

A new type of house call

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FOR THE DELTA DEMOCRAT TIMES

Dr. Darden North may not make house calls in the traditional sense. He still works as a partner out of his office at the Jackson Healthcare for Women, PA.

But he also brings his debut mystery novel to light as "House Call" — a Southern thriller with bumbling investigations, a demonic killer and corporate greed in the medical



North

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community.

Born in Jackson, and reared in Cleveland, North still has strong ties to the Delta. His mother, Evelyn, still lives in Cleveland, and North has clients throughout the Delta. He showed an interest in the publishing world as far back as high school in Cleveland, where he was the business manager for his high school yearbook. He was also the editor for the annual at Ole Miss, in the late 1970s. His wife, Sally North, succeeded him in that position.

Writing hasn't been a far stretch for North.

What was a stretch, however, was working privately on his novel, which he worked on for about 10 years, "mulling over the plot. ... I knew I wanted it to be in the medical community, ob/gyn based, since that was my experience," explains North.

"Three years ago, I got serious about getting finished," adds North. "Changing over from the computer to the laptop made the process a lot easier."

So North got to work, speaking

with other authors from the area. Some of the people he credits for helping include writers Louisa Dixon, Martin Hegwood, Nevada Barr and Gayden Metcalfe. North stresses that these were not all the people who helped him, just some who gave him advice.

"It was difficult for an unknown author to get an agent," North said. "So, I decided to self publish. ... Friends had done their own books ... so I went with The Gibbes Co. of Ridgeland."

North had a lot of hands-on input in the publishing process; and he put in a lot of leg work to get the book off the ground. He likes it that way.

After printing his first run of more than 6,000 copies, he's already sold more than half.

"I tried to capture the details of the South, of Mississippi characters," said North. "For Southern writers, there are a lot of interesting people, places and mysterious history."

Even though his book is "entirely fictional," it is set

somewhere in north-central Mississippi, north of Jackson, with some in the Delta. He does refer to Cleveland.

"I tried to make the ending of the book surprising ... leaving the readers wanting more," said North.

Although his second book is not really a sequel, he's already almost two-thirds done with it. In his third book, he will use some of the characters from "House Call," just to "let the readers know what the characters are up to."

North had to be careful in choosing the title, so it appealed to both sexes.

"I tried to appeal to both men and women. I wanted them both to enjoy the book."

The Gibbes Co. eventually came up with the name.

North is busy promoting the book while he works fulltime at his medical practice in Jackson. He has been to the Mistletoe Marketplace, to Lemuria Books and to Square Books. He has plans to visit Cotton Row, and other stores in Tupelo, Hatties-

burg and Columbia.

When asked whether he plans on slowing down in his practice, he says, "No! I love doing this. ... I can get time to write, ... perhaps later. Once I retire, I'll write more."

For his readers' sake, he seems to be writing just plenty. With "House Call" leaving readers wanting more, many folks around Mississippi are anxiously awaiting the arrival of his second and third books.

As for what North wants out of this, "We all hope some publisher or movie person may want to buy the book. ... We've been told it reads like a screenplay."

By surrounding himself with great authors, and active publishing peers, North seems to be on his way to getting his wish.

North will sign appear at the McCormick Book Inn in Greenville on Dec. 10 from 3:30 to 5 p.m. He'll also be at the Mississippi Gift Co. in Greenwood, on Dec. 9 at 4 p.m. His books are for sale at www.amazon.com. For additional information, visit www.dardennorth.com.