

THE ANGELIC LETTERS SERIES

by Darlene Polachic

In the past, Lumsden Valley resident Henry K. Ripplinger has been known for his art--beautifully rendered prairie scenes, many of which depict youth of days gone by involved in activities common to every rural prairie-dweller. Now Ripplinger is pursuing another creative avenue--writing books.

His first volume, *If You're Not From The Prairie*, was a collaborative effort with poet David Bouchard. *If You're Not From The Prairie* is a book for children. It contains paintings by Ripplinger with accompanying poetic text by Bouchard whose engaging rhythms and rhyme schemes are faintly reminiscent of Robert Service. The book has sold more than 200,000 copies.

Now Ripplinger has embarked on a completely new literary project, a five-book series he calls *The Angelic Letters Series*.

The first book, *Pewter Angels*, was released earlier this year and has already sold over 2000 copies.

"*The Angelic Letters* is a love story about undying lifelong love, guardian angels, and miracles," Ripplinger explains. "As one reviewer put it, 'It's rare to find a really good book and a good story that's good for the soul, mind, and heart. *Pewter Angels* is such a book.'"

The Angelic Letters came about because Ripplinger, a former teacher and high school guidance counsellor, always wanted to write a self-help volume, and over his long career, had learned that the best way to teach life lessons was in a story.

The specific plot for the story came to him a dozen years ago through what he calls "an amazing experience that haunted me and was a story that had to be told. In June of 2005, I was watching the sun come up over the prairie and the plot hit me like a lightning bolt. I sat down and began to write. The words and sentences literally flowed from my pen onto the paper. The story that poured out answered so many of my hopes and aspirations as a guidance counsellor."



Ripplinger says after a time of writing in longhand, he bought a computer. "Then I typed for three and a half years. I ended up with over 1000 pages that became five books." He self-published the narrative under the company name of Pio-Seelos Books.

Book One, *Pewter Angels*, was released March of 2010. The story is set in Regina and follows the lives and love of Henry Pederson and Jenny Sarsky.

"It is fiction that every reader can easily identify with," Ripplinger observes. "The story is full of good common sense role-modelling." He says many experiences from his own life appear in the story in fictionalized form.

"There are three basic things people will get out of the *Angelic Letters Series*. It is a warmhearted, epic love story; it exudes timeless life lessons that come through the main character's relationship with his mentor; and the story reminds us of our guardian angels."

The second book in the series, *Another Angel of Love*, will be released in February of 2011. All five books are already written, and Ripplinger is working on a sixth that will tie the whole story all together and end the saga.

Ripplinger says readers will have to read the entire series to learn about the personal life-changing experience that launched him on this literary journey.

"Though the books have a strong spiritual component, it is not presented in a preachy way. I really believe that God has a wonderful plan for each person, and that comes out clearly in the story."

He adds, "It's good reading for all ages—from 13 to 113."

Though he made his mark as a fine artist, Ripplinger says he always wanted to write. In the past he wrote several short stories which were never published. "This book," he says, "was like a lightning bolt in my life."

Marketing is often a challenge for self-published authors, but it is nothing new for Ripplinger who owns the Ripplinger Art Gallery and gift shop and Henry's Cafe in Regina. As a result of his aggressive distribution, *Pewter Angels* is available at Costco, Wal-Mart, Zellers, Pharmasave, Indigo, and Chapters which sells the book nationally.

Despite the fact that *Pewter Angels* is Ripplinger's first novel, it is garnering remarkable reviews. One reader wrote: "...your book is like a warm blanket on a cold night, a meal with friends that one never wants to end, a beacon of light in the dark..."

Other comments can be read on the Blog section of Ripplinger's website: www.henryriplinger.com.