

Book Discussion Questions for *Stuck in Neutral* by Terry Trueman

Using a reader's guide as a tool before, during, or after reading "*Stuck in Neutral*" by Terry Trueman can help individuals and discussion groups get the most out of the book. For more information about Rock County Reads: Phone: 608-758-6690 Website: <http://als.lib.wi.us/RockCountyReads>

1. Do you think the title fits the book? Why or why not?
2. Why do you think the book was written in the first person?
3. How is Shawn just like a "normal" teenager? What did he have in common with you? How is Shawn misunderstood in the same and different ways than other people?
4. How would you describe Shawn? What type of person do you think he is? Do you have anything in common with him?
5. How would you describe Shawn's family? What are the similarities and differences among the men and the women of Shawn's family? How did the parents' divorce affect the family as individuals and as a group?
6. What do you think Shawn's father believed about Shawn as a person and his life? How would you describe Shawn's father Sydney McDaniel? What did you think of Shawn's father? Do you think he was using Shawn for fame? Do you think his character was more or less developed than Shawn's mother? Would you describe him as selfish or selfless?
7. How do you think this story would have worked if Shawn's parents were not divorced? How might that have changed the family relationships and Shawn? How did the divorce bring another dynamic to the story?
8. What roles did Cindy and Paul play in this story? How do you think they were affected by being raised in a family with a sibling like Shawn? Were these effects positive or negative? Do you think these characters were realistic? Do you think they were important characters?
9. What do you think of Earl Detraux? Do you think he was selfish or selfless?
10. Terry Trueman includes a note at the end, saying that his son, Sheehan, has a condition similar to Shawn's. Does knowing this about the author take away or add to the story? Would you have preferred to know this before you read the book instead of after? Why do you think Mr. Trueman wrote this story?
11. Did reading this book give you any insight into living with a disability? Why?
12. Has this book changed your perceptions of people who are disabled?
13. Has this book changed your views of euthanasia or abortion?

Check your local library for book discussion dates in September and October, led by UW-Whitewater Assistant Professor, Jonathan Ivry.



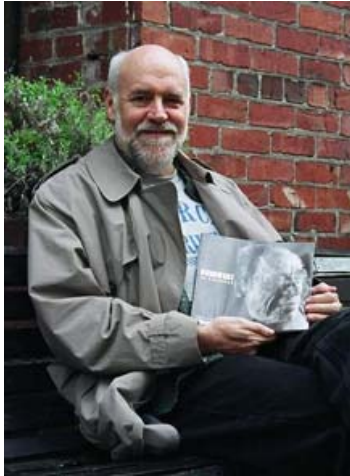
Terry Trueman will be appearing in Rock County on November 5 & 6. He will be signing his books after most events.

Friday, November 5

- Terry will be visiting schools around the county
- Eager Free Public Library - Terry will make a public appearance at 7 p.m., 39 W. Main St., Evansville. *The event is free and open to the public. There will be opportunities to ask questions.*

Saturday, November 6

- Books & Brew - An Informal Visit at 10 a.m. - 613 W. Madison Ave., Milton. *Call Maureen at 868-3371 to reserve a spot!*
- UW-Rock County - Meet the Author! at 1:30 p.m. - AV room, Hyatt-Smith Hall 2909 Kellogg Ave. - *Free, everyone is welcome.*



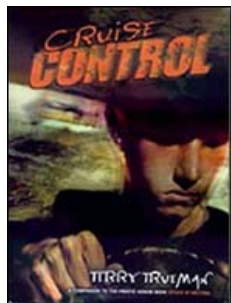
Terry Trueman

was born in Birmingham, Alabama, but grew up in Seattle. He attended the University of Washington, where he received his B.A. in creative writing. He also has an M.S. in applied psychology and an M.F.A. in creative writing, both from Eastern Washington University. The father of two sons, Henry and Jesse, Terry Trueman makes his home in Spokane, Washington, where he

has lived since 1974.

His first novel, *STUCK IN NEUTRAL* was a Printz Honor recipient. *INSIDE OUT*, his second novel was released in August 2003. *CRUISE CONTROL*, his third US novel will be a companion to *STUCK IN NEUTRAL* — the powerful story of a family torn apart by disability and divorce, told from Paul McDaniel's point of view — the brother of wheelchair bound Shawn. Hodder Books released *SWALLOWING THE SUN*, which follows a teen's heroic efforts to save friends and family after his Honduran village is destroyed by a devastating mudslide, in October of 2003 in the UK only.

Trueman's hobbies include his Sea Ray boat and his 1976 Corvette Stingray. One of his heroes is poet Charles Bukowski.



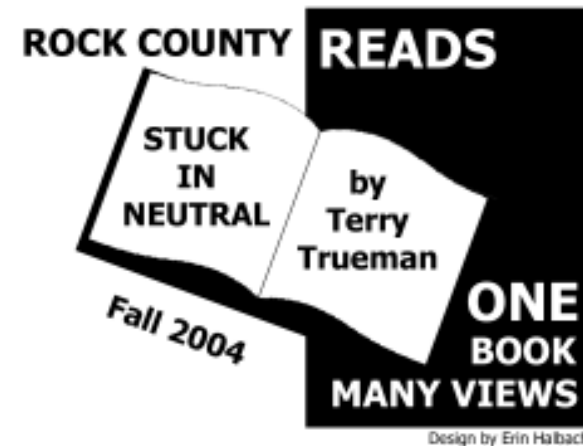
Cruise Control

by Terry Trueman is a sequel to "Stuck in Neutral". It is being released in late October 2004.

Trueman will be signing both "Stuck in Neutral and "Cruise Control" at his public events. See inside for his Rock County appearance calendar.

A Reader's Guide

Stuck in Neutral by Terry Trueman



Arrowhead Library System

210 Dodge Street
Janesville, WI 53548

608-758-6690

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