

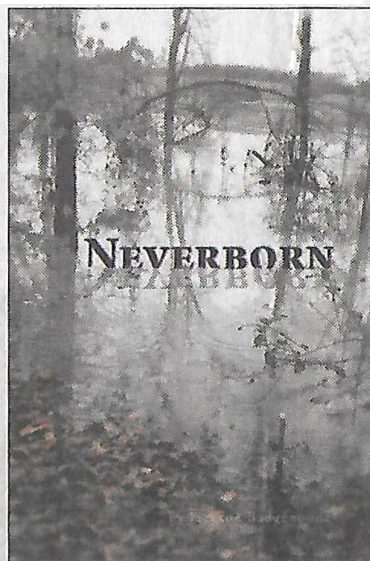
# Neverborn

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her own experience.

“The book starts out with the grief associated with a miscarriage, but as you’re reading through the book, you find out in short order that it also talks about stillborn,” said the Mount Pleasant author. “It talks about the death of a young child in a car crash. It talks about the loss of a spouse, loss of a mother, just a lot of grief that this one woman, the principal character of the book, comes to feel over a short amount of time. All of the things that happen in the book are based on real things that have happened to my family, so it made it very, very personal.”

Veza comes from a life in corporate America, working a number of years for an educational publishing company, Apple Computer and even as a teacher. When he retired in his early 60s, he decided to venture into writing. He started with several short stories before penning his first novel, “The Hidden Treasure of Dutch Buffalo Creek” under the



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**The novella is based on events that happened to the author's family.**

penname Jackson Badgenoone, in 2015.

## The launch party

“Neverborn” serves as a sequel to his first novel. It came out Thursday, April 26, and Veza will hold an official launch party Saturday, April 28, at 10 a.m. at Reflections Grief Recovery Office, 245 LePhillip Court in Concord. The novella will be

available in print at FriesenPress Bookstore immediately and will come out at Amazon.com and Barnes & Noble Bookstore by the end of May.

Veza said he wanted to have the launch at the grief recovery facility, where he has attended a six-week course in the past, to reach those whom he thought would benefit from the message in its pages. Rachael’s family and friends join her on her journey to peace — a path that takes a spiritual, if not overtly religious, route.

“Rachael finds relief through her friends, through books that she reads, and she even gets into a scenario where she starts writing a book to describe her feelings,” Veza said. “Through the process, she does reference Scripture. Her friends do reference Scripture, but she has one friend who’s an absolute atheist, who can’t get her arms around that, and she needs to find a different way of coping.”

## Finding support

Toward the end of the book, Rachael and five of her friends form a support book club, of sorts. Veza said they come to re-

alize that no matter their beliefs, no matter their loss, grief isn’t something they can handle on their own.

“That’s why we come together as human beings,” he said. “We’re social animals, not isolated, and I try to capture that in the book. They try to decide what is it about life that makes life so precious, what it is that the neverborn are denied by never having been born, what are they missing — for those of us who are born, how do we make life just a little bit better for the people around us. That’s basically the tenet of the book.”

But the novella doesn’t just touch on Rachael’s pain. Subplots explore all kinds of loss, from a woman whose husband has to leave the country overnight because of immigration status issues to a midwife who witnesses unwanted babies born to addicted mothers.

“What I wanted to capture in the book is that the people, women particularly, who go through a loss are not grieving alone,” Veza said. “Their spouses are grieving along with them, their families. And I wanted to

talk about what does it mean to be alive, and if we bring a baby into the world, what are our obligations as a society to that child, regardless of your spiritual background or your religious beliefs.”

The questions of life and death, of the lives of the born and those of the ones who die before birth, carry throughout the novel. The concept began in Veza’s first book, where neverborn souls are assigned to observe and record the lives of the living. In “Neverborn,” Rachael imagines the voices of her unborn children, which she later realizes might not be imagined after all.

“The neverborn souls that are observing all this going on in the novella are saying, ‘You people who are alive, who have the privilege of being alive, you need to get your act together,’” Veza said. “So there’s even a political undercurrent in the novella so that someone who’s reading it can say, ‘I get it.’ I don’t have to be a Democrat or a Republican. I don’t have to have a particular party affiliation. I do have to have a concern for my fellow human beings who walk the planet with me.”