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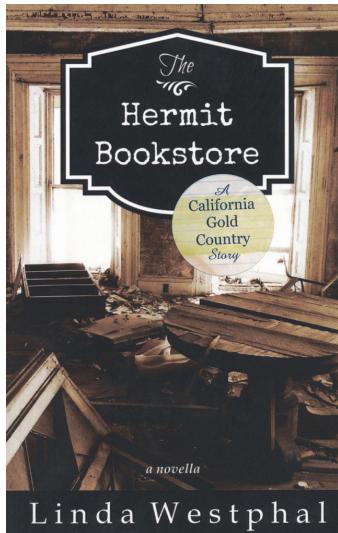

UPDATE: Situation resolved in Georgetown

Prospecting

Lotus provides setting for an intriguing novella

By Wendy Schultz

From page B2 | October 14, 2015

**Between the covers**

Book: "The Hermit Bookstore, a California Gold Country Story"

Author: Linda Westphal

Publisher: Linda Westphal, January 2015, 98 pages. Paperback and e-book versions

It's a common truth that the right book at the right time can change a life. In "The Hermit Bookstore," a mysterious bookstore appears in the small community of Lotus and three Lotus residents, Mary June, Elisa and Mario, discover just how powerful the right book can be.

Hermit Bookstore owner, Jolene Fields, seems to know just what book a customer needs and why. Is she just very talented at reading people or is there something else going on?

"The Hermit Bookstore" is a novella utilizing two beliefs held by the author, Citrus Heights resident Linda Westphal — that books are magical because they transport you to another place and that they are the world's best teachers.

As a novella, "The Hermit Bookstore" is a quick read; a book you can finish in a few hours, like a satisfying snack. It's Westphal's second book, following "The Medium," which was also published in 2015.

Westphal says all her stories have a "feel good" element to them — positive and hopeful with inspirational endings.

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"I describe myself as an author of 'feel good' stories because I think people need to have a handle to clarify an author's work," said Westphal. "If they like those kinds of stories, then they'll want to read them."

Westphal's stories also have a metaphysical twist to them as they explore life events that can't be explained. In "Hermit Bookstore," the three Lotus residents don't know how the bookstore suddenly appears, but they all need the unexpected push they receive to make changes in their lives.

The location of the mysterious bookstore at a historical farmhouse in Lotus, comes from the first visit Westphal paid to the Gold Rush area 20 years ago when she was helping the owners of the Lotus Hotel market the historical building.

"It was haunting and I was so fascinated with the history of the farmhouse and the area that I couldn't get the location out of my head, so when I wrote the story, I placed it in Lotus. I've since found that the book has been re-introducing Lotus to people who have lived in California for a long time."

"The Hermit Bookstore" was named as a 2015 finalist in the fiction category in The Indie Spiritual Book Awards. TISBA honors the best new independent books with a positive message and supports authors who are leaders of positive change.

Westphal is currently researching and building her next book and setting up local presentations and book signings for her two novels for later in the fall. Look for signing events on her Website at lindawestphal.com or on her Facebook page.

"The Hermit Bookstore" is available in print and e-book versions at Amazon, Barnes and Noble and at independent book sellers. It can be found locally at Face in a Book in the El Dorado Hills Town Center.

On Saturday, Oct. 17 Westphal will be at Placerville News Company, 409 Main St. in Placerville, to sign copies of "The Hermit Bookstore" from 6-9 p.m.

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