Espionage comes to Evansville

The story may be fictional, but the places are real.

Evansville's World War II shipyards, P-47 aircraft plant, the McCormy Hotel, and Henderson's Trocadero help set the stage for much of USI graduate Mike Whicker's first novel.

Although the W.W. II spy thriller begins in Europe, it concludes in Evansville, where a beautiful Nazi spy attempts to steal a secret formula that could change the course of the war.

Does Invitation to Valhalla's sexy secret agent become the ultimate villain or an unexpected heroine?

"I'm not going to tell you," Whicker said with a shrewd smile.

He will, however, meet with readers and sign copies of the 534-page paperback at 2 p.m. Saturday, January 26, at Barnes & Noble Booksellers.

A voracious reader, Whicker, 49, is a dedicated fan of W.W. II non-fiction and spy thrillers. His own work of historical fiction took six years to complete.

"I always liked books you couldn’t put down. That’s what I was hoping to write," he said. "Every time I can find a spy novel from W.W. II, I snatch it up."

Whicker's parents inspired his fascination with the war era. Mom was a welder at the U.S. Navel Shipyard in Evansville. Dad, a member of the Army's Second Ranger Battalion, was among the first to step foot on Omaha Beach, June 6, 1944. The bullet he took through the knee earned him a Purple Heart.

"Tom Brokaw calls that generation the greatest generation. And I agree," Whicker said. "They knew the meaning of sacrifice and patriotism."

And in addition to his parents, Floyd and Bertha Whicker of Evansville, the novel is dedicated to his wife Sandy.

Dr. Susanna Hoeness-Krupsaw, assistant professor of English, and Eric VonFuhrmann, assistant professor of English, earned mention in the acknowledgements. Whicker had classes with both, while a student at USI.

His affiliation with the University led Dr. Bernard Norling, author and Notre Dame professor emeritus of European history, to the novel. An excerpt of Norling's review follows:

"Highly impressive is Whicker's knowledge of the minutia of spying at all levels in W.W. II Germany, Britain, and the USA. With its detailed descriptions, Invitation to Valhalla reminds me of Tom Clancy's Red October. Whicker is especially good at portraying the vicious infighting that went on constantly among the Nazi leaders. The suspense grows gradually but inexorably till the very end. Excellent."

The book was published in December 2001 by Writer's Showcase, which prints "on demand" copies. Whicker receives a percentage of the profits from sales and has pledged half of the 2002 proceeds to an effort to refurbish Landing Ship Tank 325, a ship of the same model built at Evansville's shipyards, and bring it to the city's riverfront.

He is a founding member of the Evansville LST Committee that hopes to have the W.W.II-era ship visit Evansville in 2003.

A Denver native, Whicker moved to Evansville 13 years ago. He earned a B.S. in secondary education, English, at USI in 1998 and is a teacher at Reitz High School, where he also serves as assistant football coach.

Invitation to Valhalla, $29.95, is available at Evansville's Barnes & Noble or may be ordered from any bookstore. It also may be purchased by calling 1/877-823-9235 or visiting iUniverse.com on the Web.

Society to toast the arts

The USI Society for Arts & Humanities will present its 11th annual "Toast To The Arts" at 7 p.m. February 15 at the Evansville Museum of Arts, History, and Science.

This year's auction items include artistic works by Michael Aakhus, professor of art; John McNaughton, professor of art; former student David Moseman; and senior Erich Shelton; as well as pieces by A my Musia, David Rodenberg, Mark Schoenbaum, Merrill Snethen, Tim Fitzgerald, and Cedric Hustace.

A n oil of the Orr Center is among the paintings, ceramics, and sculptures to be sold. A nique jewelry and a lot in the Polar Shores Addition of Christmas Lake Village also will be auctioned, as will three special dinner events.

A selection of auction items may be viewed by visiting www.usi.edu/libarts/society/toastoarts.htm.

The fund-raising event also will feature a dinner menu of assorted canapés with wines, mesclun salad with pecans and mandarin slices, filet with portabella meurette sauce, baked salmon with creamy spinach sauce, curried carrots, twice baked potato, dessert medley, and fresh fruit. Wine will be served with the meal. A cash bar will be available for cocktails.

Black tie is preferred, and reservations are limited. The cost, $125 per person, includes a $50 charitable gift.

Gala proceeds help fund scholarships and development funds for USI students and grants to The New Harmony Theatre and RopeWalk Writers Retreat.

For reservations, call Mary Jane Schenk, manager, Donor Relations, Development, at extension 7149 by February 8.

USI offering classes for parents, children

Discover new ways to interact with your child in toddler and preschool classes offered by the USI Children's Center this spring.

Parents can learn and play with their children, and share ideas with other parents in Together with Toddlers (18 to 24 months)
and Together with 2's. The toddler class will be offered six Mondays at 5:30 p.m. beginning January 28. Together with 2's will be held six Mondays at 6:30 p.m., also beginning January 28. Each class is limited to seven children.

Learn how to use inexpensive materials and things around your home to help your child gain pre-reading and writing skills. The class, Making Games to Teach Your Preschooler Reading, will be offered Thursday, February 28, at 6:30 p.m.

Learning numbers and beginning math concepts is more than completing workbooks. In the class, Making Games to Teach Your Preschooler Math, you will discover creative ways to teach basic concepts and have fun with your child. The course will be held Thursday, March 14, at 6:30 p.m.

Preparing for school is the topic of the class, Get Ready for Kindergarten, open to 4- and 5-year-olds. Limited to eight children, the course will boost confidence and encourage a successful start in school. Children will learn to think creatively, to work independently, and to cooperate in groups. The course will be offered eight Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m. beginning January 30.

Experts say early exposure to music often enhances children’s academic success. USI is offering a creative music program for parents and children ages 2 months to 6 years. Offered as Music for Parents & Babies, Music for Parents & Toddlers, and Music for Parents & Preschoolers, the program is designed to expand a child's natural interest in music. Lessons will cover songs, instruments, and acting out stories. The program will begin in March.

Fees for the classes vary. Registration information is available from the Office of Extended Services, extension 1989.

30 athletes earn academic honors

Thirty USI student athletes have been named A cademic A II Great Lakes Valley Conference for fall semester sports, 12 of them winning repeat honors with their individual teams.

The conference had 340 student athletes named Academic All-GLV C this fall. To be eligible, a student athlete must participate in fall sports sponsored by the GLVC and have a cumulative 3.25 GPA or a 3.4 GPA in each of the two previous semesters.

The Athletic Department - 205 student athletes, 13 varsity sports - had a semester GPA of 3.015 and currently has a cumulative 3.25 GPA or a 3.4 GPA in each of the two previous semesters.

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Names in the news

Welcome

Natalie A. Ives, M. Vernon, has accepted the position of custodial worker in the Physical Plant.

Pamela S. Huber has accepted the position of custodial worker in the Physical Plant. The Evansville resident previously worked as a custodian at Welborn Clinic and Riverside One. She attended USI.

Theresa K. Neaveill has accepted the position of custodial worker in the Physical Plant. The New Harmony resident previously worked at Rossanna Eno1's and Universal Diecutters.

A former call-in reference librarian at Rice Library has accepted the position of distance learning librarian in Library Services. Philip E. Orr, Grayville, Ill., holds a B.A. and an M.S. from Southern Illinois University-Carbondale and an M.S. in library and information science from University of Illinois.

In memoriam

Dr. Aline Nunn Renner, 92, Evansville, died January 18. She joined the USI Foundation Board in 1982 and was elected a Life Director in 1996. A generous donor, she provided leadership gifts to various fund-raising campaigns, including the campaign to build and furnish the University Home, to which she gave leadership raising more than 50 percent of the total in six months.

She also made substantial gifts, endowing both the Aline Nunn Renner Scholarships for business students and the Aline Nunn Renner Presidential Scholarship. She and her sister Rebecca Couch have provided for the auditorium under construction in the Science and Education Center, which will be named for them. They also were honorary chairs of the Boards Division of Campaign USI in recognition of their early leadership gifts to the campaign.

Dr. Renner received three honors from the University: The Distinguished Alumni Award in 1980, an honorary Doctor of Law degree in 1983, and membership in The President's Circle in 1995.

Services were held January 22. Memorial contributions may be made to the YWCA or Aldersgate United Methodist Church.

In sympathy

The University community extends sympathy to the family of Kay Myrick, administrative clerk in Continuing Education, whose mother Ruby Dahl, 77, Evansville, died January 18. Memorial contributions may be made to St. Mark's Lutheran Church.
By Saturday, February 9

Homecoming Mardi Gras Party - 9:30 p.m. to 12:30 a.m., Physical Activities Center. Featuring: Harvey & the Blue Tones. Tickets: $10, available in advance or at the door.

Southern Hospitality Day - 8 a.m., campus tours and information for prospective students and their families.

“Reinventing Evansville ARC” - presentation to the American Association of University Women by Margaret D. Boarman, CEO of Evansville ARC, 11 a.m. to noon, University Center, rooms 205 and 206. A luncheon will follow. Reservations: Ext. 1677.

Tuesday, February 5

Free Film Series - Lyrical Nitrate, 6 p.m., Forum I.

Shodo Japanese Calligraphy - presented by the Global Community, 7:30 p.m., Governors Hall lounge.

Wednesday, February 13

Brown Bag Seminar - noon to 12:45 p.m., University Center, Room 206. “Managing Your Job Search” presented by Marilyn Schmidt, director of Career Services and Placement.

Ash Wednesday Mass - noon, University Conference Center.

Vacation rental

Three weeks available in Destin, Fla., beach condo in September. Extremely reasonable rates. Must purchase at least one week. Call 985-3176.

For sale

1987 Mazda 626 LX - two door, five speed, 128,000 miles, $1,000. Contact Ext. 7119, 422-0175, or dodney@usi.edu.

Brass fireplace fender - six feet long, 15 inches deep, new $250, sell for $100; solid pine fireplace mantle - six feet long, eight inches wide, four inches deep, dark finish, $50. Call Ext. 1134 or 853-3994.

Wedding dress, veil, and slip - size 14, sleeveless, never worn, sequins on top, full tulle skirt, $250. Call Ext. 7056.

Nordic Track Classic Ski Exerciser - beautiful natural oak finish and solid steel construction, perfect condition, have care manuals, $200. Contact Laura, 465-1269 or lhendric@usi.edu.

Kenmore washer and dryer - good condition, $150. Call Chris, Ext. 1298 or 473-5397 after 5 p.m.

Quarter horse - bay mare, 12 years old. Excellent horse for any rider. Western English, 4-H project, boarding possibilities available, $1,100. Call 423-7101.

Full size extra-long pillow top mattress, box spring, frame, and sheets - used for one year, excellent condition, $300. Call 491-3467 after 5 p.m.

February calendar

Friday, February 1

Homecoming Game Show - similar to Jeopardy, sponsored by the Activities Programming Board, 9 p.m., Carter Hall.

Track and Field at CEE Classics - hosted by University of Findlay, Ohio.

Saturday, February 2

Homecoming 15th Annual Alumni Game - 3 p.m., Physical Activities Center. Free.

Homecoming women’s and men’s basketball host University of Missouri-St. Louis - 5:15 and 7:30 p.m., Physical Activities Center. Tickets required.

 Coronation of the Homecoming King and Queen - halftime of the men’s basketball game, Physical Activities Center.

Respond by Friday, January 25, to receive advance discounted basketball tickets, $3.50 (bleacher seats). There is no charge to attend the alumni game. Mardi Gras Party tickets also will be sold at the door.

For tickets or information, call Alumni and Volunteer Services at extension 1924.

Marketplace

Thursday, February 7

Free Film Series - Lyrical Nitrate, 1:30 p.m., Forum I.

Women’s and men’s basketball at Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville - 5:30 and 7:45 p.m., Edwardsville.

Friday, February 8

Track and Field at Cannon IV Classic - hosted by Butler University, Indianapolis. Continues February 9.

New Harmony Memorial Commission Meeting - 9:30 a.m., Community, 7:30 p.m., Governors Hall lounge.

Saturday, February 9

Kristy Deetz and William Kolok - encaustic and sculpture, New Harmony Gallery of Contemporary Art, 506 Main St., New Harmony, Ind. Exhibit continues through March 12. Gallery hours: 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday. Information: 812/682-3156.

Women’s and men’s basketball at Lewis University - 1 and 3:15 p.m., Romeoville, Ill.

Monday, February 11

Brown Bag Seminar - noon to 12:45 p.m., University Center, Room 206. “Managing Money” presented by Dr. Greg Valentine, associate professor of business education.

Tuesday, February 12

Brown Bag Seminar - noon to 12:45 p.m., University Center, Room 206. “Managing Life’s Choices” presented by Renee Rowland, program director, First Year Initiatives.

Free Film Series - TBA, 1:30 and 6 p.m., Forum I.

Romanian Night - presented by the Global Community, 7:30 p.m., Governors Hall lounge.
Thursday, February 14
- Brown Bag Seminar - noon to 12:45 p.m., University Center, Room 206. “Managing Conflict” presented by Mark Haszard, area coordinator, Residence Life.
- Women’s and men’s basketball host St. Joseph’s College - 5:15 and 7:30 p.m., Physical Activities Center.

Friday, February 15
- USI/New Harmony Foundation Board Meeting - 5:30 p.m., Thrall’s Opera House, NEw Harmony, Ind.
- Harmoniefest - 7 p.m., Rapp Granary, NEw Harmony, Ind. Program: “The Ancient Geometry of NEw Harmony,” a lecture by Kent Schuette, adjunct faculty with the Purdue University Department of Landscape Architecture. Information: 812/682-4488.

Saturday, February 16
- Southern Hospitality Day - 8 a.m., campus tours and information for prospective students and their families.
- Track and Field at SIU Open - Carbondale, Ill.
- Women’s and men’s basketball host University of Indianapolis - 5:15 and 7:30 p.m., Physical Activities Center.

Sunday, February 17
- International Week - to be celebrated at various campus locations. Continues through February 22.

Tuesday, February 19
- “The Religious Sense in the Modern World” – panel discussion, 6 p.m., Carter Hall.
- Free Film Series - TBA, 1:30 and 6 p.m., Forum I.
- World Poverty - presented by the Global Community, 7:30 p.m., Governors Hall lounge.

Wednesday, February 20
- The Odd Couple (Female Version) - 7 p.m., USI Theatre, 3001 Igleheart Ave. Additional performances: 7 p.m. February 21; 8 p.m. February 22, 23; 2 p.m. February 24. Tickets: $9 adult; $7 senior citizen; $3 USI student. Tickets or information: 812/422-3970.
- “Encountering Nature” - lecture series featuring Tales and Scales presenting The Animal that Drank Up Sound, 7:30 p.m., University of Southern Indiana, University Center, Carter Hall.
- Baseball hosts Oakland City University - 2 p.m., USI Field.

Thursday, February 21
- Foundation Luncheon - by invitation only, Carter Hall.
- Women’s and men’s basketball at Bellarmine University - 4:45 and 7 p.m., Louisville, Ky.

Friday, February 22
- International Food Expo - 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Carter Hall: A sampling of delectable morsels from around the world. Tickets: $5 in advance from the International Programs and Services Office or $6 at the door.
- Liberal Arts Colloquium - featuring Dr. Charles Barber, professor of political science, 3:30 p.m., Liberal Arts Center, Room 1003.
- Baseball hosts Eastern Illinois University - 2 p.m., USI Field.
- Men’s tennis vs. Western Kentucky University - 8 p.m., Tri-State Athletic Club.

Saturday, February 23
- Track and Field at GLVC Championships - hosted by Lewis University, Romeoville, Ill.
- Women’s and men’s basketball at Kentucky Wesleyan College - 5:15 and 7:30 p.m., Owensboro.
- Baseball hosts Truman State University - noon, USI Field. Continues February 24.

Tuesday, February 26
- Black History Month Speaker - attorney Lesra Martin, who championed Rubin “Hurricane” Carter’s exoneration, 6:30 p.m., Mitchell Auditorium.
- School of Business Alumni-in-Residence – Michael H. Head, president, First Federal Savings Bank, 9 a.m. and 1:30 p.m., Carter Hall.
- Free Film Series – Carmen Jones, 1:30 and 6 p.m., Forum I.
- Baseball hosts Eastern Illinois University - 1 p.m., USI Field.
- International Fun Night – presented by the Global Community, 7:30 p.m., Governors Hall lounge.

Wednesday, February 27
- Presidential Scholar Recognition Luncheon - by invitation only, Carter Hall.
- Baseball hosts Brescia University - 2 p.m., USI Field.

Thursday, February 28
- Pediatric Pharmacology Update - 5 to 9 p.m., Health Professions Center, Room 1006. Information: Ext. 1989.
- Ropewalk Reading Series – featuring poet Catie Rosemurgy, 7 p.m., Kleymeyer Hall, Liberal Arts Center.