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WORLD WAR Z AUTHOR MAX BROOKS TO SPEAK IN SLO ABOUT HIS LATEST BOOK

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San Luis Obispo, CA - Best-selling author and zombie-lore expert Max Brooks will be speaking at the Spanos Theater on April 14 at 7 pm about his new book *The Harlem Hellfighters*. Brooks is the second featured speaker in the SLO Library Foundation's new Book & Author Series launched last year as a fundraiser for the Foundation, which supports the San Luis Obispo County public libraries.

Brooks, son of Mel Brooks and Anne Bancroft and now a celebrity in his own right, is credited with helping propel zombies into a mainstream pop-culture obsession with his books *The Zombie Survival Guide* and *World War Z*. The latter was made into major motion picture starring Brad Pitt.

Brooks explores the consequences of failed leadership, making the leap from mythos to American History with the release of his latest book, *The Harlem Hellfighters*. The graphic novel chronicles the little-known story of the first African-American regiment mustered to fight in WWI. They spent longer than any other American unit in combat and displayed remarkable valor on the battlefield. Despite extraordinary struggles and overt racism, the 'Hellfighters', as their enemies named them, became one of the most successful—but least celebrated—regiments of the war. Brooks drills down to help find what lessons can be learned from the triumph and tragedy of the Harlem Hellfighters.

Brooks used the format of a graphic novel to make the compelling historical story more accessible to youth. "Nothing turns kids off like a big, thick history book," Brooks observed, "and I thought a graphic novel would suck them in." There were other important reasons for this vehicle. As Brooks explains, "I wanted to make it a visual story because it is about imagery and skin color. In a novel there is the danger of the reader forgetting what the character's skin color is. I didn't want the reader to ever forget that because the guys in the story were never allowed to forget."

Leading up to Brooks' appearance, the United Way Youth Board is having an essay contest for all high school and middle school students in the county. Using examples from *The Harlem Hellfighters*, and their own personal experiences and United Way mission, entrants are to describe what it means to Live United. More information on how to enter the contest can be found at www.unitedwayslo.org/youth-board. First, second and third place entries are being awarded with donations provided by the Mac Superstore and a ticket to VIP party to meet Max Brooks.

Tickets on sale now at the Performing Arts Center ticket office or online at http://www.pacslo.org/calendar/event/an_evening_with_max_brooks

Students \$10, adults \$25. VIP tickets are available for \$35 and include the talk plus a meet and greet with Max Brooks, with light appetizers and drink provided. A book signing after the talk will take place in the Spanos lobby, with books available for purchase.

The Foundation for San Luis Obispo County Public Libraries is a non-profit public interest corporation which conducts advocacy, fundraising and program activities to support and strengthen the County's public libraries. For more information on the Foundation, or to make a donation to one of its programs, go to www.slolibraryfoundation.org.

Arrangements for the appearance of Max Brooks made through Greater Talent Network, Inc., New York, NY.

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