

Local author talks about horses and writing

Blue Mountain Eagle

CANYON CITY – Writing under the pen name A.K. Moss, Canyon City author Kathy Moss shares her love of Eastern Oregon, horses and the Western way of life in “Unspoken.”

The book, published in 2014, tells the tale of a struggling ranch family in the Baker City area, and the choices that lead them to overcome obstacles and forge a better future.

At the heart of the tale, the 16-year-old daughter learns lessons about love, loyalty and friendship.

Moss has tackled such subjects before, always with a Western flair, in her cowboy poetry and photography. When not honing her writing, she co-owns Russell’s Meats in Canyon City with her husband, Tracy.

The Eagle asked her about her book for this Q&A.

Q. You’re well known in these parts for your cowboy poetry, but not everyone knows you as a novelist. What made you turn to writing fiction tales, and was it a long-time ambition or recent idea?

A. Words on paper have always been very easy for me. Poetry has been very good to me in that I was able to put stories down and it was almost effortless to do. It gave me an opportunity to travel all over the country stepping out of my comfort zone and doing public speaking at schools and in public, sharing Western lifestyles and living. “Unspoken” came to me about 1996. At that time I was working a couple mustangs, helping a couple of people with troubled horses and helping a few kids learn to ride and understand horses, language and what the horse might be saying. What made me change from poet to a novelist? Well, I don’t think it was a conscious choice. The poetry never really stopped; it kept



Contributed photo

Local author Kathy Moss, writing under the pen name A.K. Moss, shares her love of Eastern Oregon, horses and the West, in her new novel, “Unspoken.”

coming, but it wasn’t as effortless as before. I still write poetry, but right now fiction is where I feel I belong.

Q. “Unspoken” has a family at its heart, with the 16-year-old daughter as protagonist. What made you choose a teen to put at the center of the action?

A. When I wrote, I never really thought about age, gender or even a plot for “Unspoken.” I wanted the Cason family to be as strong as I thought our family was, but as I think about it, I feel the West-

ern lifestyle creates strong families. Why Paige? I think that Paige opens up an avenue to youth and curiosity, while releasing the expectation of learning and teaching an adult. It makes it a little easier to understand without judgment of teaching an adult.

Q. Tell us how you developed your story, and when you find the time to write?

A. I started “Unspoken” and even the sequel, “Finding Home,” from beginning to end with no plot or layout in mind. I just wrote what

I wrote, because I wrote it.

When do I find time to write, well, usually about two or three in the morning, I can stay up until five, sleep till six, be to work by eight. But lately I have been taking some mornings, staying home and getting a few more chapters in.

Q. You weave in a lot of scenes about horse training and the “language” of horses – Tell us a little about your own experiences with horses?

A. In growing up, we as a family never really fit into society, if you will; we didn’t have stuff – we had horses. When I went to school, I felt out of place, never fit in anywhere except in the horse corral because the horses didn’t care if my socks matched or not. They never questioned me about my clothes and didn’t care what kind of grades I got. It was just me and the horse trying to get by the best we could with what we had.

Q. Are there trainers who particularly inspired you?

A. My second dad (after the truck) was a horse trader. He would buy troubled horses, bring them home, and we would work them for a month or two. When I would get home from school there would be a new horse in the corral. I couldn’t tell you how many horses we saved from the slaughter house. Papa seldom let me ride them first off; he had me busy in the corrals doing the groundwork. In the solace of the corral I learned or began to understand a silent language.

I learned by experience but as I grew up I sought out books by Ray Hunt, Tom Dorrance and Buck Brannaman, I loved to read about them and their techniques, but when it came down to it, it was the horse that was my teacher.

Q. The story of “Unspoken” should be a hit with young adult readers, but doesn’t it really reach out to a broader audience?

A. “Unspoken” started out to be a young adult book but I found that it has been enjoyed by all ages, even by men. I am just humbled at the wonderful reviews it has received. It has gone to Australia, Canada, England and all across the United States.

Is it for everyone? Probably not, but if it inspires... it was worth putting the words on paper and offering it for the world to read.

Q. At the end, your book has a sneak preview of the sequel. What’s the status of the next publication? Will there be more books about young Paige Cason?

A. “Unspoken” is a trilogy; the second book is “Finding Home” and will be out middle of July. I am so very happy how the story came together and how my writing has matured. It is an honor to read such kind reviews. I am so pleased with the support I have received for “Finding Home” and I had the opportunity to have Laurie Hueckman do the artwork for the cover of the book. The third in the series will be “From the Heart.” I also have two other books in mind, “Red Roan,” out of a poem that I have written and also “Finding Grace,” a memoir of how I grew up.

Q. Where are the books available?

A. You can order “Unspoken” through Amazon.com, “Unspoken Volume 1.” It will be out in Kindle soon, or visit my web site www.akmossbooks.com, or join me on Facebook at A.K. Moss Books. You can pick up a copy of “Unspoken” at Roan Out West or Bar WB in Prairie City; Chester’s Thriftway in John Day; Betty’s Books in Baker City; Dayville Merc in Dayville; or Russell’s Custom Meats & Deli in Canyon City. If you are interested in stocking my books, or booking a reading, email akmoss12@gmail.com.

Church Services In Grant County

GRACE CHAPEL
Evangelical Methodist
154 E. Williams St.,
Prairie City • 541-820-4437
gracechpl@ortelco.net
Pastor Michael Harvey
Early Worship 8:45 a.m.
Sunday School 9:45 a.m.
Worship 11 a.m.
Evening Worship 6:30 p.m.
WEDNESDAY
Prayer 8 a.m.
THURSDAY
Bible Study 6:30 p.m.

Seventh-Day Adventist Church
SATURDAY SERVICES
JOHN DAY
110 Valley View Dr. - 541-575-1216
Head Elder.....541-575-2914
Bible Classes (all ages).....9:30 am
Worship.....11 am
LONG CREEK
E. Main Street - 541-421-3033
Head Elder.....421-3468
Bible Classes (all ages).....2 pm
Worship.....3 pm
Tune into
3 ANGELS BROADCASTING
KSPL 98.1 FM
Blue Mountain Cable, Channel 2
Antenna; Digital Channel 15
& UHF Channel 8

Cornerstone Christian Fellowship
139 N.E. DAYTON STREET, JOHN DAY
541-575-2180
Sunday Bible School (for all ages)...8:45 am
Sunday Worship Service.....10 am
Pastor Levi Manitsas
cornerstonejohnday@gmail.com

John Day Valley Mennonite Church
Meeting every Sunday
at Mt. Vernon Grange Hall
Sunday School.....9:30 a.m.
Sunday Morning Worship...10:50 a.m.
Pastor Leland Smucker
Everyone Welcome • 541-575-5507

St. Thomas Episcopal Church
Morning Prayer.....10 am
(1st, 3rd, 5th Sundays)
Eucharist & Sunday School.....10 am
(2nd & 4th Sundays)
139 S. Washington,
Canyon City
541-620-1436

JOHN DAY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
541-575-1326
JOHN DAY, 126 NW Canton
Sunday Worship 9 am

MT. VERNON PRESBYTERIAN Community Church
SUNDAY SERVICE.....9 am
SUNDAY SCHOOL.....9 am
541-932-4800
EVERYONE WELCOME

Prairie Baptist Church
238 N. McHaley St.
Prairie City
Pastor David Hoeffner
541-820-3696
www.prairie-baptist-church.com
Sunday School for all ages 9:00 am
Sunday morning worship 10:30 am
Awana (Oct.-Apr.) 3:00 pm
Youth Group 5:30 pm

VICTORY BAPTIST CHURCH
KJV Independent
Fundamental • Premillennial
Terence K. Crabb, Pastor
A Bible-believing Church
“He that hath the Son hath life...” 1 John 5:12
Sunday School 9:45 am • Sunday Preaching 11:00 am
Junior Church 11:00 am • Sunday Evenings 3:30 pm
Wednesday Bible Study & Master Club 7:00 pm
Saturday Men’s Prayer Meeting 7:00 pm
108 S. Washington Street, Canyon City
541-575-2688 or 541-575-0844

New Life Bible Church
Corinthians 5:17
Every Sunday in the L.C.
Community Center
(Corner of Second & Allen)
Begins at 4:10pm
Contact Pastor Ed Studtmann at
541-421-3888

Historic Remnant Church
Preparing for Jesus to come
Meets Saturday at Mt. Vernon Grange
Sabbath School.....9:30 am
Church Services.....11:00 am
541-620-0340

Redeemer Lutheran Church
Come Worship with us at
627 SE Hillcrest, John Day
1st & 3rd Sunday Worship
& Communion4:30 pm
2nd, 4th & 5th Sunday Worship10 am
Wednesday Evening Bible Study.....6 pm
For information: 541-575-2348

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
Sunday School.....10 am
Church.....11 am
Afternoon Service.....1 pm
No Mid-week Services
Pastor Ray Isenberger
300 W. Main, John Day
541-575-1355

Strawberry Mountain CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP
Calvary Chapel Outreach Fellowship
Sunday Services10 am
Seneca Outreach.....2 pm
Midweek Services also available
170 SE Dayton, John Day
2nd & Ave. D, Seneca
541-575-2006

FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH
Sunday School.....9:45 am
Sunday Worship.....11 am
Sunday Evening Bible talk.....6:30 pm
Saturday Men’s Study.....7 pm
Full Gospel- Come Grow With Us
541-575-1202 Church
311 NE Dayton St, John Day
Pastor Al Altnow
www.fccjohnday.com

St. Elizabeth of Hungary Catholic Church
Corner of S Canyon Blvd and SW 2nd
Mon. - Fri. Mass - 12:05 pm
Saturday Mass - 5:00 pm
Sunday Mass - 9:00 am

Confession: Saturday 3:30-4:30 pm
Anytime by appointment 541-575-1459
St. Anne
Monument - Sunday at 12:30 pm
St. Katherine
Dale
1st & 3rd Sundays at 2:30 pm
Office Hours
Monday - Friday 9 am - 12 Noon

Living Word Christian Center
Hwy 26 Mt. Vernon
Celebration of Worship
Sunday 5:30pm
Kids Classes 0-6th grade
Youth Connection
Thursday 5:30-7:15pm
Kids K-6th Grade
YOUTH GROUPS
Friday 6:30pm
Jr Hi 7th-8th & Sr Hi 9th-12th
PASTOR SHARON MILLER
541-932-4910

CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE
Sunday School.....9:30 am
Sunday Worship Service.....10:45 am
Sunday Evening Service.....6:00 pm
Children & Teen Activities
SMALL GROUPS CALL FOR MORE INFO
Weekdays: Sunshine Christian School
Pastor Ron Roberson
Associate Pastor Brad Williamson
521 E. Main • John Day • 541-575-1895
www.johndaynazarene.com