

AH HA MOMENT! by Joan Mish

After thinking about this phrase most of the week, I believe the phrase means to me, a surprising moment. I ran into Hap Hansen and realized how important authors are to me, having been a librarian. So here is another run into a famous author: AVI. He's a children's writer and writes for all ages. He became one of my favorites as a school librarian.

Sometime in the 90's as I was living in Dodgeville, Lands'End, a large clothing company on the internet and catalogs offered a grant opportunity to the schools. So I decided to apply with the other 3 librarians in the school district. We each chose a favorite author to invite to come visit our students. Much to our surprise we won the grant and I decided to invite AVI the author, since he writes for all reading abilities, even some of the first graphic novels, which are like comic books.

I had a delightful time getting to know him personally. First I picked him up at the airport in Madison, Wi, the capital, and took a couple of students with me. When his plane came in he was no where in sight. Evidently he was busy writing when his flight took off from Chicago and he missed his plane. Fortunately we waited till the next plane came and we found each other. While he was at our school I left him alone to talk with the teachers and students and at the end of the second day I drove him over to Milwaukee where he was making another presentation.

As we were spending time in the car chatting, we found out we had a lot in common. We laughed a lot and found we both had fathers who were doctors. I believe he now lives in Boulder CO. Once my husband and I came out to visit our daughter in Denver and we had lunch with AVI.

He won the Newberry Award for Crispin some years ago. I found an interview on Google and here's some interesting facts, that he did not share with me.

He was **not** a great student. He failed most of his classes. He was best in science. He started to write because it was important to his family and he wanted to prove that he could write. It did take years before his first book was written.

In an interview he was asked "when did you become a writer?" And he answered " I think you become a writer when you stop writing for yourself and start thinking about your readers."

He was asked if it is hard for him to write. His answer was "It is hard for everyone to write well but you have to write **over** and **over** again and the average books takes a year to write."

His **favorite** book is the next one!

His advice to those who want to write is: "I believe reading is the key to writing. The more you read, the better can be."