

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

The Footless Girls of Camp C

Musician and author Shows Leary teams with Jean Tansey for combined art exhibit and book signing at Alias Coffee Troy

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PETERSBURG - Shows Leary, author, bassist, and event reviewer spent 48 years writing his first book, *The Footless Girls of Camp C*, a "Faction" novel based on true events revolving around American culture and military life during the late 60s and 70s.

Leary's novel, now available on Amazon, Kindle, and paperback, will hold a book signing event on St. Patrick's Day, Sunday, March 17 at Alias Coffee, located at 219 4th St. in Troy, 3-4:30 p.m.

Acoustic music will be provided by Leary's friend, John Cehowski, and another mutual friend Jean Tansey, will have her art opening for her paintings which are on view at the shop. The event

is free to the public and Leary will also have copies of his novel for sale.

Leary first met Tansey and her husband, musician Matt Warner, at their Homegrown Originals Open Mic event at The Storefront at 344 2nd Street in July 2023 during the anniversary of the 50th anniversary of the Watkins Glen Music Festival, a topic featured in Leary's novel. He asked Tansey if he could read from those chapters as part of the open mic. Tansey said yes and the rest was history.

"Jean understood the magnitude of my story and has encouraged me to continue. I have done several readings at this point and hope to continue," Leary said. "The feedback I am getting about the more sensitive topics in the book has been overwhelming to me and I am coming to understand the value of my story."

Leary calls *The Footless Girls of Camp C* a musical and military memoir based on true events. He has fictionalized the book to protect the privacy of others involved and due to the sensitive topics such as military violence and abuse, sex slavery, and music.

Shows wrote the book simply as a memory of a military expedition in 1976 and was required at the time to sign a non-disclosure agreement and not talk about the adventure for 45 years. Although he was not involved in the military, the novel was written to memorialize what happened in that given time and used as an emotional outlet to express oneself.

Due to the sensitive topics and graphic language, Leary's book is more suited for adult readers. He has submitted his book to a library for consideration and is waiting to hear back from them to see if it will be suitable for younger readers. Although certain subject matter in the book is scary and horrific, the overall message, Leary says, is positive and hopeful.

Shows self-published his book on Amazon because of its world wide reach and more favorable self control, with editing by local musician and editor, Deena Chappell. Woodstock-based illustrator Mike Dubois did the cover art for the book based on a hand sketch that Leary gave him to create his vision.

He wants to get his book out on audio if readers are interested in hearing it in an audio format, and

due to the sales and interest of his book, people are interested in hearing it on audio.

Leary has done public readings of the book and people are telling him how his captivating voice and riveting story line are helping to bring his characters to life. Public readings are helping him gain additional confidence and experience as this is a new thing for him to do, he said.

"I have never been asked for an autograph before and that is weird for me but I do sign and comment on every copy that I hand deliver or if someone brings one to me," Leary said.

The biggest takeaway from Leary about his novel is how the music from *The Grateful Dead* helped him get through an adventure of a lifetime and helped him survive the harshest of environments and violence that was incomprehensible as it involved soldiers and children. His telling of the tale has helped him realize that his story holds meaning and value to him and others who underwent their own musical, military journey.

To learn more about Leary and details on where to find the book see showsleary.com.