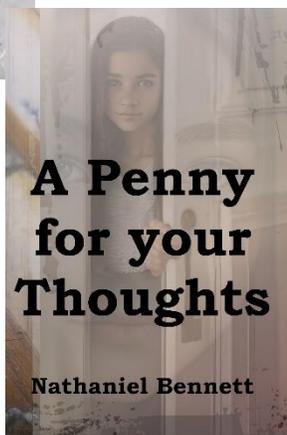
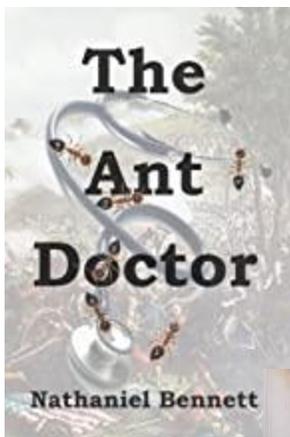
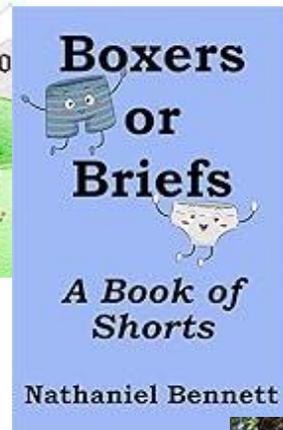
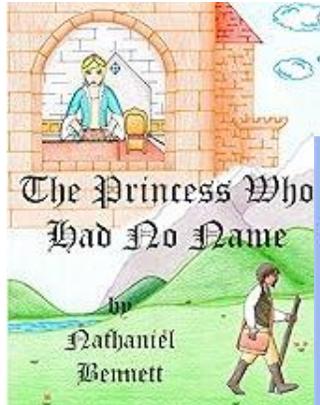




Literary Gazette

February 2026

Spokane Authors
2504 W. Walton Ave.
Spokane, WA 99205-1569



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, Spokane Authors is an organization dedicated to anyone interested in any aspect of writing and art. Members include aspiring (and successful) authors, poets, 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.

The meeting room opens at **1:30 pm**. Presentations and discussions begin at **2:00 pm**.

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

The meeting room opens at **5:30 pm**. Presentations and discussions begin at **6:00 pm**.

We set up a collection jar for those who wish to help reimburse whoever might bring refreshments.

Membership benefits include listing on the Spokane Authors website, 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
February 25th for the March 2026
issue.**

2026 Officers:

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"Like" the Spokane Authors Facebook Page:
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

Videos of many of our presentations are available at:
<https://www.youtube.com/@spokaneauthorsforyou>
Links for newer videos are in the Vice-President's message and in accounts of our most recent meetings

On the cover: Spokane Authors President Carl Northup, writing as Nathaniel Bennett is the author a several books. More are on the way!

OUR FEBRUARY MEETINGS!

We will meet at 2:00 pm. on Friday, February 13, 2026, at the San Souci West Club House, 3231 W. Boone Ave., Spokane, WA. The meeting room will be open at 1:30 pm. Dave McChesney will talk about Standard Format.

We will meet at 6:00 pm. on Wednesday February 18, 2026, at the Sans Souci West club house at 3231 W. Boone Ave., Spokane, WA. The meeting room will be open at 5:30 pm. Topic of discussion has yet to be decided.

(The gate closes at 6:00 pm, so plan to arrive before then. The gate will open automatically for you to leave.)

FROM THE PREZ

Good morning, it's overcast and the giant rodent is comatose. Yet he still managed to see his shadow, so we are doomed to six more weeks of winter. Personally, I haven't seen six days of winter so far. With that said, in the next six weeks we need to have at least ten feet of snow to make it feel like winter if the rodent is right.

Personally, I have little faith in a 130 year old ground squirrel that appears to have taken a trip to the taxidermist in 1902. The news media is more than capable of forecasting tomorrow's weather than the squirrel. Usually. Six weeks out? Not so much.

As for 2026? Full speed ahead. Tons of stuff to get done this year. For me, it has been a wonderful year so far and hoping it only gets better with all the projects I have to finish, new website, great things happening to friends and family, books and motorized toys.

(Don't you just love run-on sentences?)

Short month, so short letter. See you all on the thirteenth...

The Prez.

Nathan Carl

FROM THE VP

Groundhog weather prognostications questioned



According to some news sources, the groundhog has lost his credibility rating. Since the weather report looks so much different depending on where you live, our country is split between east and west, with six more weeks of winter for the Atlantic contingent. The western half (including Spokane) can look forward to an early spring. Whoever wins the luck of the draw, fair weather will eventually come for all of us.

Now that the weather report is over, we can talk about our lively and growing Spokane Authors group. We had a successful first Wednesday evening meeting, with four members and one guest, who only sat in because there were cookies. (That was my husband, Ray.) The four of us talked about plans and strategy suggestions for the coming year. The minutes of this meeting appear in our February newsletter. For the February 18th meeting, we will have Michael Murray, a writer and coach who encourages those who make things, including those who make a difference. Michael will do a workshop entitled "Who thanks you for doing your job?" The room will be open for us at 5:30 p.m., and the meeting begins at 6:00. The location is the same as our Friday meeting, the clubhouse at Sans Souci West, 3231 W. Boone Ave., Spokane. For directions, please call me at (509) 499-2012. If I can't answer, please leave a message so I know you are a human and not a spammer or AI, and I will call you back.

We have two months of meetings on Friday the 13th. February's speaker will be Dave McChesney, who will speak on Standard Format for manuscripts. In March, we will have Anna Goodwin, who will share her experiences writing about her father's journey in her book ***By Force and Fear: A Stolen homeland***. The Friday meetings begin at 2:00 pm, and the

room is open at 1:30 for set-up and pre-meeting visiting.

If you know someone who would be qualified to speak at either meeting or conduct a workshop in the future, please give them my phone number and email address (sue@emilytracemysteries.com) and I will get them on the schedule. This includes you if you have a topic on which you are comfortable speaking or teaching. And speaking of needing help, we also need someone to serve as secretary. DJ and Denise Guy, in addition to taking on the Public Relations duties, have volunteered to take over some of the video work for the meetings. Our group is growing, and the officers we now have are doing their best to serve the group. It is our dream and desire for the group to continue to grow and to help other authors in our area publish and prosper.

The video for January is finished—complete with subtitles and displays of the handouts—and is now available at: <https://youtu.be/VudX6t59hns>. We are working on setting up a Spokane Authors YouTube channel. Once the setup is complete, members will be able to go directly to the channel, subscribe to it if they wish, and view past videos. We are working hard to make the transition and upload the older videos. More information will be available as soon as the channel is live. In the meantime, you can access the January video by using the link above.

There will also be lots of info on our Facebook page, and on the spokaneauthors.org website. All these things help make our group more visible and, by extension, promote each member author. As another example, member Elena Smith talked to the MAC (Spokane's Museum of Arts and Culture), and we have a four-hour event scheduled for May 16th. The MAC has made this a free event, so as many members as are able may attend. We also have a two-page flyer approved by the MAC and designed by member Gail Bergan, available to distribute to help promote the event.

I have a feeling this will be one of the best years ever for Spokane Authors thanks to all of you.

Sue Esser

FROM YOUR EDITOR, WEB-MASTER, TREASURER

Since Carl and Sue both mentioned the groundhog predicting the weather, I suppose I am obligated to do so as well. My primary thought is why do we depend on a rodent thousands of miles away. After all, we don't tune in to an east coast television station to get the latest on our local weather. Do we have a more local weather predicting rodent?



I've been trying to not harp about dues payments as much as I used to do, but we are into a new calendar year, and thus a new membership year. If you haven't paid, dues (\$15.00) are due for 2026. Please pay as soon as possible. In another month or two, the roster and the website's membership list will be updated to reflect those current in dues.

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. You can also send dues payments to:

**Spokane Authors
2504 W. Walton Ave.
Spokane, WA 99205-1569**

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dave McEwen".

OUR CATALOG

It's progressing, although not at the rate I had hoped. Originally it was planned for it to be a yearly thing, but in practical terms it might be something that comes every year and a half or two years.

We want to include books by all our members, but we need to have some sort of eligibility for inclusion in the catalog. Basically, you need to be a current member to have your books included. If you were paid up for 2025 or are paid up for 2026 (or both) we will include your books. Even if you were paid for 2024

and had books in the catalog, they will be removed if you are not paid for 2025 or 2026. I recently emailed several individuals who are in that situation but have had no reply from any of them.

OUR JANUARY 2026 MEETINGS

Friday January 9, 2026

Compiled by Dave McChesney

Spokane Authors met at the Sans Souci West Club House, on Friday January 9 at 2:00 pm. Attending were Caryl Briscoe-Michas, Joel Craig, Larry Danek, , , Sue Eller, Mark Lee Golden, Denise Guy, D. J. Guy, Kevin Hostbjor, Stephen Lalonde, Amy Logan, Bob Manion, Dave McChesney, Jon Miller, Carl Northrup, Linda Sonntag, Mikel and Mrs. Stevenson, Terry Stratton, and Sarah Vail. Correen Morrill, her caregiver Teresa Corel, and Anna Goodwin attended as guests. Anna had been a member many years ago and rejoined during the meeting.

Our Vice-President, Sue Eller was the speaker for the day, and she attempted to guide us through the use of Micro Soft Word to format and prepare our books for publication on Amazon's KDP. She provided several images of screen shots to show us where to go and what to set up as we undertake the process. (The screenshots were also made available and sent to all members via email.)

Our Guest, Correen Morrill indicated she is writing a family history. Terry Stratton updated us on his writing projects. President Carl Northrup mentioned his intention to publish **Yank** soon and is working with student writers at a local private school to publish a group anthology. Mikel Stevenson announced publication of his book, **Light Transforms Broken to Beauty**.

Sue Eller hopes to finish the next Emily Trace Mystery soon. Denise and D. J. Guy are revising their children's book and working on an autobiography, titled **Double Trouble, Double Blessing**. Mark Golden shared a written New Years Resolution with us, in which he intends to "talk fifty percent less."

The event Elena Smith has been setting

up and coordinating with the Museum or Arts and Culture is scheduled for May 16, 2026, at 10:00 am.

As our time ended, we drew tickets for door prizes, packed up our stuff and headed our separate ways.

Video of our January 9th meeting available at:

<https://youtu.be/VudX6t59hns>.

Wednesday January 21, 2026

Compiled by Sue Eller

At the first meeting at 6:00 pm., at the Sans Souci West Club House, on Wednesday night, four members attended: DJ Guy, Denise Guy, Terry Stafford, and Sue Eller. We also had an intermittent guest, Ray Eller, who claimed he was only there for the cookies. This meeting replaced the Saturday one, which had been held at the St. Frances Catholic Church on Jefferson and Heroy for the past year.

We talked for a while about headers, footers, and page numbers, as a follow-up to the Jan. 9th meeting on preparing a document for publication in Microsoft Word. Terry had a question about page numbers. He had pictures that went with the text in one of his manuscripts and included a page number reference to the appropriate text. However, when the print version was created, the page numbers shifted, and the references did not coincide as they should have. We talked about some possible solutions to the problem.

The four of us discussed ways to help the group grow and be more active in the community. We agreed that more events like the one scheduled for May 16th at the MAC would benefit everyone in the Spokane Authors membership. We agreed to encourage members who were not directly participating to attend the events and show support, and to do some networking with the writers' community and the general public.

Speaking to book clubs, assisted living and similar facilities, schools, libraries, and other groups interested in books and authors was mentioned. Sue offered to update our speakers' brochure and to have those interested in talking to groups supply

information about themselves and the topics they knew best.

D. J. and Denise had some questions and discussed PR efforts, and said they were willing to help with videos of our guest speakers. Terry suggested some possible guest speakers and said he would talk to the creative writing teacher at EWU.

Sue handed out a couple of pages of information, one on finding errors on a page and the other a four-page illustration of the headers, footers, and page numbers. Since the last of the cookies disappeared (with help from Ray), the meeting was adjourned, and the extra lights turned off.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Spokane Authors

Friday, February 13, 2:00 pm
Sans Souci West Clubhouse
Dave McChesney: Standard Format

INWG "Coffee With Linda"

Saturday February 14, 2:00 pm
The Meeting House, 11th and Pittsburg
Contact lindathewriter@gmail.com to RSVP

Spokane Authors

Wednesday February 18, 6:00 pm.
Sans Souci West Clubhouse
General Discussion

Inland Northwest Writers Guild

Wednesday February 18, 7:00 pm (ZOOM)
Contact lindathewriter@gmail.com for link

INWG First Wednesday

Wednesday March 4, 2:00 pm (ZOOM)
Contact lindathewriter@gmail.com For link

Spokane Authors

Friday, March 13, 2:00 pm
Sans Souci West Clubhouse
Dave McChesney: Standard Format

INWG "Coffee With Linda"

Saturday March 14, 2:00 pm
The Meeting House, 11th and Pittsburg
Contact lindathewriter@gmail.com to RSVP

Spokane Authors

Wednesday March 18, 6:00 pm.
Sans Souci West Clubhouse
General Discussion

Inland Northwest Writers Guild

Wednesday March 18, 7:00 pm (ZOOM)
Contact lindathewriter@gmail.com for link

INWG First Wednesday

Wednesday April 1, 2:00 pm (ZOOM) Contact
lindathewriter@gmail.com For link

Spokane Authors

Friday, April 10, 2:00 pm
Sans Souci West Clubhouse
Dave McChesney: Standard Format

INWG "Coffee With Linda"

Saturday April 11, 2:00 pm
The Meeting House, 11th and Pittsburg
Contact lindathewriter@gmail.com to RSVP

Spokane Authors

Wednesday April 15, 6:00 pm.
Sans Souci West Clubhouse
General Discussion

Inland Northwest Writers Guild

Wednesday April 15, 7:00 pm (ZOOM)
Contact lindathewriter@gmail.com for link

Sandpoint Writers on the Lake

Meet twice each month, both in person and via ZOOM for critiques. Information at 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/)

Elinor Young

Running On Broken Legs: My Journey to Joy
B09XFDWC4X 1646455746

Sarah Vail

Old Schoolhouse Road

B09PMNPPMW 1490025583 1940025575

James Street

B09V1SG5CR 1480844683 1940025648

Snow Country Lane

B09YL18654 1480886378 1940025664

Lightning Ridge Road

B0CK51PT4G 1960059084 1960059076

The Legend of Flying Horses

B0FK5SG2RD B0FH9YRX8M

1960059394 1960059386

Mary A. De Bord

Violet Petals on My Heel

1667858688

Elena Smith

Why Birches Are White

B004PLNL4M 1419627511

Truths and Lies

B0BXFSSGMP 1667891650

Tucker the Dog Who Thought He Was a Person

B0FLT2ZM6P

Suzanne Holland

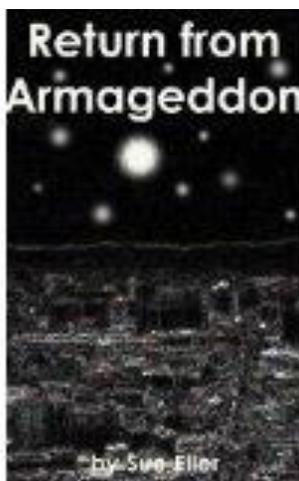
Mermaid In A Fish Bowl

B073SCB5GS 154555451

3 Mini Pigs Get New Digs (In Spirit Lake)

B0FKS89T87 196005936X 1960059351

FEATURED BOOK REVIEWS



Sue Eller

Reviewed by D. Andrew McChesney

In the not too distant future, all of Earth is united as the Federation of United Countries and United Peoples. Realizing the possibility

of invasion from space, Becky Johnson designs a defense system to protect the planet. On her way to the initial activation of the system, Becky disappears, and earth-changing events begin to occur.

This small book, which can be read in a fraction of the time required for most, packs an amazing story into a relatively small package. There is an understated but noted parallel with Biblical history and prophecy. Many characters appear to be modern versions of those from Scripture, identified in the story by more modern contemporary names.

The author does a marvelous job of combining Science Fiction with Biblical history and prophecy, while stirring in a bit of sarcastic humor and irony. The final result is certainly plausible, although not what we are led to expect by traditional interpretations.

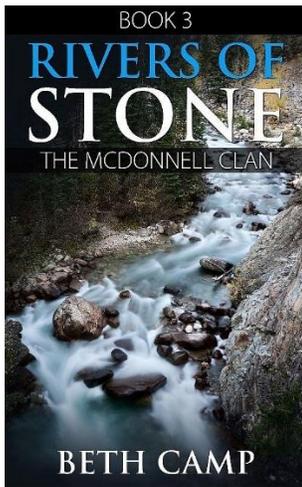
Return to Armageddon, ISBN 9781477655726 is available on Amazon, both in paperback and Kindle formats.

Reviewed by Kate Poitevin

Mr. McChesney already said it all better than I could. I would add that it could have been longer. It is nice to read a book that doesn't take a month to read, but I wanted more of this future world. Perhaps there will be a sequel someday, to let us know how her version of the world turns out. Perhaps Becky and David's grandchildren?

Reviewed by Beth Camp (5 Stars)

What a delightful read. You don't have to be a fan of science fiction to appreciate this fast-paced read about a society deep in trouble from a controlling government. Wait for it! Aliens are coming to the rescue. Or are they? Expect well-developed, believable characters, fascinating and subtle Biblical references, and an ending that affirms "listen to your own heart."



Reviewed by Sue Eller

Catriona McDonnell's greatest fear is deportation back to Scotland, where she would never see her beloved husband, Dougal, again.

Beth Camp brought me so completely into the story of Catriona and her trek across the continent, that I found myself shivering and hungry. Her descriptions of the characters' experiences and feelings, of life in the primitive areas of Canada and the northern United States, and the hardships explorers and settlers endured, draw the reader into the story as few writers can. If you enjoy historical fiction, adventure, and a quest driven by love and hope, you will enjoy *Rivers of Stone*.

Reviewed by Betty Deuber

In her third McDonnell novel, *Rivers of Stone*, Beth Camp tells the story of a new bride, Catriona, who declines traveling to the Americas' east coast with her family as an indentured servant. Instead, she chooses to sail to the Americas on the Hudson's Bay Co. ship, Prince Rupert, as a hired-on-hand—disguised as Cat, her husband's brother. They dock at Hudson's Bay fort, York in September 1842

When Catriona's husband, Dougal, and his younger brother, Colin, are sent west with a brigade, Catriona/Cat stays behind at York, working as clerk and copier. Losing her advocates and protectors, she constantly looks over her shoulder in fear of someone discovering her deception. Nor only here, but

throughout the novel, the reader feels Catriona's deep anxiety about the pretense, about sleeping in the same room with unwashed men and how she endures the severe winter climate in northern Canada.

Catriona/Cat acquires strength and stamina of a young man, and picks up the fort's lingo. Yet the reader gets a chance to know her as a woman when she shows her true female feelings in secluded places. When Dougal doesn't return in a year, like he promised, she desperately tries to hide her fear of abandonment. Later, when Dougal's letters stop, Catriona grieves in solitude. Then she buckles up and joins a brigade going to Vancouver in search of Dougal. The reader is intimately involved with the young woman as she—struggles in her four year search—endures the blizzards, floods and treks over the Canadian Rockies beside rough-tough fur men, buffalo hunters, scoundrels, breeds and friends.

Rivers of Stone is an interesting read. Compliments to Beth on the thorough bibliography she provided, as well as how she kept the narrator -third-person-direct throughout the novel. I would have liked to have followed a map of Catriona's journey

Reviewed By D. Andrew McChesney

In Scotland, in the first half of the nineteenth century, countless farmers were forced off their land so wealthy landowners could devote the countryside to pasturing sheep. As a result of this forced upheaval, Catriona McDonnell, her husband Dougal, and his brother Colin hire on with the Hudson's Bay Company. Known as Cat, she disguises herself as a boy and pretends to be a third brother.

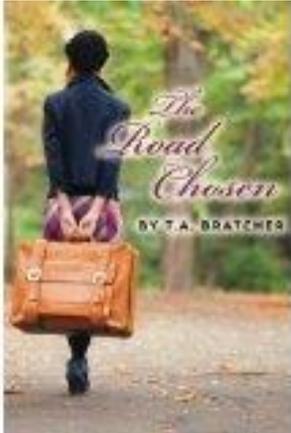
Once arriving at York Factory on the icy shores of Hudson's Bay, she is soon put to work as a clerk in the trading post. Soon Dougal is sent to Fort Vancouver while she is forced to remain behind. Not only must she cope with her husband being away, she must maintain her identity as a boy, lest she be sent back to Britain. This then is the story of her trials over the next several years. During this time she makes friends, enemies, and nearly

gives up hope of ever being reunited with Dougal.

Extremely well written, *Rivers of Stone* excels in authentic detail of the time. The suspense as Cat maintains her masquerade and her longing for Dougal continues at a high level throughout the story. Also notable is her willingness to make friends with, and to be friended by those of other origins, including members of the Cree Nation.

This is an entertaining, informative, and absorbing read. It is Book Three in the story of *The McDonnell Clan*, but it need not be read in sequence with the first two volumes. It is truly a stand-alone work, and its quality should convince readers they need to read the other stories in the series as well.

The Road Chosen



T. A. Bratcher

Reviewed by Esther J. Hildahl

This story begins when Grace is born to an unwed drug addict and is adopted by an older couple, who have two grown sons that they adopted many years ago. When she was thirteen, her parents decided to move from England to the United States, eventually settling in New Hampshire. Being very smart, she was placed in high school where she did not fit in and experienced brutal bullying. Her life took another turn when her mother became very ill and she had a life-changing decision to make that resulted in a violent altercation with her father. After that, she and her brother Lee set off on a fact-finding adventure to learn the truth about Grace's life.

The Road Chosen is a book well worth reading. It's different, interesting, and never boring. Bratcher has done a wonderful job of bringing her main character, Grace, to life. The reader truly cares about her as she searches for a meaningful life and cheers her on as she struggles to overcome one obstacle after another.

This book is available at bookstores and online.

Reviewed by Kate Poitevin

Ms. Bratcher has shared a compelling, sometimes heart-wrenching, tale about a young girl's struggle to survive high school bullies and an unconventional family dynamic. At one point she caused me to burst into tears, while sitting in my car in a parking lot. (You'll know where it was when you get there)

It is sometimes hard for those of us who had "norma" childhoods, to believe these things really happen, but they do. It is also hard for us to be confronted with these realities, but we must.

This book really opens your eyes as to what might be lurking in the past of those around us. One never knows what hardships and horrors might have been the norm for the person we see on the bus daily. The old adage, "walk a mile in his shoes" is so true. Ms. Bratcher allows us to walk along with Grace, to experience with her, as she suffers through her teens and comes out a strong, caring, young adult. I know there is more to her story and I hope we get to read it. Grace's story will stay with me for a long, long time.

Reviewed by Sue Eller

Grace's life is filled with challenges most of us never have to face. An orphaned child of a drug addict, she is adopted by a couple who eventually move from England to the United States. Through adversity she maintains a positive outlook on life. *The Road Chosen* encompasses true and lasting friendships, unconditional love, the importance of family, and a positive outlook on life. The author draws the reader into Grace's story and creates memorable and loveable characters.

Note: some scenes are too intense for young children.

Available at local bookstores in the Spokane area, across the United States, and in the United Kingdom. Visit T. A. Bratcher's website: www.tabratcher.com for more information.

Reviewed by Robert G. Hildahl

This story is about Grace, a young teenage girl who has just moved to the States from Europe. Her first year of high school in North Conway, New Hampshire is not a very happy one. Being an outsider, being from Europe, and being very smart means she is not accepted by the local students. She ends up being brutally bullied and makes only one friend.

Later in high school when she is named valedictorian of her class, she is beaten by two boys and put in the hospital. Then her life takes another tragic turn when her mother becomes very ill.

After that, Grace and her brother Lee go to Europe to learn the truth about Grace's early life and why her elderly parents adopted her after raising their two sons, who were also adopted. Many surprises await Grace as she learns the truth about her biological mother and her past.

I highly recommend this book. It's well written and a good read. *The Road Chosen* is available at bookstores and online.

Story by Suzanne Holland
Pictures by Maggie Rice

Reviewed by Esther J. Hildahl

This is the cute, humorous story of three mini pigs, named Woody, Pippi Anne, and Penny Mae who are packed up in two crates and taken to Spirit Lake to live. Of course, the siblings are frightened, but soon adjust to all the fun things of their new home like the green yard, wading pool, toys, good things to eat, their pig-sized ranch house, and their new family.

I like that this story is told in rhyme. The colorful illustrations are fun, wonderful, and well-done. At the end of the story, the author and illustrator created several fun activities for children, which include drawing, coloring, searches, and facts about mini pigs. I recommend this book for children, preschool to second grade. I also recommend this book for parents, for it is an excellent read-aloud book.

