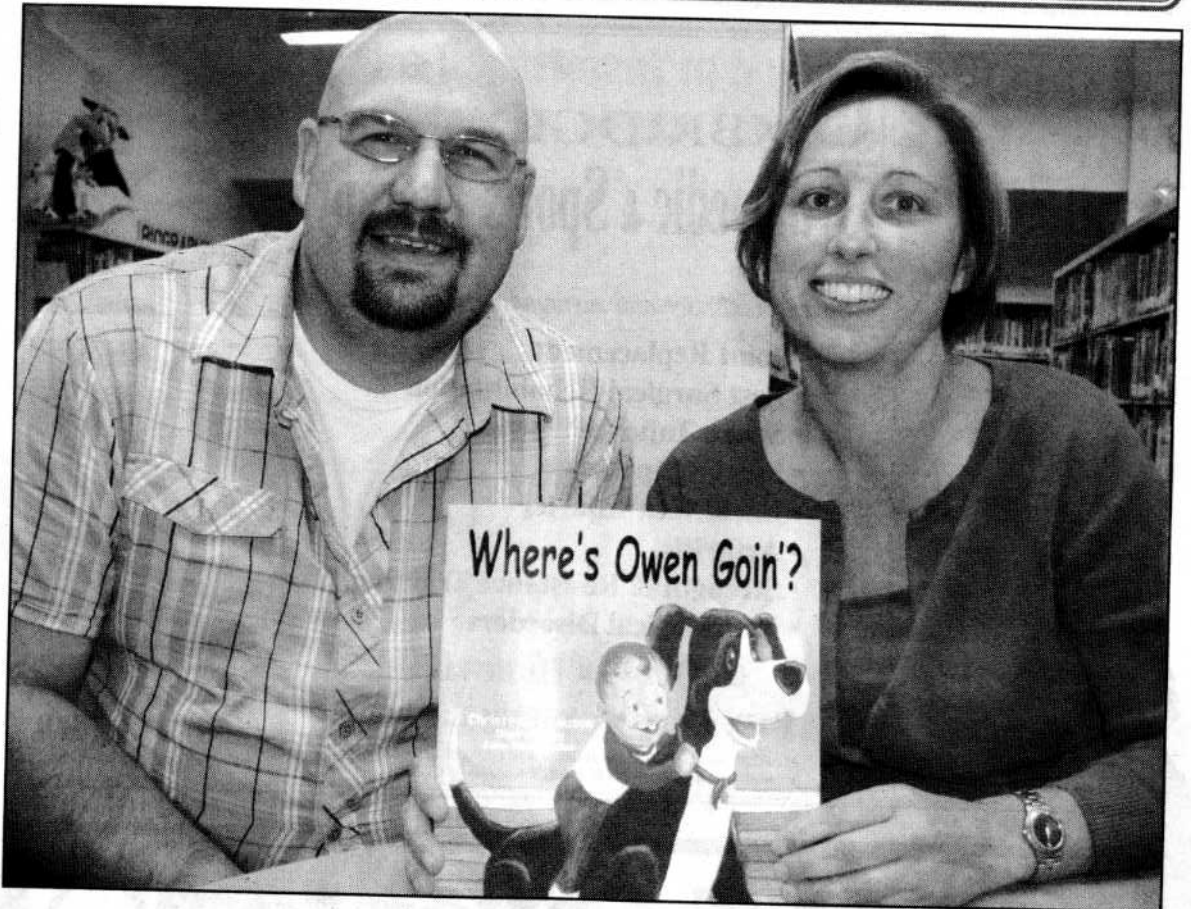
One thing he wanted to say is that "it doesn't matter how good your story is or how good your pictures are. Both have to tell a story by themselves so they work fantastically together."

Lauzon is already working on another children's book. Like the first one, it will feature Owen and Dakota.

LeClair can hardly contain his enthusiasm. He's already got ideas to put to paper.

Book signings will take place: Oct. 8 from 5 to 7 p.m. at GiGi's Global Specialty in Woonsocket; Oct. 11 at 2 p.m. at Borders in the Providence Place Mall; Oct. 21 at the Greenville Library from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. and 1:15-2:30 p.m. and Oct. 22 at Woonsocket Harris Library from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.

The 37-page, soft cover book is available at: www.amazon.com.



Christina Lauzon of Woonsocket and Jason LeClair of North Providence collaborated on the recently released book, "Where's Owen Goin'?"

Valley Breeze photo by Patricia A. Russell

Once the 36-year-old Woonsocket resident, a funeral director who enjoys taking photographs, wrote the fun-filled adventure story, she needed an illustrator. Not wanting to lose control of the project, she said she “fought” hard with the publisher, Eloquent Books in New York, to hire an illustrator.

Luckily, she found LeClair through Craig’s List. The 35-year-old works as the visual and theater arts teacher at Beacon Charter School in Woonsocket but was looking for freelance illustration work.

A graduate of Massachusetts College of Art in Boston, he’s worked as a theater teacher and technical director at St. Mary Bay View Academy in East Providence. Growing up in Pawtucket, he became interested in art after winning a drawing contest when he was 10. His father is a retired shop teacher and his mom is an art teacher at Mt. St. Charles Academy in Woonsocket.

He’s got all his sketchbooks since he was 12. “They tell the story of my life,” he said.

LeClair liked Lauzon’s story and submitted a few drawings to her. She liked how he’d envisioned the book’s main characters, Owen and Dakota, and knew she’d found the right illustrator.

Besides liking his “whimsical” drawings, Lauzon said LeClair “brought a lot of knowledge to the table.”

LeClair said that although he’d done some trade book illustrations as well as an illustration for the Rhode Island Library Association’s summer reading program in 2002, he’d never done anything as big as illustrating a children’s book.

A member of the Society of Children’s Book Writers and Illustrators, he’s attended several professional conferences where he learned a lot about editorial career paths and how to structure a book.

So, now that the book is out, how does she feel?

“I was elated,” she said.

“It’s a bizarre feeling,” he interjected.