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The Stories Keep Coming: PW Talks with Lauraine Snelling

By Marcia Z. Nelson | Oct 03, 2014



Courtesy Lauraine Snelling

Lauraine Snelling

Novelist Lauraine Snelling, who has authored 80 books since she began her writing career in 1982, gave a keynote speech at the Sept. 25-27 annual conference of the American Christian Fiction Writers. *To Everything a Season* (Bethany House, Oct.) begins the Song of Blessing series, her fifth historical series set among Norwegian immigrants to North Dakota. Snelling's work has been translated into Norwegian, Danish, and German; she has more than two million books in print.

How do you manage to be so productive?

God won't let me go. I love to tell stories, and the stories keep coming and the contracts keep coming, so I think it's all a God thing. And I'm a stubborn person.

How did you get started writing?

I always dreamed of writing horse books for girls, since I was a junior in high school. I had my first pony when I was five. (Snelling's first published book, *Tragedy on the Toutle* [1982], was a YA novel about a horse caught in the Mount St. Helens volcanic eruption.)

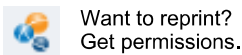
Why have you focused your historical novels on Norwegian immigrants to North Dakota?

I write about North Dakota because my mother was born and raised there, and I love the Red River Valley. In every book I've written there's a story behind the story. Ingeborg (Bjorklund, the matriarch who figures in many of Snelling's historicals) is the iconic figure in this. Strong women are my forte. I love writing about strong women and women getting together. We do what needs to be done and we take care of each other, and I have seen that all through history.

Your contemporary novels focus on issues such as cancer and loss; why?

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Publishers tried to discourage me from doing contemporaries, but I started writing them after my daughter died of cancer. *The Healing Quilt* (WaterBrook, 2002) is an evergreen. We comfort others with the comfort with which we have been comforted.

You started your career pounding out books on a manual typewriter. How are you at social media?

My assistant tweets me, and my Facebook family is my family. I love my people. I try to post every day, and I break all the rules. My page is very personal, and that seems to be working.

What's next?

I write three books a year. *Sunday Home* (a contemporary novel from FaithWords) is coming next summer. This fall, there's *To Everything a Season*, and another historical next spring.