



The Astoria **South Fulton** **Argus**

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Writer With a Midwest Flair

By Judy Beard



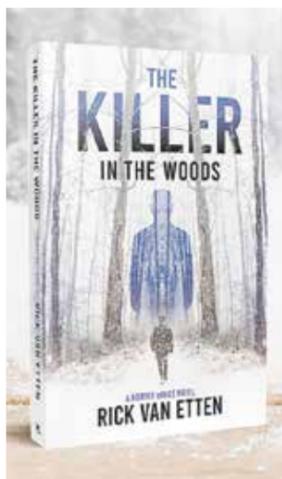
Rick Van Etten, pictured with his Irish Setter, Mattie, has many fond memories of Vermont where he attended grade school in the 1960s. He was editor of Gun Dog magazine for 20 years, retiring last year.

Submitted photos

Rick Van Etten. This name may sound familiar to many in Vermont. In the early 1960s he attended third through sixth grades at Vermont Grade School. His parents were L. Rae and Margaret "Peggy" Van Etten, and at that time, his father was the minister at Vermont First Christian Church.

You may remember seeing Rick "doing what boys do" with his closest friends, Kerry Nielsen, Mike Martin, Bill Curths and Scott Parr, with whom he has remained in touch with over the years. "Lots of fond memories, a childhood without a lot of restrictions in terms of where we could go, what we could do, etc. This was long before the days of computers and video games, so we played outside almost every day, sometimes until well after dark. Long bicycle rides, games of croquet, baseball and hide-and-peek, hunting sparrows with our slingshots and BB guns, firecrackers on the 4th of July ... all the stuff that kids did back then to have fun without getting into too much trouble," he recollected.

Today, Rick still spends as much time as he can outdoors with his dog, an 8-year-old Irish Setter named Mattie. "We hunt pheasants during pheasant season and the rest of the



Rick Van Etten recently authored a book, "The Killer in the Woods", a crime fiction. Most of the action in the book takes place in central Illinois.

year we go for long rambles at a nearby lake."

The Van Etten family moved to Des Plaines when Rick was beginning seventh grade. His dad had taken a job as an elementary school teacher. Rick graduated from Maine West High School in 1971, earned a BA in Communications from Western Illinois University in 1975 and an MA in English in 1976.

After graduating from WIU, Rick taught college English for seven years (WIU, NIU and Elgin Community College) and then

moved into corporate communications — primarily public relations and marketing, including four years at Ducks Unlimited. He then transitioned to magazine publishing, working first as an editor for Reiman Publications in Greendale, Wis. That in turn led to his job as editor of Gun Dog magazine, initially with Stover Publishing in Des Moines. "The magazine was eventually sold and I was away from it for about 18 months, but was then rehired. I served as editor of Gun Dog for a total of 20 years and retired in March, 2019," he said.

Rick then thought it was time to try something different. He had written dozens of magazine articles and editorial columns over the years, and wanted to prove to himself that he could produce a book-length manuscript. Writing and publishing a book was one of those items he wanted to be able to check off of his bucket list. That is exactly what he did — "The Killer in the Woods", a Robert Vance Novel by Rick Van Etten is now on the shelves.

"As for the storyline ... I followed Mark Twain's advice to aspiring writers, 'Write what you know.' I know magazine work and I know sporting dogs and bird hunting, so that expe-

rience provided the background for my main character. But the hitman stuff is, of course, pure fiction," said Rick.

He explained, "The Killer in the Woods" is a crime fiction and most of the action takes place in central Illinois. I specifically wanted the book to have a Midwest setting because we have our share of drama and excitement here in the Heartland, even if we are referred to as 'flyover country'. The main character is an outdoor magazine editor who's nearing retirement and moonlights as a hitman. But he's motivated by the desire to right wrongs and balance the scales of justice, not by money. And — important distinction — he's really just an average guy, not some invincible combat veteran or ex-CIA agent with superior martial arts skills and access to a lot of high-tech weaponry. He's the kind of guy you might bump into anywhere and not give a second glance. It's his ordinariness that enables him to do what he does and stay below radar."

The book is available on Amazon, both as an e-book and as a paperback. Rick is hoping to get it into a few bookstores (including Coperfield's in Macomb) in the next few months, but that plan is on hold for the moment due to COVID-19. He also plans to have readings and book signings in the future.

"I hope that readers of my book find it authentic in terms of the small-town details, and that they enjoy what they read. The book includes some underlying themes about bullying and injustice, but it's primarily intended to be entertaining, and if readers like it, I'll be happy," concluded Rick.

Rick resides in Des Moines, Iowa, with a special friend Ruth Smith. He makes his way back to this area occasionally to visit his aunt, Lana Myers, who lives in Macomb.

AHS 2020 Prom Royalty Announced

Submitted photos



2020 AHS PROM QUEEN
HAILEY CLEAVINGER



2020 AHS PROM KING
GAVIN CRENSHAW

Congratulations to the AHS 2020 Prom royalty: Hailey Cleavinger, Gabi Kreps, Amanda Parker, Gavin Crenshaw, Braxton France and Justin Schisler.

Through e-mailed votes, Gavin Crenshaw and Hailey Cleavinger were chosen as the AHS 2020 Prom king and queen.

New \$5M State Ad Campaign to Promote Masks as Virus Positivity Rate Hits 4 Percent

By Jerry Nowicki, Capitol News Illinois

SPRINGFIELD — COVID-19 cases are on the rise throughout the state and Gov. JB Pritzker is hoping a new \$5 million state advertising campaign will help slow the spread of the novel coronavirus by encouraging use of face coverings.

Pritzker announced the campaign, which has the tagline "It only works if you wear it," at the Illinois Emergency Management Agency Operations Center in Springfield. The governor said the costs are reimbursable through federal coronavirus relief funds.

Pritzker said the campaign will permeate "really every kind of medium that you can think of," including "a good deal on social media," cable, broadcast TV, Hulu, YouTube and many other platforms.

Pritzker praised a recent action by Springfield Mayor Jim Langfelder, who signed an order imposing fines for Springfield bars and restaurants flouting masking, social distancing and capacity restrictions. It also banned occupancy of standing areas at bars both inside and outside.

"But government action isn't the only answer," Pritzker said. "In fact, it's not enough by itself. We also need all our residents to take this seriously, and to protect themselves."

The advertising campaign compares face coverings to seat belts and life preservers in an effort to make their use

commonplace.

"Every day we do things that keep us safe, like buckling a seat belt or putting on a bicycle helmet. A mask is no different. It only works if you wear it. So always wear a mask when you're out in public, to protect yourself and others," he said. "Keeping it in your pocket or wearing it just around your neck doesn't work. It's really that simple."

The added push for face coverings, which have been mandated in the state since May 1, comes as the state's rolling seven-day positivity rate for COVID-19 tests hit 4 percent Monday. That drove the rolling positivity rate to the highest it's been since June 11, when it was 4.2 percent.

The 1,298 new cases among 28,475 test results reported made for a one-day positivity rate of 4.6 percent. That followed 3,106 combined confirmed cases announced Saturday and Sunday among 78,754 test results reported.

When asked if the state or local governments should impose fines for those not wearing masks, Pritzker said, "the idea here is not to chase people down on the street and say, you know, 'hey you're not wearing a mask and I'm going to throw a ticket at you.'"

He said the first priority is to ask those without masks to put one on.

— See **COVID** on page 9 —

Fulton County Census Responses

The U.S. Census Bureau's non-response follow-up operation is beginning and field enumerators will begin visiting local addresses in an effort to achieve a more complete census count.

As a whole, the Fulton County response percentage as of Monday, Aug. 2, was 67.8 percent. The percentages broken down into each

town as of the same date are depicted below:

Fairview, 72.9; Canton, 70.7; Ipava, 67.9; Table Grove, 62.3; Farmington, 72.0; London Mills, 66.9; Lewistown, 63.4; Cuba, 66.2; Astoria, 63.2; Vermont, 60.9; Banner, 59.0; Saint David, 55.2; Avon, 67.6; Dunfermline, 52.1; Liverpool, 43.9.

2020-21 Astoria School Supply List

KINDERGARTEN

- four glue sticks, three boxes 24-pack Crayola crayons (no jumbo crayons), 10 #2 yellow pencils (no recycled pencils and yellow only), 2 boxes Kleenex, 4 thin Expo dry erase markers (any color), two yellow

- highlighters, two Mr. Clean magic erasers, one box colored pencils, one box Crayola Classic Color washable markers, one package colored index cards, gallon Ziploc bags (girls), sandwich Ziploc bags (boys)

— See **List** on page 16 —