

Harvey adds two more self-published novels

Written by April Peregoy

Sitting in the audience, listening to Holocaust survivor Benny Hochman's story at the HHS auditorium Thursday, March 19, Caryl Harvey of Holyoke found herself listening to the story of someone she had known intimately for four years, though she had never met Hochman until that day.

"I cried all through his presentation," she said, adding, "He is my Abraham."

Abraham is the hero of Harvey's new book, "The Gold Train Connection"—a sequel to one of her previous books "Penance," which she published in 2005 under the pen name Anne Caryl.

The new novel is currently available at the web site www.xlibris.com/TheGoldTrainConnection.html, and will be available at amazon.com and barnes&noble.com some time in the near future.

On her personal web site, beyondqueen.net, Harvey wrote after meeting Hochman, "Mr. Hochman is not a Jew, but in many other aspects, he is the hero of my book. It was as if I had entered the Twilight Zone and a character I created had come to life. There are so many similarities I can't list them all, but if I can judge by the presentation, my book is very accurate."

"The Gold Train Connection" is the story of an older man, a doctor who survived the concentration camps as a child, and his 63-year-old bride. They go to Poland on their honeymoon because Abraham wants to show his new wife his homeland, but also because he needs to face some old terrors.

At the Denver airport, they find themselves in possession of a computer disk and in the middle of a mystery. Before their journey ends, they are embroiled in international blackmail and murder.

The book also details Abraham's return to Auschwitz and Bergen Belsen Concentration Camps. "It is funny in places, and at times it is bittersweet," said Harvey.

A lover of history and antiques, the inspiration for her new mystery came from a book she read about the Hungarian Gold Train. The famous Nazi-operated train, carrying valuables stolen from Hungarian Jews that would today be worth approximately \$4 billion, was on its way to Berlin when it was seized by American troops.

The valuables were never returned to the owners or surviving family members. Instead, they were sold at auctions, stolen or dispersed among U.S. Army officers.

In 2001, Hungarian Holocaust survivors filed a lawsuit against the United States government for the mishandling of the train's possessions, and received \$25.5 million—an amount not even close to the value of what was lost, according to Harvey.

"The whole thing made me so mad," she said. "It is what inspired me to write this novel."

Harvey's fiction writing venture began in 2005 when she published her first novel "Campo Savage," followed a few months later by "Penance." They were published by then-new company Serving Jesus Christ with Joy Ministries.

Recently, the company contacted Harvey to notify her it was going out of business, and she would be getting the rights back to her first two books. The call came about the time Harvey was ready to publish her third novel, "The Gold Train Connection."

Knowing her chances of getting published with a big company in a timely fashion were slim, she chose to self-publish instead.

"Had I gone through a traditional publisher and they had bought the book, it would have taken about a year to 18 months for it to come out," she said. "I felt it is such a timely subject, and I was afraid that if I waited that long, it wouldn't be timely any more."

So Harvey purchased a publishing package through an established company to guide her through the process of self-publishing.

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The upside to publishing her own work, according to Harvey, is that she was able to design her own book cover. She did the art work on the cover herself, incorporating a swastika and bride and groom figures into the design.

However, it also means she has to do all of her own marketing and promotions. She said she needs to sell at least 100 copies just to break even.

To help her reach her goal, she is using the opportunity of having the rights to “Penance” returned to her to have it turned into an ebook, which can be read online for free. Her hope is that readers will hunger for the sequel after reading the first book in the series. The link to the ebook will be available very soon on her web site beyonderqueen.net.

Another book Harvey has recently self-published, that will be available through xlibris.com in a month, is “Back to Reason.” It is a collection of stories that take place in a small town called Reason—which Harvey said is actually a thinly disguised Holyoke.

Many of the stories in the book are actual events that took place in Holyoke, said Harvey. “Some Holyoke people may recognize themselves in these stories,” she added.

One chapter is about Reason’s Chamber Community Night; another its two competing funeral home businesses. However, there are some stories that come from Harvey’s family and friends and a couple more from her own imagination.

“It’s just a group of humorous, small-town stories,” she said.

Harvey is a long-time resident of Holyoke, having moved here in 1969. Over the years she has worked as a psych tech for Centennial Mental Health and the Area Agency on Aging. She and her husband Charlie have four biological and three adopted children, and have also been long-time foster parents.

Her biography on xlibris.com explains, “The murder of their son in 1995 led Anne on a journey to explore her own fears and prejudices through the lives of her fictional characters. In a way, male and female, they are all Anne Caryl.”

Before trying her hand at fiction, the local author wrote several articles for magazines, newsletters and online publications, which she continues to do to this day. Most of these articles are designed to help other foster parents like herself. She also does regular book reviews for the web site www.ilovemystery.com.

To keep her fiction and nonfiction works separated, Harvey chose to use the pen name Anne Caryl for her novels. The name comes from combining her middle name “Anne” with her first name.

In addition, she maintains her web site beyonderqueen.net, sharing her “50 and beyonder logic” with others in her age category, particularly those who are foster parents like herself.

Publishing her own novels, said Harvey, is tedious work, and she is now ready to take a break from writing novels. She has recently discovered she has a talent for painting as well, and wants to spend more time learning about and exploring her artistic side.

Harvey’s first novel “Campo Savage” has been resubmitted for publication by Barber Publishing. It is available at Inklings Bookstore in Holyoke, along with “Penance.” Inklings can also special order “The Golden Train Connection” through xlibris.com if requested.