



The Writing Bug

By Mark H. Newhouse

GETTING IT REAL IN FICTION

For more than two years, I've had the pleasure of sharing fascinating stories about your neighbors and friends who share their passions by creating books, poems and stories for others to enjoy. The key word is "passion". Whenever I have the privilege of addressing aspiring youth writers, I tell them the first requirement of a writer is to have a passion for their story and subject. If you don't care, your readers won't either. The sad truth is few writers make money with their creations, but they have the joy of knowing they have achieved their dream of creating something that will be treasured by their family, friends, and readers lucky enough to find their books. But is passion enough even in fiction?

THE SUBJECT IS THE THING

Many writers, including me, are bitten by the bug to write fiction: mysteries, romance, suspense, horror, sci-fi, and more. Fiction looks easier to write and is fun. It appears to just require a good imagination, and of course, much less research. It also is often more difficult to market, since there are so many new fictions written and it is difficult to get yours noticed in the crowd. A lot depends on the background of the story. This is where

the author's passion for a subject can make a major difference.

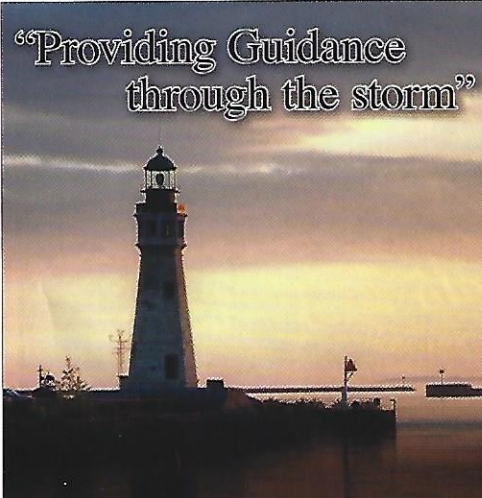
For example, in historical fiction, the event, people involved, and location, may interest readers in a book. In my novel, *The Devil's Bookkeepers*, the setting in the ghetto my parents were among the few to survive is so important it is almost the main character of this suspenseful tale that depends so much on the real horrors of the historic event. Readers seeking a book about the Holocaust and World

War 2, will find my most fictional story, built around the actual events, by their interest in the "subject". In other words, the subject is vital, and such fictional works depend on the reader believing in their authenticity. You need to know about your subject.

DAN KINCAID: INTO THE WOODS

Dan Kincaid is a great example. He is an author who has turned his love of the outdoors into fiction that

"Providing Guidance through the storm"



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is interesting, unique, and that he makes authentic and real to readers. His love of nature and concern for the environment led to his books for his family and young people who share his passion. This Village of Dunedin resident's *Kade Holley-Forest Ranger* series, attracts teenage/young adult readers, their parents and grandparents, who love nature, but he also has the purpose of helping youngsters "who may become interested in pursuing a career in forestry, wildlife management, or related fields." Anyone who loves nature will enjoy his books. His subject matter will attract readers to his fiction, but it is his authenticity that keeps them.

WRITE ABOUT WHAT YOU KNOW and LOVE

Dan is also an example of the importance of writing about what you know and/or are eager to research. Even in fiction, getting the

facts right can make the difference between a book that is realistic and one that readers may see as false. Dan writes about his subject because he has Bachelors and Masters degrees in Forestry and Environmental Management from West Virginia and Duke Universities, and spent thirty nine years working in forestry and natural resources. His books appear realistic because of his experiences including: fighting forest fires, managing wilderness areas, trails, campgrounds, wildlife and fishery projects, and general forest management. Thirty-one of those years were with the U.S. Forest Service at various National Forests. Does he have a passion and knowledge of his subject? You bet. In fact, one of his unique experiences was coordinating the locating, cutting, shipping, and directing various publicity events surrounding the furnishing of a Norway Spruce, sent from southeastern Ohio to

the nation's Capitol as the official Christmas tree. Yes, he knows his stuff. He shared this experience in his non-fiction, *A Gift to the Nation: From Ohio and Wayne National Forest – The 1987 U.S. Capitol Christmas Tree*.

Dan loves writing. For twelve years, he wrote a weekly newspaper column about the great outdoors. In addition, he served five plus years as a part-time sportswriter for a daily newspaper in Marietta, Ohio. While he currently enjoys spending time writing, he's not all work, and you can spot him playing softball in numerous leagues in The Villages. His next book idea?

Dan's fictional books include: *Kade Holley, Forest Ranger Vol. I* and *Kade Holley, Forest Ranger Vol. II*. All of his books are written from first-hand knowledge and experiences gained in his career as a

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forest ranger. Each Kade Holley book includes five separate stories that take place in National Forest settings, including Minnesota, Ohio, North Carolina, Washington, Georgia, West Virginia, and Colorado. The exciting adventures include a plane crash on a remote lake in Northern Minnesota; encounters with snakes, bears, moose; deer poachers and unruly vandals; forest fires; an assignment to Mount St. Helens; and even a ride with a famous Indy Car racer during a fire prevention media event in Colorado. There's something to excite every young reader. Us older folk too. His experience makes the books come to life for readers who have never been to these amazing locations or shared his experiences.

Like most Villager authors, Dan's eight books are available on Amazon.com. He loves the fact that writing has helped "me tell others about the


wonderful career opportunities that I had, and that other young people can have if they choose this path." He also reports that *Kade Holley, Forest Ranger Vol. III* is in the works. "Then I may delve into a play that I have started, as well as a book for teenagers that I hope to have my wife assist me with."

DO YOU HAVE PASSION? EXPERTISE? EXPERIENCE?

Dan has the passion, experience and expertise that makes his exciting fiction real to his readers. During his career, he gave hundreds of presentations. He says he hasn't "wanted to get too deep in this" now, preferring to write, and enjoy retirement, but he, and many of our authors make great presenters for your clubs, schools and organizations. You can find Dan and our other authors and books, as well as local writing clubs eager to help you

achieve your dreams, at www.wlov.org. And if you have a middle or high school writer, the Florida Writers Association has a great All-Star Conference just for them. Learn more at www.floridawriters.net. If you have a passion, let the Writing bug help you share it with others as Dan and many of your neighbors have done. ■

Mark's latest adult novel, *The Devil's Bookkeepers*, is a story of love, friendship and sacrifice, in a time of terror. His award-winning children's mysteries include: *Welcome to Monstrovio*; *The Case of the Disastrous Dragon*, and *The Case of the Crazy Chickenscratches*. Founding president of Writers League of The Villages, Chairman of the Florida Writers Association Youth Program, he invites adults and middle/high school writers to visit www.floridawriters.net for contests and conference news. Contact Mark with questions and story ideas at www.newhousecreativegroup.com



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