

A close-up portrait of Deb Hockenberry, an older woman with short, wavy white hair, smiling warmly at the camera. She is wearing a light-colored, textured top. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

WRITERS MONTHLY PDF

DEB HOCKENBERRY

A GUIDE FOR PROFESSIONAL WRITERS

DECEMBER 2023

CONTRIBUTING STAFF



Del Garrett, Owner/Managing Editor.

Arkansas Hall of Fame writer Del Garrett is the author of six novels: *Texas Justice*, *While the Angels Slept*, *Shadowlight*, *The Buccaneer's Daughter*, *The El Dorado Trail* and *Whispers in the Wind*—*The Search for Jack the Ripper*, a crime novella series featuring private detective Felix Nash, plus an anthology of short stories he calls *Del Garrett's Flea Market Tales*. Del's first attempt at writing fiction, a Civil War short story, was published by *Louis L'Amour Western Magazine*. He has also been published in *Pro Se Productions*, *Blood Moon Rising*, *Gateway Science Fiction* and *Storyteller Magazine*. He won an international award for Best Historical Western Fiction and numerous other contest awards. His poetry has been published by the Missouri Poetry Society. He is a former radio and TV announcer. He owns Raven's Inn Press which publishes fiction and nonfiction books and anthologies.



Renee' La Viness, Cozy Mysteries/Advertising Executive

As a writer, Renee' La Viness has been published in multiple anthologies, magazines, newspapers, and other projects. As an editor, she worked for 4RV Publishing from 2013 to 2018, including two years as the first Children's Corner Imprint Editor. Currently, Renee' enjoys sponsoring and judging writing contests, offering workshops, speaking at conferences, and editing children's books and short stories. She is the founder/organizer of the annual Meet the Publishers! event in Tulsa, Okla., and a co-founder/organizer of the Read.Write.Share. Writers Weekend in Arkansas. Renee' and her husband live in Oklahoma, where they are proud, active grandparents, and she volunteers at the local schools.



Ellen Withers, Writing for Contests

Ellen Withers is a freelance writer and retired insurance fraud investigator. Her professional writing career began in 2003 as a contributor to the *Arkansas Democrat Gazette*. A former editor of an international magazine, *SIU Today*, for insurance fraud investigators from 2007 to 2017 and remains on their editorial committee. She has written the monthly resident feature for *Life in Chenal Magazine* since 2006. Her non-fiction articles have been included in several national and regional magazines. Twelve of her fiction stories have been published in anthologies and two creative non-fiction stories were featured on KUAR's radio show *Tales from the South*. She was nominated in 2009 for The Pushcart Prize in the published short story category—a prestigious national award given for an outstanding literary work published in a small press. She is the contest coordinator of the annual Arkansas Writers' Conference, presented by the Pioneer Branch of the National League of American Pen Women.

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On the Cover

Deb Hockenberry has always wanted to write for children. She has taken multiple courses from The Institute of Children's Literature. Her debut picture book "Where Can We Have the Party?" has been very well received by the public. Deb hopes "Elves For A Day" has been equally well received. Along with her writing, Deb also enjoys gardening, reading, crocheting, and playing with her cat, Harry. Deb is a Pittsburgh transplant who currently resides in Central Pennsylvania. You can find out more about Deb at her website: <https://www.authordebhockenberry.ne>.



Courtesy Photo.

FROM THE EDITOR

Do Your Research! Research is important to every writer, fiction or nonfiction. The old adage is to write what you know, but what if you don't know anything? Does that mean there are certain subjects about which you are forbidden to write?

Balderdash! There are no rules in writing. Yes, *i* before *e*, except after *c*; don't end a sentence with a preposition; don't use one-word sentences. And I just did...*Balderdash!* And my meaning is perfectly clear. To be perfectly clear about rules, there are 'standards' we generally go by, but there are talented writers who know how to bend or even break the rules. Why? Because there's no crying in baseball—sorry, getting off the track—there are no rules in writing. Punctuation, yes, but even that is a definite maybe.

However, I'm reminded of what my communications professor said in my post-grad class at Oklahoma University: "Copy from one source, that's plagiarism; copy from two sources, that's research; copy from three sources...that's your doctoral thesis."

Research gives you what you don't know. Edgar Rice Burroughs, the creator of Tarzan, never set foot in Africa before writing *Tarzan of the Apes* and certainly never went to Mars to pen the John Carter stories.

So, the first rule of doing research is to check more than one source. What you are looking for are facts: Who, what, when, where, why and how. Facts are not copyrighted; therefore, you are not plagiarizing someone's work just because they wrote it first. In my job as a newspaper reporter, I was told to get at least two sources before I went to print. I usually checked three. Depending on what you are writing, your sources are bibliographies, Googling, AI (the current rage), news reports, biographies...a thousand places and a million facts. Just remember to credit the original source and writer and spend a little time studying the 'fair use' of copyright laws.

When you do the research, simply recast sentences in your own words.

Del Garrett
Editor and Publisher



Contests Validate Your Writing

By Ellen Withers

There are many reasons for writers of all skill levels to take part in writing contests. Beginning writers need the validation that contests give to your work. You know you're getting somewhere when you go from no awards to a Third Honorable Mention.

Experienced writers need to stretch and grow, branching out from their comfortable writing genre from time to time. A fantastic contest description will help you do it. Creative contests can force an experienced writer to stretch their boundaries and go 'where no one has gone before' in their creative mind.

Contests help you pack a punch in a limited amount of words. I am a wordy writer. Because of that, I initially write my stories without regard to a word limit. When I have a completed first draft, I revise for setting, characterization and plot/story, also without regard to word count. Then I revise for the five senses. Do I have smells woven into the tale? Sights described? Sounds that would add dimension and depth? Touch and taste by the characters? Will the readers feel the emotion of the story (fear, love, attachment, revulsion, etc.)?

Once I feel I'm telling the story I need to tell, then I look at the word count. If it's too long to enter the contest I've chosen, I save a digital copy of the long version to be put away for possible later use. Then I take the copy and start chopping away at the words. I can't eliminate all the extra words at once. It works best for me to remove about 100 words every time I read through it. When I've gone through it five or six times, I'm always pleasantly surprised by how much the trimmed down version improves the story. Is it because the reader doesn't bog down in longer sentences? Is it the more direct storytelling aspect of it? I don't know. But it's always better. Always.

Writing contests were my path to becoming a published novelist. The years I spent learning to write by attending conferences, entering contests and working my way to awards taught me how to improve my skills. By winning contests, publishers notice your talents. They know repeated wins or placement in contests means you know how to write and write well.

CONTESTS

Copy links and paste in your search window

Reader Views Literary Awards – Deadline Dec. 31, 2023

[Reader Views Literary Awards](#)

Gemini Magazine Poetry Contest – Deadline Jan. 2, 2024

[Poetry Open Contest 2024 - Gemini Magazine Literary Fiction Poetry a Little Crainess and More. \(gemini-magazine.com\) =](#)

DISQUIET Literary Prize 2024 – Deadline Jan. 5, 2024

[The DISQUIET Prize - Disquiet International](#)

Bardsy 2023 Winter Anthology Contest: Compelling First Chapters. Deadline January 15, 2024.

[Rattle Chapbook Prize | Rattle: Poetry](#)

L. Ron Hubbard Writers of the Future Contest

Deadline - March 31, 2024

[Writer Contest | Writers & Illustrators of the Future \(writersofthefuture.com\)](#)

Drue Heinz Literature Prize - Deadline May 1

[Drue Heinz Literature Prize - University of Pittsburgh Press \(upittpress.org\)](#)

Graywolf Press Nonfiction Prizes – Open Deadline begins February 2024

[Submissions | Graywolf Press](#)

The Jeff Sharlet Memorial Award for Veterans

Deadline: Biennially. The next contest will be held in May 2024

[The Jeff Sharlet Memorial Award for Veterans | The Iowa Review](#)



Photo courtesy of Pixabay.

Solving the Cozy Mystery

By Renee' La Viness

Most often, cozy mysteries are about murders. But they don't always have to be about murders. Maybe someone stole another person's identity or heisted their golf clubs before a major competition. Mysteries can include a long list of possibilities. When deciding what yours should be, aim for something that hasn't been written to death. Readers want a fresh perspective.

No matter the crime, your cozy should not include blood, guts, or violence. No children or animals should be harmed, either. Weapons may be used, but make sure any gore or freaky details happened before your sleuth finds the body. For instance, after a murder, the body might be moved, which would prevent blood or gore from being present when the body is found.

Sometimes, accidents can be unintended weapons, such as clocks that stop, traffic that doesn't let someone arrive in time, a push that results in a tumble down the stairs, or simple forgetfulness.

Always remember to keep the mood light and avoid visible violence. If something bad happened, it was not when the pen and paper were looking.

Never lie to your readers. Ever. No matter how you disguise it, always tell the truth. Your readers will have great respect for your ability to keep the story honest and still fool them and the crime solver.

When unfolding the details of the crime, allow the readers to see what the sleuth sees. Each clue or event must make sense, even if the sleuth interprets it incorrectly. Some can be a little outlandish, but they should be believable as details are discovered and explained. If the author makes up reasons for the characters to do things, but those reasons don't make sense, the readers will see through the lies.

If you use a real town, the streets and businesses should be in their correct locations, so readers who are familiar with that town will feel more connected to the story.

Emotional responses should be appropriate. If someone laughs when a groom runs away from his wedding ceremony in mid-vow, there better be a good reason for it. Put the truth in plain sight and disguise it well. Your readers will appreciate and respect your honest, yet cunning, style.



Courtesy Photo.

Spreading a little cheer, the author holds up two of her well-liked books. Her fascination with writing developed in elementary school and paved her way to a Ho-Ho-Homonious relationship with words.

My Bumpy Road to Being Published By Deb Hockenberry

My very first memory of loving books and knowing that I wanted to be a writer came long ago when I was in elementary school. My mother would send my siblings and me to our neighborhood library to take any book out we wanted or to read them there.

Continued on next page.

One summer day, my siblings and I walked to the library. I was nervous on the walk, but I had made my mind up. I would ask the librarian if there were books to read about becoming a writer.

Once I got my younger siblings into the children's library, I left the children's section. Naturally, the others wanted to know where I was going.

I walked out to the librarian's desk. The librarian was Ms. Austin from church. That would make it easier for me to ask my burning question. She never laughed at a kid.

Ms. Austin looked down and asked what I wanted. I asked her my question about becoming a writer. She looked at me and smiled the biggest smile I'd ever seen. Even her eyes smiled! Then she did something that made me feel 10 feet tall.

She led me into the adult's library. The adult's library! Wow! In our neighborhood library, both the children's and adult's libraries were one large room opposite each other. I looked around the room as Ms. Austin led me to a table in the back. She asked me to sit down and wait for her. Then she started picking through the shelves. Ms. Austin came back with three books in hand and laid them on the table in front of me. They were "The Writer's Market," "The Writer's Handbook" and I forget what the third book was, but it was a writing reference, too.

I read them to the best of my ability. Since I was in elementary school, I didn't understand the writing terms in the books, but remembered things I understood.

My next experience came just a few years later. I decided that my elementary school needed a school newsletter, and I was the person to write it.

Santa Claus had brought my sisters and me a toy typewriter for Christmas. It actually worked, so after school one day I took it and crept up to my room. I began typing out the school newsletter, each done separately. My newsletter had very simple articles in it. They covered such topics as: Suzie falling in a mud puddle on her way to school, teachers, etc.

I handed them out before the school bell rang the next morning. Before the day was out, I was called down to the principal's office. Boy, did she give it to me! She put the fear of the school board and writing into me. I never wrote again for years. In my defense, it was the 1950s. Kids didn't talk back to their elders then.

Even though I didn't write for years, I was forming a story in my head. It was a story combining a birthday party with young animals. It would become my first book. Over the years, this story has changed several times with society. It started out with evil monkeys who kidnap King Lion. The evil monkeys had knives and guns. Society would never accept that today! Especially for a book for ages three to six. "Where Can We Have The Party" is now a very gentle story. You can find it on Amazon. I learned something from this, too. Never give up.

Continued on next page.

Several years later, I had an assignment in my high school English class that reignited my passion for writing. My English teacher had been teaching us the proper way of writing a story. Then he did something wonderful! He passed out pictures, torn from a magazine, and told the class to write a story about it. My picture was a mountain of ice-cream.



Courtesy photo.

Deb said that even though she didn't write for years, she was forming a story in her head – "Where Can We Have the Party" is now in book form.

I wrote a several page mystery about two boys traveling through that ice-cream mountain. I don't know what grade I received on that story, but about a week later another English teacher asked if he could speak to the class. This other teacher was the Director of the English Department. Whatever this man had to say had to be important! I noticed that my teacher nodded from the other English teacher to me.

The director made an announcement for anyone who wanted to write for the high school newsletter to raise their hand. I was so excited! Thinking of the things I'd learn there, I raised my hand. I'd learn how to write so other people would enjoy it. I'd learn punctuation and how to interview other people! Slowly, my hand came down.

My classmates were howling with laughter. They were yelling out things like, "Only squares do things like this." I was just a 15-year-old girl who wanted to fit in. I was doomed.

The director looked at me and then around the room. He said he would be in his office at the end of the hall if anyone would like to see him about this. I had hope! I kept thinking about what the other kids would think of me and other thoughts along the same lines. By the end of the day, I chickened out and didn't go see him.

Peer pressure caused me to make the worst decision of my life.

By this time in my life, my health was going downhill fast. After a while, I wound up in a coma and forgot so many things. I didn't forget that little story that I had in my head, though. Yes, I forgot all those little details so I had to rewrite it. In my head, of course.

When I was in a rehab facility, I thought about my story while I was exercising. Eventually, I had it all fleshed out.

When I got home, I started spending Friday nights writing my story down, by hand, in a notebook.

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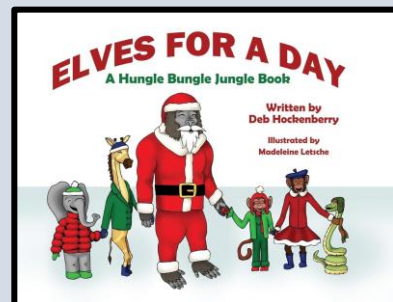
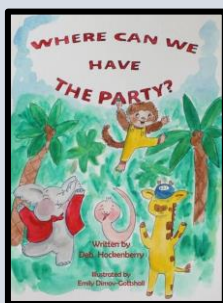
Of course, it wasn't formatted properly at all, but I was proud of it. One day, when all my siblings were at school, I took it down to show my mother. One thing about my mother, you could always count on an honest critique when you asked for it. I was so glad of that! She didn't laugh after she read it. Instead, she gave me suggestions on improving it. It turned out that my mother was my biggest cheerleader on my road to being published.

Soon, I told my family about my dream to be a children's writer. They all were behind me one hundred percent! One of my sisters showed me an advertisement in a magazine for The Institute of Children's Literature (<https://www.instituteforwriters.com/writing-for-children-and-teens/#>). This was my chance to learn to write stories properly.

I took the test and sent it in. When I got the phone call saying I was accepted, I was so happy I cried. Now, how was I going to pay? Would they accept payments? I wrote them a letter asking that. They said that they take payments for the course, but the down payment had to be paid in full first. I begged my parents to pay the down payment with the promise that I'd pay them back. Which I did.

I used my story for an assignment close to the end of the course. My instructor sent me a letter saying how much she loved it, but the characters should be human instead of animals. She asked if I would rewrite it and send it in. My characters had a fit! My characters were all talking at once. I rewrote the story, though. I got another letter from my instructor saying it was publishable as is. My original characters wouldn't leave me alone until I changed it back. It didn't matter that at the time there weren't any publishers buying talking animal stories. Oh no! This taught me another lesson. Always listen to your characters.

Years later, after submitting my story and being rejected, I self-published my story. This taught me always to believe in your story. Always!



Deb has two Hungle Bungle Jungle books out now. "Where Can We Have The Party?" can be found at <https://www.amazon.com/Where-Can-We-Have-Party/dp/1537077120>, and her "Elves For A Day" (both hardback and paperback print on demand) can be found at <https://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/book/1144215081> plus you can get the e-book at <https://www.amazon.com/Where-Can-We-Have-Party-ebook/dp/B0759ZTTTS>.



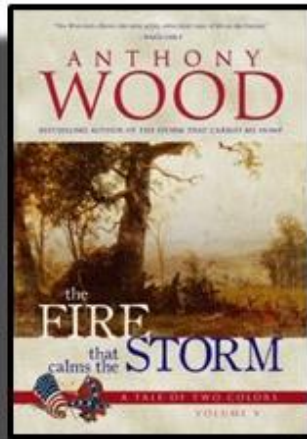
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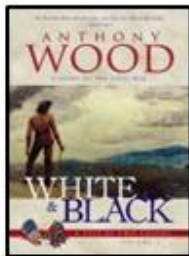
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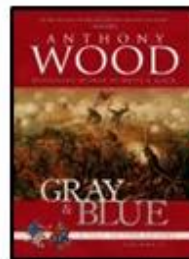
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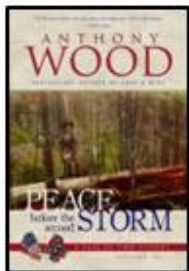
BOOK #5 – THE FIRE
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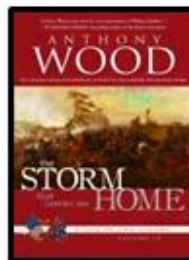
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ALL HE EVER WANTED WAS A
HOME AND FAMILY. HE
WOULD HAVE TO LEAVE
BOTH TO KEEP THEM.



BOOK #2 -- GRAY & BLUE:
HE TOOK AN OATH TO
FIGHT. HE JUST DIDN'T
REALIZE IT WAS FOR THE
WRONG REASONS.



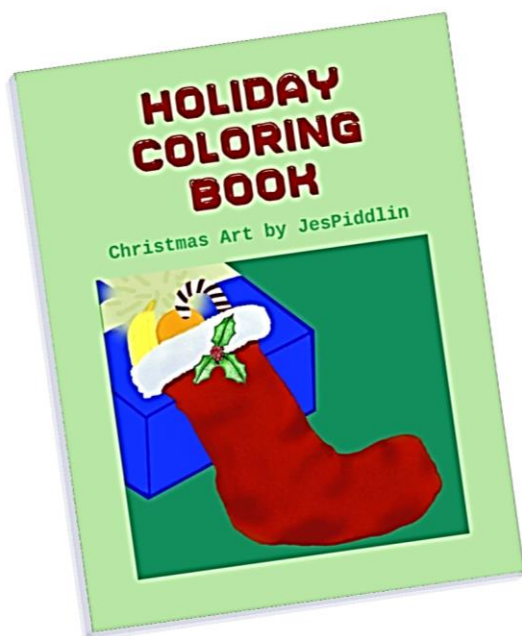
BOOK #3 – PEACE BEFORE
THE STORM. THE BATTLE
IS OVER BUT THE WAR HAS
JUST BEGUN.



BOOK #4 – THE STORM
THAT CARRIES ME HOME
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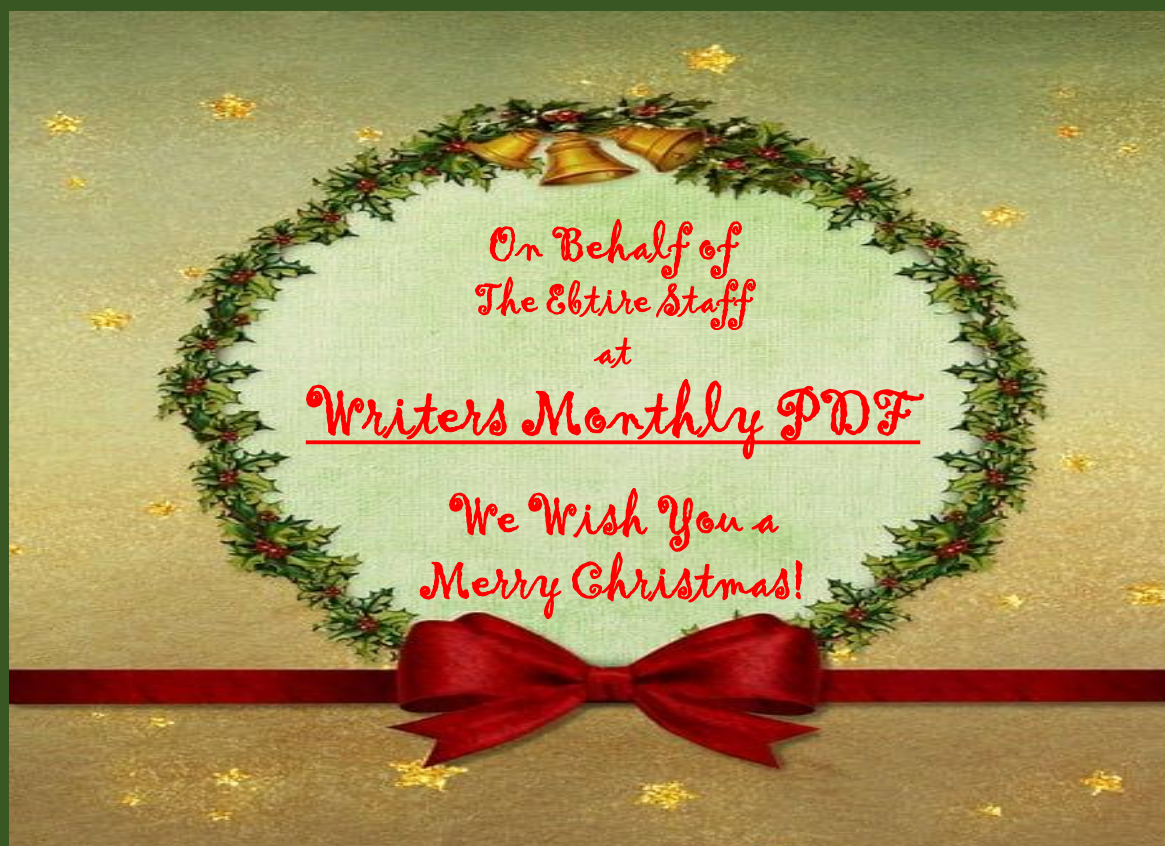
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FICTION



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A STUDY OF THE PAST

By Del Garrett

National Investigations Committee on Aerial Phenomena
(NICAP)

1536 Connecticut Ave., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20001

Subject: Electro-Magnetic Effects Associated With
Unidentified Flying Objects (UFOs)

The following report is comprised of ...

Continued on next page.

News reporter Jake Sommers scanned the introduction of the 220-page report he'd received from an anonymous source. Sub-divided into three chapters, the last 13 pages had been tabbed with a red plastic marker. That chapter titled 'Vanished Humans' carried a sub-title of *Strange disappearances of named individuals*.

Sommers worked for the Boise Gazette in the Idaho capitol. Ever since a Russian spy satellite, Kosmos 954, broke apart in 1978, an array of burning debris that followed resulted in thousands of UFO reports to Mountain Home Air Force Base in Idaho and Malmstrom Air Force Base in Montana. Sommers had been intrigued by the story. He'd mentioned it in one of his columns and a week later he'd gotten the NICAP report in the mail with no return address on it.

He took a quick look at the headings and brief intros for the other two chapters and saw nothing except what had continuously popped up every year or so since the supposedly UFO crash landing in Roswell, New Mexico, in 1947.

Old news.

However, the 13 pages on humans disappearing caught his attention and his reporter's nose for news.

Many UFO reports over the years claimed to involve abductions, but the majority of them had ended with the baffled subjects being returned, each with wild stories of medical examinations by the so-called 'grays' or their larger counterparts. Rarely had he seen any reports of people never being seen again—unless the reports covered the infamous Bermuda Triangle or speculation as to what really happened to Amelia Earhart and Fred Noonan.

On page two of the chapter on disappearances, Sommers read a report of an individual who had found some debris on a portion of his property. The farmer, Pierre Dumont, lived just outside Grand View, not far from Sommers' parents' farm. He decided to visit Mom and Pop and take a trip to see Mr. Dumont while there.

On the evening Sommers arrived at the Dumont farm he could already see the array of lights in the northern sky above him. Dumont turned out to be a jovial man, not bashful at all about discussing the phenomenon.

"Just a piece of space junk, I figure," he told Sommers. "Didn't see no little green men, though." Dumont laughed. "Some fellas from the government came along next day and took the hunk of twisted metal to study it."

Dumont took Sommers to the place where the piece of metal had landed. The ground showed no indication of disturbances, other than tire tracks from two cars and Dumont's farm tractor. Sommers thanked the man and asked permission to stay in the open field to track the strange lights and photograph them for the newspaper. Dumont agreed and left the reporter alone in the area.

An hour later, after Dumont had returned home to a hot supper, Sommers packed up his camera and was about to leave when a blinding light encircled him and out of it stepped a man about his age walking toward him. The man wore a silver jump suit and matching skull cap.

Continued on next page.

“You’re the reporter we contacted, right?”

The man extended a hand and Sommers shook it.

“I know this must seem strange to you,” the man said. “As the old saying goes, ‘We come in peace.’ If you’ll follow me, I have something to show you.”

The man grabbed Sommers by the shoulders and the beam of light grew brighter. Sommers felt himself being lifted as if in an elevator and the two of them rose upward to a central opening in a disk-like spaceship hovering overhead.

Once inside the flying disk the man beamed a smile at Sommers and said, “Just like in all the Sci-Fi movies, huh?” He laughed and pointed Sommers down a walkway into the belly of the ship.

“First of all, Mr. Sommers, let me assure you we’re not here to capture you or perform any medical exams, nor are we space cannibals with a hunger for human flesh. You are perfectly safe because we, too, are human beings, just like yourself.”

The ‘we too’ turned out to be a small crew of others, each wearing silver jump suits, skull caps and white lab coats, working at different stations loaded with technical gear.

“Let’s get introduced. I’m Raymond Sharkey, a native of Ohio and these folks are...” He went around the dais, introducing each member by name and state. All Americans. “We’re not space travelers, so to speak,” Sharkey said. “We’re *time* travelers. Historians, if you like. Mr. Sommers, I was born in the year 2145. In our time, 2175 to 2180, a major global war destroyed most of the cities on Earth. As a result, many governments went underground and only three world powers survived—America, Russia and China. As a result of the war, much of our history was lost. We’re here in your time to get it back.”

Sommers couldn’t speak. He looked around the compartment in awe. Other members of the team went back to their workstations, leaving Sharkey to complete his report to their guest.

“We contacted you because you are a reporter. Your job is to capture history in the making and preserve it for future generations—

us, for example. You’ve always had an interest in things beyond this world so we knew we could get your attention with that old NICAP report. Sorry, everything new to you is old to us. Pardon me, if I speak in abstract terms. I think the best way to explain our mission is to just show you what we do. Esther, please show Mr. Sommers what you are working on.”

A pretty blonde in her early 20s stepped aside and allowed Sommers to join her on the dais.

“My job is to track down the expansion of the United States under its Manifest Destiny.” She explained in an academic voice. “As you know, the United States won its independence from England and set out to explore and colonize regions west of the Mississippi. I’m cataloging our days in the Wild, Wild West.” She giggled. “You like western movies, don’t you, cowboy?”

“What cowboy doesn’t?” Sommers said with a grin.

“Here’s something you might like.” The girl hit a button and the entire ship disappeared, leaving Sommers and the crew standing in a dusty street surrounded by men in period dress with guns drawn.

Continued on next page.

The sign on the post behind them read, OK Corral. “You’re about to witness the Earps and the Clanton gang doing their famous shootout on Wednesday, Oct. 26, 1881, in Tombstone, Ariz. The man standing next to you is none other than the gambler and gunfighter, Doc Holliday.”

Sommers looked at the frail man with long mustache and fancy vest and holding a double barrel shotgun in his hands.

“This is a recording device,” the young woman said and held a small orbital device in the palm of her hand. “I’ll capture this moment for our historical library. Are you ready, Mr. Sommers?”

The blonde pushed a button on top of the orb and all hell broke loose with guns blazing and men falling to the ground. Holliday raised the shotgun inches away from Sommer’s head and fired both barrels. The buckshot pellets passed through Sommers without damage and struck Tom McLauray in the right side of his chest. All of a sudden, the scene froze leaving Sommers frightened and crouching on the ground.

“I’m sorry, Mr. Sommers, my fault. I should have told you when we visit a section of history, we’re like ghosts. Nobody can see us, and nothing can affect us. Everything you see from badges to bullets to bad men are nothing but holograms. The shotgun blast could not kill you and, as you can see, you’ve lost no blood.”

“No blood, maybe, but I almost lost something else.” Sommers checked his pants to make sure he hadn’t embarrassed himself.

“You might like this scene better,” one of the men grabbed Sommers by the arm and pulled him to another workstation. “My job is to catalog great American music. See what you think about this action.” He held up an identical orb in his hand, punched a button on top, and Sommers found himself on stage standing next to a hip-wiggling Elvis Pressley who sang about a ‘hound dog’ and girls in the audience went wild. Sommers couldn’t resist trying to dance across the stage like Elvis.

Esther clasped her hands together and begged, “Oh, let that one play out.”

“Later, dear. On your own time.”

“One more display,” Sharkey spoke up. “Felix, over here, is recording the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Again, as Esther said, you’re in no danger.”

This time, Sommers saw a blinding light and felt the heat of the nuclear blast, only slightly, but no damage as everything around him turned to rubble. The scene vanished almost as soon as it started.

“No need to witness this tragic event any more than we have to,” the young historian said as he sat the orb back in its cradle. “Some parts of history are truly gruesome, but they are relative to what shaped the world, so we record them. The bombing ended the war with Japan so countless lives were saved that would have been lost had the war continued, so it’s important to record them.”

“So, why show me all of this?” Sommers asked. “We want you to join us,” Sharkey said.

“Join you?”

Continued on next page.

“Yes. Remember the report, the part about vanishing people. They vanished from your time, but they are very much alive and contributing to similar projects in our time. You are a reporter, you have a way with words. We’re asking if you would like to join us and use your skills to help future generations understand how our world was shaped. As I said before, we don’t capture people we invite them to be a part of the team. Felix is one of our recent volunteers. He was born in the same month and year as you were.”

“I was an orphan, grew up on my own, studied film making and now I do this.” The man said. “I don’t regret leaving everything behind. I have friends here and will soon have a family...if Esther agrees to marry me.”

Esther shot him a smile. “Only if you promise to love, honor and give me all of your paycheck.” She laughed.

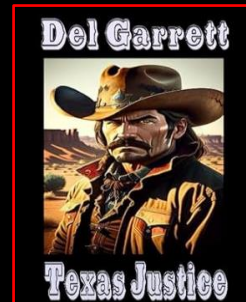
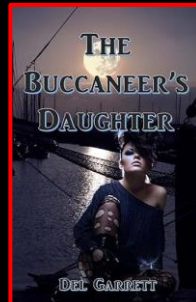
Sommers took a moment to think about Sharkey’s offer. He was intrigued, of course, but Sharkey had warned him that his decision would mean he, too, would become another lost soul. Sommers realized that would mean never seeing his family or friends again. In the end, he politely declined Sharkey’s offer. With that, Sommers shook everyone’s hands and prepared to return to his own life, his own time.

The beam of light disappeared. Sommers opened his eyes and tried to clear his thoughts. He rose from the ground where he must have fallen asleep. Looking up at the lights from the space debris he decided he’d taken enough photographs to go with his story about falling objects from the sky.

He picked himself up from the ground, walked to where he’d parked his car and opened the door. Something clawed at his brain, and he tried to remember what troubled him so.

“I don’t remember falling asleep,” he mumbled. “But, wow, I had the strangest dream.” He looked up at the night sky and the array of lights and saw one of them blinking at him.

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Hearts & Souls



Ball Busting

London, England 1710

By **Zacharias Conrad von Uffenbach**

Towards evening we drove to see the ball busting which is held here nearly every Monday in two places. On the morning of the day the bull or any other creature that is to be busted is led around, it takes place in a large open space or courtyard on two sides of which benches have been made for the spectators.

A young ox or bull was led in and fashioned by a long rope to an iron ring in the middle of the yard, then about 30 dogs, two or three at a time, were let loose on him; but he made short work of them guiding them and tossing them high in the air above the height at the first story then amid shouts and calls the butchers to whom he dogs belonged sprang forward and caught the beast right side up. To break their fall they had to keep fast hold on the dogs to hinder them from returning to the attack. Without barking several had such a grip on the bull's throat or ear that their nostrils forced open.

When the bull had stood a tolerably long time, they brought out a small bear and tied him up in the same fashion. As soon as the dogs had at him, he stood up on his hind legs and gave some terrific show, but if one of them got at his skin he rolled about in such a fashion that the dogs thought themselves lucky if they came out safe from beneath him. But the more cheering and worst of all was the crimson little pony which was brought out saddled with an ape on its back. As soon as a couple of dogs had been let loose on him, he broke into a prodigious gallop, for he was free not having been tied up like the other beasts, and he stomped and bit all around himself. The ape began to scream most terribly for fear of falling off and if the dogs came too near him, he siezed them with his mouth and twirled them around shaking them so much that they had to hold firm.

Finally, another ball appeared, and several dogs were let loose on him. This (gruesome sport) delights the nation, but to me seemed nothing very special.

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About the Author

Zacharias Conrad von Uffenbach (Feb. 22, 1683 – Jan. 6, 1734) was a German scholar, bibliophile, book-collector, traveller, palaeographer, and consul in Frankfurt am Main who is best known today for his published travelogues.



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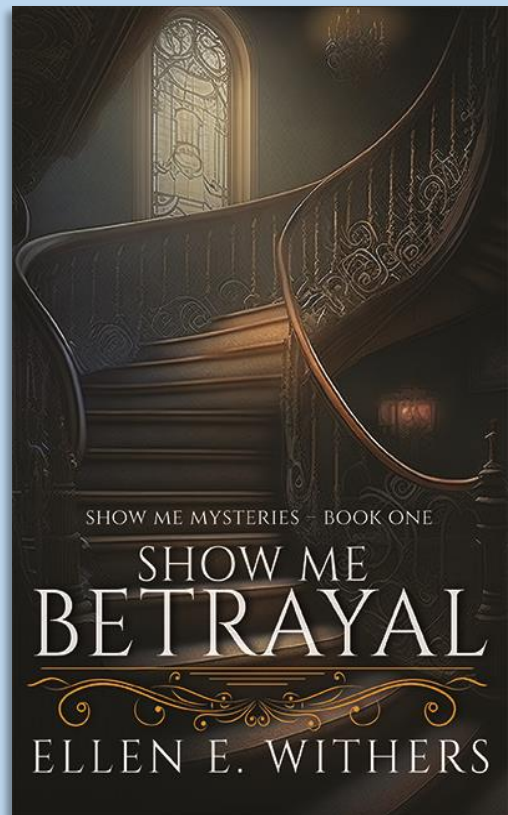
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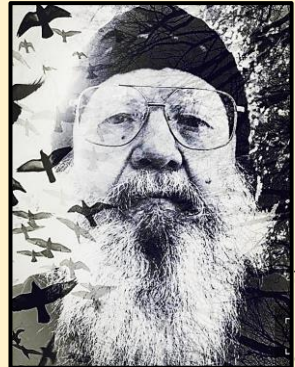
A Purdy Girl

By Phil Gladden

*Mommy?
Yes, Beth Ann
Am I a purdy girl?
Yes, baby, you're very pretty
Are you sure?
My hair ain't shiny like the kids on TV
How do you know I'm purdy Mommy?
Because you look like me.
Then I'm not purdy.
Why do you say that?
Cause if I look like you,
I'm gorgeous.*

About the Author

Phil Gladden is a retiree from Tampa, Fla., who moved to Paris, Ky., with his wife, two dogs, and four cats in 2015. He now writes a weekly newspaper column titled Phil's Philosophical Fodder. He has a collection of those articles in a book titled "Just Think About It." He is in the final stages of a novel, "Bob's Destiny," which he has worked on for the past seven years. Phil has had several magazine articles published and has won first place in the Kentucky Monthly's Penned Contest. He also won first place in The Carnegie Center's Harriet Rose Legacy poetry contest in Lexington, Ky.



Courtesy Photo.

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