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**ENTERTAINMENT & DINING**


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# Nutley author overcomes challenges, completes book

By John Dunphy  
Observer Correspondent

**NUTLEY** — Every creative mind must tackle the same obstacle: completing their work. Sandra Bonaldi, of Nutley, faced this very challenge and overcame it with success.

"I always loved to read. It was one of my passions," Bonaldi said.

She had never given writing serious thought until the birth of her children, Joe, Jackie and Mark.

"They were babies and I just started writing short stories, poetry and journals," she said.

What started as a hobby soon took on a fair share of her mind. With the help of her husband, Tom, a computer technician, she was able to design a Web site where she began posting her short stories and other writings. It was here that

her first novel, "One Enchanted Evening," began to take form.

"I had people calling me up asking when the next post was going to be," she said.

This particular story had been going on for a few posts when she got an honest opinion from her best friend, Gloria Navarro.

"She said, 'Can I be totally honest with you? It's gotta be a book,'" Bonaldi said. "So I said, 'Alright, I'm gonna do it.'"

Over the past two years, "Evening" has undergone two or three rewrites. Bonaldi said she was lucky in that she had several people working with her in order to create the finished project.

The story itself follows the lives of Jessica and Ben, two members of a corporate world entangled in a Cinderella story without the

magic. Ben is a high-ranking corporate executive who becomes enamored by the executive assistant Jessica at a company function.

The limousine ride that follows sets them both up on a love torn romance with its own ups and downs with quite a bit of "sizzle" as Bonaldi puts it.

"I like romance novels. You need that little bit of romance; that little bit of zing," Bonaldi said.

Where Bonaldi differs from most of the authors in this genre is that she does not only cater to women readers. Whereas most authors who write romance novels gravitate toward the feminine experience of the characters in the book, Bonaldi shows the emotions of her male characters just as well as those of the women.

Bonaldi has already started her second novel

which is entitled "Midnight Magic." She says that although the story includes many of the same characters, it's not exactly a spin-off and that it holds well on its own.

The next one will begin to take on a lightly, more realistic approach to love in the real world. "Evening," of course, has elements of truth and everything depicted in the book could

conceivably happen, but with her next novel, Bonaldi says acts of domestic violence and other trends will occur and that this may become a trend which she hopes to create.

By keeping the fairytale aspects of love and romance while also making the characters more believable through problems that occur all too frequently in the real world she should bring the

love story out truer and more realistic than ever.

Creating a work like this, an author is never without a fare share of people who would like to contribute to the next project. Bonaldi said her friends and family have begun approaching her with ideas and different scenarios, but that some of the ideas "are just so out there,"

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she laughed.

Sandra isn't the only creative force in the Bonaldi family. Her youngest son,

Mark, drew the limo that is seen on the second page. Bonaldi said she originally wanted his art to be the cover but the publisher had

trouble making the print work. She stood firm, though, and said she wanted her son's work somewhere in the novel — and so the picture went inside.

For all future writers, Bonaldi has possibly the simplest advice.

"Just go out there and do it," she said.

To purchase your own copy of "One Enchanted Evening," log on to [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) or [www.bn.com](http://www.bn.com). For more information on Bonaldi, visit her Web site at [www.sandrastuff.com](http://www.sandrastuff.com).