

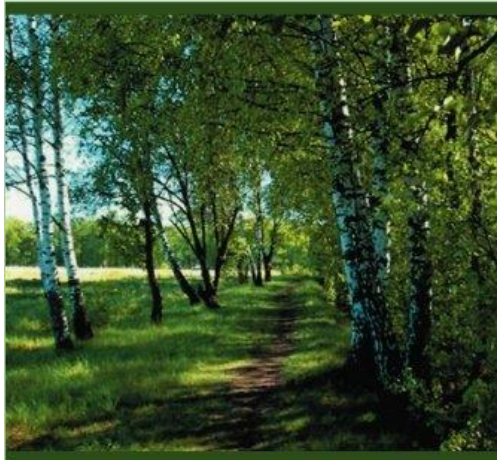


# Literary Gazette

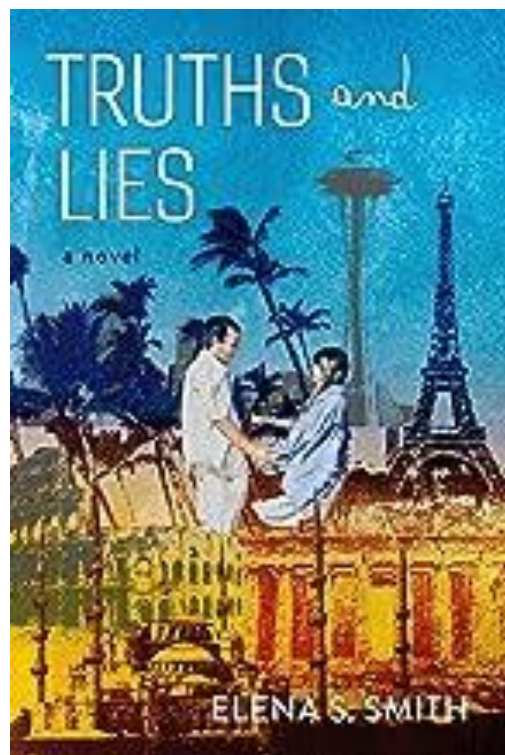
May 2025

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

WHY BIRCHES  
ARE WHITE



ELENA S. SMITH



**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.

**Spokane Authors** also meets the **third Saturday** of each month in the social hall of **St. Francis of Assisi Church**, 1104 W. Heroy Ave., Spokane.

Meetings begin at **2:00 pm**. We must be out of the room and building by **4:00 pm**.

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 by:  
May 25<sup>th</sup> for the June 2025 issue.**

## 2025 Officers:

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**Vice-President:** **Sue Eller**  
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sue@emilytracemysteries.com

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**Treasurer, Newsletter Editor, and Web Master:**  
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## Advisory Board:

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violetpetalsbook@gmail.com

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**"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:** [authors@spokaneauthors.org](mailto:authors@spokaneauthors.org)  
If no response : [daveeva@comcast.net](mailto:daveeva@comcast.net)  
Or: [saspworks4u@gmail.com](mailto:saspworks4u@gmail.com)

**Videos of many of our presentations are available at:**  
<https://www.youtube.com/@spokaneauthorsforyou>

**Cover:** Spokane Authors member *Elena Smith* is the author of: **Why Birches are White and Truths and Lies.**

## THE BOOK ON THE COVER...

Learn more about Spokane Authors member Elena Smith via her Member Webpage. Go to [www.spokaneauthors.org](http://www.spokaneauthors.org) click on MEMBERS and then on her name. Visit her new website at [www.elenasmithbooks.com](http://www.elenasmithbooks.com)

## OUR MAY MEETINGS!

**We will meet at 2:00 pm. on Friday, May April 11, 2025, at the San Souci West Club House, 3231 W. Boone Ave., Spokane, WA. Local author and Spokesman-Review columnist Cindy Hvale will be our speaker.**

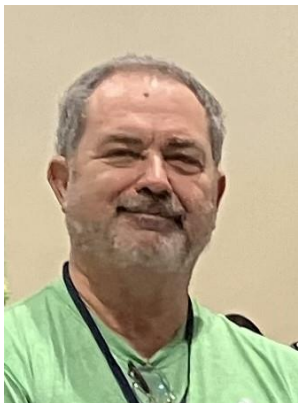
**Our Saturday, May 17 meeting has been cancelled. We hope to resume these alternate monthly meetings in the near future.**

## FROM THE PREZ

It is now officially May. Today is May Day, next week, Cinco De Mayo. After that, Mother's Day on the 11<sup>th</sup>. The 18<sup>th</sup>, is Mount St. Helen's Day, and my Forty-fifth Wedding Anniversary is somewhere in there...I think. To cap off the month, Memorial Day.

Now a short recap of how we got here.

Spring sprung in March, April was a very taxing month and tried from day 1 to fool us. However, we saw many new faces in April, which is always a blessing, and we look forward to seeing them again in May.



I am looking forward to a very playful summer, I hope you are too. My son and I have five minibikes running now, so we have a variety of crazy to choose from. I'm also hoping to get two more books published this year and try and keep up with the garden.

Ah...retirement.

The last thing in my letter today has been the greatest thing on my mind lately. One of our members, Marilee Hudon, is not doing

well. Please remember her in your prayers and if you can, send her a card. Dave will have her address or check the latest roster.

See you all on Friday the 9<sup>th</sup>.

Your Prez.

*Carl/Nathaniel*

## FROM OUR VICE-PRESIDENT

The meeting on May 9<sup>th</sup> will feature columnist and correspondent Cindy Hval, who writes the *Front Porch* column for *The Spokesman-Review*. She will talk to us about her book *War Bonds: Love Stories*



*from the Greatest Generation* and will speak about writing nonfiction, biography, and memoir in general. The book tells the stories of 36 couples who met and married during or shortly after World War II. Published by Casemate in February 2015, it is available on Amazon.com, Walmart, and can be ordered from Barnes & Noble.

Spokane Authors' May guest speaker meeting takes place on Friday, May 9<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 p.m. in the clubhouse at Sans Souci West, located at 3231 West Boone Avenue. Able-bodied and semi-able-bodied members are encouraged to come early (around 1:30 or so) to help set up tables and to help tear down after the meeting is over. Last month, we had such good attendance that we had to set up more tables after the meeting was scheduled to begin. (Note: it will be easier to put away extra tables after the meeting is over than to set more up at the beginning. It's good to see we are drawing in more interest all the time.

The Saturday meeting at St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church, 1104 W. Heroy Ave., has been cancelled for this month. Check our website at [spokaneauthors.org](http://spokaneauthors.org) for updates and look for next month's newsletter as well.

Lining up quality speakers for our Friday meetings takes a lot of juggling of both our schedule and that of the speaker. However, I



do have speakers lined up for most of the spring and summer. Next month, member and author T. Hammond will discuss editing and how we can prepare our manuscripts for submission to an editor. In July, we will hear from Gena Bradford, who will address the ins and outs of writing motivational books. For August, we will hear from one of the members of the Rotary Club South, and I hope to have a name and short bio soon. I don't have anyone lined up beyond August yet but stay tuned.

*Sue Eller*

## FROM YOUR EDITOR, WEB-MASTER, TREASURER



I waited as long as I could, but I've finally started to update the roster and the website to agree with those who are paid members for 2025 and those who are not. You will notice that the roster is slightly shorter than it was. I removed ten people who have not paid since 2022. Next, I'll adjust the MEMBERS list on the website, so it only lists current members. Simply put, there needs to be some advantage, some reward for being a paid member of Spokane Authors. And you can't say I don't bug you about paying your dues in a timely manner. Remember, our membership year runs from January 1<sup>st</sup> to December 31<sup>st</sup> of the current year. We prorate dues for those joining during the year.

At the same time, I realize that individuals may have financial situations we are not aware of. If that's the case, simply let us know, we don't need to know the details, and we'll make arrangements.

Once again, the group is not about money, but we do need the money for ongoing operation. We pay for a post office box, a website, and more.

Our Saturday meetings might be

changing as far as location. You may remember that the one in March didn't go as planned. We had one in April, but because of the location change and it being Easter weekend, attendance was very light. Hopefully, we'll have some word on future meetings at this month's Friday meeting.

As always, you can send dues to:

**Spokane Authors**

**P. O. Box 18573**

**Spokane, WA 99228-0573**

Or bring cash or check to a meeting. (If I remember to bring my "Square," you can charge your dues to a card.)



## SECRETARY NEEDED!

We are currently without a secretary, primarily someone to record our meetings. While we can and have operated without one, we should have someone in that position. If anyone wants to assume these duties, let us know and we would no doubt elect you by acclaim.

## SPOKANE AUTHORS CATALOG

We hope to release a new edition of our catalog in the fall. We want to include new members and those who have renewed their memberships since issuing the first edition last year. If you and your books are currently listed, please make sure to keep them there by renewing your dues for 2025. If you have published a new book or books, let us know so we can include it.

## OUR APRIL 2025 MEETINGS

Compiled by Dave McChesney

Spokane Authors met on Friday, April 11<sup>h</sup> at the Sans Souci West Club House. Members present included Gena Bradford, Caryl Briscoe-Michas, Larry Danek, Mary DeBord, Sheri Decker, Betty Deuber, Carolyn

Eller, Sue Eller, Mark Lee Golden, Denise Guy, D. J. Guy, Tina Hammond, Esther Hildahl, Bob Hildahl, Kevin Hostbjor, Amy Logan, Bob Manion, Dave McChesney, Carl Northrup, Kate Poitevin, Debby Putman, Elena Smith, Linda Sonntag, Terry Stratton, and Shandra Tanner. We welcomed new member Joel Craig and guests Lindsey Anderson, G. S. Jennsen, and Katie Hauritz.

President Carl Northrup introduced Vice-President Sue Eller, who in turn introduced our guest speaker, Frank Scalise, former member of the Spokane Police Department and author who writes as Frank Zafiro. His topic was audio books.

Frank began by talking a little about publishing in general and noted that in this day and age one can do everything that a publisher can do, or we can hire out to have it done. He noted that some feel it legitimizes our work to have it traditionally published, and there are still some who look down on the independent, self-published author. If one has a book out in print, as an e-book, or as an audio book, it does tend to validate it.

There are several ways to produce an audio book. One way is to go through Books In Motion, located here in the Spokane area. They are a traditional publisher, except that they produce audio books rather than print books. There is no cost to the author to have a book recorded, but the audio publisher has full control, and it may end up that the author receives smaller royalties.

Indie Authors can also work through Amazon, or ACX, Audio Gate, *Find Away Voices* (owned by Spotify) and *Chirp* (owned by Book Bub). One can hire a narrator/voice actor to record one's book or do it oneself. Paying the voice actor can be a matter of royalty sharing, a fixed fee based on the running time of the recording, or a combination of both. If an author decides to record the book, he should have a quiet room with no echoes, a good *podcast* quality microphone, and an audio editing system such as Audacity. There are several videos on You Tube to point one in the right direction. One would record or have the book read and recorded and then

upload, just as one does with an e-book or a print book for Kindle and other places.

Frank also mentioned that one would have to do some work for the cover, even if it is basically the same as the print version. That's because the cover for an audio book is square, while a print book is rectangular. At the end of his presentation, he shared a few samples of audio recordings of some of his books.

Once Frank had ended his presentation, we took a break and then came back to finish up our meeting. Elena Smith noted that her new website was completed and available at [www.elenasmithbooks.com](http://www.elenasmithbooks.com). Carl Northrup announced he'd finished his WIP, and it had been sent out to Beta readers. He's hoping to have it published by the end of May. Finally, we drew for door prizes, said "goodbye" to one another and headed our separate ways.

(If I do not give you credit for being there, I apologize. It's possible I missed a few. We had a good crowd, and Carl noted that it was more than we had had in a long time.)

Spokane Authors also met on Saturday April 19, at vice-president Sue Eller's home. Because we had changed the location, and because it was over Easter weekend, only a few people attended. Present were Caryl Briscoe-Michas, Larry Danek, Sue Eller, and Dave McChesney.

Sue had some handouts for everyone, and we took a little time to go over them. One was an intensive list of sound-alike words, such as *to*, *too*, and *two*. Another was a list of sentences and phrases in which we were asked to find the errors. We also discussed the possibility of finding another location for our Saturday meetings, so we don't end up with the doors being locked as happened last month.

## MEMBER WEB-PAGE GUIDE

1. Name and **photo/headshot**
2. Brief biography
3. Links to any website, blog, or other online locations.
4. Information about any books published.

- a. Book cover shot/thumbnail
- b. Brief description/blurb.
- c. Amazon ASIN, ISBN or other catalog number
- d. Locations where physically available.

In many cases your editor/webmaster can find much of this on-line, if it is there. If it's not and you would like to have a member webpage that is as complete as possible, please e-mail information to [daveeva@comcast.net](mailto:daveeva@comcast.net), [authors@spokaneauthors.org](mailto:authors@spokaneauthors.org), or send via USPS to:

Spokane Authors and Self-Publishers  
P. O. Box 18573  
Spokane, WA 99228-0573

We are always ready and willing to update and correct your member webpage. Do not hesitate to contact your webmaster if your page needs attention.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Local Author Book Club

Wednesday May 7, 2:00 pm (ZOOM)  
Contact [lindathewriter@gmail.com](mailto:lindathewriter@gmail.com) For link

### Spokane Authors

Friday May 9, 2:00 pm  
Sans Souci West Club House  
Speaker: Cindy Hval

### Inland Northwest Writers Guild Coffee with Linda

Saturday May 10, 2:00 pm  
*The Meeting House*, 11<sup>th</sup> and Pittsburg,  
RSVP at [lindathewriter@gmail.com](mailto:lindathewriter@gmail.com)

### Spokane Authors

~~Saturday May 17, 2:00 pm  
St. Francis of Assisi Social Hall~~ **CANCELLED**

### Inland Northwest Writers Guild

Wednesday May 21, 7:00 pm (ZOOM)  
Contact [lindathewriter@gmail.com](mailto:lindathewriter@gmail.com) for link

### Local Author Book Club

Wednesday June 4, 2:00 pm (ZOOM)  
Contact [lindathewriter@gmail.com](mailto:lindathewriter@gmail.com) For link

### Spokane Authors

Friday June 13, 2:00 pm  
Sans Souci West Club House  
Speaker: Tina Hammond

### Inland Northwest Writers Guild Coffee with Linda

Saturday June 14 12, 2:00 pm  
*The Meeting House*, 11<sup>th</sup> and Pittsburg,  
RSVP at [lindathewriter@gmail.com](mailto:lindathewriter@gmail.com)

### Inland Northwest Writers Guild

Wednesday June 18, 7:00 pm (ZOOM)  
Contact [lindathewriter@gmail.com](mailto:lindathewriter@gmail.com) for link

### Spokane Authors

~~Saturday June 21, 2:00 pm  
St. Francis of Assisi Social Hall~~  
**POSSIBLE NEW LOCATION???**

### 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 SASP members' books are on Amazon and/or Kindle™ (We print short parts of the list on a rotating basis. The complete, and hopefully up to date list is available on the web-site, 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/)  
Example: [www.amzn.com/dp/B008TXC332](http://www.amzn.com/dp/B008TXC332)  
or: [www.amzn.com/dp/1936178044](http://www.amzn.com/dp/1936178044)  
ASINs for each book are the same, regardless of what Amazon Marketplace you use.

### Phillip Jones

*The Casebook of Thadeus Rede & Other Stories* B00HWXAWTW 1492181730  
*Inventions and Discoveries: A Trip Through History* B00FBHNRW 149038460X  
*Forensic Science for Writers: A Reference Guide* B008Y2MX8S 1475267207

*Criminal Investigators, Villains, and Tricksters:  
A Trip Through History*

**B00DVP4YHQ 148279960X**

**Gail Saunders**

*Cluckenstein: The Halloween Chicken*

**1946882054**

**Johanna Price**

*Raising Buckshot: A Family's Experience with  
Autism*

**B00RKH993A 1483420205**

**Joan M. Kop**

*The Freedom Chaser* **B07PNYVCSF 0578217740**  
*Spies, Lies and Psychosis*

**B0D6HMC4XX B0D6XF6118**

**Stephen D. Lalonde**

*The Phoenix Gift*  
*A Palette of Verse*

**B07KGMSBDJ**

**B01NCJ8IP7**

**Nathaniel Bennett**

*The Ant Doctor*  
*A Penny for Your Thoughts*

**B09QP55ZSX**

**B0D7NKMYQ6 B0D5363WX3**

*The Princess Who Had No Name*

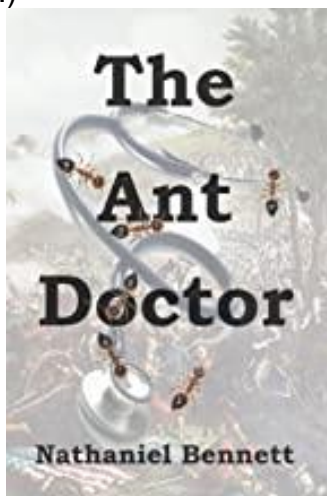
**B0DB5ML9LS**

*Boxers or Briefs: A Book of Shorts*

**B0DG5C13RN B0DGNV19FF**

## FEATURED BOOK REVIEWS

(We have several new reviews this month. If there is room, we will continue with or monthly rotation through those reviews we have on file.)

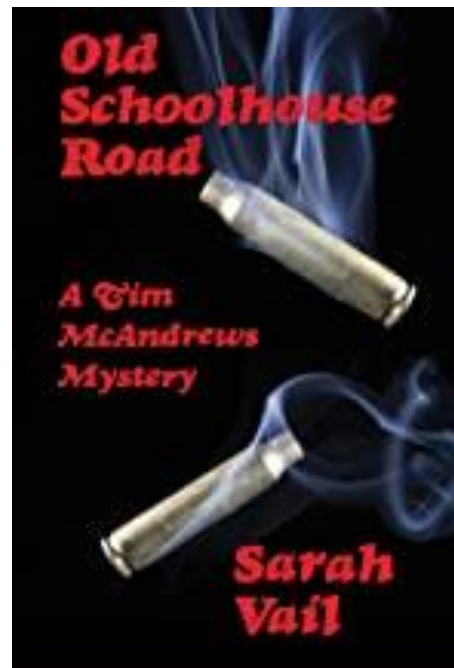


NEW

Reviewed by Kevin Hostbjor

A wonderful read. I picked up this book after meeting the author at a craft fair and thoroughly enjoyed it. Set within the backdrop of the civil war and all the horrors and bigotry of the era, the story follows characters surviving the war with honor and kindness. Written well, it brings the characters full circle and concludes in a realistic and satisfying manner. Recommended.

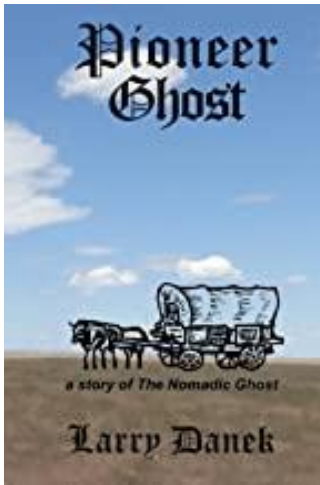
TOTALLY NEW



Reviewed by Kevin Hostbjor

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.





NEW

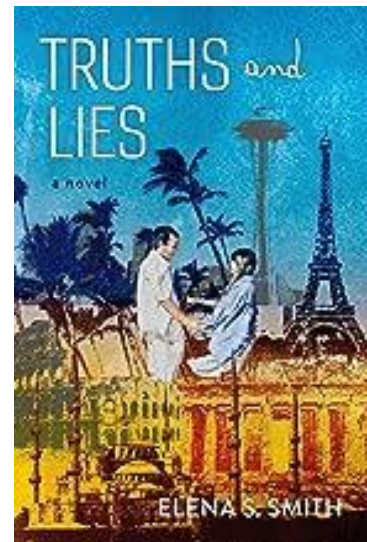
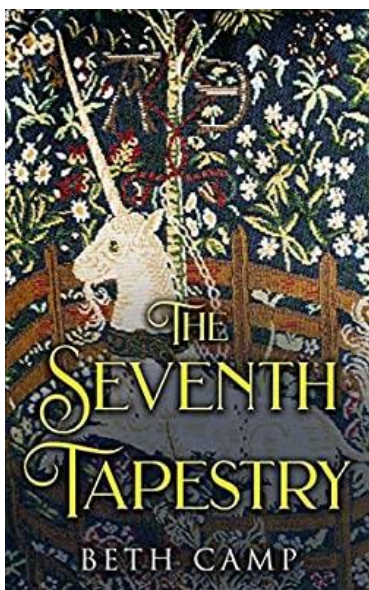
Reviewed by Kevin Hostbjor

A wonderful ghost story set in the Old West. The Pioneer Ghost takes us on an incredible journey through the old west, where wagon trains and their accompanying passengers struggle to reach the Oregon territories. Along the way, one boy's tale is interrupted by a ghost on a mission. I stumbled across this book at a craft fair and never regretted choosing it. The novel is short, but the story is fully fleshed out and engrossing. Enjoyable read. Recommended.

Reviewed by Kevin Hostbjor

This is a wonderful story of a young American museum curator who unexpectedly finds herself caught in the web of a ruthless stolen art ring centered in the Edinburgh area. Thousands of dollars of medieval artifacts are missing. Teaming up with a dashing member of Scotland Yard's Art Crimes Unit, the two must weave their way through clues and dangers to expose the thieves and recover the artifacts. When a priceless tapestry goes missing and bodies of people close to the museum begin to pile up, their investigation takes a critical turn. The Edinburgh and local castle locations are written so vividly, you can't help but want to visit these places. Through the entire story, I imagined how perfectly *The Seventh Tapestry* would fit into the British crime drama mystery television series, *Midsummer Midsomer Murders*. It went for 24 seasons. I think it is time for the 25th season. *The Seventh Tapestry* is an easy read and well worth your time. I recommend it highly and can't wait for the sequel.

TOTALLY NEW



Elena S. Smith

NEW

Reviewed by Joan Kopczynski

Elena's book, *Truths and Lies* surprised me, not only because it's well written but also



because English is not Elena's first language, Russian is. Her PhD in Linguistics is evident as most of the dialogue sounded authentic, as if it were written by an American. It also surprised me because Elena's book covers universal themes of love relationships, whether they are in the U.S., Europe or Russia. For example, she writes: "Men want sex no matter when, with whom, and how, while women as a rule want sex with the man they are in love with." While reading her book, I felt privy to gossip about people I knew or had known in real life. Especially about the lies we tell each other.

Vicki, the protagonist, is a university professor who seeks truth in relationships, not lies or manipulation. She is very independent and has a trust problem with men. I sympathized more with and was hooked by her character Tom, a lonely man in his late 50s, who got served divorce papers when he felt nothing was wrong with his marriage and then gained weight and lost all confidence in himself. I liked that Elena's characters were realistic and flawed. Vicki and Tom meet at a Seattle Seahawks football game, and their entwined lives are forever changed.

The book has several twists and turns, and the political ending surprised me. I found Elena's courage to write about the lies Putin told about Ukraine was nothing less than admirable. This book is so much more than a simple romance story; it is a lesson in the fine art of relationships and the length some people will go to seek the truth. I highly recommend reading it.

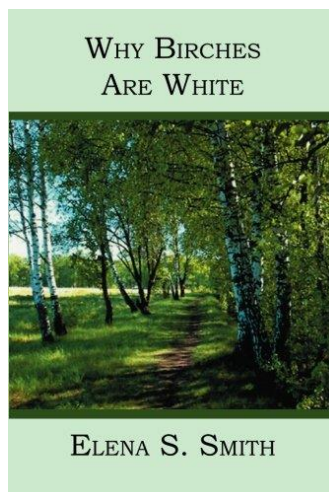
NEW

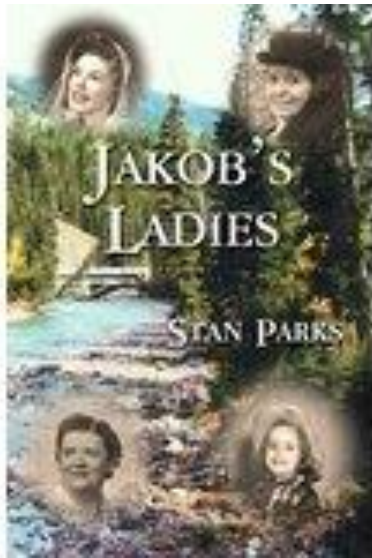
Reviewed by Kevin Hostbjor

To be honest, love stories are not normally found on my bookshelf. I'm a sci-fi, fantasy, mystery, suspense, chaos kind of guy. I do love a good sense of humor and admit ... in many genres, there is a romantic element. Recently, I attended a craft fair with the author, Elena Smith, and became intrigued about her journey from Russia to America. I bought her book. To my surprise and pleasure, I found *Why Birches Are White* to be a wonderful read. Elena Smith is a true writer. Her voice is clear and infectious. Her use of personal letters to demonstrate the growing relationship between a Russian woman and an American man is sweet and telling. I wanted to know more. I needed to know what happened to them. One might think a Russian born person could not write an English story without introducing a host of confusing translation issues. One would be wrong. As an author myself, I aspire to write with the same clarity and grammar accuracy as Elena Smith. After meeting her, I'm so pleased I decided to give *Why Birches Are White* a try.

(Thanks to Kevin for all the recent reviews!

We now continue with our normal rotation including more reviews *Jakob's Ladies*, the first review of which was published last month.)





By Stan Parks

Reviewed by Robert G. Hildahl

Jakob Miller arrived by stagecoach in Sheridan, Wyoming in 1895, just having graduated from the Chicago College of Dental Surgery. Sheridan was a frontier town expecting the railroad to arrive within a few months. Then Sheridan would really start growing.

The last Sheridan dentist had died four years ago. The local doctor, Doc Kelly, rented Jakob his storeroom for a dental office. Later, Jakob found an old barber chair in need of repair to use for his dentist chair. After doing a few more things to get his office ready, Jakob was ready for business.

Zeke, Jacob's first patient, walked in, grinning his toothless smile. He wanted to buy *some of those store-bought teeth*, but he didn't have enough cash to pay for them. So, he offered to take Jakob elk hunting in the Bighorn Mountains in exchange for his teeth. Jakob agreed.

On their hunting trip, Jakob was able to shoot a large elk. But later he was attacked by a big grizzly bear. Zeke shot the bear, but not before it shredded Jakob's right arm.

Jakob met his wife-to-be, Liz, the local schoolteacher, who helped take care of him as he recovered from his injury. Eventually they were married and moved into a small one-room cabin. They were both very happy.

As time went by, Liz gave birth to a daughter, Beth Ann, and they were able to move into a much larger house. Then their happiness took a tragic turn when Liz became very ill and died, leaving Jakob and Beth Ann, who was only two years old at the time. With the help of his housekeeper, Chucha, Jakob was determined to raise his daughter by himself.

However, five years later, Jakob fell in love with Geraldine, one of England's aristocrats living in Wyoming. Beth Anne loved her, too. Before they were to be married, they traveled to England so that Jakob could meet Geraldine's family, which they did. But due to circumstances, Jakob returned home alone.

Will this be the end of their relationship? Will Geraldine ever come back to Wyoming? Will they ever get married? Read and find out.

I enjoyed reading *Jakob's Ladies*. It tells a very good story. It's never boring, and I recommend it to one and all.

(It looks like we'll have to continue reviews of this book, next month.)