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# In 'Candy Shop,' author recalls childhood in Clayton

BEV BRITTON  
 Clayton Pioneer

When creating his fantasy adventures, author Brandon Mull channels the 10-year-old kid inside of him. So, it only seemed natural to set "The Candy Shop War" in Clayton — where Brandon lived from fourth to seventh grade.

"When it comes to reading, I'm like a big kid. I like a big adventure story and imaginative stories that kids seem to respond to," Mull says.

"It was really easy to draw on the Clayton setting. To me, it was a magical setting at that age," he adds. "Main Street has that Old West feel and that used to get my imagination going."

Although the town in the book isn't named Clayton, the candy shop is on Main Street and the characters attend Mt. Diablo Elementary School, as Mull did in the mid-'80s.

In chapter two, he writes: "All along Main Street from Greenway to the hill topped by Mt. Diablo Elementary, the buildings looked like they were trying to belong to the Old West. Most were two stories and made of wood. Some looked like saloons, while others looked like old-fashioned houses. Plank sidewalks connected to businesses, with periodic barrels doubling as trashcan. There was a general store, a dentist's office, a town museum, a post office, a bar and grill, a craft store, an antique store, and a barbershop with a striped pole out front."

"It has fantasy elements woven into the story, so it's not like a real portrait of Clayton," the author says. "I have very fond memories of Clayton, and I hope that the people of Clayton will feel like I fictional-

ize their town well."

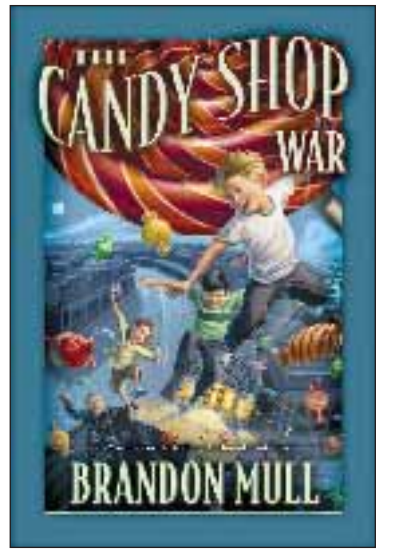
Mull also gives a nod to his childhood days in Connecticut in his "Fablehaven" series about mystical creatures gathered in a hidden refuge. The second book, "Fablehaven: Rise of the Evening Star," debuted at No. 8 on the New York Times best-seller list and Mull is working on the third book in the five-part adventure.

The success of "Fablehaven" has allowed the 32-year-old to quit his day job writing marketing copy and

Rings" and "The Chronicles of Narnia." "That kicked open a door in my mind that never closed," he reports.

At school assemblies around the country, the Highland, Utah, resident strives to share his love of reading. He was scheduled to speak at Mt. Diablo Elementary School on Sept. 13 (after the Pioneer's deadline).

"I'm a big believer of reading and imagination. It's a message that I can sincerely take into schools and talk to kids about," he says.



series with ushering in a new era in children's literature. "Hopefully, it will create a cycle in which better books will be created for kids and that kids will then read more."

The "Fablehaven" series may follow in Potter's footsteps right onto the big screen. Avi Arad of "Spiderman" fame recently optioned it for a movie.

"I'm very excited to be teamed up with this guy. He's got a great track record," Mull says. "He gives me the confidence that the movie will be well-produced."

Until recently, Mull recalls being disappointed with movies made from fantasy books. "The Lord of the Rings" was a movie I thought that nobody could make until I saw it. It was such a grand, complex story that I thought it would be unadaptable. But I was very impressed," he says.

Mull also has praise for the "Harry Potter" and "Narnia" theatrical offerings. "They've shown that technology and filmmakers' abilities have caught up to where fantasy can translate to film."

When "Fablehaven" comes to a close for Mull, he hopes to return to a trilogy he tried shopping around in his earlier days. "I have a catalog of stories that sit there simmering in the back of my head until they are finally writable," the author says.

"Candy Shop War" is available at Clayton Books in the Clayton Station.



Brandon Mull spent his childhood in Clayton and sees the town as the perfect setting for "Candy Shop War."

commit fully to his passion.

"I've always loved to make up stories and I've always loved to write," he says. "For a lot of years, it was something I sort of suppressed because it seemed improbable — it was a difficult career."

As a child, he was enthralled by books like "The Lord of the

"I make a case for kids that reading should be part of their entertainment," he adds. "There is a lot of other media competing out there for their attention. Until they crack open a book and see that reading can be a fun entertainment experience, they don't understand."

Mull credits the Harry Potter

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## Upcoming Events

### CLAYTON OKTOBERFEST, OCT. 6 AND 7

The 4th Annual Oktoberfest is coming to downtown Clayton with music once again by the Internationals (who are just returning from their performance at the Oktoberfest in Munich), dancing, a traditional Biergarten and plenty of great food and premium wines. This will be the fourth appearance in Clayton by the Internationals.

Performances by Bavarian dancers, street musicians and dancers and puppet shows sweeten the deal. Admission and parking are free.

The event begins with a carnival on Friday night, and continues Saturday from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. and Sunday from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Parade and keg tapping are Saturday at 12:30.

The Biergarten and non-stop music begin at 1 p.m. each day. Pre-sale of carnival ride tickets will start Sept. 15. Buy them at



Ed's Mudville, La Veranda, Skipolini's Pizza, and Hair by Jim. Advance tickets are \$10 for 25 tickets. The day of the carnival they will be \$15 for 20 tickets.

For more info, call CBCA at (925) 672-2272 or go to www.claytonoktoberfest.com.

### CLAYTON VALLEY KITCHEN TOUR OCT. 20

Looking for some great ideas for a kitchen remodel? Plan on attending the Clayton Valley Kitchen Tour and see six new and remodeled home kitchens on Oct. 20 between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. Pictured is the Clayton kitchen of Bill and Kathy Gray.

The self-driving tour is sponsored by the Clayton Valley Woman's Club and all proceeds benefit local charities and scholarships.

Tickets are \$25 in advance or \$30 at the door. Call (925) 672-1696 for tickets and information, or mail a check payable to Clayton Valley Woman's Club directly to Clayton Valley Kitchen Tour, c/o Kathy Olson, 5459 A Roundtree Place, Concord, CA 94521.



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**29 Mt. Wilson Way**

Nicely updated 3 bedroom, 2.5 bath home in fantastic location. Updated kitchen, baths and 2 car attached garage. Sought after schools and beautiful views of Mt. Diablo. Don't miss this great opportunity to own in Clayton. Offered at \$450,000.