

Angels on author's mind in new series

By ROSE SANCHEZ
SASKATCHEWAN

Lumsden, Sask., resident Henry Ripplinger had a story he wanted to tell.

He started writing it down, and for the next four years continued to write. The result: a five-part (although it could become six) series of books called *The Angelic Letter Series*.

"I got inspired to sit down and write," says Ripplinger about the fictional story set in the 1950s on the prairies — most notably Regina.

In *Pewter Angels*, Ripplinger describes how he had always wanted to write a novel. He's a well-known artist already, having his illustrations in the book *If You're Not From the Prairie* and his work is on display in private and corporate collections across Canada.

Ripplinger describes how in 2005 he picked up a pen and scribbler and began writing. He wrote almost non-stop for two weeks until his hand and wrist gave out. He then purchased a laptop computer.

"Sentence followed after sentence almost effortlessly as the scenes unfolded in my mind's eye," he wrote. After three years, Ripplinger had more than 1,000 pages and he continued to add more as the editing process began. It began to take shape into a five-part series with timeframes.

"The result is a chronicle of love and adventure in the lives of two people, whose story shows us how angels and the heavens are intricately involved in all our lives and that miracles happen when we follow our hearts," wrote Ripplinger.

His past history as a guidance counselor also came in to play. Through the lives of his characters, Ripplinger was able to show how choices can determine a person's happiness and suggest positive values and principles for living.

With five books as part of *Angelic Letters*, Ripplinger now feels like there's more story to tell and is half done working on a sixth book to be part of the series.

"I always had it in my mind that there would be a sixth

book," he says. "When the fifth book was finished it called for that sixth book ... I wondered what had happened (to the characters). It ties everything together."

The *Angelic Letters* series is a love story following the lives of Henry and Jenny, who met as teenagers and were soon separated by circumstances and parental interference. They are guided through the struggles and victories in their lives by their guardian angels.

Pewter Angels is an easy read with descriptive passages setting up the timeline of this enduring love story. Characters are richly developed and believable. The issues they have to face are many and Ripplinger doesn't back away from the characters facing some concerning situations, such as when Jenny is roughed up by some older, neighbourhood teens with a page-turning outcome.

Individuals picking up this first book will be begging Ripplinger to release the rest of the series as quickly as possible. There is no doubt, he has created suspense and readers will turn the last page of *Pewter Angels* wanting more.

Ripplinger is planning on releasing the second book in the series in March of 2011 and the third by the fall of that same year. He formed his own publishing company called Pio-Seelos Books and it has given his publication a professional feel.

With the success so far of *Pewter Angels* in hard cover, Ripplinger will be releasing the book again in a soft cover version and it will also be carried in Barnes and Nobles stores in the United States.

"Doors have opened so amazingly," says Ripplinger, about people's response to the book.

His website has received numerous hits and individuals who have read the book leave comments about how much they enjoyed it and encourage him to release the rest of the series as quickly as possible.

Ripplinger himself is a believer in the existence of angels who watch over and protect people. He hopes by reading the *Angelic Letters* series, readers are

reminded of the existence of these

beings. More importantly he hopes readers enjoy the series, and learn something from the characters he has created.

He says readers have told him the book has changed their lives and they can see themselves in the characters as they make certain decisions and then have to live with the consequences.

"I hope people enjoy the book and they get a great read out of it," he says. "The book, as well as being a love story, it exudes so many life lessons that people are emailing me about."

More information about Ripplinger and the *Angelic Letters* series is available online at www.henryripplinger.com. *Pewter Angels* is in all Wal-Mart stores in Saskatchewan, including Swift

Current, as well as Chapters, Costco, Zellers, Pharmasave and Ripplinger Art Gallery.



Just watch: found items become an exhibit

By JOHN R. STATTON
SWIFT CURRENT

After a lifetime of walking, collecting and painting along northern Saskatchewan highways, Myles J. MacDonald has become the Watchman.

His 30-year friendship with fellow artist George Glenn has resulted in the exhibit of the same name.

A collection of trash, tools and neglect, the exhibit offers an unsettling glimpse of what one can find across the expanse of northern highways.

"This is all the stuff that most people would not realize is out there, in terms of all the artifacts that have come off the shoulders of the highway or out of the ditches,"

said MacDonald.

"The sheer volume of material that's out there is incredible."

MacDonald said he watches what's at his feet, what's in the ditches, the condition of the soil, field and sky while he explores the Prince Albert area.

He cleans up the smaller trinkets picked up, but leaves barbecues and larger items.

"If I'm walking for five miles that day I'm not about to try and carry some of these things home," he said.

MacDonald covers about 65 kilometres each month, taking on five-kilometre stretches each time.

"It's an archaeological tendency in me to examine all these things and speculate on why did this get here, how did it get here," he said.

"This project doesn't end because the cases are filled."

His paintings of northern Saskatchewan scenery are from observation and memory. Never based on photographs and always original, the exhibit showcases

his work in conjunction with junk filled plexiglass cases arranged by Glenn.

"Sometimes it's as simple as a curve with an object in the case and a curve in the painting with, or something haunting with a painting that echoed with the objects selected for the case," said Glenn.

"I would hope that people would start to see and think about the kinds of things, as a culture, we throw away."

The two artists attended the Coffeehouse Evening event at the Art Gallery of Swift Current (AGSC) Sept. 25, where they gave guided tours of their exhibit.

"Everybody who came was quite intrigued with the whole project and the interesting artists that were here to visit with us," said AGSC director and curator Kim Houghtaling.

"I think they put together a pretty interesting project. It's humorous; it's challenging; it's a little bit disturbing in some ways when you consider what's really going on out there on the fringe between humanity and nature."

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Photo by John R. Statton

Northern artists and old-friends, George Glenn and Myles J. MacDonald joke about aging. The Art Gallery of Swift Current hosted a Coffeehouse Evening event on Sept. 25, to showcase the pair's Watchman exhibit.