

In Review

Atkinsen Ticket for political junkies of all parties

By John Woodward
Staff Writer

Ponte Vedra Beach resident Ken Gorman started his amateur foray into novel writing when he was 72 and, like many first-time writers, there was positive feedback and there was not-so-positive feedback, as his skills were still relatively unpolished.

His third novel, *The Atkinsen Ticket*, marks a great leap forward in his abilities, according to reactions he's received about the book.

The novel is an earnest portrait of President Herb Atkinsen, an honorable yet vulnerable character contemplating running for re-election. The richness of Atkinsen's backstory creates a character instantly likeable and easy to support.

"With all the cynical views of politicians, and rightly so, it's amazing what happens to these people once they get elected, so I felt there has to be some honor in politics," said Gorman.

Beyond Gorman's novel, the nation is moving deeper into an already tumultuous presidential campaign, so it's easy to assume an air of skepticism regarding the novel.

Gorman's novel is about politics—he's a self-confessed political junkie—but the book doesn't serve as a political soapbox.

"There's no personal agenda in (the novel) on any issue, and I purposefully left out using the words 'super delegate' at one point because I'd be identifying a particular party," said Gorman. "What I did instead was just use 'majority' and 'minority' parties, because I didn't want to go off track."

Still, it's difficult, if not impossible, to identify which party is the minority or which is the majority in the novel.

Conflicted about running for re-election, and with still-fresh memories of losing his wife to cancer during his first term, Atkinsen finds himself in the middle of a sweltering political climate choked with unproductive, bipartisan bickering in Washington.



Ken Gorman

PHOTO BY JOHN WOODWARD

But nowhere in the novel is there a mention of who belongs to which party, or which party controls the government, or which party holds the majority or minority, and it plays as a huge asset to

the novel.

As a result, the political nature of the novel becomes part of the backdrop for Atkinsen's character portrait and not the vehicle for the novel.

The novel opens in the bowels of Yankee Stadium, a place Gorman could

practically call a second home, as the institution loomed a few blocks from where he grew up in the Bronx.

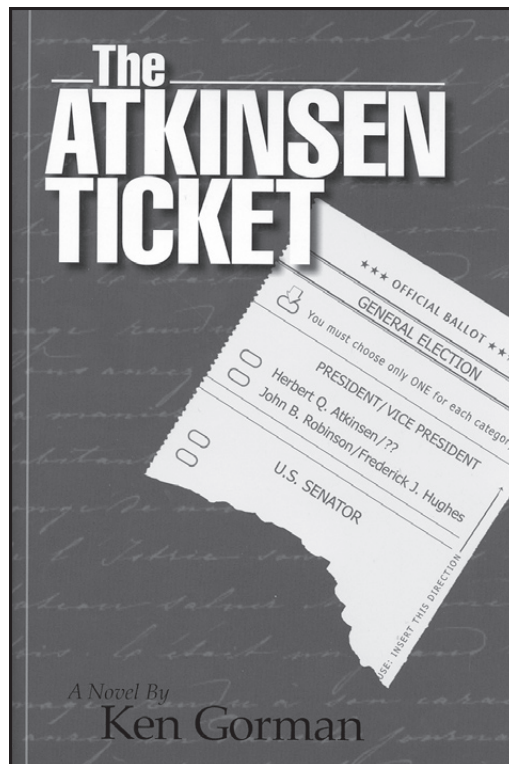
It's Good Friday as an assassin makes his way through the interior of the stadium to his perch, where he's looking for a shot at Atkinsen, who's scheduled to throw out the first pitch.

The first chapter closes there and the reader is taken into the past to follow the events leading up to that pivotal moment.

On the way, Gorman paints his portrait of Atkinsen with deft dialogue and clever strategic maneuverings among his characters, and includes a potentially campaign-threatening scandal and a bitter rivalry with the politician he trounced to win his first campaign.

The lack of political agenda in a political novel is clever and refreshing, successfully elevating the novel into a rich character portrait with detailed and complex political relationships and rivalries as the backdrop, making this an excellent novel for other self-confessed political junkies as well as anyone else with even a mild interest in politics.

Staff writer John Woodward can be reached at 285-8831, extension 31, or jwoodward@jcpgroup.com

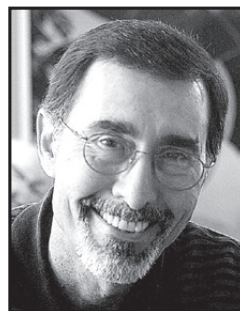


Book launch for local novelist Aug. 9

Things have been quiet for too long for Windrusher, the cat first introduced to readers four years ago in the adventure/fantasy novel, *Windrusher*, by Victor DiGenti.

After arranging to have his protagonist catnapped in the 2005 sequel, *Windrusher and the Cave of Tho-hoth*, DiGenti returns with his third adventure, *Windrusher and the Trail of Fire*.

The former producer of the Jacksonville Jazz Festival launches his new title with a book release party at Barnes & Noble Booksellers at St. Johns Town Center on Saturday, Aug. 9 at 2 p.m. The author promises refreshments, prizes, readings from the new book and

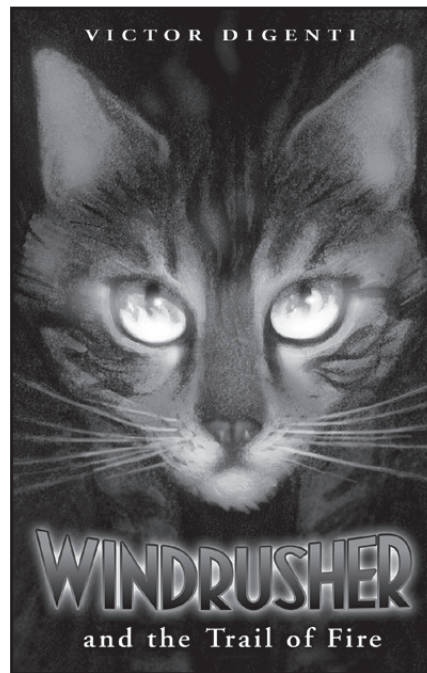


Vic DiGenti

a trivia contest.

"My readers have been asking for another *Windrusher* adventure for the past few years," DiGenti said.

"We're going to have a *Windrusher* Trivia Contest, as well as a *Windrush-*



er look-alike contest. To enter the contest, readers will need to bring along a picture of their own cat, and the winner will take home an autographed copy of my new book."

DiGenti has won multiple awards for his first two books. His unpublished manuscript, *Matanzas Bay*, a mystery/suspense novel set in St. Augustine, won the 2007 Josiah W. Bancroft Sr. award. He and his wife live in Ponte Vedra Beach with their seven rescued cats.

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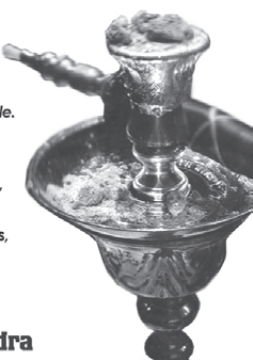
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11:15 1:55 4:35 7:30 10:15	11:10 12:25 1:40 2:55
HANCOCK (PG-13)	4:10 5:25 6:40 7:55
11:25 12:30 1:45 2:50 4:15	9:10 10:25 11:40
5:30 6:45 8:00 9:15 10:30 11:45	THE DARK KNIGHT (PG-13)
HELLBOY 2: THE GOLDEN ARMY (PG-13)	11:00 11:35 12:10 12:45
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JOURNEY TO THE CENTER OF THE EARTH - DIGITAL 3D (PG)	4:15 4:50 5:25 5:55 6:35
12:00 2:20 5:00 7:35 10:15	7:10 7:45 8:20 8:55 9:30
MAMMA MIA! (PG-13)	10:05 10:40 11:15 11:50
11:20 12:20 2:00 3:00 4:40	THE X-FILES: I WANT TO BELIEVE (PG-13)
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SPACE CHIMPS (G)	6:10 7:30 8:45 10:10 11:20
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