

Idea blows up into children's book for local author

Woodbine writer's 'The Trouble with Bubble Gum' available on Amazon

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

WOODBINE — Writers may spend months or years trying to get a book published, but local resident Shari Schwert received a deal from the first publisher to which she sent a manuscript of her children's book "The Trouble with Bubble Gum."

"If you have any experience with bubble gum, you know it can become a sticky mess if chewed sloppily, particularly if you try to blow big bubbles. The main character in Schwert's book, which is written in rhyme, falls victim to sloppy gum chewing."

"I literally just sat down one afternoon and in about 20 to 30 minutes, I had this little story," Schwert said.

The book is aimed at children 4 to 8 years old.

The story lived in Schwert's mind for 24 years, dating back to her college days before she began a career as a high school English teacher, elementary school teacher in Atlantic City and owner of day care centers. She did not keep a copy of the story, but a college friend still had the proposed book on a floppy disk.

A story can begin as a weird thought that pops into your mind, she said.

Schwert said publishing a book is entirely different today than 25 years ago.

"If you didn't have an agent, the publishing houses didn't want you, but agents didn't want you unless you've been published, so it took an act of God to try and get anything done," Schwert said.

The publisher matched Schwert with illustrator Mari Sebastian to create the artwork for

the book.

"I tried to let her have as much creative freedom as possible because I didn't know what I was doing," Schwert said.

Writing has always been fun and easy for her, and she is considering writing young adult fiction, she said.

"I can kind of hook them when they're young and maybe they can grow with me," Schwert said.

The main character in her book is warned by his mother of the trouble that could result from sloppy chewing of bubble-gum, especially when you have a bushy head full of curly hair. As boys are known to do, he ignores her warning, and becomes a sticky magnet for all kinds of objects.

Schwert read her book to a classroom of kindergarten and first-grade students who asked if she had written more books.

"Seeing these little kids read it is what I wanted to do when I grew up," she said.

A manuscript for another book is ready to be sent to her publisher, Schwert said. Her children are in high school, which gives her time to devote to writing.

Schwert's reading preferences as an elementary school student were Stephen King, William Johnstone and Shel Silverstein, not children's literature. She said she uses her husband, who is very analytical, as a sounding board for her ideas while she is more like "Daffy Duck."

"You have to be willing to give in to all the stupid thoughts because what may be stupid to an adult mind is fantastic to a kid," Schwert said.

Her book is a 2024 Family Choice Award winner and has all five-star reviews on Amazon.



Provided

Shari Schwert published 'The Trouble with Bubble Gum,' a story aimed at children 4 to 8 years old.

Project Lifesaver bracelets available at sheriff's office

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CAPE MAY COURT HOUSE — One of the fears for a person with a loved one suffering from dementia or Alzheimer's Disease is that person wandering away from home.

Those suffering dementia have been known to arise in the dark of night and go walking outside. The chances of finding that person unharmed are rarely good.

A national program called Project Lifesaver, available in Cape May County, uses a bracelet that broadcasts a radio signal. If a person wearing a bracelet wanders away from home, police can quickly locate them by tracing the signal.

The transmitters have also been used by those with Down Syndrome and autism. According to Project Lifesaver, more than 5 million people in the U.S. have Alzheimer's Disease and that number will triple by 2050. More than 50 percent will wander away from home and become lost.

By forming partnerships with local law enforcement and public safety organizations, Project Lifesaver deploys teams with the most reliable technology available to quickly locate and return wandering adults and children to their families and caregivers.

Such patients are unaware of their situation; they do not call out for help and do not respond to people calling out to them.

Nearly half of them will die and many can become injured or fall victim to predators if they are not located within 24 hours.

The number of people, families and communities experiencing this risk will grow dramatically in the next several years.

Sgt. Dustin Phillips, of the county Sheriff's Department K-9 Unit, is the local administrator.

"They wear a device that emits a specific radio frequency that we have equipment and trained officers to respond to their last known location and use this equipment that can help find this beeping the device emits and then we can help locate them safely," he said.

The analog signal works better than GPS, which can fail in harsh weather and produce a signal that cannot be detected through heavy tree cover or inside. The battery is replaced every 60 days, Phillips said.

He said a receiver can pick up the signal from a mile to a mile and half away.

"Usually, we try to get more than one officer out there and we'll try and triangulate the signal," Phillips said.

The Project Lifesaver bracelet offers peace of mind to family members

and caregivers who are already stressed, he said.

On a night when the temperature was 19 degrees, a person had disappeared, last seen around 9 p.m.

"It's now 4:30 in the morning and we were able to locate that person a few miles from their home," Phillips said.

The technology was developed after a study was conducted on the cost of conducting searches in the Chesapeake Valley, often involving the use of aircraft.

"They look at these situations where somebody had been missing for three days, they searched for three days and they were found 75 yards from their home or they searched for two weeks and the person was found a quarter-mile away in the woods from their nursing home," he said.

Phillips said in a case study, 12 Alzheimer's patients were equipped with the bracelets for a year and each one wandered away at least once but all were located within 30 minutes.

According to the Project Lifesaver website, 4,283 persons have been rescued. The radio tracking system also works for those who are visiting Cape May County and enrolled in the program in their hometown.

The program is free to county residents. Email dustin.phillips@cmcsheiff.net.



Susan Krysiak/CAPE MAY MAC

Summer's favorite treat

Dustin Piccolo, of Fine Fellows Creamery in Cape May, offers four flavors of Bassetts ice cream to those at the Carroll Gallery exhibit at the Emlen Physick Estate, 1048 Washington St. The exhibit, 'We All Scream for Ice Cream: The History of Summer's Favorite Treat,' is open through Nov. 3 and features many untold stories about the dessert, as popular during Victorian times as it is today. Admission is free.

Cape May MAC to present 'Ripple Effect' May 3

CAPE MAY — Every individual shapes bias-free classrooms, says Janis Washington White, who will share her wisdom and experience in education and the corporate realms in the upcoming talk "The Ripple Effect: How Every Individual Shapes Bias-Free Classrooms."

The event, sponsored by Cape May MAC (Museum + Arts + Culture), is scheduled for 7 p.m. Friday, May 3, at Cape May Stage, 405 Lafayette St.

White's talk is based on

her groundbreaking book "Erasing Bias From the Classroom: A Guide to Fostering Self-awareness, Open Dialogue and Advocacy."

White will share her insights on the pivotal role each person plays, transcending connections to education.

She will demonstrate how people can all be part of the conversation that empowers change and fosters inclusivity in schools.

White is a retired certified school counselor, ac-

complished corporate manager, certified life coach and advocate for diversity and inclusion.

As a passionate public speaker and active community volunteer, she continues to shape a more inclusive and empowered world.

With a bachelor's degree in human resources management and a master's degree in community counseling, she's leveraged her education to make a tangible difference in both corporate and educational spheres.

PUBLIC NOTICE

The following lakes (Lk) or ponds (Pd) may be treated with aquatic pesticides using backpack or boat mounted spray equipment on or between May 1- 31, 2024: In Cape May County: Magnolia Lake in Dennis Twp

The following pesticides may be applied: Clipper/ Flumigard SC (flumioxazin), Hydrothol 191, Aquathol K (endothall), Captain/Captain XTR/Cutrine Plus (copper), Roundup Custom (glyphosate), Seclear (copper sulfate), Sonar Genesis or Sonar One (fluridone), Tribune (diquat dibromide), Copper Sulfate (CuSO4), Aquastrike (endothall/diquat dibromide), Komeen/Nautique (Copper), Green Clean Liquid 5 (hydrogen peroxide).

Treatments will be conducted by TIGRIS Aquatic Services (NJ Cert #98622A), 56 Rte 130, Bordentown, NJ 08620 ph: 888-243-0891, under the supervision of Chris Borek (NJ Cert#27355A). Upon request, the pesticide applicator or applicator business shall provide a resident with notification at least 12 hours prior to the application, except for Quarantine and Disease Vector Control only, when conditions necessitate pesticide applications sooner than that time. For pesticide health emergencies contact NJ Poison Info & Ed System 800-222-1222. For Routine health inquiries or exposure symptoms contact NJ Pesticide Info Center 800-858-7378. For pesticide regulation information, pesticide complaints, and health referrals, contact the NJ PCP 609-984-6507.

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Derby Day

DERBY DAY tells the tale of three syndicates competing for the blanket of roses: An all female team and filly seeking to make "herstory"; the last of the Kentucky breeders, backing a reluctant jockey, who blew a previous Derby win; and Horse Racing's most legendary trainer, with an undefeated horse, owned by a Saudi Prince. The script was under consideration as a feature film by The Walt Disney Company and finished in the top 20% of entries (from 12,000 scripts) at The Austin Film Festival.

Derby Day will perform at 3PM, Saturday, May 4th at studio-space, located at 112 Woodland Avenue, #4, in Somers Point (across from the Crab Trap).

**** YOU CAN PURCHASE A VIRTUAL TICKET AT WWW.STUDIOSPACESPNJ.COM TO WATCH THE LIVE STREAM OF DERBY DAY ON MAY 4, 2024 AT 3PM EDT****

The streaming page on our website will have a Zoom link that you can access before the event but, we'll activate the stream on the day of 15 minutes early. Any issues email directorpat@gmail.com

Live admission \$20 • Stream purchase \$20

Made possible by funds from the Atlantic County Office of Cultural & Heritage Affairs, a partner of the New Jersey State Council on the Arts.