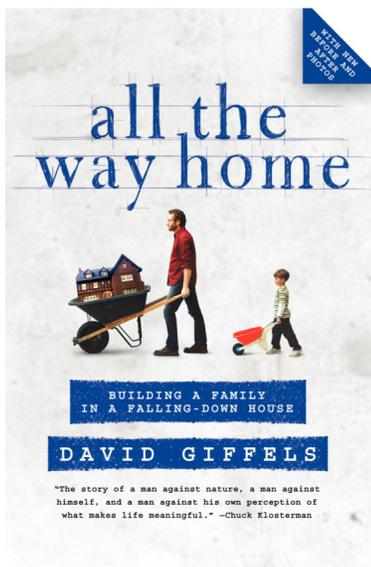


All the Way Home: Building a Family in a Falling-Down House by David Giffels A Choose to Read Ohio Toolkit

About the Book



With the lyrics of a Replacements song running through his head ("*Look me in the eye, then tell me that I'm satisfied*"), David Giffels—with his wife and infant son in tow—combs the environs of Akron, Ohio, in search of the perfect house for his burgeoning family. The quest ends at the front door of a beautiful but decaying Gilded Age mansion, the once-grand former residence of a rubber-industry executive. It lacks functional plumbing and electricity, leaks rain like a cartoon shack, and is infested with all manner of wildlife. But for a young father at a coming-of-age crossroads, the challenge is precisely the allure.

All the Way Home is Giffels's funny, poignant, and confounding journey through the great adventure of restoring a crumbling house on the way to discovering

what the words "grown up" and "home" really mean.

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Book details:

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<http://www.harpercollins.com/books/All-Way-Home-David-Giffels>



About the Author

David Giffels is an author and journalist from Akron, Ohio, whose most recent book, ***All the Way Home: Building a Family in a Falling-Down House***, has received widespread acclaim, from the *New York Times*, which described it as “sweet and funny” to the *Los Angeles Times*, which called it “a truly wonderful book” to Oprah’s *O at Home* magazine, where it topped the “Fantastic Summer Reads” list. The memoir, about his coming of age as a father in a ramshackle mansion, is published by William Morrow/HarperCollins. The book was honored in 2009 with an Ohioana Book Award and has been selected as a 2011 Choose to Read Ohio title.

Giffels, a longtime *Akron Beacon Journal* columnist and former writer for the MTV series *Beavis and Butt-Head*, has recently joined the creative writing faculty at the University of Akron, where he teaches creative nonfiction in the Northeast Ohio Master of Fine Arts program.

Giffels is the co-author of two other books: the rock biography ***Are We Not Men? We Are Devo!*** (SAF Publishing, 2003), and ***Wheels of Fortune: The Story of Rubber in Akron***, a 1998 history of his hometown that is the best-selling title in University of Akron Press history. He is currently working on a Rust Belt memoir, to be published in 2011 by William Morrow / HarperCollins.

His essays appear in ***The American Midwest: An Interpretive Encyclopedia*** (Indiana University Press, 2006), ***The Appalachians: America’s First and Last Frontier*** (Random House, 2004) and as the introduction to the ***West Point Market Cookbook*** (University of Akron Press, 2008). His writing has appeared in the *New York Times Magazine*, *Redbook*, *This Old House Magazine* and many other publications.

He has been a contributing commentator and essayist on National Public Radio station WKSU. In an 18-year journalism career, he has received dozens of awards, including the 2006 national award for commentary from the American Association of Sunday and Feature Editors and a 2008 general excellence award from the National Society of Newspaper Columnists. In 2009, he was honored as Best News Writer in Ohio by the Associated Press. He has been nominated six times for the Pulitzer Prize.

In June 2010, Giffels was honored with the Cleveland Arts Prize Mid-Career Artist Award for literature.

Giffels has bachelor’s degrees in English and mass media and a master’s degree in English/creative writing from the University of Akron. He lives and writes in Akron, where he lives with his wife and two children.



<http://oh.webjunction.org/ohcintro>

Author Resources:

David Giffels's Official Website

<http://www.davidgiffels.com>

Includes a photo gallery featuring images from before and after the restoration, and links to media interviews with David Giffels.

Author page on HarperCollins website

http://www.harpercollins.com/authors/32856/David_Giffels/index.aspx

Biography from University of Akron Department of English

<http://www.uakron.edu/colleges/artsci/depts/english/bios/giffels.php>

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Talk About it!

(Spoiler warning! Some discussion questions refer to key events in the book. Do not read if you don't want to find out what happens.)

- Describe the difference between David's and Gina's response to the news that their offer on the ramshackle house has been accepted. How do you interpret the final line of that chapter: "She believed in me."?
- One reviewer described this as "the story of a man against nature, a man against himself, and a man against his own perception of what makes life meaningful." How do each of those elements play out in the story?
- David Giffels is a lifelong resident of Akron. How does this story reflect his sense of place?
- Why is the author so unsettled by the loss of his hammer?
- Is there any practical advice in the book for a would-be home renovator?
- The author's wife, Gina, writes three chapters, titled "Duets." What effect do these have on the story?
- How would you have responded to find Mrs. Radner still in your house on the day you took possession?
- Why do you think she had such difficulty leaving?
- One reviewer called **All the Way Home** "a cautionary tale." Would you agree?
- The author writes that he has never seen *The Money Pit*, yet many readers and reviewers have made references to that movie. How does **All the Way Home** compare or contrast?
- What effect do the frequent references to music have on the story and the reading experience?
- Considering that this book was written about 10 years after the events, and that the home renovation continued well into those years, why do you think the author chose to end the story where he did?



<http://oh.webjunction.org/ohctrointro>

Explore more!

All the Way Home with David Giffels

<http://www.wcpn.org/index.php/WCPN/soi/12222/>

Audio interview from WCPN's *The Sound of Ideas*, originally broadcast June 2008.

“An Artful Restoration” slideshow from *The New York Times*

http://www.nytimes.com/slideshow/2008/04/17/garden/20080417akron_index.html

Before and after photos of the Giffels's home.

Book Notes: David Giffels

http://www.largeheartedboy.com/blog/archive/2008/05/book_notes_davi_7.html

The *Largehearted Boy* music blog's Book Notes series has authors create and discuss music playlists relevant to their recently published books.

Book Video for *All the Way Home*

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pKiSheurXxM>

Take a home tour with David Giffels.

David Giffels on *All the Way Home* from the Diane Rehm Show

<http://thedianerehmshow.org/shows/2008-07-27>

Audio interview from the NPR show, originally broadcast July 2008.

“Don’t Hate Me Because I’m Solvent” by Joyce Wadler

http://www.nytimes.com/2008/04/17/garden/17akron.html?_r=1

The *New York Times* article (4/17/08) about the Giffels's renovation project, including David Giffels's ten tips for taking on a falling-down house.

“A Falling-Down House No More” by M.L. Schultze

<http://www.wksu.org/news/story/22061>

Audio interview with David and Gina Giffels from WKSU (originally broadcast May 2008) and renovation photos.

“Use a Machete and Shower Less: Five Manly Ways to Go Green” by Gwendolyn Bounds

<http://blogs.wsj.com/developments/2008/06/21/use-a-machete-and-shower-less-five-manly-ways-to-go-green/>

Wall Street Journal interview with David Giffels.

About Choose to Read Ohio

Choose to Read Ohio (CTRO) spotlights Ohio authors and promotes reading across Ohio. The State Library of Ohio, in partnership with Ohioana Library Association, developed this initiative to encourage Ohioans of all ages to share literature by authors native to, residing in, or associated with Ohio. CTRO is adaptable for use in classrooms, libraries, bookstores, by book discussion groups, families, and other community groups.

Explore Choose to Read Ohio resources & toolkits: <http://oh.webjunction.org/ohctrointro>.