

New book crosses Dr. Seuss with financial wizards

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By Matthew Stolle

Rochester MN

What would you get if you crossed Dr. Seuss with Warren Buffet?

For Rochester author Mitch Anthony, the result is a children's book containing simple financial advice in a language that even "Sam, I am" could understand.

What could be more timely? As households retrench in the face of what could be a nasty recession, people are putting the brakes on spending. A new thriftiness has become vogue.

Anthony's new book, "The Cash in the Hat," uses a world reminiscent of Whoville to underscore those bedrock principles: Spend less than you make. Save all you can. Don't do anything stupid.

"Debt pretends to be

your friend

It gives you things

again and again

Debt buys you toys

and buys you snacks

But it's not your friend

'til you pay it back."

Anthony, a financial services expert and the author of several other books, including "The New Retirementality," says the idea for the book came to him about six months ago, at a time when the economy's foundations were just beginning to rumble from the housing crisis.

To buy it

The "Cash in the Hat" sells for \$12.95 and is available from Insight Press, (507) 282-2723, or mitchanthony.com.

It took about 30 minutes in a San Francisco hotel room one morning to write the lyrics. The more intensive work of illustrating the book was done by Greg Wimmer, a Rochester-based artist whose many murals decorate Rochester.

While "The Cash in the Hat" would appear to be geared toward children, the book's primary audience is adults, Anthony said, baby boomers in particular a generation Anthony says has been particularly inept in handling money.

Indeed, the tableau Anthony had in mind as he was writing the book was that of parent and child reading the book together and starting a conversation.

"We're going back to Grandma's economics. Grandma and Grandpa were like, 'You don't need that. You should save your money,'" Anthony said.

Anthony said the book would not have worked when house prices were rising and few thought they would ever go down. In the midst of a housing crisis and an economic recession, there is likely to be a new receptivity to the message in the book.

In his efforts to get the book published, Anthony said, he was turned down by numerous publishing firms, which only fueled his determination to see it published. Since the book went on sale just less than a month ago, it has sold 1,500 copies, Anthony said. He said he's already fielding calls from financial advisers who want to give the book to their clients' kids as graduation gifts from college or high school.

"Publishers in this economy won't take any risks at all. They said, 'We don't know where to put this in the book store.' But I knew there's an appetite for this sort of thing right now," Anthony said.