

Where Are They Now? Tricia Levenseller *continued from front page*

after I started working on that first book I discovered for the first time that I really enjoyed writing.”

Levenseller's first published book, *The Daughter of the Pirate King*, was just released by Macmillan Publishing through their Feiwel and Friends children's division on February 28. The historical fiction novel is for teens, (“... and adults who are still in denial,” says Levenseller on her website) features a 17 year old female pirate captain, Alosa, who gets herself kidnapped by enemy pirates on purpose, so she can steal a treasure map.

“I saw the *Pirates of the Caribbean* movies and just loved them, and when I would go to a book store I would look at the Young Adult shelves for stories about pirates and I was so sad to find that there really weren't any,” says Levenseller about her inspiration. “And, of the few I found, none of them were about female pirates. And I thought that I wanted to see girls represented.”

Levenseller's book can be found at Barnes and Noble, Amazon, and other book stores, including many independent book stores. It has received great reviews and was selected for the American Booksellers Association's (ABA) Indies Introduce Winter/Spring 2017, a list of the top ten books for children and teens. “It was really an honor and amazing to be nominated for that,” she says. Because she made that list she was invited to appear at the ABA book conference in Minnesota this winter, where she had the opportunity to meet other authors, interact with book sellers, sign books

for fans, and sit on several panels to discuss her book and her writing process. “It was a really great opportunity for me, and since my publisher sent me and paid for everything, it was really amazing and fun!”

A 2009 graduate of VHS, Levenseller played volleyball and basketball, played clarinet in the band, and was a member of the National Honor Society. Levenseller says she never finished the first novel she started for her Senior Project, even though she ended up committing about 60 hours to writing it, “... because I was having so much fun with it and I didn't want to stop!” says Levenseller.

“My first love has always been fantasy books, but someone gave me some writing advice, to write what you know, so I started writing about a girl in high school trying to figure things out, because that's what I knew. I didn't know about dragons or magic or anything else. If I was to give it a genre, it would be Young Adult Contemporary Romance. But eventually I got bored with that Senior Project and I never did finish it. But the Senior Project was what got me started and what made me realize that I loved writing. So, Yay for the Senior Project!”

After graduation Levenseller headed off to Brigham Young University in Utah, where she graduated in 2013 with a degree in English Language and a minor in Editing.

“Studying English Language is different than studying English Literature,” says Levenseller. “It is more

focused on sentence structure, grammar, and punctuation.”

Even so, her interest in writing novels remained. “After I went to college I wrote my very first fantasy book from start to finish during the summer following my freshman year,” says Levenseller.

The process of writing a novel and getting it published has been a learning process for Levenseller, full of ups and downs, and many stops and starts that required patience and resilience.

After completing that draft of her first book, which was an urban fantasy, Levenseller sent it out to friends and family for feedback and then spent the first semester of her sophomore year getting up one hour before her classes and working on editing and revising the story. She also began researching how to get her book published. “All signs pointed to getting an agent,” says Levenseller.

Levenseller began sending out one page “query letters” to prospective agents, noting that the only way to get a book traditionally published by one of the big five publishing houses is to go through an agent, who acts as a middle man in the process. “You can't submit a manuscript to the publisher directly, you have to have an agent submit your work on your behalf,” says Levenseller. “The query letter is a way to explain what your book is about and pique an agent's interest and if anyone is interested they will request a copy of your manuscript to read.”

Levenseller says that most people don't realize that an agent does not get paid until they sell your manuscript, so they don't agree to represent you or your work unless they think they can sell it.

Almost immediately, Levenseller received a request for her manuscript and two weeks later she received a

phone call, saying the agent would love to represent her. So her first book was sent out to editors at the various publishing houses, which was very exciting.

“And then a year went by and nobody wanted to buy the book,” says Levenseller. “And I was very distraught of course, and sad, because I had put so much work into this and nobody wanted it. So I called my agent and said, ‘OK, that didn't work out, is it OK if I write you another book?’ And he said yes.”

Levenseller's next attempt was a historical fantasy, which she learned she really enjoyed writing, and that was drafted, edited and revised and sent off to the publishing houses. Again, after a year, no one wanted to buy her second story.

“But I was not to be deterred, because I knew I wanted to write, so I asked the agent if I could write him a third book, and he said yes,” says Levenseller.

Levenseller's agent rejected her third book, so she wrote a fourth book, which involved pirates and her agent told her he didn't like pirates. “At this point I had to break up with my agent,” says Levenseller with a laugh, “and start all over again and find a new agent.”

Levenseller found a new agent and eight months later she sold *Daughter of the Pirate King* to Macmillan. “It took me four books, two agents, and a ton of rejections, but I finally made it,” she says.

Levenseller explained that once the book sold, getting it released and on the shelves is still a long process. She says her book sold in July of 2015 and was finally released over 18 months later.

Macmillan did give Levenseller a contract for two books, and says she is currently working on edits to a sequel about her pirate character Alosa, which

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NOTICE OF BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING

A public meeting of the Budget Committee of the Vernonia Rural Fire (District name), Columbia (County), State of Oregon, to discuss the budget for the fiscal year July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2018, will be held at Vernonia Fire Station (Location)
555 E Bridge Street, Vernonia OR (Address). The meeting will take place on 4/11/2017 (Date) at 6 (Time) a.m. p.m.

The purpose of the meeting is to receive the budget message and to receive comment from the public on the budget. This is a public meeting where deliberation of the Budget Committee will take place. Any person may appear at the meeting and discuss the proposed programs with the Budget Committee.

A copy of the budget document may be inspected or obtained on or after 3/15/2017 (Date) at Vernonia Fire Station (Location) between the hours of 9 a.m. p.m. and 4 a.m. p.m.

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