



# Literary

# Gazette

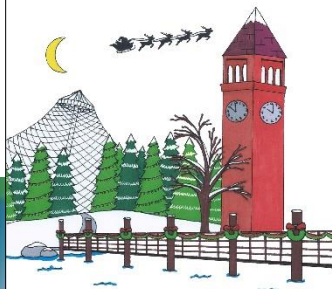
## December 2025

**Spokane Authors**

**P. O. Box 18573**

**Spokane, WA 99228-0573**

*Christmas Tales  
from  
Spokane Authors*  
a Holiday Anthology

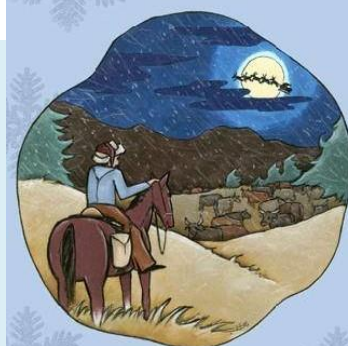


**Winter Stories**



Esther J. Hildahl

**Santa's Heroes**



Bob Manion

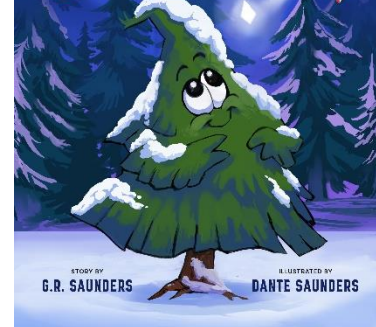
**Finding  
Rudolph**



Good Holiday Story Series - Book 1

Karen Jean Mayo Hood

**EDGAR'S  
CHRISTMAS WISH**



STORY BY  
G.R. SAUNDERS

ILLUSTRATED BY  
DANTE SAUNDERS

**Spokane Authors and Self-Publishers (SASP)**, now known as **Spokane Authors**, began in 1998 when *Chuck O'Conner, Elmer Freeman, Joe Meiners, and Dan Vollmer*, Spokane area authors, formed a club to share knowledge and experience with those interested in writing and alternative publishing. Today, SASP is an organization dedicated to anyone interested in any aspect of writing and art. Members include aspiring (and successful) authors, poets, journalists, illustrators, editors, publishers, printers, writing instructors, and many others. Monthly meetings provide inspiration and education by way of knowledgeable and entertaining guest speakers, and the cheerful camaraderie of people sharing common interests and goals. Membership is open to all who love writing, art, and interesting people.

**Spokane Authors** meets the **second Friday** of each month at the **Sans Souci West Club House**, 3231 W. Boone Ave., Spokane.

Presentations and discussions begin at **2:00 pm**. Members and guests also have a chance to relate accomplishments and note upcoming activities. We usually draw for door prizes.

Beginning in January, **Spokane Authors** will also meet the **third Wednesday** of each month, also at the **Sans Souci West Club House**, 3231 W. Boone Ave.

The meeting room will be open at **5:30 pm** and the meeting will start soon thereafter.

We often provide refreshments such as bottled water, cake, or cookies. We set up a collection jar for those who wish to help reimburse whoever brings such refreshments.

**Membership benefits** include listing on the Spokane Authors website, [www.spokaneauthors.org](http://www.spokaneauthors.org). Many members provide short biographies and links to external personal websites, creating more marketing exposure. Current members may list and describe their published works on the Spokane Authors website and offer their work for sale at meetings.

Visit the "members" page on our website to connect with members' webpages. Our "links" page connects to interesting on-line locations.

**Guest speakers** inform, inspire, and entertain with a variety of topics designed to provide knowledge about writing and publishing.

**Spokane Authors members** are encouraged to purchase or trade completed works with fellow members. They are also encouraged to donate copies of their work as door prizes. Winners of other members' work are expected to provide a review.

**Note:** Your name tag is yours to keep and maintain. We provide space to display your books, but *you* must bring them to each meeting.

## Submissions Due: December 25<sup>th</sup> for the January 2026 issue.

### 2025 Officers:

**President:** *Carl Northup (Nathaniel Bennett)*  
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(509) 671-3949

**Vice-President:** *Sue Eller*  
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**Secretary:** **OPEN**

**Treasurer, Newsletter Editor, and Web Master:**  
*Dave McChesney*  
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### Public Relations:

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### Advisory Board:

**Member:** *Esther Hildahl*  
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**Member:** *Mary De Bord*  
(509) 999-4797 violetpetalsbook@gmail.com

**Member:** *Bob Weldin*  
(509) 514-2747 minersquest@comcast.net

**"Like" the Spokane Authors Facebook Page:**  
[www.facebook.com/pages/Spokane-Authors-Self-Publishers/1640079982945679](https://www.facebook.com/pages/Spokane-Authors-Self-Publishers/1640079982945679)

**"Join" the Spokane Authors Facebook Group:**  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1646364128981815/>

**"Follow" us on "X":** <https://twitter.com/AndAuthors>

**Contact us at:** [spokaneauthors@gmail.com](mailto:spokaneauthors@gmail.com)

**Videos of many of our presentations are available at:**  
<https://www.youtube.com/@spokaneauthorsforyou>  
Links to newer/current videos can be found in the Vice-President's messages in this newsletter, as well as accounts of our most recent meetings

*On the cover: A variety of Christmas/Holiday themed books by members of Spokane Authors.*

## OUR DECEMBER MEETING!

We will meet at 2:00 pm. on Friday, December 12, 2025, at the San Souci West Club House, 3231 W. Boone Ave., Spokane, WA. Members and guests are encouraged to share short (five minute) excerpts of their work in our Annual Open Mic Event.

We will not meet on the third Saturday of the month in December.

## NEW ALTERNATE MEETING

Beginning on Wednesday January 21, 2026, our second meeting of the month will be the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of each month, beginning at 5:30 pm. We'll meet at the same place as we do on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Friday of each month, the Sans Souci West club house at 3231 W. Boone Ave., Spokane, WA.

Please note that the gate closes at 6:00 pm, so allow yourself time to arrive prior to that. (The gate will open automatically when you leave.)

## FROM THE PREZ

Dear Santa,

I've been a good boy this year, despite what others may say.

I've been a good boy...almost every day.

I've been good through thick, I've been good though thin, through snow or sleet, I stayed within.

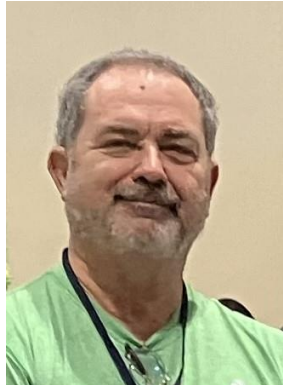
I've been writing most days through the din and the fog and using my spell check when I get in a bog.

Some days I struggle where the story is going.

And huddle with characters while the wind is a blowing.

I had to go back again and to read, to see if anyone was caught up in greed.

I found that everyone was where they should



I awoke from my sleep and ran through the house. Disturbed every creature, including my spouse.

My computer sat quietly looking at me.

"You've been a bad boy it giggled with glee. Now sit yourself down and pay attention to me."

So I sat myself down and said with a yawn, "It's 2 in the morning, I'll see you at dawn."

"Dear Santa, I'll see you at Macy's or the mall don't you know. If you want to go sledding, we'll be needing more snow."

The story's on track, no trains have derailed. I'll be sending this off now, to all your emails.

The Prez,

*Nathan/Carl*



## FROM THE VP A Spokane Authors' Christmas Wish

In the final lap to the Christmas shopping melee, there are still a few craft fairs and related events this month in which some of our members are participating. I love to meet my readers personally, and it gives me joy to see them again as they come back for the next installment in the series I've been writing. I had a couple of people come to one of our tables this fall and, after looking over our selections, declare they had every one of our books, which brings me to the point today. How long has it been since you published your last book? I am ashamed to say it has been several years for me.

I do stay busy with other writing activities, such as participating in Spokane Authors activities and meetings, helping others with their self-publishing efforts, and finding speakers who can add to our knowledge and make us aware of opportunities available to us, both locally and beyond our immediate area.



This month's meeting—a tradition begun a long time ago and hopefully one

which will endure—is the reading of excerpts from our original writings. It's fun to hear from those who wish to participate, and I love the varied approaches to the event. This meeting is not so formal, either. It gives us a chance to fellowship, visit, and appreciate the talents of our variety of voices. There will be treats, too. I plan to make some cookies, and anyone who wishes may contribute.

The November video featuring guest speaker Dave McChesney is live at <https://youtu.be/Y4mh2IAHxdI> and comes complete with subtitles. Dave has also sent out a transcript via email. Until further notice, I will be hosting the videos on my personal YouTube channel, and all SA speaker videos are set to Public. I'm still honing my video-taking and

editing skills, so bear with me while I produce the best videos I can.

Watch for the announcement of the January program. Once it's finalized, I'll have Dave send out an email with the particulars. Looking forward to 2026, we will continue to have a second meeting of our group for people who are unable to attend the Friday afternoon meeting because of a day job. The meeting will be on Wednesday evening, and will be at the same location as the Friday meeting: Sans Souci West Clubhouse, 3231 W Boone Avenue. There will be a definite program for each meeting, and Dave McChesney will send out the agenda, as well as the time in an email update. Thanks go out to St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church for hosting us for a Saturday meeting while we figured out how to make it all work.

I hope to see many of you at the December 12th meeting in the clubhouse at Sans Souci West mobile home park, 3231 West Boone Avenue in Spokane, Washington. The meeting begins at 2:00 pm, and the room is open at 1:30 for setup and pre-meeting visiting. Don't forget that in December we will not be having a Saturday meeting but will resume in January, on Wednesday the 21st. In the meantime, I hope you have a wonderful holiday season with friends and family.

*Sue Esser*

## FROM YOUR EDITOR, WEB-MASTER, TREASURER

Last month we held elections. Many office holders were reelected and will continue on with their duties. Welcome to our new Advisory Board members, and welcome to our new Public Relations Team. (These folks will be listed on the website and in the newsletter with the start of the New Year.)

Our December meeting will follow tradition and be an Open Mic Session. We will look forward to hearing short (five minutes or so) excerpts of your work. Members and guests are invited to share their creativity.



If you haven't done so already, now is the time to pay dues for 2026. You can bring cash or check to a meeting, or if I remember my Square card reader, you can use a credit or debit card. Until January, you can send dues payments to:

**Spokane Authors**  
**P. O. Box 18573**  
**Spokane, WA 99228-0573**

After that, we'll switch to my address for written correspondence.

## **OUR NOVEMBER 2025 MEETING**

Compiled by Dave McChesney

Spokane Authors met at the Sans Souci West Club House, on Friday November 14 at 2:00 pm. Attending were Caryl Briscoe-Michas, Joel Craig, Larry Danek, Mary DeBord, Betty Deuber, Gary Edwards, Sue Eller, Mark Lee Golden, Denise Guy, D. J. Guy, Esther Haldahl, Bob Hildahl, Kevin Hostbjor, Joan Kopczynski, Stephen Lalonde, Amy Logan, Bob Manion, Dave McChesney, Carl Northrup, Elena Smith, Linda Sonntag, Terry Stratton, and Sarah Vail. Guests included Kat Collins, Dennis Thomas, and Genny La Morgan.

Bob Manion talked a little about setting up a book signing, book sales event at the local VA Hospital. Steve Lalonde introduced a short pamphlet sized "chapter book" he'd compiled, called *Ecstasy Through Agony: The Writer's Odyssey*. He had several copies of it available for those that might want a copy.

Dave McChesney was our featured speaker for the day. He talked about character names and used examples from the *Stone Island Sea Stories* to illustrate the points he tried to make. He suggested that naming a character made them more important in the story and allowed the reader to better identify

that character as a unique individual. He also mentioned the importance of names fitting the time and place of the story, along with matching nationality, ethnicity, and so on.

Following a break, Elena Smith talked about Spokane Authors doing an educational presentation at the Museum of Arts and Culture, probably sometime in the spring. There are a number of rules we would have to comply with, and we need to let the Museum know our intentions by the end of this year. Sue Eller told us of fellow member Gail Saunders' new children's book. Amy Logan mentioned a new book/magazine for or about veterans. *Military Experience In The Arts*. (She has since provided a link for the site: <https://militaryexperience.org/>)

A number of upcoming craft fairs were also noted, with Shadle Park High School and Mead High School both being the weekend beginning the next day. Coming up in the early part of December are craft fairs at Ridgeline High School and Stratton Elementary School in Newport, Washington.

We also held elections to choose our officers for the coming year. Everyone currently serving as an officer ran again, and no one opposed them. We did have two new individuals run unopposed for Advisory Board positions. While we did have a couple of write-in votes for Secretary, it was not enough of a majority to declare either of those individuals as Secretary. Thus, we still need a Secretary, specifically, a Recording Secretary to help record the events at our meetings.

Officers and Advisors for 2026 include: Carl Northrup – President, Sue Eller – Vice President, Dave McChesney – Treasurer, Caryl Briscoe-Michas, Debby Putman, and Mary De Bord, Advisors. Having volunteered to do the job, Denise and D. J. Guy were approved by acclamation to be our new Public Relations Team. Likewise, it was noted that Dave McChesney continues to serve as Editor for the LITERARY GAZETTE, and as our Web Master.

As our afternoon drew to a close, we drew for door prizes, set the room to rights and went our separate ways. Remember, our meeting on December 12, 2025 will feature an

open mic session, where members and guests can share some of their work with fellow writers. Please try to keep presentations to five minutes or less.

Here is the link to the presentation at our November 2025 meeting.

<https://youtu.be/Y4mh2IAHxdl>

As the individual who normally unlocks our meeting room at St. Francis of Assisi would not be available to do that, we did not meet on Saturday, November 15, 2025. We have also decided not to meet on the third Saturday of December 20<sup>th</sup>.

## MEMBER INTERVIEW VIDEOS

Spokane Authors member Tiffani Harvey was recently interviewed by a couple of different organizations, and she has provided links to the videos of these events. The links will also be posted to her member web page.

Tiffani's October 23 Interview:

<https://youtu.be/Qorii-AFgxs?si=GdRT3q1s5uGslRkr>

Tiffani's November 7 Interview

<https://youtube.com/live/gtJZHR4kqyE?si=vBFnpAJQbbpZMN1m>

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Ridgeline HS Arts and Craft Fair

Saturday & Sunday, December 6 & 7

### Stratton Elementary Arts and Craft Fair

(Newport, WA)

Saturday, December 6

### Spokane Authors

Friday December 12, 2:00 pm  
Sans Souci West Club House  
Our Annual Open Mic Session

### Spokane Authors

Saturday December 20, 2:00 pm  
St. Francis of Assisi Social Hall

**CANCELLED**

## Sandpoint Writers on the Lake

Meet twice each month, both in person and via ZOOM for critiques. Information at [bonniemcdade@gmail.com](mailto:bonniemcdade@gmail.com)

## SASP BOOKS ON AMAZON/KINDLE

Many members' books are on Amazon and/or Kindle™ (We print short parts of the list on a rotating basis. The complete list, RECENTLY UPDATED, is available on the website, under "NEWS." )

To speed your search, add the provided ten digit numerical or alpha-numerical code (ASIN) to: [www\(dot\)amzn\(dot\)com/dp/](http://www(dot)amzn(dot)com/dp/)

### Karen Jean Matsko Hood

|                                   |            |            |
|-----------------------------------|------------|------------|
| <i>Blood Heiress</i>              |            | 1592108857 |
| <i>Bloom of Autumn Gold</i>       |            | 1592102166 |
| <i>Huckleberry Delights</i>       | B0045U9U34 | 1596493852 |
| <i>Transracial Adoption</i>       |            | 1594346690 |
| <i>Transracial Adoption Guide</i> |            | 1594346704 |
| <i>Petting Farm Fun</i>           | B00H5X0Y2E | 1594346186 |
| <i>Finding Rudolph</i>            | B074JZPG9X | 1598082957 |
| <i>Morning Reflections</i>        | B00DH70LVG | 1930948557 |

### Ed Des Autel

|                           |            |            |
|---------------------------|------------|------------|
| <i>III Minutes to XII</i> | B07B3YDPLK | 1641382511 |
|---------------------------|------------|------------|

### Marilee Hudon

|                          |            |            |
|--------------------------|------------|------------|
| <i>Waxing Is Useless</i> | B07HY4Y85T | 172128186X |
| <i>Lilac City Lunacy</i> | B0BSVB117K | B0BSJ6CFV4 |

### Dennis Held

|                             |  |            |
|-----------------------------|--|------------|
| <i>Betting on the Night</i> |  | 0966861280 |
|-----------------------------|--|------------|

### Gena Bradford

|   |  |            |
|---|--|------------|
| <i>I Can't Rest Now, Lord! I'm Responsible...</i> |  | 1072677067 |
|---|--|------------|

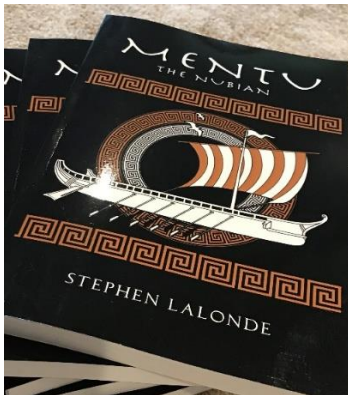
### Phillip Jones

|   |            |            |
|---|------------|------------|
| <i>The Casebook of Thadeus Rede &amp; Other Stories</i>                         | B00HWXAWTW | 1492181730 |
| <i>Inventions and Discoveries: A Trip Through History</i>                       | B00FBHNRFW | 149038460X |
| <i>Forensic Science for Writers: A Reference Guide</i>                          | B008Y2MX8S | 1475267207 |
| <i>Criminal Investigators, Villains, and Tricksters: A Trip Through History</i> | B00DVP4YHQ | 148279960X |

## FEATURED BOOK REVIEWS

This month we have a new review that almost fits within our normal rotation. It's the first one.

### Mentu the Nubian



By Stephen Lalonde

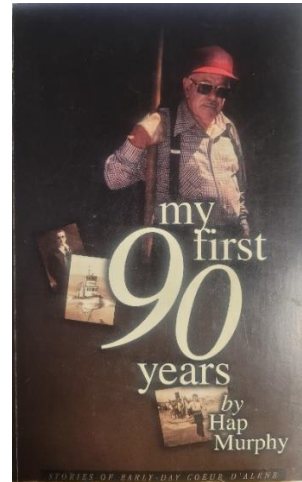
Reviewed by Elena S. Smith

*Mentu the Nubian* is a continuation of *Sinon of Kira*, in which Mentu—formerly Sinon's enslaved servant—is granted his freedom after saving Sinon's life. In this sequel, the narrative shifts to Mentu's perspective, tracing the complex personal and cultural challenges he faces as a newly freed man seeking to construct his true identity. His pursuit of self-understanding centers on a return to his origins, prompting a voyage to rediscover the place of his birth and, potentially, to find the mother he was separated from in childhood.

Now captain of his own ship, the *Cyrene*, Mentu navigates a series of adversities with determination, each obstacle reinforcing his self-determination in the aftermath of enslavement. The novel culminates in a moving reunion between Sinon and Mentu, marked by their first embrace—a symbolic gesture of their liberation from the racial prejudices that once defined their relationship. Whether Mentu succeeds in

finding his mother remains an open question left for the reader to discover.

Lalonde's prose is fluid and engaging, skillfully integrating action, emotions and cultural context. *Mentu the Nubian* offers a compelling continuation of the series, and it sets the stage effectively for the next volume, *Anissi*



By Hap Murphy (An autobiography)

Reviewed by Bob Weldin

Henry "Hap" Murphy was a storyteller with a remarkable memory for names and details. Except for a few years in the Army during WWII, and a short time at Lake Roosevelt, Hap spent his active life on and around the lakes and rivers of Northern Idaho. He was born in Coeur d' Alene (CDA) and spent his early youth on the banks of the Pend Oreille River at Dover, at that time a bustling sawmill town. His father worked for the Dover Lumber Company and was in charge of the tugboats that towed the logs to the mill. Hap occasionally went with his father on a two or three day trip up Pend Oreille Lake for a tow of logs for the mill. He tells several stories of his mischievous boyhood in and around Dover.

Hap became a tugboat captain and spent most of his adult life on or near Lake CDA living a full and rich life around family and friends. He worked hard and sometime played hard. He tells stories of Harrison and St. Maries when they were bustling, rowdy towns with bar fights and brothels. He tells stories



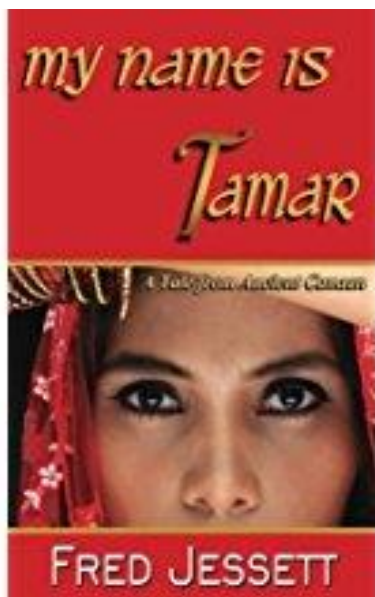
about making and selling home brew and moonshine during Prohibition. He tells of the 1933 flood and how tough it was for some people during the great depression.

He learned to cook on the tugboats or while batching in his boat house, tied up at the CDA beach. Army cooks were famous for being sloppy and bad. Hap was so good at KP duty that he rose to chief cook and was the pride of his unit. He later opened the Boat Drive Inn Cafe in CDA for more than a decade.

*My First 90 Years* is a good read, and of special interest to those who grew up in the CDA area. Or maybe you just want to remember the men who piloted the tugs and walked the tow lines, to get the logs down the river and across the lake to the sawmills.

Reviewed by Robert Hildahl

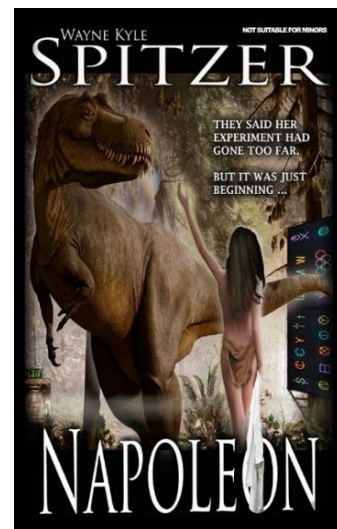
This book is about Hap Murphy who for most of his adult life was a tugboat captain who moved logs up the St. Joe River to Lake Coeur d' Alene and to the sawmills. Being a good storyteller, it's full of many entertaining, interesting, and humorous stories. I really enjoyed reading *My First 90 Years* and I recommend it to anyone who likes a good read.



Reviewed by Esther J. Hildahl

*My Name Is Tamar* tells the story of a young Canaanite girl, whose character is taken from the Bible, Chapter 38 in the Book of Genesis. The author tells her story as he imagined it might be. When she is fourteen, she is married to the eldest son of a Hebrew man named Judah. Judah has high hopes that she will produce heirs, especially sons, but instead she experiences rape and much abuse. After her husband dies unexpectedly, she marries Judah's second son who is also cruel and he, too, dies. Judah does not offer his third son because he is afraid that he might die, too. Meanwhile, Tamar is desperate to be married and have children. In disguise, acting as a prostitute, she decides to seduce her widowed father-in-law, who she feels is a good and decent man. This was a very dangerous thing to do, for she could be put to death.

This is a well-written book with well-defined characters. It's a page turner and a good read. I've always enjoyed reading stories taken from the Bible and Jessett did a good job describing what life was probably like back in Biblical times and how poorly and unfairly women were often treated.



By Wayne Kyle Spitzer

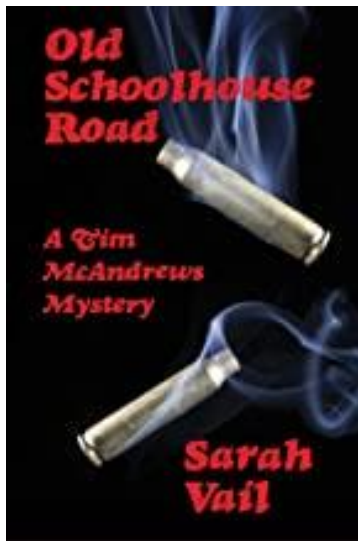
Reviewed by Sue Eller

Jan Vasquez, a specialist in animal behavior, finds herself face to face with a



dinosaur. A living, breathing, and hungry dinosaur. Her top-secret government job is to find a way to communicate with it. As she draws nearer her goal, strange events lead her to believe someone is trying to sabotage her work.

Wayne Kyle Spitzer shows his mastery of the novella with his succinct character development and plot line. His use of a nine-minute countdown near the end drives the story to its conclusion while it keeps the reader on the edge of his seat.



Reviewed by Kevin Hostbjoer

This is a well-researched and written novel. Sarah Vail grabs the reader from the first sentence with a timely school shooting, capturing the fears and terrors of today's unfortunate environment. The ongoing crime story contains twists and turns and surprised this astute (I thought I was anyway) reader right at the end with yet another twist. How wonderful. Highly recommended.



Reviewed by Betty Deuber

Kari Barr's novel, *Once Again: Tales of Destiny* is for anyone who believes in magic, as well as those, who do not. The plot takes many turns as it winds through the lives of humans, *Fair Ones*, and ogres, mixing the worlds of fantasy and realism. The point of view changes in this novel from character to character. The many characters featured in this novel originate in *Faire Realms* (fairy kingdoms). Kari refers to them as *Fair Ones*.

MARA, the main female protagonist, is first introduced as a human. She's a college student studying photography in Seattle, Washington, who has felt different from her classmates since she was a small child. She does and sees weird things no one else experiences. After attempting to tell others about them, she is rebuffed, and learns to keep quiet about her whimsical encounters.

AERRVIN AP ROSEWIN, the main male protagonist, is a *Fairy Prince*. His mother is about to give up her throne, then his sister will be Queen, so he is asked to go to America and create his own kingdom. He's reluctant, until the Wind Sprite, Mirri Sihee, his constant companion and he, all six inches of him, rest on a star fish beached by the tide pool. There she advises him. "My Lord, I do agree 'tis time for you to put aside your childhood... Go make a legend of your search, worthy of the bards of

olden time.” At 124 years old, he thinks, — *yes, it is time enough I make my own realm.* After making his decision known, other *Fair Ones* tell Aerrvin, he needs a wife to do that. Paying no heed to the advice, he transposes to America, as a human, and unmarried. He settles in Seattle, Washington, and buys an old laundromat.

MORVAYNE AP STEWART, the villain is an evil elf. Since elves good or bad rank higher in the domain than all the Wee people, he can do anything he wants. For centuries and centuries, he has been bound and determined to marry Mara.

\* \* \*

In this novel, unbeknownst to mortals, many *Fair Ones*— good elves, goblins, brownies and sprites, as well as evil elves, ogres, and trolls, inhabit the human world.

At twenty, Mara studies photography at the university. On weekday mornings, she waits at the bus-stop at the corner, near the Victorian home she inherited, for the ride to the university. One day, in 2009, she notices the old laundromat across the street is getting a new face; unfamiliar young people are renovating it. It’s starting to look like a quaint gift and antique shop, and she thinks it will spice up the neighborhood. A slight wind ruffles the long blonde hair of one of the young male workers. A glow encircles him and she names him Mr. Sunshine, a golden boy. A split second before she boards the bus her stare meets his, and a strange force sweeps through her body.

That morning, while working on the building, Aerrvin rests a moment, wipes his brow, and looks across the street. He sees a girl, a girl with an aura about her, when suddenly the bus pulls up. For a second, before she boards it, the *Fairy Prince* feels the girl’s emotions brush against his soul, and he’s able to flash his “Purple and Gold Brilliance.” He stands in awe. *Did she feel It? Would he see her again?*

Later in the day, Aerrvin and his workers meet other humans. Jill, a human, a baker and Mara’s roommate, immediately plans a block party for the new neighbors.

Still, in 2009, Morvayne lurks and waits for his chance to marry Mara.

\* \*\*

Only some characters in Kari’s story have the power or magic to change from *Fair Ones* to humans and back again. When Mara discovers she has that power, she accepts she is one of few who inherits the genes of magic. Suddenly, she understands why she feels fulfilled in the morning, after waking from the dreams she has had of dancing in the magic kingdom with fairies, brownies, sprites, and all *Fair Ones*, and why those night fantasies were not dreams at all. Mara unknowingly penetrated the void into the land of fairies and had actually danced all night. Whilst falling in love with Golden Boy in both spheres, Mara seems to have little concern with destiny. The evil elf, Morvayne, seems to dwell on it.

\* \* \*

Throughout the book, Kari’s prose often sounds like poetry. She understands the Wee-people’s life style so well; she makes the unbelievable, believable. Who knows, she may be a *Fair One*.

*Once Again: Tales of Destiny* deserves five jingles from Tinker Bell.