

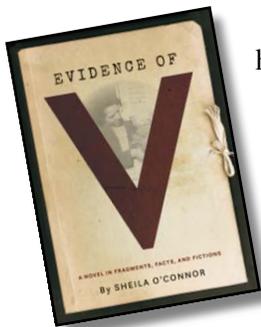
THE POWER OF PUBLICITY

Evidence of V by Sheila O'Connor Gets Plenty of Attention in June

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this year's book award programs have all been virtual. So, instead of coming up on stage and making a speech after learning her book had been selected as [Editor's Choice for the Fiction Prize in the 2019 FOREWORD Indies](#), Minnesota author Sheila O'Connor celebrated at home. Earlier this year, the book also won the Novel & Short Story category of the [Minnesota Book Awards](#).

Evidence of V: A Novel in Fragments, Fact and Fictions was inspired by the true story of the author's maternal grandmother's six-year incarceration as a 15-year-old girl for an unplanned pregnancy in 1935. The novel incorporates multiple genres as well as historical documents to bring to light the little-known practice of incarcerating girls for "immorality" at the Minnesota Home School for Girls in Sauk Centre, Minnesota and across the United States.

O'Connor discussed her book and the story behind it at a virtual event in partnership with The Friends of the Brainerd Public Library on June 22. The event was previewed by the [Brainerd Dispatch](#), as well as [Lakeland Public Television](#), and radio stations [KAXE-AM](#) and [WWWI-AM](#) in Brainerd, Minn.



A popular speaker, O'Connor has continued to raise awareness of this silenced Minnesota history despite the constraints of the virus. "Although my events have gone virtual, I remain committed to reaching out to communities across Minnesota whose families may have been affected by similar circumstances, and to raise awareness of this treatment of girls and women within the criminal justice system," said O'Connor. Ultimately, O'Connor hopes to connect with survivors and descendants whose stories have yet to be told.

In addition to recent awards, "Evidence of V" is listed as one of the Best Criminal Justice Books of the Year by the Marshall Project, a nonpartisan, nonprofit news organization that seeks to create and sustain a sense of national urgency about the U.S. criminal justice system. It is also a nominee for the Northeastern Minnesota Book Awards.

Learn more about Sheila O'Connor's work on her author website: SheilaOConnor.com.

Coming up in July...

R. Michael Conley's latest book, *Mortgaging the American Dream: What Were We Thinking?* is set for release on July 7. The book tells the story of how humanity has systematically borrowed on the future to sustain what has become an unsustainable paradigm, and how, in the process, we are mortgaging the American Dream for future generations while jeopardizing our own. Learn more about the book at WeatheringTheStorm.net.

A story written by Marlin Bree, author, *Bold Sea Stories*, will be published in the July 4 issue of the Duluth News Tribune.

Pete Carlson, author, *Ukrainian Nights*, will be interviewed on KFAI-AM's Write on Radio! Around 7:30 p.m. CT on July 7.

The fifth book in the *Cooked to Death series (Restaurant in Peace)* officially launches on Sat., July 25 with an event from Noon - 2 p.m. at [Once Upon A Crime \(604 W 26th St, Minneapolis, MN 55405\)](#) Several of the authors whose stories are included in the latest book in the anthology series plan to participate in the event.

30th Annual Midwest Book Award Winners Named in June

Winners of the 30th annual Midwest Book Awards were announced during a Facebook Live watch party the evening of June 27. RMA Publicity is happy to share that three books we have helped promote won recognition.

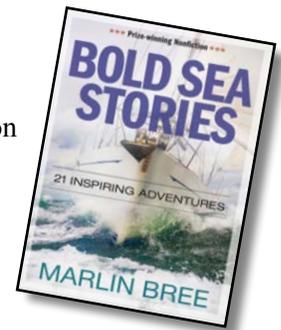
Judy Stoffel, author, *#LookUp: A Parenting Guide to Screen Use*, won gold in the family and parenting category; Elaine Koyama, author, *Let Me In*, won silver in the business category; and Ron Peterson, author, *Gardeners of the Universe*, won silver in the Fiction-Fantasy/SciFi/Horror/Paranormal category.

Also in June, Peterson's novel was reviewed in the [St. Paul Pioneer Press](#). In her review, Mary Ann Grossman said, "You don't need a doctorate to enjoy this look at human potential--or human collapse."

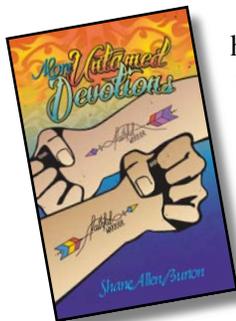


Pioneer Press Reviews Marlin Bree's *Bold Sea Stories* in June

The Pioneer Press also offered a very nice review for Marlin Bree's *Bold Sea Stories*. In the June 11 issue of the paper, reviewer Mary Ann Grossman wrote, "Bree keeps the tension high as he describes navigating through incredible waves, ice storms and unfamiliar waters." Read the full review in the story [posted here](#).



Anoka County Herald Publishes Story About Pastor Shane Allen Burton's *More Untamed Devotions*



Pastor Shane Allen Burton of Hudson, Wisc., received some discouraging news recently. He has been diagnosed with terminal cancer; but he's not letting that prevent him from pursuing an important mission. He wants to encourage people everywhere to "Live life in ALL CAPS!"

That message is loud and clear in many of the stories in his latest book, which was recently published by Radiant Heart Press, an imprint of Henschel HAUS Publishing of Milwaukee, Wisc. There is a story about the book in the June 11 edition of the [Anoka County Herald Tribune](#) newspaper in Minnesota. Burton founded Lifelines, A New United Methodist Faith Community in Andover in 1998 to 2001, later working at Fridley Covenant Church from 2012-2013.

[Chicago's Daily Herald](#), which covers one of the other communities Pastor Burton has served over the years, has also published a story. Burton is the former associate pastor at Church of the Incarnation in Arlington Heights, Ill.

Country Messenger Newspaper Publishes Story About Strusinski's Memoir, *Care Under Fire*

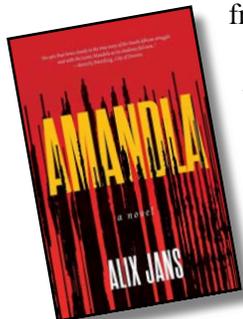
There is a story on the front page of the June 11 issue of the [Country Messenger newspaper](#) about Minnesota lobbyist Bill Strusinski's recently published memoir, *Care Under Fire*. In the article titled, "Jungle Therapy: Combat Medic's experience in Vietnam has shaped his life for over 50 years," reporter C. L. Sill shares intimate details of what life was like on the front lines for Strusinski. The story also shares Strusinski's motivation for telling his story now.

Copies can be ordered through the publisher's website, [Calumet Editions.com](#).



St. Paul Author's Historic Novel, *Amandla*, Launches in June

St. Paul author and South African native Alix Jans launched his debut novel, *Amandla*, on June 16, which was “Youth Day,” in South Africa. On that date every year, South Africans pay tribute to the Soweto school children killed in the 1976 uprising that proved to be a turning point in the struggle to liberate South Africa from the apartheid regime.



Amandla begins with a prologue in which Nelson Mandela is woken by a would-be assassin, whose motives are both personal and political. The story then flashes back to a seminal battle between the Zulus and the Afrikaner Boers (farmers), and the genesis of a multi-generational saga between two families inextricably entangled in a deadly feud. In the drama that unfolds, a tragic misunderstanding leads to a personal vendetta that mirrors the prejudices at the heart of each group's inability to comprehend the aspirations of the other, culminating in an attempt to assassinate Mandela—with his own gun!

Learn more about this title, or pick up a copy today at Alixjans.com.

Story About Sigma's Bookshelf's Latest Teen Authored Title, *Outcast*, Published in MN Sun Sailor Newspaper

A story about Sigma's Bookshelf's latest title, *Outcast*, by Plymouth, Minn., resident and Wayzata High School student Sakthika Vijay, has just been published in the [Minnesota Sun Sailor newspaper](http://MinnesotaSunSailor.com). Congratulations to Sakthika on this much deserved recognition for her amazing book!

Outcast is the story of a young girl of Indian descent with an uncanny ability to write meaningful songs. In the story, she goes from being an obscure teenager to a superstar; who has to deal with a lot of life challenges along the way.

Copies of *Outcast* and Sigma's Bookshelf's other teen authored titles are available online at SigmasBookshelf.com/Books.



MEDIA OPPORTUNITIES

If your book is relatable to any of the following events observed in July or August 2020, let us know! RMA Publicity may be able to help you secure publicity in the print, broadcast and/or online media for your book.

July is...

Cell Phone Courtesy Month
National Make a Difference to Children Month
National Park & Recreation Month
Worldwide Bereaved Parents Awareness Month

Also coming up in July...

Resolution Renewal Day – July 1
Anniversary of the Debut of Paperback Books – July 30 (1935)

Source: 2020 Chase's Calendar of Events

August is...

Boomers Making a Difference Month
National Immunization Awareness Month
Read a Romance Month
What Will Be Your Legacy Month

Also coming up in August...

Respect for Parents Day – Aug. 1
World Lung Cancer Day – Aug. 1
National Bargain Hunting Week – Aug. 3 – 9
Elvis Week Aug. 8 – 16
Assistance Dog Week – Aug. 9 – 15
Be an Angel Day – Aug. 22
Be Kind to Human Kind Week – Aug. 25 – 31

Why Now is the Time to Start Developing a Plan for Selling Books During the Holiday Season

By Rachel M. Anderson,
Publicist, [RMA Publicity](http://www.RMAPublicity.com)



Have you started seeing Christmas merchandise in the stores yet? If not, you will very soon. It seems like stores get the biggest retail holiday of the year started earlier and earlier every year. And it's not because people are planning their holiday festivities earlier than they did before either. It is because retailers are doing all they can to increase their sales during the holiday season; and as a bookseller you should too.

No, stores don't bring in the holiday inventory early because they think people will start buying for Christmas in July. It is because they are working to gain impressions. For those without a background in marketing and advertising, an impression is basically a view—when an advertisement is seen, heard or able to influence a potential customer in some way.

Think about it. If you start seeing the Elf on the Shelf prominently displayed in stores in July, by the time the holiday season rolls around and you're out looking for gifts for the kids in your life, you may just want to buy it. The same concept can hold true for your book.

So, as an independent or small press author what can you do to make your book top of mind among potential buyers? Here are a few ideas:

1) Send a complimentary review copy to the features or book editor at your local newspaper, and let them know you are hoping they will consider the title for their special holiday gifts section. In the Twin Cities where RMA Publicity is located, both the Star Tribune and Pioneer Press release a holiday books section shortly after Thanksgiving.

2) Help potential customers associate your book with the holiday season by posting content on your website, blog and social media that has a holiday feel to it during the summer. This can be photos of you

wearing a Santa hat, or your book wrapped in ribbon. Or perhaps you can offer a Christmas in July sale on your print and/or eBook.

3) Start working on holiday-themed social media posts to put up in October, November and December. Doing them now means you won't be scrambling to get them done when the busiest time of the year arrives.

4) If you have an e-version of your book, start looking into what is involved in getting your book featured in one of the popular promotional programs out there for eBooks. These include The Fussy Librarian, Book Gorilla and Choosy Bookworm to name a few.

5) As we continue to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic, it's hard to predict whether bookstores will be open to doing events over the holiday season. If they do, those events are likely to be virtual, and now is the time to get your name on the list. Be warned though, it may already be too late, as other authors may have already beaten you to it.

Need help coming up with a marketing plan for the holiday season? Feel free to reach out to request a [free publicity consult](http://www.RMAPublicity.com). I'm happy to discuss tactics that could work for your particular title.

Next month's publicity tips article:

How to Sell Books at a Time When In Person Events are Off Limits Due to COVID-19

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