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# THE RED-EYED RAVEN GAZETTE

The Official Newsletter of Author Tim Ritter



## WHAT'S INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Upcoming Release: *The Screamer Down the Hall and Other Tales*

Exclusive Access: A Little Something No One Else Has Read

Sometimes You Just Gotta Step Back and Say "Nope"

Presentation Update

## WELCOME!



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Welcome to the May 2025 issue of the Red-Eyed Raven Gazette!

Many thanks to all of you who have taken the time to subscribe to this newsletter! I enjoy putting it together, and I hope you enjoy reading it. Feel free to email any questions you have to [tritterman@gmail.com](mailto:tritterman@gmail.com).

There seems to be no shortage of things to talk about. In this issue, I'm filling you in on my next release, a collection of horror and other fiction. Also, you get exclusive access to something I wrote many years ago that needed dusting off. Then there's a little update on one of my writing projects. Lastly, as always The Presentation Update page has all the latest info on when I will be giving talks which are open to the public.

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

# UPCOMING RELEASE: *THE SCREAMER DOWN THE HALL AND OTHER TALES*

I'm so excited to share this news with you, a bit of a sneak peak at my next release coming later this year:

## *The Screamer Down the Hall and Other Tales*

This book will be quite the departure for me. I've spent the last several years writing works on nonfiction, and invested hundreds of hours in developing presentations about historic events. But back when I was a kid and newly exploring writing, my stories were fiction, and now I will return to fiction for this book, a collection of short stories and poems, entitled "The Screamer Down the Hall and Other Tales".

First, a little sneak peak at a preliminary cover design idea, minus the text:





My two literary heroes are Edgar Allan Poe and Ambrose Bierce. And it's no coincidence that Bierce was greatly influenced by Poe's works. Both of them knew how to tell a story, how to draw you in and affect every one of your senses.

Of course if you think of Poe you think of the spooky stuff, like "The Raven", "The Tell-Tale Heart", "The Black Cat", etc. But Poe wrote so much more than just gothic horror. He wrote adventures, detective stories, comedies, and beautiful loving poems. Bierce also wrote such variety, in addition to gothic horror, and was a master at the idea of the twist ending.

Both of these men and their works have greatly influenced my writing, so I decided it was time to put something together that's kind of a tribute to their work and the influence they have had on me.

The title comes from a poem that will be included in this collection. "The Screamer Down the Hall" is a long poem that I wrote back in 2020 that tells the story of Poe's death from the viewpoint of a terminal patient down the hall from him in the hospital in Baltimore. The patient is horrified by Poe's agonizing outbursts, which he can hear from his room.

I submitted the poem to the Saturday Visiter Award contest (yes, "Visiter" is intentionally misspelled) from the International Poe Festival in Baltimore, MD, in 2020 and was a finalist but alas did not win. I knew I wanted to do something with the poem, and eventually decided to write this collection of poems and stories.

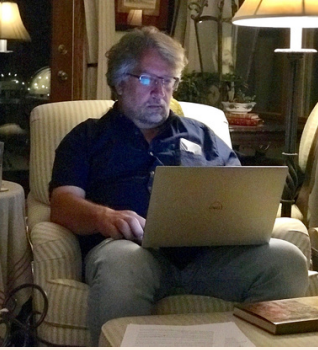


You'll find a variety of tales in this book. I don't want to give too much away ahead of time, but I think it's going to have something for everyone. If you like horror, I've got a serial killer on the loose, something not quite right in a little town, Jack the Ripper, and others. If you like adventure or science fiction, there's time travel, anarchy, and more. For you lovers at heart, there's a study of a couple at dinner and some poems for a certain lady in my life. Additionally there are some silly tales for fun.



A few of the spooky tales have been featured on the "Chilling Tales for Dark Nights" podcast and have been well received. So I am looking forward to getting this collection in your hands. Stay tuned for further details when the book gets closer to publication, as there will be an opportunity for presale!





# EXCLUSIVE ACCESS: A LITTLE SOMETHING NO ONE ELSE HAS READ

As you may be aware, I was a Civil War reenactor for about 20 years, which was an amazing, exhausting, and smelly experience. I even wrote a book about my adventures, planning for it to be a three-book series. Unfortunately the book was expensive to produce (this was before Amazon's publishing platform was available), and it never really gained much traction. Plus I questioned how well the political climate at the time would accept a book about reenacting. So I pulled it off the market, and most of the stories within continue to await a rewrite.

I did, however, rewrite a couple of tales from it, and I thought as loyal readers of my newsletter you might enjoy a peek at one of those stories. If you like this, I've got a longer one I can include next time. So here you go:

## **Tim's Rules of Reenacting #127:**

**If You Have to Get Up in the Middle of a Cold Night to Answer Nature's Call,  
Don't Forget Your Glasses...**

The Battle of Cassville Reenactment, April 8-9, 2000, ended up being one of those cold and blustery early April weekends, full of promise of the coming spring, but with an icy howling wind straight out of the north. You know the kind; it screams down your throat when you try to speak and chills you to the bone. Such a wind hindered all efforts to build camp that Friday night, as tents blew over soon after construction, aided by the fact that the softened ground from recent rains barely held tent stakes in place as the wind tested the structural strength of poles and ridge beams. Also dampened by the recent rains, the firewood hissed and sputtered as the entire battalion attempted to light fires to ward off the cold as the sun sank below the horizon. A chilly night was coming, and it was well after dark before campfires burned with any appreciable heat.

At about 10:00 that evening I decided to call it a night and retired to my tent, which was still whipping and rocking under the constant strain of the north wind. I kept my clothes on for added warmth, put on my stocking cap, and threw blankets over me to try to stay warm, all the while listening to the wind howl and hoping my tent poles and stakes would hold up through the night.



In the wee hours of the morning, I suddenly awakened with a strong urge to visit the sandbox. Throwing off my covers and attempting to clear the cobwebs from my brain, I noticed my candle lantern was still burning and the wind had died down to a breeze. The air felt cold, and I knew even colder temperatures awaited me outside. I pulled on my wool sack coat and stepped out into the chilly silence. The campfires crackled with tall flames leaping into the air, illuminating the front part of the camp, and I walked along the fires to the north end of the battalion where five porta-potties had been conveniently placed. I picked the one in the middle.

Emerging from the plastic palace a short time later, I stopped for a moment to take in the scene of the quiet camp, fires dancing, and so many tents lined up, each one looking remarkably similar to the one next to it and across from it. At that moment, two crucial concepts became dreadfully clear, which had previously escaped my notice: #1, I had not bothered to take note of the precise location of my tent in relation to the other camps nearby, and #2, I forgot to grab my glasses before walking out into the cold. In short, I wasn't sure which tent was mine and I was blind as a bat.

I walked past three camps easily, knowing my regiment to be near the south end of the battalion. Having passed the first three regiments, I slowed my pace to study each succeeding camp, in an attempt to locate my group. After passing one more camp, I noticed two bodies covered in blankets and sleeping very close to the fire. Remembering that Clem and Ryan from my group liked to sleep out in the open by the fire, I concluded that this was my regiment, and turned to find my tent.

In the sleepy, cold recesses of my brain, I remembered that my tent had been pitched as the second on the left. Walking up to the tent, I hesitated, just in case I was wrong, and developed a flimsy excuse to use, should I discover that I had barged into the wrong tent. In one quick move, I opened the flap and slipped into the tent.

There, before me, lay my cot, and next to it, my ammo box with my glasses sitting atop, next to the candle lantern.

I was in the right tent.

Breathing a sigh of relief, I took off my coat, climbed back into bed and threw the blankets back on me, to drift back to sleep.

From that point on, I made sure to always grab my glasses before heading to the sandbox in the middle of the night. And considered a trail of breadcrumbs...

# SOMETIMES YOU GOTTA STEP BACK AND SAY “NOPE”

Well, gang, I've got to admit it's time to step back and say “Nope”.

I've been struggling with the writing of a book on the old Chadwick Railroad. It's an interesting topic, and just researching the development of railroad service in the southwest Missouri area has been fascinating.

For details pertaining directly to the Chadwick Line, despite being interesting material, I have had to come to the conclusion that there simply may not be enough there to write an entire book. To be clear, I could most definitely write something but it would be a fairly thin work with very limited appeal. And most likely it would be at least another couple of years before it was completed, just to be sure I get everything right. But honestly I just don't feel like there's enough there for an entire book.

So I've had to come to the conclusion that the Chadwick Line book project should be abandoned, and I've moved on to the next project. Maybe sometime down the road I'll entertain the idea of picking up the train project again, but for the foreseeable future, it's off the list. However the topic might have found its way into a story in the aforementioned “Screamer Down the Hill and Other Tales”...





# PRESENTATION UPDATE

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

## June:

**7th - 8th:** I won't be speaking but will be participating in the annual Between the Pages Writers' Conference in Springfield.

**26th:** *City Utilities, Springfield, MO (private meeting)* - I'm honored to be invited to present my "Leadership Lessons from D-Day" talk at a management meeting of Springfield's utility company.

## July:

As of right now, nothing extra scheduled. That's ok, though, because I'm working to finish my next book!

## August:

As of right now, nothing extra scheduled.

## September:

**20th:** *Daughters of Union Veterans meeting, Springfield, MO* (private event)- I'll be presenting "Wild Bill Hickok and Davis Tutt: A Big Bucket of Ugly"

**27th:** *Ava Civil War Tour, Ava, MO - 9:00a.m.* - This will be the 5<sup>th</sup> year of doing the Ava Civil War Tour. Stay tuned for more information.

## October:

**10<sup>th</sup> - 11<sup>th</sup>:** *Ozarks Creative Writers Conference, Eureka Springs, AR* -I will be giving two presentations at this conference. If you are a writer, please consider attending this event. It is a terrific gathering of folks who creating the written word.

**18th:** *Republic Library, Republic, MO - 10:30a.m.* - Presenting "What Really Happened at the OK Corral"

**30th:** Details are still being assembled, but it looks like I will be presenting some version of my "Spooky Stories" talk at a location TBA in Fair Grove, MO. Time TBA. Stay tuned for more info.

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*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, Elfindale Manor, Mission Ridge, and Turner's Rock.*