

# LOCAL NEWS

## Harsha captures life's precious moments through her poems

BY JILL BALLINGER  
GAZETTE EDITOR

Some people can take the value of the moment, savor it and commit it to memory. Many others live in a constant whirlwind of activity and thought, often missing life's most important moments.

Poet Jeannie Harsha lives her life striking a delicate balance between the two. When she writes, she affords herself the luxury of being still, letting the importance of being present in the moment take precedence over the constant drone of life.

In her first book *But first can you tie my shoe?* Harsha shares what she gained in those precious moments she gleaned as her children, now 24 and 21, grew. The collection of poems winds its way through their childhood, from its beginnings in Washington to high school graduation in Mariposa.

Harsha has been writing forever, beginning with journals and diaries as a child. She was born in the east, grew up in Colorado with a house full of siblings and has lived in northern Arizona, Minnesota, Washington and Mariposa. Her varied past includes working as a backcountry ranger, naturalist and archeologist.

She never really thought about writing for publication until her early 30s, when she took a creative writing class. A teacher encouraged her to submit her work, and she promptly won the American Mother's Literary Contest.

Since that time, she has been published in various magazines and journals and has continued to write poetry. She began collecting them as her children, Jason and Jenner, grew. She thought it would be a nice gift for them.

Then she took another class. Part of an assignment asked students if there was something they had always wanted to do but hadn't. Publishing a book was Harsha's answer. From there, it was a quick ride from concept to publication. Now the book is available at Amazon, Barnes and Noble, and locally at Windows on the World.

The collection begins as Harsha was a young mother and concludes at her daughter's high school graduation. The order of the poems came to her in a moment of calm, just as the poems do.

"That's just one of those things," Harsha said. "When you're taking the time to be still, ideas come to you."

A prime example of one of those moments is the piece "Daybreak." Harsha wrote it on the back of a bill envelope as she waited for young Jenner to finish her breakfast. She stopped and paid attention to all the things of the world that were connected in something as simple as eating cereal.

She was able to honor the mill worker, farmer, potter and dairyman. "Just by pausing, I was able to observe it and appreciate everything that brought that breakfast together," she said. "It makes me realize that we all share a connection."

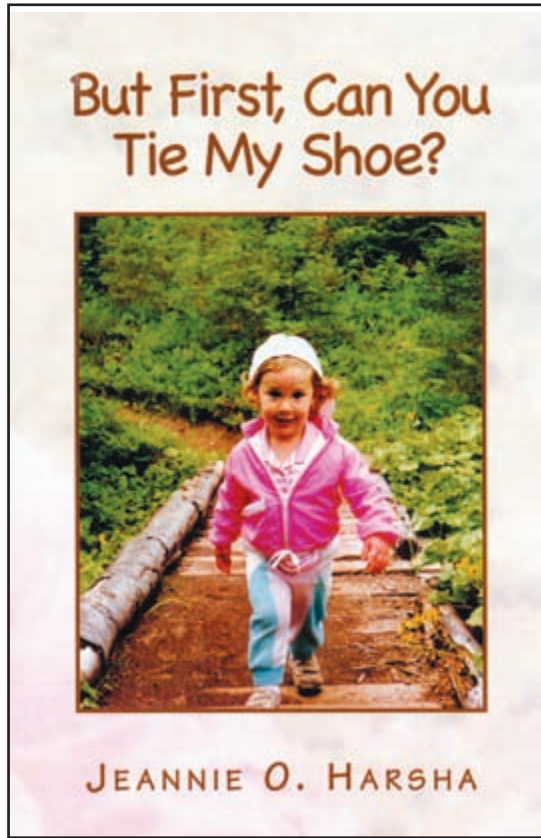
Harsha said "Daybreak" is a good representation of how one can attain a higher awareness just by taking the time. "It enhances one's enjoyment of life," she said. All of the poems, however, are really special to the author and third grade teacher because they represent unique moments in the child-rearing years.

Some works honor other children in the community. She notes that this is not just a book for parents. "It's for anyone involved in a child's life," Harsha said. "It's for everybody in the 'village,'" who help raise its children.

"It makes me happy not only to give these to my kids, but to share it with the world," Harsha said of her poems. "We can give kids the best of our time, and it makes time stand still. We can capture those precious moments."

There is a photo with the poem "Remember - Now" of the Harsha kids with their friends, the Radanovich's. Christopher Radanovich, who was killed in a car accident last year, is in the photo. Harsha said its inclusion was key to reaching many people.

"I wanted to acknowledge a dear son from our community



POET JEANNIE HARSHA'S DAUGHTER AT A YOUNG AGE IS THE APPROPRIATE COVER FOR HER BOOK THAT EXPLORES THE WONDERS OF RAISING CHILDREN.

who will always be a part of the collective fabric of our memories," she said.

Harsha extends her love of poetry into her classroom. "It helps students be playful with words and helps the enjoy writing," she said. "I want them to learn to love words, get their thoughts out. She even uses a concept called "stand around poetry" that has poems posted around areas where students might be waiting, like the lunch line.

She is grateful for the opportunity to reach so many children every day, and now so many readers. "Sometimes I think I'm just the vessel," she said. "It definitely makes me realize that the poems do touch people. It makes me realize that we do share connections."

The back cover of her book sums it up. "Poetry," she says, "is a magical way to express ones inner thoughts and feelings. What comes out and onto the page is remarkable connection to the rest of the world."

Harsha will be signing her book the weekend of the Mariposa Storytelling Festival at Windows on the World books in downtown Mariposa. The signing is set for March 13 at 2:30 p.m. She will do another singing and reading at Willow Bridge Books in Oakhurst on April 17 at 2 p.m.

## Soroptimists visit King Vintage Museum

CONTRIBUTED BY ANITA STARCHMAN BRYANT

Mary Ann Hutcherson, a docent at the King Vintage Museum in Oakhurst, recently addressed the members of Soroptimist International of Mariposa. Hutcherson informed the Soroptimists that from March 6 to April 1 the museum will host the "Abraham Lincoln: Self Made in America Learning Station Exhibition" provided by the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum.

Only 40 locations in the United States and only four locations in California were chosen to host this Abraham Lincoln exhibit. The King Vintage Museum is the only Central Valley location to display the exhibit. The Oakhurst museum was chosen because of its close proximity to Yosemite which was protected by the "Yosemite Grant" legislation signed by Lincoln on June 30, 1864, during the Civil War. The exhibit displays the journey taken by Abraham Lincoln "from frontier obscurity to our nation's presidency... documented through a combination of images, objects and the written word in the seven learning stations."

The King Vintage Museum reminds visitors not to miss the "rest of the story." During this special event, the museum's permanent collection, which totals over 10,000 vintage



PICTURED IS MARY ANN HUTCHERSON, A DOCENT AT OAKHURST'S KING VINTAGE MUSEUM.

pieces, will feature its fashions from the 1800s to the early 1900s as well as a portion of its children and men collections. The mission of this unique museum is "to foster an awareness of the history and appreciation of vintage fashion and to offer an education for all ages on the lifestyles and fashion of past eras."

Located at 40680 Highway 41 (next to the Day's Inn) in Oakhurst, the King Vintage Museum is managed by Wild Wonderful Women & Friends, Inc., a non-profit corporation. For more information about the King Vintage Museum and the Abraham Lincoln exhibit visit [www.KingVintageMuseum.org](http://www.KingVintageMuseum.org) or call (559) 658-6999.

### Park offers Half Dome permits

Yosemite National Park will implement the Half Dome Cables Day Use Permit Interim Program beginning this summer for ascending the Half Dome cables on Fridays, Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays. No permits will be required for the Half Dome cables Monday through Thursday. Permit reservations began on Monday, March 1, for the months of May and June.

It is anticipated that demand for the Half Dome Cables Day Use Permits will be high. Visitors are urged to become familiar with the [www.recreation.gov](http://www.recreation.gov) Web site to acquire step by step directions on how to secure a reservation to climb the cables on Half Dome. It is recommended visitors read the suggestions at [http://www.recreation.gov/resource/contracts/nrso/Half\\_Dome\\_Permit\\_Process.pdf](http://www.recreation.gov/resource/contracts/nrso/Half_Dome_Permit_Process.pdf).

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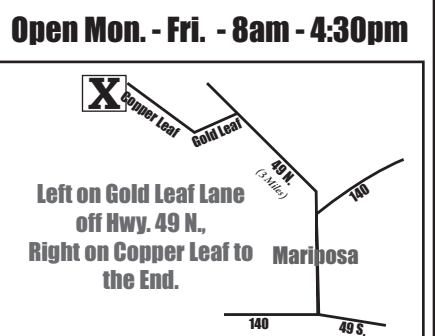


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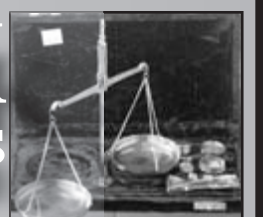
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