

# PAGE turners

(a sampling of recent works by local authors)

By Sara Clifford, Brown County Democrat



## NONFICTION

### 'Never Give Up on a Kid'

by David E. Hennessy

**O**n July 4 weekend, 1998, David Hennessy rolled up on a bicycle into the yard of a man who would become sort of a kindred spirit.

He'd never met Emilio "Dee" DaBramo; he became a guest in the man's home in New York's Catskill Mountains through a mutual friend.

It took him two days to understand who DaBramo was, and why the 75-year-old was greeted like a celebrity everywhere he went, by everyone from high school students, to waitresses, to the Kennedys.

And when he learned that DaBramo's memory was failing, Hennessy knew he had to learn more about this man's life — and record it — for the benefit of history.

Thus began DaBramo's biography, "Never Give Up on a Kid," which chronicles the Italian immigrant's journey from a non-English-speaking student in 1929 into an innovative educator and administrator for more than 30 years.

"From my perspective," Hennessy writes, "his life story should be a must-read for every practicing educator and every aspiring teacher candidate studying at our colleges and universities today. They would certainly draw inspiration from it."

**Q: In 25 words or less, what is this book about?**

**A:** A biography of an educator who solved many of the perplexing problems facing our public school educators today as early as the 1970s.

**Q: What inspired you to share these stories?**

**A:** First, by the enormity of the accomplishments of educator/humanitarian Emilio "Dee" DaBramo in dealing with the problems of two distinct segments of our youth population: the culturally and socio-economically deprived kids in city ghetto neighborhoods of New York, with one of the most successful Alternative School programs, the APPLE program, (A Place where People Learn Excellence). In recognition of his early work with the physically and intellectually challenged kids (1948), he was sought after by Eunice Kennedy Shriver, the founder of the Special Olympics. After inviting him to her home in Maryland and hearing of his experiences with the target population, she invited him to be a volunteer advisor and clinician to the Joseph P. Kennedy Foundation to work with her on the Special Olympics project (1968-1980).

Secondly, I was fascinated with his life story as the son of a poor Italian immigrant family that settled in the tiny town of Stone House in the Hudson River Valley of New York state. I was amazed at how he overcame his struggles with the English language in school and with his WWII experience as a member of a B-24 bomber crew flying 31 combat missions over German-occupied Europe. For these missions, he and his crew members were awarded three Air Medals and the Distinguished Flying Cross.

**Q: Have you written any other books?**

**A:** Yes. 1964 – "Elementary Teachers Classroom Science Demonstrations and Activities." The book was also published by Prentice-Hall affiliates in Japan and India. This was one of the first science books published exclusively for elementary school teachers after the Russians launched their Sputnik satellite into orbit on Oct. 4, 1957.

1989 – "Instructional Systems Development: Tools and procedures for organizing, budgeting and managing a training project from start to finish," with Mildred J. Hennessy.

**Q: What is your day job?**

**A:** In 1995, I retired from operating our training consulting firm. Most of my time is now spent raising funds for the Brown County Citizens Scholarships and writing books.

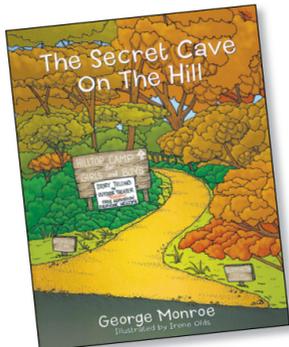
**Q: What are your connections to Brown County?**

**A:** I arrived in Brown County in 1962 to attend Indiana University for graduate studies in television and film production. In 1963, I was hired by Cummins Engine Company in Columbus to establish a training group for the service department with the mission of producing field training programs for the company's dealer and distributor organizations around the world.

(See KID, page B3)



HENNESSY



## FICTION (children's)

### 'The Secret Cave On The Hill'

by George Monroe  
illustrated by Irene Olds

**I**n his native Brown County, Scoutmaster and teacher George Monroe, with a group of Boy Scouts, followed an ancient legend to an underground cave, where stolen gold was said to have been buried.

Or, so goes the legend of "The Secret Cave On The Hill," Monroe's fourth book of the Brown County stories he was raised on.

This one is told in a format designed especially for children, with large, colorful pages illustrated by former Brown County resident (and Brown County Democrat cartoonist) Irene Olds.

It also stays true to Brown County's unique sense of place, mentioning Hilltop Camp, Little Blue Creek and the geologic features of this area that made this cave's existence so improbable.

**Q: In 25 words or less, what's this book about?**

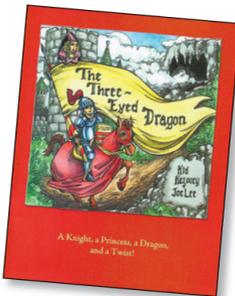
**A:** Wild country, land-hungry pioneers, angry native Indians, a vicious attack in the dark of night, stolen gold, a secret hiding place and the mysterious death of a treasure hunter.

**Q: What inspired you to share these stories?**

**A:** My five daughters are responsible for my writing about the people and unique events in Brown County. They loved the stories I told them (repeatedly, by request) as they were growing up and often visiting their grandmother (my mother) and their numerous other (Roberts) family members who lived there. My youngest daughter, Abby, strongly encouraged me to put these stories in print "so they wouldn't be lost, and other kids could enjoy them."

**Q: What other books have you written?**

**A:** The other books I have written that relate to Brown County are pictured and described on my website, browncountystories.com: "Brown County Stories: Some personal recollections," "More Brown County Stories: Some other personal recollections" and "Still More Brown County Stories: Recollections and



## FICTION (children's)

### 'The Three-Eyed Dragon'

by Kevin MacDowell

**I**f you don't recognize that name, "Kid Kazooey" might sound more familiar. MacDowell, "the singin' and swingin' librarian" recently seen on the stage of The Palace Theatre, has made his first foray into children's book publishing with "The Three-Eyed Dragon."

"A lot of my songs are stories set to music, so taking a song and turning it into a book felt natural," MacDowell said. "Reading is so important for kids' development, and I think 'The Three-Eyed Dragon' is a story young children will be drawn to."

The book, drawn from the lyrics of MacDowell's song of the same title, tells the tale of a knight "both strong and bold"

collected tales."

**Q: What's your day job?**

**A:** As vice chairman of its board of directors, I do a lot of document and proposal writing for Fund for The Erevna International Peace Center (FEIPC), a U.S. support organization for The Erevna International Peace center (EIPC) that is being developed on the Island of Cyprus.

**Q: What are your connections to Brown County?**

**A:** After moving from Brown County to teach general science at a junior high school in a suburb of Chicago, I obtained a Ph.D. from Michigan State University in an interdisciplinary program focused on facilitating changes processes in organizations. I also completed post-doctoral programs to become a licensed clinical psychologist and an approved consultant in clinical hypnosis. After 14 years of teaching and program development at the University of Illinois in Chicago, I left that position to develop a private psychotherapy practice (for 15 years) in Evanston, Ill., where I currently live with my wife, Merle. I am now retired.

**Q: What's your writing ritual?**

**A:** I write things about Brown County (for recreation) in between the Peace Center writings. I do some kind of writing almost every day.

**Q: What's the last book you read?**

**A:** The latest book I have read is "Birds Without Wings" by Louis De Bernieres. It chronicles the fall of the Ottoman Empire.

**Q: Where can people buy your book, and for how much?**

**A:** Copies of "The Secret Cave On The Hill" may be purchased locally at The Book Loft, Miss Moonpennies Emporium and the Brown County Historical Society. It can be ordered online from Amazon Books and Authorhouse for \$21.99.



MONROE



OLDS

## FICTION

### 'Subjected: The series,' including 'Eye of God,' 'Parallax' and 'The Predicate'

by Gary F. Smith

**B**rown County resident Gary F. Smith enjoys the search for answers to some of life's biggest questions. His sci-fi series explores the biggest of all — what's inside the "mind

of God" — through the eyes of an introspective, scholarly character, Dr. Sayer, and the otherworldly experiences he finds himself in. The cover copy for the first book, "The Eye of God," which Smith says also summarizes the entire three-book series, reads:

"Daniel Jeremy Sayer has gone through more than his share of pain, loss, and frustration, which leads him to ask some 'Big Universe' questions: Why have we been subjected to this life? What on Earth is happening? Why the big mystery? Is anyone out there even listening?"

"When the answers start coming, in the form of a mysterious, seemingly benign, yet oddly inane individual from another dimension — Alien, or Angel, he's not sure which — Daniel suddenly begins to question whether he really wants to know the answers after all. Through tragedy, loss, coincidence and consequence, through frustration, anger, courage and faith, along with a touch of humility and humor, Daniel Jeremy Sayer unexpectedly finds himself being shown the metaphysical edge of human existence, whether he wants to see it or not."

**Q: In 25 words or less, what's this series about?**

**A:** Sci-fi and philosophy, the dichotomous relationship between religion and science. Themes include time travel, history, our actions, inactions, choices. Ultimately, it's about time, purpose and hope for a future.

**Q: What inspired you to share these stories?**

**A:** I'm the quintessential asker of questions. My favorites as a child were "Why?" and "Yeah, but, why?"

**Q: Have you written any other books?**

**A:** Just the three-book series. I write a blog, too, called Confutational Subjects. It covers similar themes as the books — also full of questions. And I'm starting a new series. It's in the development stages. It's going to be a little more down-to-earth, I think.

**Q: What's your day job?**

**A:** I work in Columbus for a high-end industrial metal-cutting machine manufacturer. Great company and owner. Small, but growing exponentially, which is fortunate for all of us there.

**Q: What are your connections to Brown County?**

**A:** I've lived in Brown County for 34 years now! I love it! Great people. I love the woods, the animals and the country life.

**Q: What's your writing ritual? In what environment do you work best?**

**A:** Early morning to 4:30ish, at my desk, in my den, a couple of windows looking out at the woods, our pond, the hummingbirds, wild turkeys, deer, lots of strong coffee!

**Q: What's the last book you read? Do you have a favorite?**

**A:** "The Hunger Games" series. I read it to see why it's so successful, mainly. Suzanne Collins is a pretty good writer. I love sci-fi. David Weber is one of my contemporary favorites. I like Dean Koontz's metaphysical stuff, too. Not into the horror genre.

**Q: Where can people buy this series?**

**A:** The books are available (print and eBook formats) through my website, www.gfsmithbooks.com, Amazon.com and Barnes and Nobles.com. And they will soon be available through Apple's iBookstore, and a few others. The eBook price is \$2.99; print copies are \$11.99.

**Q: Do you have any book signings or related events planned?**

**A:** No signings scheduled at this time, though

(See SERIES, page B3)



SMITH