Family of Award Winning Novelist Robb White Celebrates His 100th Birthday By Announcing New Release Out Of Print Books

Children's classic adventure novelist Robb White, who wrote one of the most sought after out-of-print books of all time "The Lion's Paw" would have turned 100 years old on June 20th. In celebration of this momentous occasion, the family's own publishing imprint A.W. INK, Inc. has announced the re-publication of several of White's all time favorite young readers, "Sailor In The Sun", "Up Periscope" and "Silent Ship, Silent Sea, to be released this year.

Salt Lake City, UT (PRWEB) June 23, 2009 -- In celebration of the 100th birthday of the late Robb White, a commemorative tribute to White's life works was recently written by a journalist, and die hard fan, Joseph W. Smith, III. Smith also writes for Wikipedia (changsmith2@msn.com). The tribute was published in the Sun-Gazette, a Pennsylvania newspaper, and the story follows:

ROBB WHITE: Seeking Adventure and Long-Lost Books

When it comes to Robb White, it's tough to say which was more exciting -- his life or his books. For most folks, though, the tougher question is, "Who's Robb White?" The late author -- who would have turned 100 this past Saturday -- penned adventure novels, TV scripts and horror-movie screenplays. Though most of his books are out of print, he has a cadre of devoted fans whose fondness borders on obsession.

Most of White's 27 books are aimed at younger readers, many of whom first encountered him through the Scholastic reading program in public schools 40 or 50 years ago -- captivated by the powerful authenticity and breathless excitement in such stories as "Secret Sea," "Flight Deck," "Up Periscope," "The Survivor" and "Torpedo Run."

But White's legendary 1946 novel "The Lion's Paw" has proven the most enduring -- and perhaps the most elusive.

Of the 79 reader-reviews at Amazon.com, 77 give the book five stars, calling the story of three kids on a sailboat "engrossing," "wonderful," "timeless," "enchanting," "excellent," "fantastic," "mesmerizing," "beautifully written" and "absolutely incredible."

But the word that seems to come up most often is "favorite."

One reviewer wrote: "This book changed my life ... This was the book that opened the door for me, that showed me just how wonderful reading can be. I have read and reread my original beat up paperback version many, many times."

Yet the book was out of print for years, and those aging paperbacks proved hard to come by. Last year, Bookfinder.com listed "Paw" as America's most sought-after out-of-print children's book.

Originally priced under $1, it regularly sold for $50 on eBay, with pristine hardbacks netting 10 times that amount.
But now, a splendid new reprint, complete with drawings and jacket design from the original Doubleday hardback, can be purchased through Amazon, eBay, thelionspaw.org, selected retailers or the national wholesaler, Ingram.

White's third wife and life-long friend, Annie, explains: "My daughter Leslie and I receive mail daily from many readers who proclaim 'The Lion's Paw' their favorite book ever!" So they formed A. W. INK to reissue White's books -- starting with 20,000 copies of "Lion's Paw," currently stored in their Utah garage and sold by phone or Internet.

Having moved about 10,000 so far, they hope to reprint other White titles soon.

Yet when it comes to Robb White, finding long-lost books is only half the story. He lived a life most folks only dream about.

Born to missionaries in the Philippines, White grew up among Igorot natives whom he called "absolutely superb people," even though they ate several of the family's dogs.

White later moved to the U.S., where he graduated from Annapolis with the rank of ensign in 1931.

Working on a "floating school" in the 1930s, White one night swam ashore from two miles out when the schooner was crippled in a December storm.

He married Rodie Mason in 1937 and the couple settled in the Caribbean, eventually purchasing an uninhabited eight-acre island for $60.

The Whites spent three years on this barren atoll, digging a cistern out of rocky ground and shipping in concrete for a small, sturdy house. They weathered a typhoon, a flirtatious Nazi skipper, a boatload of Jewish refugees and a surprise visit from White's mother-in-law.

After Pearl Harbor, White was recalled to military duty, earning nine medals, serving on battleships, submarines and aircraft carriers, and fighting in the Battle of Leyte Gulf near his birthplace. White drew heavily on these experiences for his later novels.

In the 1950s and 1960s, White wrote episodes of TV's "Perry Mason" and teamed with horror director William Castle for a series of cheap but successful thrillers, including "Macabre," "The Tingler" and "The House on Haunted Hill."

Widely traveled, White was a member of Harvard's 1950 anthropological expedition to the Middle East. He lived in California, Arizona, Georgia, North Carolina, England, Ireland, Scotland, Italy, the West Indies and the French Riviera.

He died on Thanksgiving in 1990.

White's daughter Bailey is an NPR commentator who reminisces about her father in several of her books.

White's son, Robb IV (1941-2006), was a boat-builder whose collected writings were released June 1 under the title "Flotsam and Jetsam."
My own White obsession began when I fell in love with "Flight Deck" in middle school; it was reignited in the 1990s when I found an ancient but sturdy copy at a local newsstand in downtown Williamsport.

After years of Internet searches and more cash outlays than I care to admit, my collection of White's books was finally completed this spring when I nailed an affordable British edition of the very rare "Sailor in the Sun" (cheapest copy now available: $700).

I recommend "Sail Away," "No Man's Land," "Silent Ship, Silent Sea" and White's memoir of his amazing Caribbean adventure, "Our Virgin Island."

A. W. INK, Inc has announced their plan to bring these long sought after adventure stories back into print in 2009!

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