

Spotlight Interview

by Joan Stippick

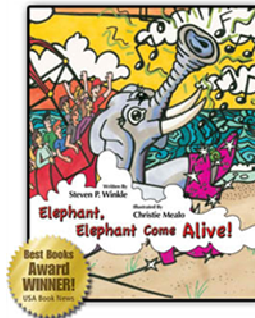
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An Interview With Steve Winkelstein

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Steve, your books are fantastic! Who would you say your books are geared towards? Who is your ideal reader?

"I would say that my audience is a mixture of moms, children, and local mythology enthusiasts. It's definitely a challenge to write something that children can enjoy, while at the same time building a collectable item for adults based around local history. I seemed to have found a winning formula in Lucy."

What was your inspiration for writing your books? What gave you the idea to write these specific books?

"Lucy herself inspired "Elephant, Elephant Come Alive!" She and Kerry Lee Mclean, author of "Pigs Over Boulder" inspired the concept. And, after imagining what it would be like if Lucy came to life, the story kind of wrote itself. With the High Diving Horse in "The Diving Horse and the Magic Whistle" it was a little more deliberate."

When you are not writing, you enjoy another career. Can you tell me about your "real job"?

"When I'm not writing I work with George Drakopoulos at Malelani Cafe in Ventnor City. Along with the usual activities that involve running a cafe, such as making drinks and serving customers, my job is to focus on the culture of Malelani. It fits in

with a theme I bring up during the author's note in "The Diving Horse and the Magic Whistle", which is the Atlantic City Renaissance. George and I are building the cafe to be a central hub for art, music, and other cultural activities. This concept runs throughout one of my facebook groups, The Winkle Society, in which I list all of the art and cultural events happening in South Jersey and beyond."

Tell me something about yourself that many people do not know.

"Most of my close friends know this, but most acquaintances and strangers do not: I'm a wizard."

What are some of your hobbies, besides writing?

"I wouldn't call writing one of my hobbies. Rather I would say it's one of several ghoulish tormentors. But I do enjoy boating."

What do you like best about living in South Jersey?

"Being near the ocean and the bay is the greatest part of South Jersey. There's nothing better in the world than being on boat in the back bays of margate with a fishing rod and few good friends. Aside from this, I'm really growing to love the rich mythology involved in a whole host of

characters that are part of South Jersey's great history. I am truly enjoying bringing these characters back to life."

Many people have creative fiction in their heads, or a personal story to tell, or a passion for a particular subject. Do you have any advice for aspiring authors?

"During school assemblies I give out the two keys to success. The first is intelligent persistence, meaning never give up but don't forget Einstein's words, "Insanity is attempting to do the same thing over and over again while expecting different results." (To paraphrase) And secondly, Consistent Discipline is necessary to cultivate your passion from abstract haunts to concrete monsters."

Thank You Steve, I enjoyed our chat. I'm looking forward to reading more books from the wizard of Margate! Good luck to you!