

GREEN

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put it on the front page. Soon, nickels were being sent to this librarian from all over the country, who in turn sent them to Green.

Green said the nickels were a wonderful gift to him and he wanted to share it with his fans.

With this, Green introduces his parents, Sydney and Mike Green, who come on stage to tell stories of a young John Green and read his first "award-winning story" he wrote at age 8.

Green soon comes back on stage to answer a few audience questions and give shout outs for birthdays.

Questions from the audience ranged from how to be a good writer, were there any initial story lines dropped for the final draft and how to be a writer with a mental illness.

"I think we all know mental illness is stigmatized in our culture. People talk about mentally ill people in ways that are cruel and dehumanizing, but it's also romanticized a lot of times," Green said. "This idea is that you have to be crazy to write and not only do you have to be mentally ill, you have to be untreated. You have to sort of ride the line between wellness and absolute decompensation in order to write well. This is a very dangerous lie."

The final portion of the evening is a staging of the Green brothers' popular podcast *Dear Hank & John*. As Hank was not able to attend, Green invited his mother on stage to be part of it.

The duo answered questions ranging from the importance of librarians to favorite Disney movies to apocalyptic fears — Green has a list of his top five — to what to do after graduating college.

"I also found it became much worse after graduating college, not to discourage all the UNCA students. For me, that was the hardest part of my life, the first few years after college," Green said. "It slowly got better as things in my life became more stable and I began to understand how to do things and it wasn't so stressful every month to pay the water bill."



PHOTO BY KARRIGAN MONK

John Green has authored five books on subjects ranging from adolescence to cancer and young love.

The final question was one of how to deal with a breakup, to which Sydney Green had a simple answer: "party on."

Green ends the night by telling a story of his friend who died earlier in the year, Amy Krouse Rosenthal, who was an author, filmmaker and radio host and someone Green said found positivity in every human moment.

Rosenthal, according to Green, gave him one of his first big breaks of his career by putting him on the radio. A few years later, she invited him to one of her readings but he did not want to go as he was in a particularly terrible period of depression. Still, he went because he felt obligated.

It was at this event Rosenthal told John that in World War I, many British soldiers did not understand why they were fighting and would often sing a lament of, "We're here because we're here because we're here" to the tune of "Auld Lang Syne."

"That night she made me understand that we were here, meaning that we were together. Even when we felt alone we weren't. Not really, because we were part of a vast and deeply interconnected us," Green

said. "Amy made me feel in that moment what I believed ever since: that hope is not foolish or idealistic or misguided. Hope that life will get better and more important that life will go on is the correct response to the arc of history. 'Hope', as Emily Dickinson wrote, 'is the thing with feathers that perches in the soul and sings the tune without the words and never stops at all.'"

Green invited the audience to join

him in singing, despite the fact he hates audience participation. Green begins to sing and his parents walk out, hand in hand, to stand on either side of him.

As the event comes to a close, the chorus of, "We're here because we're here because we're here because we're here" floats out into the night, giving UNC Asheville hope for the future.

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