

# Jeffery Schatzer: Author of *The Runaway Garden*; Professor Tuesday Series (Such as *Professor Tuesday's Awesome Adventures in History*); *Fires in the Wilderness*; *The Bird in Santa's Beard*

By Sharon Arquette

As a student in elementary school, Jeffery Schatzer was extremely interested in sports and enjoyed reading about famous Olympians such as Jim Thorpe. His "first love" at age nine was his fourth-grade teacher, Mrs. Schwab, who encouraged her students to read and turn in book reports.

She told Schatzer she thought he was a "good writer" and that's all it took for the smitten young boy to dream that some day, he would like to write to earn a living. His grades were good in elementary school but in high school, although he enjoyed math, his other grades began to slip.

For a while, during his sophomore year and the beginning of his junior year, his grades continued to slide downward. A couple of his teachers took notice and, along with his parents, worked with Schatzer encouraging him to get back on track. He says, "I refocused from goofing off to reading my textbooks and homework assignments with more effort and concentration."

He also recalled Mrs. Schwab and began writing again. By the time he graduated from high school, he had made a decent comeback and was accepted to Indiana Wesleyan University.

He graduated with a bachelor of science in business degree and furthered his studies earning a masters degree in business advertising.

Schatzer became a business writer for a Fortune 100 Corporation and although he earned a decent living doing this professionally, he missed writing for his own enjoyment.

"You don't get into writing books for the money," says Schatzer. "You get into

it because you enjoy creating and formulating stories."

He continued to work as a business writer but with his wife's encouragement he began to write stories for children in the evenings. With his own children serving as both inspiration and audience, he began to submit his stories "just for the fun of it" to several publishers. In the late 90's he submitted 'Santa Claus' Christmas-themed stories to Land's End Clothing (now owned by the Sears Company) to be featured for sale in their Christmas catalog. In 1998 his stories started to sell.

In 2004 the self-published author sold 10,000 copies of one of his books in under six months and went to Mitten Publishing. From 2004 through 2010 he was the recipient of numerous distinguished writing awards including a silver medal from the International Film and Television Festival in New York City and the USA best book award in the Children's Book category for his hardcover fiction, *The Runaway Garden*.

That book's theme reflects First Lady Michele Obama's initiative for better nutrition. Since 2004 he has published one book per year, including the popular

Professor Tuesday series. His work was featured in the May 2010 issue of *Martha Stewart Living Magazine* and his books were chosen in 2010 by the Library of Michigan for the Michigan Reads Children's Book Program.

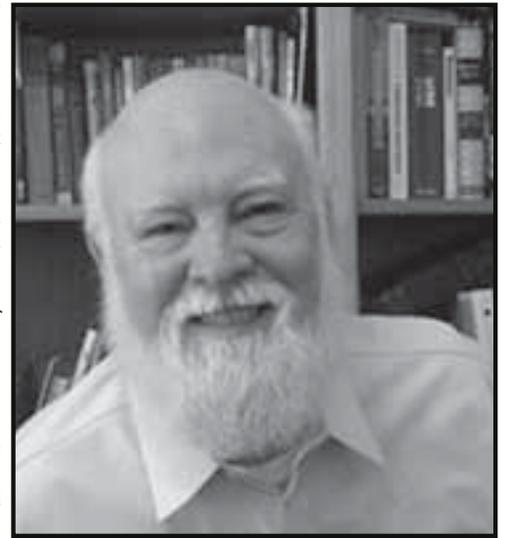
Schatzer is a firm believer in the influence that parents and grandparents have in getting children to read.

"Libraries across the country have so many free programs that are drastically under-attended" says Schatzer. "In the state of Arizona, they look at the literacy rate to determine how many prisons will be needed in the future, equating the lack of literacy skills to the crime rate."

He also talks about his involvement in programs and speaking appearances, giving talks on encouraging men to read to their children.

"It's common for children to be read to by their mothers and grandmothers and later, their teachers," he says. "But fathers and grandfathers need to get more involved. Kids learn to read at school, but the joy of reading really begins at home."

Schatzer and his wife Deborah live in Michigan with their two canine companions, Doris and Dottie. Their two children are now adults and have blessed them with six grandchildren. One of his children grew up to be a police officer, while the other is now the director of human resources for a national corporation in the automotive industry.



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"If a man empties his purse into his head, no one can take it from him." - Benjamin Franklin