

# Bruno-based writer publishes fantasy novel

by Kayla Malanka  
Staff writer

It has taken years of persistence, determination, and struggle.

However, for Bruno resident James G. Anderson, and his writing partner, Mark Sebanc of Ontario, their hard work and dedication has turned a dream into reality.

On September 8, 17,000 copies of the fantasy novel, *The Stoneholding*, authored by both Sebanc and Anderson, hit bookstores around the world.

"It's an epic fantasy," said Anderson, "set in an alternate world with a very deep history and cosmology that has been developed behind the whole thing."

*The Stoneholding* is the first book in a four-book series entitled *Legacy of the Stone Harp* and comes from an idea Sebanc had about 20 years ago.

Born and raised in Toronto, and then later moving to the Upper Ottawa Valley of Ontario, Sebanc said writing the series was something that was always in the back of his mind.

"It was always an aspiration and a dream," said Sebanc, noting his inspiration came from J.R.R. Tolkien, the author of *The Lord of the Rings* series, among other fantasy classics.

"It was a desire to follow in Tolkien's footsteps, Tolkien being the great master of the genre," said Sebanc. "And knowing what kind of impact Tolkien had in my own life, and feeling that I wanted to create something similar."

About 20 years ago, Sebanc set out to do just that. He began "tinkering" and giving context and texture to his ideas, and upon completion of his first draft, he submitted it to a publishing company in New York.

He received an "unprecedented" three-page rejection letter from the senior editor explaining how to fix his novel and Sebanc knew he needed some help.

It was then that he decided to ask Anderson, a family friend who was living in the Upper Ottawa Valley of Ontario at the time, to help him bring his ideas to the next level.

Anderson said he remembers receiving the phone call from Sebanc and was struck by his "openness and humility" to be able to hand over his work to another writer.

Sebanc asked Anderson to go over a few chapters with an "editor's eye."

"At that point I really thought, 'well, what is the worst that can really happen? If he says put your hands where I can see them and step away from the manuscript?'" said Anderson.

"So I got my pencil and really got busy. I ripped and tore it to pieces."

However, Anderson said Sebanc was really receptive to his ideas and Sebanc eventually asked him to co-author the book.

"(Anderson) is so multitalented and his gifts are so complementary to my own," said Sebanc.

"I'm probably a little bit better at describing landscape and doing that kind of thing, and he is really good at dialogue and the thematic elements come from (Anderson's) fertile imagination."

This balance in writing styles allowed Sebanc and Anderson to make the epic fantasy novel bigger and better.

Anderson said they began by taking a look at the notes and suggestions in the rejection letter and two "massive" revisions to the book were done.

These changes included revamping the cosmology of world and ensuring the book had its own voice, explained Anderson.

After the revisions were completed, the men decided it was time to acquire an agent and sent the novel to various places, hoping their book would draw some attention.

"Nothing seemed to be coming up," said Anderson, noting it was very frustrating.

After seeing so little success, the two authors decided it was time to take a leap of faith. They self-published 2,000 copies of their revised book.

"Just to see if we could make a little splash in a big

pond," Anderson explained as to why they did it. "Fortunately, we had some good aces up our sleeves."

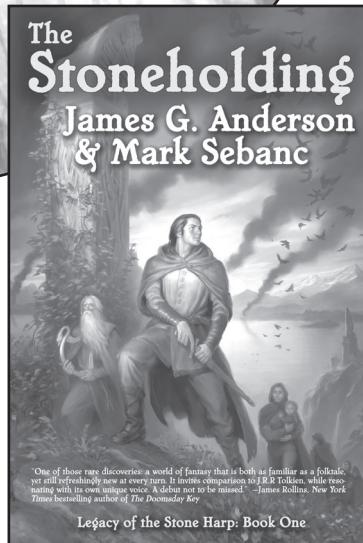
One of these aces was that the book had a solid story behind it, and another was a supportive friend and well known illustrator, Ted Nasmith, who designed Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* covers.

"He agreed to do the cover of our self-published edition (and) that was a real feather in the cap," said Anderson.

In October 2004, the revised novel was published



**Jim Anderson (left) of Bruno and Mark Sebanc of Ontario co-authored the fantasy novel, *The Stoneholding*, which was released this week. It's the first novel in a fantasy series called *Legacy of the Stone Harp*.**



under their own Stoneharp Press and was sold in Chapters book stores across Canada.

After the book was published, the two friends began doing book signings and trying to create a bit of a "buzz" about their novel.

After several "incessant e-mails and flowing leads," Sebanc landed the authors a book signing at Books of Wonder in Manhattan, said Anderson, one of New York City's oldest and largest independent bookstores.

It was this signing that would tip the balance of the scales and give Anderson and Sebanc the break they had been looking for.

Books of Wonder not only asked them to come down for a signing, they also decided to publish 200 limited edition copies of the book in hard cover.

"It was an interesting trip, but we didn't realize it would carry so much weight," said Anderson.

An agent from Baen Books in the United States, having heard about the book through their signing, took interest.

The authors sat down once again to revise and improve their novel, and, with the help of Baen Books, that revised novel was published and released this week.

Anderson said it is going to be interesting to see the book find its niche market. Advance copies have already been circulated have come back with a mix of reviews.

"You cannot please everyone," said Anderson, adding their whole experience has been a steep learning curve for the two writers.

"You just keep on trying, keep on revising, keep on honing your art, keep on striving to be a better writer and to get to the top level of your game," said Sebanc. "It's a struggle (and) you have to be a stubborn (person). You learn by doing. There is probably no other way."

Anderson said writing a fantasy novel wasn't something he ever thought he would do until Sebanc asked him to co-author this novel.

It was then he realized he had an "extreme passion" for it.

Throughout their journey the two writers have "really found two heads are better than one" and working together is a "great remedy to writers block," noted Anderson.

Having moved to Bruno in October of 2007 to work at the St. Therese Institute of Faith and Mission, Anderson said the long distance co-authoring of the book has not been a problem.

"Even the work we were doing when we lived 20 minutes apart from one another was largely on the phone and via e-mail," said Anderson.

Together, the two authors discuss their plot thoroughly, "establish the road map," and then discuss in great detail the type of writing and description they want.

Then, one will write up a rough draft and the other will revise it. The chapters will "ping-pong back and forth like that until we have a final discussion on the phone and lay it to rest and move on," said Anderson.

Anderson is currently unable to devote as much time as he would like to writing, as his work at St. Therese is taking up much of his time. But, he said, once the the school year gets underway, he suspects he will have a bit more time to write.

"It's actually a real struggle for me right now because I want to write I need to write," said Anderson. "Writers, write, we have to."

The second book of their series, called *Darkling Fields of Arvon*, is set to be released in the spring of 2010.



**It's no secret...**  
*actions speak louder than words.*  
We strive to make our customers look good on paper: sale forms, cheques, cards, envelopes, brochures, labels, work orders, invoices.  
Business printing since 1969.

**GRAPHIC ARTS PRINTING LTD.**  
903 5th Ave, Humboldt (306) 682-4242  
e-mail: gap1@sasktel.net

Established 1969

## Day In The Park

September 13th  
Water Ridge Park  
12:00-4:00

**Free games and activities**

Learn more about the services our community has to offer

<p><b>12:00-2:00</b> QT Clown</p> <p><b>2:00</b> Water Soccer Game with the Humboldt Fire Department</p> <p><b>2:30</b> Doggone Safe Dog Bite Prevention Demonstration</p> <p><b>3:30</b> BBBS WestJet Raffle Draw</p>	<p><b>ATTENTION KIDS:</b> Bring your favorite stuffed animal and have the staff from Emergency Services check him/her out in the <b>Teddy Bear Clinic.</b></p> <p>Wagon Rides, Face Painting, Sparky the Dog, and much more....</p> <p>Super fun inflatable jumper (free)</p>
--	---

Free hotdog to everyone who attends with more options available to purchase. Sponsored by SaskEnergy

The Day in the Park is brought to you in part by SaskEnergy, Sask Lotteries, & the Community Initiatives Fund



## Horse Power Week IS BACK!

**September 14<sup>th</sup> - 18<sup>th</sup>**

**Come out & meet the New Humboldt Broncos**

<p><b>Monday: Movie with the Broncos</b> 4:00 pm at Reel Attractions Cinema &amp; Video \$5.50 includes movie, popcorn, &amp; drink</p>	<p><b>Tuesday: Broncos serve you breakfast</b> at A&amp;W 8:00 am - 9:30 am</p>
<p><b>Tuesday: Toonie Mini Golf with the Broncos</b> 5:30 pm - 7:30 pm</p>	
<p><b>Wednesday: Toonie Swim with the Broncos</b> 7:00 pm at the Humboldt Aquatic Center</p>	
<p><b>Thursday: BBQ at the Civic Park</b> 11:30 am - 1:30 pm Meet the Broncos and have them serve you lunch. All proceeds to the SPCA.</p>	

**\*\*\* Also watch for Broncos working at \*\*\* numerous businesses throughout the week.**