



ARTIST OF THE WEEK

Stephen King (1947-)

There are few things that Stephen King writes that aren't scary. Could anyone honestly confuse him with Dr. Seuss or one of the Brothers Grimm? Although he may be quite grim, he has made a successful living scaring the living daylights out of readers and moviegoers throughout his prolific career.

For most of his young life, Portland, Me.-born King, called Fort Wayne, Ind. and Massachusetts home until settling with his mother and adopted brother, David, in Durham, Me.

After obtaining a Bachelor of Science Degree in English at the University of Maine at Orono in 1970, King married Tabitha Spruce - a college sweetheart - but struggled in his career. Occasionally, short stories by King were published by men's magazines.

King became an English high school teacher in Maine in 1971. He honed his writing skills in the evening hours, producing short stories and novels. In the spring of 1973, he turned out "Carrie," which later became a movie starring Sissy Spacek. This successful piece allowed King to leave his teaching position in order to focus on his writing career.

SPECIAL NOTICE:

Due to our special 10/28 edition, all A&E press releases must be received by tomorrow at 4 p.m. to be considered for publication. 250 words or less, typed.

No EXCEPTIONS!!

Arts & Entertainment

Billy Callahan's 'Muckraker' Gets Gritty, Honest And Spooky - Just in Time for Halloween

By MICHELLE H. LePOIDEVIN

WESTFIELD - Do you remember those books you were forced to read in school that nearly put you into a coma? Gritting your teeth with the turn of every endless page, you considered using those yellow and black Cliff Notes to get you through your reading agony.

Billy Callahan's "Muckraker" would never belong on this kind of reading list. It's a knockout, gritty, straight-shooting, in-your-face novel that grips you at the turn of all 250 pages and won't let go.

Here is a snippet of "Muckraker's" honesty: "Written in black magic marker on the side of the cement wall, catching my eye, was SW+GS 4ever. I tried to remember if I knew those initials. Really I wanted to etch in two extra initials: BS." This kind of quote comes in only the first seven pages. Brace yourself for the others.

Mr. Callahan, who grew up in Westfield, recently sat down with The Westfield Leader and The Times and discussed his inventive writing style, which seems to break all of the often stringent rules of journalism and fiction writing.

The fast-paced, suspenseful and true story of "Muckraker," which revolves around the eerie Halloween season and a drug ring that reportedly takes place at Mindowaskin Park in Westfield, features such a highly-controversial topic that Halloween



AUTOGRAPH, PLEASE... Billy Callahan puts his John Hancock on his most recent novel, "Muckraker" during a book signing on October 9 at the Town Book Store in Westfield. Mr. Callahan has also written "The Wildflower" and "For Lindsey." "Muckraker," holds gritty and honest truths which make the novel a true pageturner.

will never really hold the same meaning for readers.

The lead character, Ashley Munroe, grapples with the reaction of his classmates once he publishes his revealing article about the drug activities in the Hi's Eye. While confronting the aftermath of his decision, Ashley maintains his belief that he did the best thing by trying to save his community from the drug ring.

Mr. Callahan paints emotions and vivid traits of his supporting characters with a neon brush. While reading "Muckraker," you feel as if Blake and Maureen are actually trading flirtatious, yet

biting remarks around you, while the adolescent, sexual tension between Ashley and another character Tara the Curb Owl is also unavoidable.

"I always wanted to write a book about Halloween, something that people could get into and enjoy," Mr. Callahan told The Westfield Leader and The Times. "I just wanted to entertain people." Mission accomplished.

For Mr. Callahan, Halloween holds a feeling of fondness. "I love the whole holiday," the author beamed. As for revealing the controversial parts of "Muckraker?" Well, he would do it all over again.

When asked about uncovering subjects that most authors would rather ignore and allowing all of the proverbial cats out of the bag, Mr. Callahan confided, "If there's something wrong, it should all be let out."

If a high school student approached the author about the risks involved in publishing an article on members of the Trench Coat Mafia, which annihilated students at Columbine High School, Mr. Callahan said he would advise the student to go with their gut feeling and try to make a difference.

Regarding the power of the written word, he noted that if such an article was written, it might have prevented the massacre at Columbine from happening, or at least brought attention to the eminent danger involved in the issue.

Portions of "Muckraker" highlight all of the angst, anxiety and clear-cut characters of a good John Hughes film (Some Kind of Wonderful, The Breakfast Club), the ins and outs of facing up to the bullies in life and the differences between teens that can make or break their fragile emotional worlds.

"Muckraker" is fraught with entertainment and the startling realisms of life that most authors

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Halloween Ha-Ha: Q: Why did the ghost go into the tavern? A: For the boos!



HISTORY AND CUSTOMS OF HALLOWEEN

There are several different stories regarding the origin and practices associated with the spookiest day of the year. Here are a few of them.

The origin of the witch came from the Saxon word "wica," meaning "wise one." Witches would rub ointment on their skin to obtain a feeling of flying. Some witches rood on horseback, while poor witches walked or carried a broom or pole to get over streams.

Scottish children would hollow out and carve large turnips and put candles in them. Irish



children used turnips and potatoes. In certain parts of England, children used large beets. Upon the arrival of the Scotch and Irish in the United States, pumpkins were discovered and turned into the modern-day Jack-O'-Lantern.

In England, poor individuals once went to houses to sing and beg for "soul cakes" which were square pieces of bread with currants. The more soul cakes the beggars obtained, the more prayers they would say for their deceased relatives. Spanish people put cakes and nuts on graves on Halloween to bribe the evil spirits.

In order to avoid becoming possessed by evil spirits, Celts would dress up in frightening costumes and parade around their neighborhoods to scare away the demons that would possess them. Over time, however, this practice became more ceremonial instead of to prevent demons.



Black cats were believed to have the special ability to sense the presence of the dead.

The tradition of "bobbing for apples" originated from the worship of the goddess of harvest, Pomona. Her sacred fruit was the apple.

The Main Ingredient:

PUMPKIN AND PEANUT HALLOWEEN SPREAD

- 1/2 cup pumpkin from a can 2 teaspoons chopped peanuts
1/2 cup peanut butter
2 teaspoon honey Strips of carrot, celery sticks and apple slices
1/4 teaspoon cinnamon

Combine pumpkin, peanut butter, honey and cinnamon. Mix well. Chill. Before serving, top mixture with chopped peanuts. Makes 1 cup.



Westfield Ghost Hunters Society Explores Eerie and Unexplainable Phenomenon

By SONIA V. OWCHARIV

WESTFIELD - Everyone has heard at least one ghost story in his or her lifetime.

When I was growing up as a child at an elementary school in Roselle, the story that we, as second graders heard and embellished upon, was called the monster from Unka Bunka Land.

Unka Bunka Land was a place, which was wooded and fenced

off. Supposedly, there was a creature that roamed day and night looking for children to eat and to steal.

Everyday at lunch, a group of us would get close enough to the fence, but never enter the woods, and yell out his name, "Unka Bunka, Unka Bunka, where are you?" We hoped that maybe we could catch a glimpse of his ugly, scary face. Sometimes one of us thought we saw him, and then we would run off screaming hysterically.

But, we never saw him. Almost 20 years later, when I see one of my former elementary classmates and mention the name Unka Bunka, he smiles coyly and says, "I remember!"

However, what about real ghosts? What about other stories?

This past summer on the big screen, we viewed a lot of movies centering around spirits, clairvoyance, extra sensory perception and the afterlife. These movies included The Blair Witch Project, The Sixth Sense, Stigmata and Stir of Echoes.

The movies kept us buzzing with more information concerning the ghostly haunting genre than one could expect.

Why do ghosts exist for some while others are more skeptical of their existence?

One reason may be, because this phenomenon deals with the unknown or the afterlife. For some, there is eternal life without a doubt. But, for others there still lies a question of doubt about ghostly figures or what actually happens to the individual's spirit once the body has ceased living.

In Westfield, there is a society which investigates such concerns of the other side. The society is called, The New Jersey Ghost Hunters Society, Inc.

The group, which is led by co-ghost hunters and founders, Jeff and Laura Muller, was formed to help all those who are interested in the paranormal or to learn how to search and to document ghostly activities such as doors opening and closing on their own, unknown whistling sounds, steps creeping or the moving of furniture.

The founders investigate ghost sightings, haunted houses and other unexplained activity in homes.

"One time we were called to go investigate this house in New Jersey. The man who lived in the house knew there were ghosts, but accepted their presence. However, one night we received a phone call asking us to come, because he could no longer take it," reported Ms. Muller.

"When we got to the house, I felt the need to go to the basement and perform more investigations. In the basement was a dug out pit, where apparently being an older home, you could tell that was where the coal was stored to heat the house. After the area was cleansed with a wand of sage herbs, I began to work," she revealed.

"In my consciousness, I realized that this was the burial place for at least 12 African slaves, some of them being young children," noted the ghosthunter. "While I worked,

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HAUNTED HOUSE: WESTFIELD -- The Westfield Recreation Commission will host a Haunted House on Sunday, October 31, from 5 to 9 p.m. at the Memorial Pool Complex. The event will be held rain or shine. For more information, please call the Recreation Commission at (908) 789-4080.

SCARE YOURSELF SILLY with these movies: The Exorcist, Halloween, Amityville Horror, Scream I, Scream II, The Blair Witch Project, Poltergeist, Pet Semetary, Scream, Sleeping With the Enemy, The Devil's Advocate, Nightmare on Elm Street, Psycho, Hellraiser, Friday the 13th, I Know What You Did Last Summer. It's the Great Pumpkin, Charlie Brown (not so scary!)

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