

New Reads by Local Writers

by Cheryl Keyser



Chasing Amanda

(Solstice Publishing, 2011) by Melissa Foster

The disappearance of a child is terrifying, and in this book two young girls go missing. Protagonist Molly Tanner has been so horrified by an earlier abduction that she uproots her family and moves to a quieter community. But, small towns hold their own mysteries, and these residents' secrets make this tale outstanding. Add the family tension between Molly's extrasensory perception and her doctor husband's scientific worldview and this is one of those books that's hard to put down. "I almost threw this manuscript away," says Melissa. "It was the first book I wrote. [But] it has taken off." The story came to her while running on White Ground Road in Boyds, featured in the book. "It's a bit of a creepy road," notes Melissa, "and after this story idea came to me, I have never run there again."

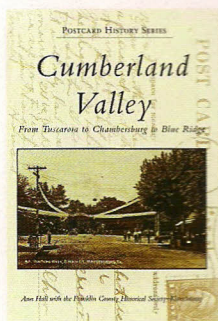
Available at www.amazon.com, www.barnesandnoble.com, *kindle*, and www.melissafoster.com.

Cumberland Valley

(Arcadia Press, 2011)

by Ann Hull with the Franklin County Historical Society — Kittochtinnny

Another entry in the excellent Arcadia Press local postcard history series, this installment focuses on the Cumberland Valley. Some particularly haunting images are the burning of Chambersburg during the Civil



War: the ruin of the home of Capt. Benjamin Chambers, son of the founder of the town, and an 1864 image showing piles of rubble spilling from houses onto East Market Street. Detailed captions often contain nuggets of lore.

Imagine having to "use three trolley cars and walk across two sets of railroad tracks to get from Caledonia to Chambersburg."

Ann, director of the Franklin County Historical Society, extensively researched area history. "I asked everybody I met if they had additional material I could use," she says. "I love these old pictures. Images sometimes capture life much better than words."

Available at www.amazon.com and www.arcadiapress.com and in Chambersburg at Route 5, Gift Enclosure, the Council for the Arts, and the Franklin County Historical Society gift shop.

Song of Satan

(iUniverse, 2010)

by Anadi Naik

An estimated 960,000 incidents of domestic violence occur every year, according to the Domestic Violence Resource Center. In this tale, Anadi vividly portrays how a family reaches this point and the tragic consequences. The main characters,



John and Sarah, have a seemingly happy marriage, but then his business goes bad, leading to feelings of anger and frustration, triggering abuse. John decides to destroy his marriage, the only thing in life he felt he could control.

Anadi, a retired child protection caseworker for the State of Maryland, has seen many similar cases.

"This book is a composite of many families I have seen over the years," he says. "I didn't plan to write this, but I have seen positive relationships destroyed by circumstances." This is Indian-born Anadi's first book in English. In treating this issue in a fictional manner he has chosen to reach out to those working in this field, helping them understand what such families are facing.

Available at www.iuniverse.com, www.imagine.com and www.amazon.com.

Can Anybody Tell Me Why God Won't Speak To Me?

(This Book is a Bomb, 2010)

by Jonathan Lee Byrd

The question in the title is not an uncommon one. Jonathan does not directly answer it, but instead finds a response in one of man's oldest longings. Set in Hagerstown, this "unusual" book alternates chapters on



preparing hallucinogenic mushrooms with the narrator's stultifying work in the office of a religious organization. His co-workers are referred to only by number. As the 22-year-old nameless narrator quits, he's a young man undecided, but with a sense of freedom.

Jonathan's book is based, in part, on personal experience, and a lot of grit, pushing himself to write 500 words a night. He decided to do his own publishing, both for his work and that of other new writers, "because I am impatient and wanted to see the results right away." In the process he set up a unique business model, providing a free PDF of all our books online, he explains, "hoping that readers will like them and donate to us." Available at www.thisbookisabomb.com and on *kindle*.

*Books may be available at additional locations.

Local authors may submit information about their recently published books to: stacey@ridgerunnerpublishing.com or mail to: Hagerstown Magazine, P.O. Box 2415, Hagerstown, MD 21741-2415.

Hagerstown: The Best of Life in Washington County & Beyond

September/October 2011 143