



In New Book, Greed, Corruption and Mismanagement Destroy Democratic System; Homelessness, Joblessness Result in Takeover by Political and Industrial Elite

ASHWOOD, a Speculative Fiction Thriller Takes Readers on a Riveting Journey into the Future

Minneapolis, MN (Vocus) August 31, 2010 -- ASHWOOD, the second speculative fiction novel by Cynthia Kraack, award-winning author of MINNESOTA COLD, has just been released. ASHWOOD explores the challenges of rebuilding a country in the aftermath of its complete economic collapse: the result of unconscionable greed, corruption and mismanagement. How do citizens relate to the enslavement of the worker class in an environment that is totally controlled by the political and industrial elite? ASHWOOD is a brilliant synthesis of historic events and calculated probability, with all of the twists and turns of a spellbinding thriller.

Readers might wonder about the similarities to the current economic crisis that permeate ASHWOOD. Cynthia Kraack explains: "Because I studied economics at a graduate level, I've long dreaded what might happen in an economy that is 75% consumer-driven. How do corporations survive when ordinary people can no longer afford to purchase things because their incomes have been stunted or jobs lost in the struggle to meet ever-increasing shareholder expectations? Interestingly, the first draft of the book was just completed when the stock market dipped into the 6,000 range in 2009."

Is ASHWOOD intended to warn readers about the fragile nature of democracy and the need for critical thinking? "It is difficult to know how to be a fully responsible citizen in today's democratic societies. It is easy to feel that big money, big lobbies and big government, diminish what an individual can influence. As ASHWOOD illustrates, that is very dangerous thinking," adds Kraack.

A haunting tale, ASHWOOD follows Anne Hartford, an unemployed teacher who is trained to serve as the matron of one of many agricultural estates, designed to produce food for the metropolitan areas. She soon discovers that the estate to which she is assigned is filled with hungry children, promised safe haven from dangerous urban homes and reduced to cheap labor. Can threats from corrupt bureaucrats keep her from exposing the truth? How she resolves this conflict challenges readers to reflect upon their own values. Has fear become the ultimate weapon of mass destruction in this Orwellian future?

About the Author:

Cynthia Kraack is a graduate of Marquette University's College of Journalism, she also holds a Masters in Labor Economics and Educational Psychology from the University of Minnesota and an MFA in Creative Writing from the University of Southern Maine. She spent many years as corporate communications professional.

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