

# The reluctant writer

*If you really like it you can have the rights  
It could make a million for you overnight  
If you must return it you can send it here  
But I need a break  
And I wanna be a paperback writer*

— The Beatles  
As you may know, I've dipped my toe in the novel water. I just dipped it again with my second novel and fourth book.  
I don't know why I do it. I have no illusion of becoming a best-selling author. Call it professional growth or amateur insanity.

It's a lot of work to write and publish books that almost nobody will read. They won't read them mostly because they won't find them tucked away on Amazon alongside millions of other books.

Being an independent publisher means there's no marketing budget. When you make \$5 a book, you have to sell 100 books to recoup a \$500 ad spend. It's not a good investment.

So, it just sits there hoping someone will buy it, read it, and like it enough to leave a review, or tell a friend, and maybe in a hundred years, five people will have read it.

## Ramblin' Man

By David Porter



Marketers find it. I get four or five emails a week from marketers telling me how great my books are and how well they would do if only I would give them a thousand dollars.

The books are not great. They're OK. As far as novels go, they're as good as 80 percent

of the novels I've read. Then again, I haven't read very many novels.

I'm reluctant to market them, anyway, because they're a lot different from what I write here. I don't even use the same name on them because I don't want any of my longtime

readers to buy them and then hate me for the rest of their lives.

The novels are, let's say, gritty. They use language and talk about situations you'll never read from me here. I think that's one reason I write them, actually. It's a different medium with a different style. Thus, I expect them to have a different audience.

The funny thing is, I don't care whether anyone reads them. That seems counter-productive, I know. But I don't write them for other people. I write them for myself. If other people read them and like them, that's the mayonnaise

on my ham sandwich.

I'm not done. I have a couple more novels in me. Maybe more. We'll see.

I've been in the newspaper business for more than 40 years. I needed a different outlet. A new challenge.

I have no intention of quitting my day job. And judging from current sales, that's not going to be a problem.

I just want to be a paperback writer. And now I am.

© Copyright 2026 by David Porter who can be reached at [presseditor1@gmail.com](mailto:presseditor1@gmail.com). If you really want to risk the read, drop me an email and I'll send you a link.



It looks like shipping operations in the Strait of Hormuz may be getting back toward normal. Yay!

I suppose naysayers might point out that the prez is taking the same deal he was offered a few weeks back. And it is true that the present arrangement is strikingly similar to the one that had been on offer when I wrote my May 13 column. Which he rejected by way of threatening to blow Iran off the face of the earth. No doubt it will be touted as the New Deal.

Same as the old deal (the one that didn't get done), but nowhere near as good as the deal that had been done - until the US simply tore it up and stomped on the pieces.

But hey, better late than never, right? I'll take it. If the ships move, the price of gas will come down. Unfortunately, it will take time for fertilizer prices to come back down. And there's no way to make up for fertilizations already missed, and for farming decisions already made. Some folks say things

will be back to normal within six months. Some things, maybe, but farmers have had to make decisions based on current conditions, whose effects we will feel well beyond six months from now. These will pertain to corn, soy, and other crops using nitrogen fertilizers, and may be laid squarely at the feet of this Administration. The effects of the current low winter low wheat harvest will also be felt much longer, but these will be mainly due to dry weather rather than public policy. However, the high prices of fuel and fertilizer are also affecting the drought-stricken farmers' decisions on future plantings.

Locally, I've had to start watering fairly often to help my new plants and seeds along. My neighbor has resorted to sprinklers to keep

his lawn thick and green. If this dry wather keeps up, he will have the option of cutting way back on watering and fertilizing, and it will be fine. Well, OK, it might not look fine. Grass deals with dry weather by going dormant. It dies, almost down to the ground. So it looks dead. But as long as it's not cut, the dead grass acts like mulch, keeping the soil cool around the surviving roots - rather than getting baked to a brick-like consistency at blistering temperatures, which might well kill the roots. A healthy lawn can stay in this quiescent state long enough that the dead grass can actually be made to look good for weeks to months, simply by painting it green. A non-toxic dark green spray paint might work well.

Also locally, a lot of fields

that had remained unworked until well into May have now been planted. Apparently, the late-April deluge merely delayed field operations. So far, so good. Beans have been up a while, corn is beginning.

My no-care petunias have started growing in earnest. One has even started to bloom. They will cover entire garden beds. They will bloom until there's a killing freeze. When they grow out into the lawn, I simply mow them. They become very fragrant at night.

Something strange is going on with my Mexican Hats. Their long stems keep bending. Then they straighten out. Some of the plants also look seriously deformed. Last year a lot of them died out. Disease? Poison? Or neither? Some books describe Mexican Hats as a "short lived

perennial". So perhaps all the established ones are simply calling it quits. Hopefully the new ones coming up from seeds will be all right. If not, I'll have to try growing something else where they're growing.

My Common Milkweed and Butterfly Weed are blooming. I've seen a few Monarchs. The other day I even saw a Viceroy. A few Red Admirals. A few large, black-colored swallowtails. One may have been a Pipevine Swallowtail. I finally saw a Tiger Swallowtail. A very few Painted Ladies. A couple of tiny blue butterflies. Some Suphurs and Cabbage butterflies. An occasional Painted Lady. There used to be many butterflies around this time of year. But it's been a long time.

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# Keep kids busy this summer at the library

As our sights turn to the celebration of America's 250th birthday, we are excited to welcome back the Champaign County Forest Preserves with their program on Historical Toys and Games. Children are invited to take a look back at how kids of the past entertained themselves without screens or any of the modern conveniences that we have today. Participants will learn about the origins of each game, how to play them, and even have an opportunity to play themselves. The toys and games will be set up Saturday, June 6 from 11:00AM-12:00PM. Please RSVP on our website or by calling the library to let us know how many people to expect.

If you're looking for other ways to keep the kids busy this summer, Teen Make Lab

continues all month long on Wednesdays from 3:30-5:00. This program is a designated space for teens to express themselves through art and creation. We provide the tools, and teens can use the time for camaraderie and to let their creativity loose.

Every Friday this summer from 10:00-10:30, bring the little ones to Story Time. Now an immersive, interactive experience, babies and toddlers can make a craft or play in a sensory bin after listening to their story.

Also, sitting through a story time counts toward your Summer Reading Challenge Minutes! There's still plenty of time to sign up for Summer Reading. ANY age can participate, and then you get to receive prizes throughout the summer as you meet your Reading Challenge Goals.

Visit our webpage at [tolono-library.org/srp](http://tolono-library.org/srp) for more in-

formation on summer reading or visit our events page

for more information on all upcoming programs this

month. See you soon at the library!

## Philo Library weekly news

BYOB book club has its June meeting on Tuesday, June 2, 6:00-7:00 p.m. Join others who love books and find out what recents reads and authors they found to be good reading - This is open to anyone who enjoys reading whether it's poetry, biographies or science fiction. This club is all about books of all kinds.

Mark June 1 on your calendar - that is the date kids can pick up Reading Logs and begin keeping track of their summer reading. Fill up one log and bring it in for a prize. Fill up another and get another prize - you can do this until August 1. Think of the prizes you can collect, including Barnes & Noble gift cards.

Also June 1, there will be sheets to pickup to get your fa-

vorite recipes included in a new Philo Cooks cookbook, sponsored by Philo Library. Recipes need to be submitted by August 1 so we can have the book available by the winter holidays, that would make a good present for anyone who enjoys good food..

Summer programming has begun with a week of fun for all. On Tuesday, we had a great time taking turns reading to the pups who were being adored by all. These dogs belong to an organization, PawPrint Ministries, based in Decatur. They are comfort dogs and have been trained to work with people in traumatic situations as well as children who get a chance to practice their reading skills in a fun environment. We appreciate the

handlers and their dogs comin, they do a wonderful job.

On Wednesday, the Champaign Forest Preserve District will be doing a presentation on Micro Marvels - June 3, 1:30-2:30 p.m.. We hope to have a great turnout for this program as well. There are a total of 3 Forest Preserve presentations in the month of June at Philo Library - they are free and open to all. The second one is Habitats and Hideouts. June 10, 1:30-2:30. Ever wonder where raccoons are during the day since you usually see them at night? Here's a chance to find out along with other fun facts and hands on activities. The last program will be June 24, 1:30-2:30 at Philo Library - "Scaly Encounters" . I'm assum-

ing this might include lizards, snakes and I don't know what else. We'll have to wait and see.

Don't forget the Stuffle Sleepover (ages pre-k to 4/5th grades. June 8. kids bring their favorite Stuffle to Philo Library at 6 p.m. There will be a light snack and stories before the kids tuck their Stuffle in for the night. Then everyone goes home and to bed. Do the Stuffles plump up their pillows and close their eyes? Experience shows us that you never know what to expect these critters to do when left to their own devices. I'll let you know what our Stuffle Cam catches them doing in the next column. Thanks for reading.

Southern Champaign County  
**TODAY**  
**BUSINESS DIRECTORY**

VETERINARY SERVICES	EYE CARE
<p><b>Four Counties Mobile Veterinary Services</b></p> <p>Kathleen M. Mcmanamon, DVM</p> <p><i>House and Farm Calls Small Animal and Equine</i></p> <p><b>Hours:</b> Monday-Friday, Noon-8 p.m. Saturday, By Appointment Phone: (217) 834-3472</p>	<p><b>CHITTICK FAMILY EYE CARE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adult &amp; Pediatric Eye Care</li> <li>• Contact Lenses</li> <li>• Custom Vision Correction</li> <li>• Digital Retinal Exam</li> <li>• Glaucoma detection &amp; management</li> </ul> <p><b>10 West Adams Villa Grove, IL 61956</b> Office: 832-2111</p> <p><b>Hours: Mon - Fri 8 - 5</b> <i>Medicare assignments accepted/Health Alliance Provider</i></p>

**To list your business, contact**  
Stephanie Wierman, 217-620-7460  
[stephanie@thecounty-chronicle.com](mailto:stephanie@thecounty-chronicle.com)

## Area Church Services

<p><b>IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH</b> 390 CR 2400E, Broadlands (217) 834-3289 For more information call church office</p>	<p><b>FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH</b> (Non-Denominational) "Come Rejoice With Us" 701 N. Sycamore Street Villa Grove, Illinois Phone (217) 832-5231 Fax (217) 832-9348 website: <a href="http://www.fccvg.com">www.fccvg.com</a> e-mail: <a href="mailto:fccvg@frontier.com">fccvg@frontier.com</a> Minister—Mike Zylstra e-mail: <a href="mailto:fccvgmin@frontier.com">fccvgmin@frontier.com</a> Open communion observed weekly Morning Worship Service: 9:30 a.m. Sunday School (all ages) 10:45 a.m. Jr. &amp; Sr. High Youth Group 1st &amp; 3rd Sundays 6:00 p.m. Wednesday Bible Study 6:30 p.m.</p>	<p><b>COUNTRYSIDE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH</b> 1807 County Road 1000N, Urbana Between Sidney and Philo Rev. Jeff Stahl E-mail: <a href="mailto:cumc.office99@gmail.com">cumc.office99@gmail.com</a> <a href="http://www.countrysidemethodist.com">www.countrysidemethodist.com</a> Worship Coffee Hour- 8:30 a.m. Worship-9:00 a.m. Nursery Available during worship Wednesday Wednesday's Bible Study 1:30pm Facebook Devotionals on Thursdays - 1:30 Crossroads Youth Group meets on the last Sunday of the Month from 5-6:30pm; dinner is provided. (Ages 7 &amp; up) Please contact the office for more information 217-688-2422 "Love God; Love Each Other"</p>
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**To add your church to the directory, email:**  
[office@thecounty-chronicle.com](mailto:office@thecounty-chronicle.com)