

# BOOKMARK



*Fiction and Nonfiction News from Janet Litherland*

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## The Book Lover

Just for fun I decided to count the books in my house. It took a while. There are 987 books, fiction and non-fiction. On top of that, there are 29 cookbooks, which is pretty funny, because anyone who knows me well, knows that I can't cook, don't like to try, and ... don't. Counting the books was a good project. It brought me face to face with some works I'd forgotten over the years, some I need to revisit. Among them is a 10-volume set of little books titled *Seeing Europe with Famous Authors* (1914). They include short essays such as Nathaniel Hawthorne's impressions of Salisbury Cathedral and Washington Irving's account of his visit to Stratford-on-Avon, which he called a "poetical pilgrimage." While I was counting books, I made a list of my favorite authors. There are 27 of them, a few of which are noted in the adjacent column. Happy reading!

Last month the public library in the little Pennsylvania town where my husband and I were born hosted a book-signing for me in conjunction with "Homecoming." We had a wonderful time seeing old friends and long-lost relatives!

**All of Janet's books  
are available at:**

Amazon.com  
BarnesAndNoble.com  
BooksAMillion.com

## A Review -- An Assortment of Authors

"These are a few of my favorite things ..."



Sunsets ... gentle rain ... a brisk walk ... falling leaves ...  
clean sheets ... wildflowers ... holding hands ... "Hi Mom!"

Seems this issue of *Bookmark* has a musical theme! (See p. 2) My taste in music is as eclectic as my taste in books—from classical to country, from Elton John to Kenny G, anything at all by the Irish Tenors—which brings me to a wonderful book—a **memoir**—by a very special person, Ronan Tynan, one of the original Irish Tenors. *Halfway Home* is entertaining and inspiring. Each decade of Tynan's life represents a challenge, some forced upon him, some chosen. As a child born with deformed legs, he was determined to ride horses in competition. After his legs were amputated below the knees at age 20, he donned prostheses and became a runner and jumper, winning 18 gold medals and setting 14 world records in the Paralympic Games. Meantime he graduated college and became a medical doctor specializing in orthopedic sports injuries. Though he always loved to sing, he didn't begin studying voice until age 32 (He's only 46 now!). His musical success in Europe was immediate and phenomenal. In this country, he is best known as one of the Irish Tenors, along with John McDermott, Anthony Kearns and Finbar Wright. From a small farm in an Irish village to award-winning disabled athlete, to medical doctor to world-renowned singer, Ronan Tynan's story is worth reading. He tells it simply and with humor. And he's only *Halfway Home*! Photos included.



**Some of my favorite escape-fiction authors:** I guess **Jack Higgins** must be a favorite—I have 37 of his books! He first captured me with *The Eagle Has Landed* (1975). Higgins writes about spies and war. His writing is not technical, as Tom Clancy's is; he just tells a good story. I do like **Tom Clancy's** "Op-Center" (non-technical) series, but those books are not entirely his own; he writes them "with" another author, which is something I'll discuss in the next issue. I have all of **Sue Grafton's** alphabet series focused on Kinsey Millhone, a female private eye who usually gets into as much trouble as her clients do. All of Grafton's books are laced with humor. Another writer who keeps me laughing is **Donald E. Westlake**, but *only* the books about Dortmunder, a lovable little con man and his bevy of weird friends. Some of Westlake's other books are a little too harsh for my taste. I also like the Victorian mysteries of **Anne Perry**, especially the William Monk books, and the Thomas & Charlotte Pitt books set in 1800s London. I have 38 of them! For those who like gentle stories, I highly recommend **Jan Karon's** Mitford series, beginning with *At Home in Mitford*. Unmatched for inspiration and humor! Next issue: Two terrific "literary" novels and a discussion of "thrillers."

FICTION AND NONFICTION NEWS FROM  
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I love to hear from my readers!

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## Memories Are Made of This

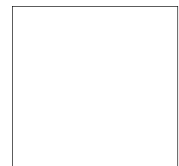
“... some grief, some joy. Memories are made of this.”

Words from the 1950s song written by Terry Gilkyson and sung by Dean Martin, Frank Sinatra and others, came to mind as I thought about helping you write your memoirs. “Some grief, some joy”—the episodes (stories) that made you what you are today. Don’t think of this project as your “autobiography.” That sounds overwhelming. Agatha Christie, the English mystery writer, wrote her life story many years ago. Though it was titled, *An Autobiography*, this is what she said about writing it: “Autobiography is too grand a word. It suggests a purposeful study of one’s whole life. It implies names, dates, and places in tidy chronological order. What I want is to plunge my hand into a lucky dip and come up with a handful of assorted memories.” That’s what you want—a lucky dip. It will be more fun to write, and much more interesting to read. Christie also said, “I have remembered, I suppose, what I wanted to remember.” (pp. vi, xii) Ignore unimportant details and events, and tell your stories honestly and in your own words. That 1950s song ends, “*With His blessings from above, serve it generously with love ... Memories are made of this.*” Serve your memories generously and with love. Your children, grandchildren, and maybe someone you’ll never know—someone born 50 or more years from now—will be glad you did!

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**Janet Litherland** is the author of 10 nonfiction books and two novels, *Chain of Deception* and *Discovery In Time*. She is the former owner of Write-Choice Services, Inc., a book-development company, which aspiring authors can find at [www.writechoiceservices.com](http://www.writechoiceservices.com).

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Janet’s Book News