

Cowie contributes to help survivors of the San Diego wildfires

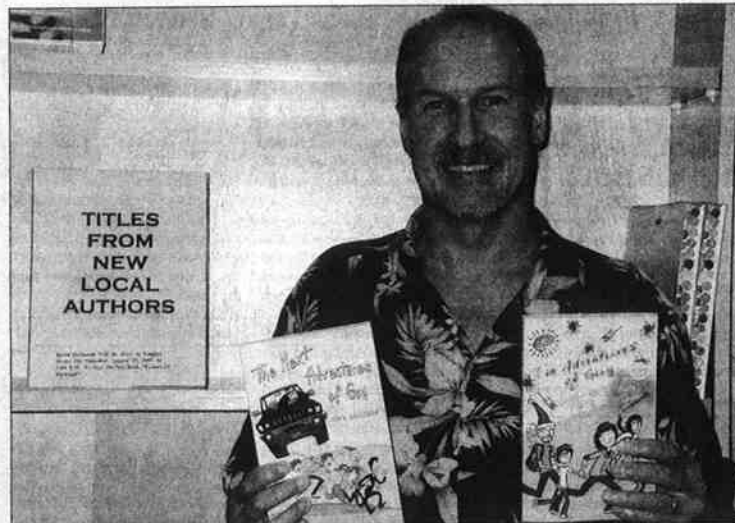
In the newly released, "Tales of Courage and Inspiration in THE HEAT OF THE MOMENT, inspired by the heroes of the 2007 San Diego Wildfires" anthology, Norm Cowie contributes as one of 21 authors to assist the survivors.

Cowie was asked to use his characters from the "Adventures of Guy" series to write about loss and catastrophe.

Cowie wrote his piece, titled, "The 'Really Hot' Adventures of Guy - Guy's life is one big party until destruction spurs too close to home," donating all proceeds from the book directly to the victims through the Fire Safe Council of San Diego County.



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NORM COWIE, New Lenox author of 'The Adventures of Guy' series, holds signed copies of his books at the Empire Bookstore in Frankfort. Empire Bookstore has dedicated a section within the store for autographed books by local authors.

- photo by *Therese Mahoney*

Rescue Riders recruit motorcyclists for emergencies

by *David Gialanella*
The (Elgin) *Courier News*

ELGIN, Ill. (AP) - Most people don't think of motorcycles as emergency response vehicles, probably because they never had been used in that capacity until some folks in Kane County came up with a winning idea.

"It hadn't been done before to my knowledge," said Dean Akey of Rescue Riders, a group of volunteer bikers who are trained in basic emergency response. "We looked all over."

The group has been able to accumulate about 125 members since its inception three years ago and hopes to recruit more, said Akey, of St. Charles.

"The big value of that event is to introduce those concepts to people who haven't had the training," he said. "We want to get as many bodies as we can there."

Rescue Riders came about after county officials approached Akey, he explained. He already had started a group called "Bikers for Bikers," which does fundraisers for fallen riders. Originally, Rescue Riders was more of a "taxi service" for emergency workers and supplies. But then everyone started to realize that it makes more sense to train the bikers themselves in basic response measures so they can keep things under control until the professionals come onto the scene, Akey said.

Now all his troops - who also are Kane County Medical Reserve Corps volunteers - are trained in CPR, first aid, triage and accident-scene management. What they lack in expertise, they somewhat make up for in speediness.

"It just takes longer for a traditional emergency vehicle," he said. "You can ride (a motorcycle) between lanes of traffic and on sidewalks."

Rescue Riders did not play a major role in the recent flood response; it's a rarity that Kane County experiences a disaster severe enough to require the Rescue Riders' services. But Akey and his comrades aren't just sitting around waiting for the Apocalypse. They also escort bikers on large weekend rides at no cost, as there often are accidents with so many motorcycles in one place. Akey said they also are always scrambling to train as many bikers as possible in basic emergency response. Because riding is significantly more dangerous than driving a car, all bikers need as much training as they can get, he said.

Akey himself was involved in a nasty accident four years ago when he was hit by a car while riding his motorcycle, he said. Though he suffered several broken ribs, a broken collarbone and eventually needed 60 staples in his head, he still had the presence of mind to treat his own bleeding, he said. Other bikers around him had no medical training, which Akey said is an all-too-common occurrence when enthusiasts hit the streets.

"There were probably 10 people standing around me who didn't know what to do," he said.

To help avoid those kinds of problems, and to make sure the county is prepared to deal with a disaster that quickly eats up traditional emergency responders, Akey constantly is trying to get the word out about the unique program.

Though it might be difficult to put a price tag on the ability to save a life, cost is no issue anyway.

"We don't charge anybody," Akey said. "We train them for free. All we want from someone is to invest their time. It doesn't cost them a penny."

On the Net: www.rescueriders.org

'Adventures of Guy' and Empire Books - a winning combination

by *Therese Mahoney*

New Lenox author Norm Cowie showed up at our meeting with his satirical wit in overdrive. Cowie had agreed to meet me at the Empire Bookstore in Frankfort to talk about his new book and introduce me to Paula Ingram, the store's owner.

Ingram and Cowie had gotten to know one another and had agreed upon an arrangement to sell and market Norm's books, hoping to create demand in the ever-dwindling independent book market.

The Empire Bookstore in Frankfort is a great place for local bibliophiles to find a good selection of classics and top-sellers at discounted prices. And if the store doesn't have what you're looking for in-stock, Ingram will order it for you, usually at 25 to 35 percent off the listed cover price.

"The most important thing to me is customer service," said Ingram. "The customers are everything to me. I'm very committed to this community and want people to have a place where they can buy a book and have a nice experience."

The store is also a treasure-trove for those looking for works by local authors. Ingram has obtained signed copies of books written by many Lincoln-Way authors. She prides herself on promoting local talent and offers the signed copies at her standard discounted rates.

The store also carries works of art by local filmmaker, Robert Alaniz, jewelry and book ribbons by MaryBeth Sadlik and designer notecards by Joyce Leas.

Empire Books stocks signed copies of Cowie's latest work, "The Next Adventure of Guy ... more wackiness," as well as copies of the first in the series, "The Adventures of Guy ... written by a guy (probably)."

You can pick up a signed copy of both "Adventures of Guy" books at the store for \$13.95 each. And you might even run

Come see Cowie ...

Norm Cowie will appear at a book signing event at 2 p.m., Sunday, Dec. 16 at Borders Bookstore in Matteson.

into Cowie.

Cowie's first "Adventures of Guy" book hit the market in 2006 and was extremely well received by literary critics and readers alike.

"I wrote the first book to tell the kind of story I would like to read," said Cowie. "The book is about guys. I thought only guys would want to read it, but found out women like it because it portrays men to be what they are, kind of ridiculous. We all know it and relish it."

The characters in the "Adventures of Guy" books each take on a role and garner a kind of superpower to fight evil. In the first book they battle evil telemarketers and in the second they go up against Big Oil. Along the way, the characters keep running into attorneys who impede their progress.

The "Adventures of Guy" books are part science fiction with a heavy dose of humor. The superpowers manifested by the characters include the reticent unbeliever, a kind of sorcerer and a guy with elf powers bestowed upon him by the Santa hat with elf ears he wears.

In the first "Adventures with Guy" book, the group also included a warrior woman with double PMS and a battle cry of "Twenty Four Hour Sale!" In the second "Adventures with Guy" book, the warrior woman is replaced by Wendy, who works at Wendy's, and possesses the "Power of Redhead."

"I wrote both books in the

same way," said Cowie. "I found things of the world that make people angry and made fun of them. Big Oil and telemarketers and attorneys - real stuff that bugs me. I take those things, pick on them and merge them into a story."

Cowie says when he wrote the first "Adventures of Guy" book he didn't know it would turn into a series. "I left open the possibility. It was the best thing to get back to the characters."

He believes his books have become so popular because of the strength of his characters and the fun they have. "The characters absolutely come 100 percent out of my brain. They dictate the action and I chronicle it. They sometimes surprise me and crack me up," explained Cowie.

"The Adventures of Guy" books are filled with humor. The storylines accentuate modern-day ridiculous truth with the characters assuming ridiculous realisms. If you're looking for a funny read that's fun to read, these are for you.

"You can open any page of either book and if you have a sense of humor, you're going to like it," said Cowie.

Even though I know both books are very funny, having laughed my way through both of them, I thought it would be fun to put Cowie to the test. I picked up my copy of "The Next Adventures of Guy ..." opened to page 136, and immediately came upon the following:

Inside, it felt as if we were sitting by the exhaust of a jumbo jet airliner at takeoff, or near the business end of the winner of a chili eating competition.

You can put Cowie to the test yourself. Visit Empire Bookstore at 75 W. Bankview Drive, in Frankfort (815-469-0723) to pick up a signed copy or visit his Web site at www.normcowie.com, to learn more about the author and the "Adventures of Guy."