

Darden North visits Off Square Books Friday, Oct. 31

By KENNETH JONES

Ponder House Press, the publishing company releasing Dr. Darden North's latest medical thriller, "Fresh Frozen," could not have chosen a more fitting moment to release the novel. With a presidential election only five days away from this article's printing, the topic of abortion, and more broadly the issues surrounding fertility and stem cell research, are constant topics of conversation for both pundits and private citizens, and provide hours of entertainment fodder on shows such as "Dr. Phil" (where a recent episode had fathers arguing their right not to pay child support) and "Law and Order: Special Victims Unit" (where a recent episode featured stolen embryos).

In North's third medical thriller, Wesley and Carrie Sarbeck have struggled for years to get pregnant, all but bankrupting them and nearly killing Carrie at one point. Feeling left out of a society where having a child is almost compulsory, the Sarbecks decide to make one last, desperate grab for the

American Dream, and visit the Van Deman Center, just outside of Jackson. Housed in what was once an abandoned, dilapidated building, the Van Deman Center has emerged as the pre-eminent fertility clinic in the United States. It is where the Sarbecks, superstar Allyn Saxton, and southern belle Cheryl Choice all go. But

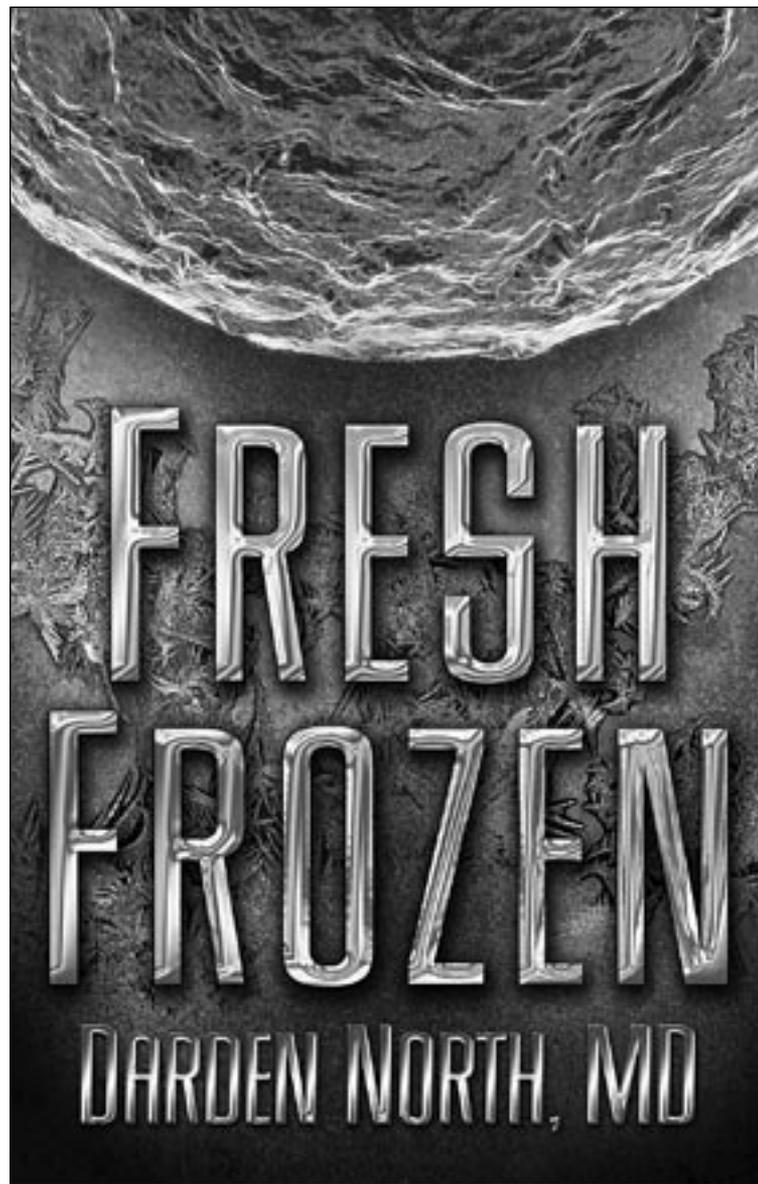


Dr. Darden North

with an internet voyeur tapping into the clinic's security system, and a poisonous mix of hormones and surgical treatments killing one of the aforementioned patients, the pursuit of life suddenly becomes a run from death.

With desperate would-be parents, embryo and sperm peddlers, pepping toms, and doctors with reputations to maintain at any cost, the characters of "Fresh Frozen" seem to collide into each other.

North will be signing his latest thriller at Off Square Books on Oct. 31, at 5 p.m. North is an obstetrician/gynecologist from Jackson, with years of experience, and his knowledge of this field comes across in his writing. Dealing with topics that would have seemed like science fiction 25 years ago, this is medical suspense that puts Robin Cook on notice.



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