

Local writer hosts book signing at Cafe Fromage

By Hillary Gavan hgavan@beloitdailynews.com | Posted: Friday, December 13, 2013 4:00 pm

ROSCOE — Local writer Toni Rocha will be spreading the holiday cheer as she hosts her third book signing of “Magic in the Air” from 5 to 9 p.m. today at The Cheese People and Café Fromage, 431 E. Grand Ave., during Downtown Beloit Association’s Holidazzle.

Rocha, who loves the holidays and a bit of magic, has been writing little Christmas short stories for the Daily News for nine years featuring the lively tikes Bobby and Cindy.

“You want to be a kid at Christmas and you want it to be magical. These two kids have a bit more magic than most of us. They are good kids and they always do the right thing, but sometimes they get into awkward situations,” Rocha said.

She picked her favorite tales to include in her book including “The Christmas Visitor,” in which Bobby and Cindy meet their Great Aunt Tillie and reconnect with the true meaning of Christmas and “The Fright Before Christmas” which introduces Cindy and Bobby to their reclusive Great Uncle Thadeus, whose ghost arrives with the grandfather clock he crafted just in time to make Christmas quite spirited.

In “The Crystal Music Box,” Bobby and Cindy help a snow sprite find parts to her broken crystal music box so she can produce snow for Christmas. And in “The Legend of Willie Fixett,” the children discover a strange little man hiding in their basement and help him discover his true calling with a little help from Santa Claus.

Rocha, who belongs to the Rockford-based In Print professional writers group, affiliated with the Chicago Writer’s Association, also hopes to chat it up with fellow writers at Holidazzle. With 17,000 writers in the area, including Chicagoland, Rocha decided she finally decided to pursue her dream of writing a book by self-publishing through the publisher XLibris. It only cost her \$750 and she got her published book back on her birthday on Jan. 29.

“If you really believe in what you are doing it’s worth the risk,” she said.

Her challenge now will be to market the book, which is available online at Amazon.com and Barnes & Noble in addition to Xlibris’s many websites. She also has her books for sale at the Cheese People of Beloit and at the Mandolin Cafe in Roscoe.

Rocha is a retired newspaper reporter and freelance writer with more than 50 years’ experience in communications. She has published three nonfiction self-help books for teens on how to cope

when someone in the family has cancer, how to recover from eating disorders and how to have careers in magazines. Her work for teens are featured in libraries around the country.

In addition to writing numerous regional and national articles, she's the medical writer for Northwest Quarterly magazine and is planning on publishing her next book, a 90,000 word novel called "Door" in which a family which has lost their money in New York must move in with relatives back in Door County in the 1930s.

"It's about making friends and adapting to different lifestyles and of course interrelationships and getting along," Rocha said.