

Local author releases third novel about family, war in colonial America

Longtime Milpitas resident uses ancestor's history as inspiration for story about immigrant struggles

BY ALIYAH MOHAMMED

Local novelist Ken Yoder Reed says beginning to write a new novel always starts with a feeling or problem. His latest novel, "Both My Sons," involved wondering what it was like to be a new immigrant to this country and how his ancestor, Nicholas Stoltzfus, arrived in America from a foreign land.

It was this ancestor that became part of the composite for the novel's protagonist "Greenywalt," an immigrant father in colonial Pennsylvania who wants a peaceful life with his two sons — the older illegitimate one whom he loves and the younger legitimate son he's never really understood. Things get more complicated when the French and Indian War begins in 1754.

The novel takes the reader back to the 18th century when Swiss-Germans came to America as "boat people" to escape religious persecution, taxation and severe weather that eliminated Germany's crops, a harrowing journey that many did not survive. Reed said the experience of Greenywalt — who is called "Greeny" when he

moves to America because people can't pronounce his name — speaks to the immigrant experience of other pioneers who came and settled here centuries ago, as well as those who arrive here today.

Saying the novel is more relevant now than it was when he started writing it six years ago due to the Syrian refugee crisis impacting many other countries in Europe and the United States too, Reed drew on his experience growing up in the Mennonite-Amish community in Lebanon County, Penn. for this novel as well as his two prior novels. Writing short stories about his life was how he got into writing as a child, something he continued as he went to college and worked as an editor for the Mennonite Publishing House.

"Growing up in the Mennonite community when I was a teen, I hated the community and wanted nothing to do with them," Reed said. "Then I went off to Japan to teach English and had an epiphany, a spiritual moment when I realized who I was and then I kind of fell in love with the Mennonites and I wrote stories about

my childhood, a couple of plays, kids stories."

He started writing his first novel, entitled "Mennonite Soldier," in 1975 while he was still living in Pennsylvania. Reed said the story really got people's attention because Mennonites are pacifists, and the story was about a Mennonite soldier. The story was also loosely based on the life of his grandfather who grew up Amish and left that community only to return and become a pastor in the Mennonite community.

His second novel, "He Flew Too High," published in 2009, was about a man in the Mennonite-Amish community who has a spiritual awakening and leads a revival that splits the community, after which he leaves with his followers to start his own colony. Reed said this is very common in the Mennonite community, as evidenced by the different communities that exist in the area he grew up in.

Eventually, Reed and his wife moved to San Francisco to start a little Mennonite church as volunteers and ended up staying here. Reed worked a variety of jobs including for a temporary hiring agency, working as a teacher and typing up death penalty appeals for the Supreme Court of California.

But when the owner of the employment agency



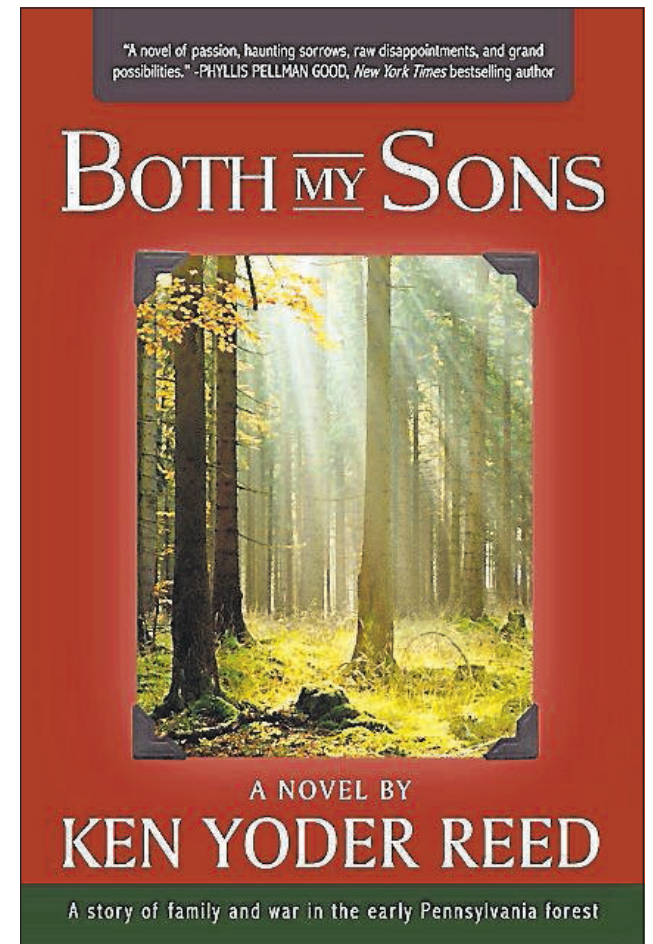
Local author Ken Yoder Reed will release his third novel about a Swiss-German refugee who immigrates to the forests of Pennsylvania in the 18th century.

Photo courtesy of Ken Yoder Reed

decided to retire, she offered Reed the agency. He has since sold the company and started his own recruiting firm, which he does full time while writing on the side.

Reed and his wife bought their first house in Daly City. The couple then moved to Milpitas in 1991, bought a house and raised children, who went through the Milpitas public school system.

Reed also freelanced for the Milpitas Post Newspaper for more than a year, writing feature profiles on Milpitas pioneers and notables including the late lo-



The cover of local author Ken Yoder Reed's latest novel about the immigrant experience of Swiss-Germans who came and settled in rural Pennsylvania during the 18th century.

Courtesy of Ken Yoder Reed

cal historian Mabel Mattos and former mayor Denny Weisgerber, among others.

Last year, the couple moved to Berryessa, where Reed wrapped up "Both My Sons." The novel is scheduled to be released by Masthof Press on Oct. 7.

For the book's release, Reed will return to Penn-

sylvania where he will lead the local historical society on a bus tour of the major locations in the novel. Also, on Nov. 5, Milpitas Public Library will host a public launch party for Reed's new novel inside the library's auditorium, 160 N. Main St.

Reed says he's considering writing his next novel about Saint Junipero Serra, a Roman Catholic priest and controversial figure who is known for founding some of the first Spanish missions in California and who was canonized by Pope Francis last year.

For more information about Reed and his work, visit facebook.com/kenyoderreed/.



GOOD EATS

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Read the food section Friday's in print and online at www.ifoldsflip.com/t/65076-milpitas-post



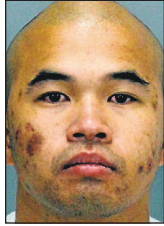
Traffic stop ends in drug arrest charges

By JASON GREEN, BAY AREA NEWS GROUP

A 29-year-old San Jose man was arrested last week after an officer found roughly 10 ounces of methamphetamine in his pickup truck during a traffic stop, according to Milpitas police.

The officer pulled over Hoanglam Duc Bui for a traffic violation at 10:27 p.m. on Aug. 4 on the southbound Interstate 880 onramp from West Calaveras Boulevard in Milpitas. A search of Bui's 2008 Toyota Tundra ensued when the officer determined he was driving with a suspended license.

The search turned up



Hoanglam Duc Bui

roughly 10 ounces of methamphetamine, as well as a small quantity of cocaine, marijuana and drug paraphernalia, according to police.

Police said Bui was arrested and booked into Santa Clara County Jail for possession of methamphetamine for sale, possession of a controlled substance, possession of drug paraphernalia and driving with a suspended license.

Trio nabbed for fraud, narcotics charges at local inn

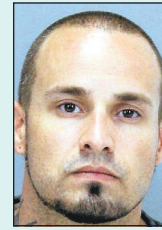
By MILPITAS POST STAFF

A Bay Area couple was arrested at a local motel last week for fraud and narcotics charges, Milpitas Police Department reported.

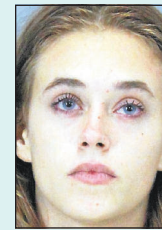
On Aug 4, at 12:11 p.m., a Milpitas police officer saw a brown 1995 Ford Taurus in the parking lot of the Heritage Inn at 378 W. Calaveras Blvd. The officer spoke to a man, later identified as Steven Talbot Zensius, 47, of Fremont, who was working on the car. Zensius was on probation from Alameda County and was found to be in possession of a small



Steven Zensius



Joseph Luprete



Jennie Gates

quantity of suspected methamphetamine, police said.

During the course of the investigation, officers conducted a search of a room at the Heritage Inn associated to Zensius. At the room, officers

located Joseph Marino Luprete, 32, and Jennie Danielle Gates, 18, both of San Jose. Luprete was on probation from Santa Clara County. A search of the motel room revealed suspected methamphetamine, multiple

fictitious identification cards, a credit card re-encoder device and multiple suspected stolen credit card numbers, police said.

Luprete was booked into Santa Clara County Jail for fraud related charges and violation of probation. Gates was booked into jail for possession of a controlled substance and fraud related charges. Zensius was cited and released for being in possession of a controlled substance, police said.

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