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# THE RED-EYED RAVEN GAZETTE

The Official Newsletter of the Author Tim Ritter



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## WELCOME!



Welcome to the March issue of the Red-Eyed Raven Gazette!

Well, it's officially springtime. Are your allergies bothering you? It's a regular sneezefest here at Frog Acres, and I'm seriously considering buying stock in allergy medicine companies.

True, the weather right now beats the heck out of freezing cold temperatures. And we will all be thankful when the trees and flowers are fully leafed out and blooming. But my nasal passages are crying out in agony.

Did you suffer from allergies as a child? I did, and spent many nights unable to breathe. I like to use nose spray at night (Vicks) and sure wish it would have been around when I was a kid.

Ok, I'll quit griping...

As always, thanks for your encouraging messages sent when these newsletters are released. Your support is very much appreciated.



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## "SARAH & ORVILLE" UPDATE!

It never ceases to amaze me. Writing projects begin and you think you know where you want to take it. Then something pops into your head so you try that approach. Then you think of something else, and it just continues from there...

I say this because *Sarah & Orville* has continued to grow and develop into something beyond my original vision. I thought I was going to put together a simple collection of stories about the two of them, as well as a deep dive into the letters that Sarah wrote before The Fire. But it's become something much larger than that.

Back when I started writing *Sarah Burning*, I wanted you to know as much about the family and their history as possible. I wanted to tell you about Orville's ancestors, who they were and what they did, because that, of course, had an influence on who Orville was. And it was the same for Sarah. I thought that by telling you everything, you'd fall in love with both of them. But then I realized that Chapter Two of *SB*, which gave the family's backstory, would be over one hundred pages by itself if I took that approach. And you would have hated it, because it would have taken too long to get to the heart of the story. I think one of my first drafts had that chapter at over 30 pages long, just telling the family story. It simply wasn't going to work that way.

So now, *Sarah & Orville* becomes the opportunity to give you all that backstory. And I've referred to it as a prequel to *SB*, but I'm not sure that's entirely accurate. It doesn't stand on its own like a prequel should. It refers to the story in *SB* more than once, so technically it's more like a companion or supplement to *SB* rather than a prequel.

I set an aggressive schedule to have *Sarah & Orville* released by the first of June this year, but I'm not sure I'm going to hit that. It might be a little later in the month, or early July. It all depends on when I get the edits and formatting processes completed. I will be announcing a presale in the near future, which will be similar to the one for *SB* with signed copies, etc. I'm working on some other goodies to put with it, so stay tuned for all of that.

I'm really excited about what *Sarah & Orville* has become, and I hope you will enjoy it.



## **CHILLING TALES** FOR DARK NIGHTS

## PODCAST NEWS!

I may have mentioned previously that one of my next writing projects will be a collection of poems and short stories that are intended to be a tribute to Edgar Allan Poe and the breadth of his writing. Everyone knows he wrote a bunch of macabre and spooky tales, but few recall that he also wrote adventure stories, mysteries and silly tales. So this collection I'm writing will have much of the same: spooky tales and poems, adventure stories, and some silly stuff. It is tentatively titled "The Screamer Down the Hall and Other Tales", so named after one of the Poe-esque poems within the collection which was nominated for a Saturday Evening Visiter Award (yes the misspelling is intentional) at the International Poe Festival in Baltimore, Maryland, in 2020.

Knowing that I've been working on this collection for some time, one of my writer friends suggested I submit one of my spooky tales to a website that runs a horror-themed storytelling series called "Chilling Tales for Dark Nights". My friend Paul McSorley is one of the narrators on the show, so I sent it to him and he loved it. The story is called "The KP Murderer", and tells the story of a guy who comes home from work to discover a serial killer is on the loose nearby.

You can access the episode here: <https://youtu.be/fP1oKviuxcc?si=VtWTPIOfSReyGHFo>.  
(If it doesn't show up as a link, copy and paste to go there).

As you can see from the link, it's on Youtube. But you just listen to it. It's not visual. My story is the second one on that episode.

I'm happy to announce (and as a subscriber to my newsletter, you are the first to hear about this) another of my stories has been selected for an upcoming episode! "Mind the Leg, Madeline" will premiere on the show the evening of Wednesday, April 3. The show airs at 9:00PM Eastern Time.

I gave you a little taste of that story back in Newsletter Issue #6. Now you'll get to hear the rest of it on April 3!

As previously noted, I am a huge fan of Edgar Allan Poe. I even used to do a regular weekly thing on Facebook called InsPoe Wednesday. One time on InsPoe I gave a quiz about ole Edgar. Since it's been a while, let's take another look at it. For your enjoyment:

## “How Much Is Poe In My Life” test

Please answer the questions below... and be honest...

1. When I hear the name Edgar Allan Poe, the first thing that comes to mind is:
  - a. The Raven (10 pts)
  - b. “Nevermore!” (10 pts)
  - c. A man named M. Valdemar (50 pts)
  - d. I need a drink (100 pts)
  
2. I first learned about Poe and his writing:
  - a. As a teenager in literature class (25 pts)
  - b. As a child because I got into stuff like that at an early age (50 pts)
  - c. Just last week (15 pts)
  - d. You mean the character in Star Wars is real and writes stories? (-1000 pts)
  
3. My travel bucket list includes the following:
  - a. The Poe Museum in Richmond, Virginia (100 pts)
  - b. The Poe House and Westminster Church & Graveyard in Baltimore, Maryland (100 pts)
  - c. The Poe Cottage in Bronx, New York (100 pts)
  - d. The Hot Dog Palace in Bugtussle, Tennessee (-1000 pts)
  
4. In my personal book collection I have:
  - a. Poe's Complete Works (100 pts)
  - b. Poe's Tales of Mystery and Imagination (75 pts)
  - c. Just a few of his tales and poems but I'd like more (50 pts)
  - d. You mean the character in Star Wars is real and writes stories? (-1000 pts)
  
5. With Fall and Halloween coming, I look forward to:
  - a. Reading “The Raven” (50 pts)
  - b. Reading one of Poe's scary stories (50 pts)
  - c. Trying to write something in Poe's style (100 pts)
  - d. Pigging out on candy corn and watching “Freddy vs. Jason” (Nevermind)

If you answered (a), (b) or (c) on Question 1, you're awesome. If you answered (d) on 1, we need to hang out together more often. If you answered anything besides (d) on 2, 3, 4, and 5, you're awesome. If you did answer (d) on 2, 3, 4, or 5, then your point total is below zero and it means you haven't read any of my posts about Poe on Facebook. Shame on you!

Now don't you feel better after taking that little test?



# PRESENTATION UPDATE

If you or anyone you know or belong to a group needing speakers, please give them my contact info!



Every month in this section I highlight one of my current presentations. I'm really excited about this newest one:

## The New Madrid Earthquakes

I always thought the earthquake event in New Madrid, Missouri, in the early 1800s was a single large earthquake with multiple aftershocks. However, as in many cases, the truth is much worse.

The event known as the New Madrid Earthquakes started on December 16, 1811, and continued through early February of the following year. Several extremely violent quakes were recorded during that time, with hundreds of aftershocks in between, some occurring as often as every eight minutes.

This presentation examines the severity of the quakes, their impact upon the land which in most cases was permanent, and most importantly the personal testimonies recorded that give a first-hand account of the terrifying events that literally shook the world.

## SCHEDULE OF APPEARANCES

April 12, 2024 - 1:45p.m.  
Truckee Meadows Community College  
Reno, NV (via Zoom)  
Presentation: *The Story of the Liberty Bell*

April 16, 2024 - 7:00p.m.  
Monroe Coffee Co.  
Fair Grove, MO  
Presentation: *The Tornado Outbreak of 1880*

April 20, 2024 - 10:30a.m.  
Republic Library  
Republic, MO  
Presentation: *Wild Bill Hickok and Davis Tutt: A Big Bucket of Ugly*

June 4, 2024 - 12:00p.m.  
Fair Grove Chamber of Commerce  
Fair Grove Fire Station  
Presentation: *The 80th Anniversary of D-Day*

June 8, 2024 - Time TBD  
Between the Pages Writers Conference  
Springfield, MO  
Presentation on Poetry and Short Prose. Title TBD.

September, 2024 - 9:00a.m.  
Discover The Ozarks Festival  
Ava, MO  
Ava History Tour - Host

*My regular speaking engagements, twice each month, continue at the three Elfindale senior living facilities in Springfield. Also, I present monthly at The Preston Senior Living Facility, as well as Elfindale Manor.*