

BOOK AGAIN

NEWS LETTER

Sept/Oct 2006

Sheryl's News

"Have you checked out our new Greeting Cards?" You will be hearing that refrain quite frequently during your next visit, because I am very happy with our completely new assortment of greeting cards from Leanin' Tree. Take a look at them next time you stop by and let me know your thoughts! I think you'll enjoy our selection.

I'd like to take this moment to thank all of you who have been bringing in so many great books in very good condition. Because of you, our turnover remains strong and gives everyone else a better chance of finding just the right book. But remember – the more recent and most popular books don't stay on our shelves for long, so be sure to take advantage of our free *Book Again Request Service!* Ask about it during your next visit...

—Sheryl

BOOKS WANTED:

✓ Audiobooks (CD or Tape) UNABRIDGED

Nana's Applesauce Cake

1½-Cup Apple Sauce	1-tsp. Ground Cloves
1½-tsp. Baking Soda	1-tsp. All Spice
1½-Cup Brown Sugar	½-tsp. Salt
¾-Cup Corn Oil	1-Cup Raisins
1-tsp. Cinnamon	1-Cup Chopped Nuts
	2-Cups Flour

Mix the above ingredients and then pour into an 8 or 9-inch square pan. Bake at 325° for 1 hour.

HALLOWEEN HALF-OFF SALE!

Friday, Saturday and Sunday

Oct 20, 21, 22 and 27, 28 & 29

**All books inside the store will be
half-off our already low prices!**

Prices this low are absolutely

SCARY!

This is our best sale - don't miss out!

DIANA READS SOME SCARY BOOKS

Hi, it's Diana and my turn in the review box again. I'm not at all into sci-fi or horror, but I do like stories that sit in the middle. Those tales of the supernatural and terror-filled powers that cause the monsters in our brain to wonder "What if."

Jay Bonansinga's *The Killer's Game* is about a serial murderer. One who has seemingly crossed the time barrier? The frozen body of a man, found after a landslide, is discovered to have been murdered, several thousand years ago. Police are puzzled at the

similarities of this murder to a series of recent murders.

With all evidence pointing to global warming, what if a thawing occurred? In Jeff Rovin's *Fatalis* a nightmare is about to begin for humankind when one of the most feared predators makes a comeback.

DO NOT read these books before going to bed. Daytime, with all the lights on and the doors locked would be good. Let your imagination go and have fun (?) with these thrillers.

"A room without books is like a body without a soul."—Cicero

STORE HOURS: Tuesday through Sunday 11 am to 4 pm (Closed Mondays)
5039 Torrance Blvd., Torrance, CA 90503 • (310) 542-1156 • www.bookagain.com

NOTE: Joe will return with a new column in November. This month we have Sheryl's youngest son Dan as a guest-columnist.

A TRUE STORY?

It was thirty years ago when Jay Anson began to write his very first book, *The Amityville Horror*. Recounting a family's terrifying month-long ordeal in a haunted house, the book not only became a nationwide best-seller, but also spawned a motion-picture blockbuster, leading to eight filmed sequels, making it one of the first and largest major movie franchises.

As a haunted house story, the book is quite tame; but what truly frightened and caught the imagination of the public was its subtitle: "A True Story." These events weren't crafted by the imagination of Poe, Bradbury or Lovecraft—they supposedly really happened to an innocent Long Island family—the Lutzes.

But was it actually a true story?

A year after the Lutzes fled, the house was purchased by the Cromarty family, who claimed their new home was perfectly normal. The only negative forces they encountered were the curiosity-seekers which flocked to the house, frequently causing commotion in the neighborhood at all hours of the night.

In the early 80s the Cromarty family appeared on the television show *That's Incredible* in an effort to dispel the notion that their home was some sort of demonic passageway to Hell. They gave a tour of the house, claiming certain features (which were noted as being damaged in Anson's book) were, in fact, original, un-repaired and never broken. But can you really prove that the front door never came off its hinges 4 years ago by tapping on its frame with the handle of a screwdriver?

Perhaps the most telling portion of the *That's Incredible* episode came when Mrs. Cromarty talked about the priest (the one whose blessing of the Lutzes' home was supposedly interrupted by a demonic voice ordering him to "get out"). She claimed the priest testified in federal court that while he did bless the house, he never suffered from sores on his hands nor experienced any of the other afflictions mentioned in Anson's book. This was immediately followed by a voiceover stating that no such denial by the priest could be found in the transcript of the trial. Furthermore, the priest had given an on-camera interview for the series *In Search Of*, where he confirmed that he did, indeed, suffer the afflictions mentioned in Anson's book.

The trial, at which Mrs. Cromarty claimed the priest had testified, was between the Lutzes and former DeFeo attorney William Weber. Weber was claiming he had helped create the ghost story with the Lutzes and was now suing for breach of contract over a failed book deal between the parties. The case was settled out of court after a long 2-year process.

It is important to note that while William Weber stated that he knew for a fact the haunted house story was false (because he

helped to create it), he nonetheless had a provision in his contract whereas the Lutzes would submit to a polygraph test (to judge if the story was true) which, if they failed, would result in the Lutzes losing not only their share of the book profits, but their house and anything else they owned deemed to be an artifact of their story. The question remains: if Weber and the Lutzes knew the story was false, why then would Weber put this clause into the contract? Furthermore, how could Weber expect the Lutzes to ever sign a contract which would have given away their home and the rights to their story for absolutely no compensation at all? That clause in the contract only made sense if Weber and the Lutzes did *not* create a fake haunted house story together...

Curiously enough, the Lutzes did end up taking a polygraph test in regards to the haunting. The test was conducted in 1979 by Michael Rice and Chris Gugas, both considered among the top in their field. They passed with flying colors.

Over the years, people have claimed the Lutzes created their story purely as a money-making venture. If this were the case, then the Lutzes were *very* clever to devise a hoax that hasn't been conclusively uncovered in over 30 years. But if they were so clever, then why didn't they become rich from it? Surely they would have planned it all out to ensure they received the lion's share of any and all profits. The people who got rich were Jay Anson and the film producers, not the Lutzes. And if the Lutzes were so clever, wouldn't they realize what an incredible long-shot it was for their book to actually make money in the first place?

Others have speculated that the Lutzes were deep in debt after purchasing their Amityville house, and faked the haunting story as an excuse to abandon their expensive new home. In reality, both George and Kathy had each sold their previous homes and came out ahead financially in the deal. In fact although the Lutzes fled their home in January of 1976, they continued making payments on it until June or July.

So is Jay Anson's book a true story? Technically, no. Jay rearranged the events and admitted to using literary license while writing his book. There was no slime oozing from the walls in real life, and the Lutzes didn't take Danny to the hospital when the window slammed down on his hands. At best, Jay's book should be considered as being "based on a true story."

But did a haunting really happen? That we don't know. There is no proof that a haunting ever happened in Amityville. Due to its very nature, it is next to impossible to prove that ghosts even exist. However, if it was all a hoax, then there should definitely be proof of that—a weak link, a forgotten clue, *something*. To date many have theorized and given their opinions on the matter, but so far no one has proven the Amityville Horror to be a hoax...