

Virginia's favorite storyteller has done it again with

WINTERVILLE FOREVER



AUTUMN'S REUNION

(A Story of Thanksgiving)



By Francis Eugene
Wood

With illustrations by
Robert W. McDermott

**Virginia's
favorite
storyteller,
Francis
Eugene
Wood, has
released
two new
stories this
Fall.**



The first, *Autumn's Reunion*, illustrated by Robert W. McDermott, is an extraordinarily touching Thanksgiving story. This is a very family-oriented read, but I think it's most endearing to those of us who have a plethora of thanksgiving memories under our belt. It's especially touching to those who have family members or who have themselves served the country to protect the freedom we enjoy today.

Woods' second release, out just this past week, is the much anticipated third in the trilogy of Winterville stories, *Winterville Forever*, with illustrations by Dan Larsen. The Winterville stories have accumulated quite a fan club throughout the country over the past two years. They're perfect for children of all ages who wonder where snowmen go after winter is over and want to get in on the action. Both of these new releases are "must reads" this holiday season.

Virginia's Favorite Storyteller



One thing you'll notice about Virginia's most endearing storyteller, Francis Wood, is ... his books are all self-published. You won't find them at the bookstore. You can't get them anywhere, except online at **www.tipofthemoon.com**.

In 1997 Francis and his wife, Chris, formed Tip-of-the-Moon Publishing Company for the sole purpose of producing and promoting his stories, because, "There's no fluff in my books.

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If I can tell the story in less than fifty pages then that is fine. Every line, every word is the way I want it to be. Large house publishers want fluff. They can have it. Tip-of-the-Moon is about getting the stories to the people the way I saw them in my mind. I could care less how thick some stranger wants a book to be.”

Francis, a native of Farmville, had been writing for outdoor sports magazines for a number of years when he decided to publish a Christmas story he had written titled *The Wooden Bell*. The release of that little book in November of 1996 would cause such a stir in the author's hometown that he would be forced to reprint it three times before Christmas.

Other stories followed. *The Angel Carver*, *The Fodder Milo Stories*, *Nipkins*, *Snowflake* and *The SnowPeople* are just some of the titles which have endeared the author to his readers. His works have won design awards, printing awards and praise from readers and critics alike. *The Nipkins*, Volume Two, won the Crystal Award of Distinction in the writing competition in 2003 from The Communicator Awards Print Media Competition (an international competition). *The SnowPeople* won this same award in 2004 along with a Best in Print 2003 Award of Excellence from the Printing Industries of Virginia. Upon reading Wood's book, *The Angel Carver*, author Earl Hamner, Jr. (creator of *The Waltons*) noted Wood's authentic integrity as a writer and his honest portrayal of the people of Nelson County, Virginia.

Once again, Francis has made paper flutter to life with *Autumn's Reunion*, a story so real and touching you just

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know you've been transported right into the scene of this classic Thanksgiving reunion. As the story unfolds the precious holiday memories are so vivid you can almost picture them as your own. Autumn's Thanksgiving memory left a tear on my cheek and a renewed gratitude for family, peace and the noisy clatter and laughter that comes with a holiday meal.

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Marcella Parsons, Managing Editor of Arose Books noted, “[Autumn’s] amazing story reinforces the love of his family, and is a reminder that no sorrow is without hope,” as she admonishes, “Wrap yourself up in a warm, country quilt, sit by a fire and sip some apple cider as you read this truly American Thanksgiving story.”

Winterville Forever, the third in a trilogy of books that Francis has just completed, is a lot on the lighter side. The best way to describe this addictive series is to let a few of the readers who are hooked on these books tell you what they think:



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"Okay, I want specific directions to Winterville."

"Beautiful. Funny. RETURN TO WINTERVILLE has all the right stuff."

"Wood and Larsen are a winning combination."

"Where does this all come from? Oh, Yes, Winterville."

"I thought this would be great for the grandchildren. But I'm 68, and I love it as much as they do."

"I love the characters. I love the place. I love the story factory that is Francis Wood's mind."

Winterville Forever is all about the adventures of artist Dan Larsen's adorable snowpeople. Virginians have been abuzz about Snowpeople since Dan, a noted artist from Richmond, created them a few years ago. These whimsical creatures became quite the rage among collectors when he introduced them, and grew even more popular as he began personalizing them with team jerseys by request.

Dan had a stroke of genius one day. His snowpeople needed a story. When he approached Francis with the idea of giving his Snowpeople adventures, fans of Dan's paintings and fans of Francis' stories went wild. It was a match made in heaven. Each season for the past three years, fans all over the country have anxiously anticipated the arrival of each new edition.

Francis says it's the project that has become his life's dream. "When I was a very young boy I decided the snowmen in my

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yard needed a place to go after they melted away. Winterville was a good place to imagine. There, my snowy creations could carry on their lives in an acceptable climate where they could live forever. I imagined they would take a little of the spirit of their creator with them into this wonderland beyond the encroachment of men.

Artist Dan Larsen must have been a kindred spirit. When he asked me to write stories about the SnowPeople he had been painting and marketing for several years, little did he know I had already imagined their home. His request gave me a chance to go to this whimsical place of my youth. I thoroughly enjoyed writing these stories and working with Dan on this project. I hope all of you will see that in Winterville all that you can imagine is possible.”

Winterville is the place where snowpeople go after they have melted away from your yard. The stories take you inside this magical place where the whims of kindhearted are the rule of the day. Interesting characters abound in this snowy land. Readers get to follow a family of snowpeople to Winterville and share in the adventures only the young at heart can possibly entertain. Because of his ability to whisk us away to simpler times, and his fatherly propensity to throw in some good values lessons we can share with our children, today, thousands of us eagerly anticipate any writing that comes out of Francis' brain.

If you haven't read the first two editions of the Winterville series, you should go ahead and get all three this year.

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These stories provide hours and hours of quality time with the kids and grandkids, some sneaky lessons on values and lots of great big giggles.



We're betting they'll be snapped up by collectors early this year, with the third in the trilogy coming out. The buzz about town (and in several other places) is that the Wood/Larsen Winterville series would make the perfect next animated special.

Virginia artist Dan Larsen's work has been hailed as

“unique” and “imaginative”. Whether painting a river scene or SnowPeople his eye for detail is uncanny. Francis says, “Dan didn't just draw the pictures my words conjured. He actually went to Winterville with me. His work is the evidence.”

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The son of famed political cartoonist, Chic Larsen, Dan discovered he had inherited the artistic gene after he retired, and then couldn't let go of the paint brush. He quickly became a very respected and much-collected Virginia artist. Whether painting impressions of wildlife or the quiet stillness of life along the river, Dan's paintings depict a deep respect for nature and an unusual zest for life.

The Winterville Series was Dan's only venture into the book illustration genre. His ability to take an author's words in ink and make them come alive on canvas is a very rare gift.

Sadly, Dan passed away a few weeks ago, just after *Winterville Forever* had gone to print and as we were excitedly planning this story. When I interviewed him for our story, he told me he created Snowpeople so he could watch them give people a reason to smile. His ability to help us all smile will certainly be sorely missed.

A few more reader responses to the Winterville series:

"This has Disney written all over it. Great!"

"I've collected Dan Larsen's Snowpeople prints. Now, because of Francis Wood's writing, I want to go to Winterville."

"I can't wait for the movie!"

"Winterville. So that's where they go? Perfect."

