

Senior Times

Shelby Beckett

*Gainesville Author
Channels Creativity
in her New Novel*

DECEMBER 2012

seniortimesmagazine.com

PRRST STD
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit #827
Gainesville, FL

INSIDE

VOLUNTEERS OF THE YEAR

As Nominated by
Peers and Community

HOLIDAY HARMONIES

Barbergators & G'ville
Harmony Show Chorus

Spirit of Gainesville

Local Author and Spiritual Teacher Channels Creativity in New Novel

BY COURTNEY LINDWALL

She sits, still and calm, asking for his presence.

Her eyes are closed, but when they re-open, she will be gone. It will be Jared instead. He does not predict the future, and he won't pretend to be perfect. But he will answer your questions.

Jared is another type of being — and he only speaks through Shelby Beckett.

Beckett, 75, is a local spiritual consultant from Gainesville who uses channeling to learn more about the spiritual world before and after death. Recently, Beckett finished her novel, “Between,” which weaves in information she has learned from 40 years of knowing Jared.

“The story really just came to me,” Beckett said. “It’s grown. It’s expanded.”

“Between” is the story of Stacy Addison, a beautiful young girl in a coma, caught between this world and the next. With an unusual power to spiritually heal, she becomes tempted to stay in the next world and fulfill her dreams of

transforming others.

But Addison is faced with choices — a theme, Beckett said, that is crucial throughout the whole story.

“Between” is her third published work, but only her first novel. She has been writing it for 12 years, through nine different drafts. But the ideas behind the story come from even further back in Beckett’s life.

She earned degrees in Latin and Greek from the University of Akron as an undergraduate and a Master’s degree in archaeology from the University of Cincinnati. Through her studies, she learned about mythology, which she incorporates into her book.

During her time in school, Beckett was not always spiritual. In fact, she began as a skeptic. Her life had become a melting pot of beliefs, and she was not sure what she believed.

“I don’t mind people being skeptical because I was a skeptic once myself,”





she said.

And then she met Jared.

She was a member of a spiritual study group in Ohio, where her husband was stationed at a military base. Each week the group would perform some type of experiment. One week, the experiment involved having a communicator write through the participants, who would hold a pencil against a sheet of paper and wait for a message.

For some, a message would not come.

For others, their hands would move a little bit, maybe forming letters. For Beckett, her hand began to immediately write.

She wrote letters and words — and then she wrote sentences.

The being Beckett had begun to channel was not a human, from the past or present. His name was unpronounceable, he told her. He was a being she did not understand — one she

PHOTOS BY KRISTEN KOZELSKY

had never encountered. But he said she could call him Jared.

Beckett began a 40-year friendship with him, during which she began teaching classes so others could ask questions of Jared, too. He taught her about life after death and why she should not be afraid. He taught her the importance of listening and learning through mistakes.

She is now able to channel Jared simply by “tuning in.” In fact, she said, tuning in has become easier than tuning out.

“I feel it like a pulsation on the right side of my face,” Beckett said.

But Beckett knows she has to be careful when opening up her mind to channeling because “there are a lot of energies out there who would really like to have a voice,” she said.

The wisdom she has gained from her friendship with Jared has inspired the basis of the novel, although the story

BOOK SIGNINGS

Book Gallery West
4121 NW 16th Blvd., Gainesville
Saturday, January 19 @ Noon

Sacred Earth Center
1029 NW 23rd Ave., Gainesville
Tuesday, December 11 @ 7:00 p.m.

itself is purely fiction.

Addison, the young heroine of the story, is in a coma after a train accident — an accident modeled after an experience from Beckett’s childhood. Once Addison has been introduced to the “Between,” characters pull her in different directions. There is the “Ominous Power,” that struggles to keep Addison from going back home. There is the mentor Max, a cat who gives advice along the way. And then there is the husband and daughter that Addison left behind — the ones who she would miss the most.

Beckett hopes the story will provide a sense of comfort to readers about death.

One of the most important spiritual lessons Beckett has learned is that the future is fluid, open to change based on the decisions we make.

“There is no end to the journey,” Beckett said, describing this life as the “tip of the iceberg” or the “edge of the meadow.” Jared has taught her this.

Beckett’s other two published works, “What You Believe is What You Receive” and “How to Live Happily Ever After,” focus on Jared’s other spiritual teachings. Letting go of the bad, forgiving yourself and remaining positive are pieces of guidance Beckett now lives by.

Another one of the most important spiritual lessons Beckett has learned is that the future is fluid, open to change based on the decisions we make.

“Everything we choose turns us in a



certain direction,” she said.

Beckett often tells a story about a woman she knew through one of her spiritual classes. The woman had dreamed that her

son had died in a car accident. The dream was vivid; she knew the place.

In the dream, the son was wearing a jacket, a jacket she knew he owned. When she woke up from the dream, the first thing she did was hide her son’s jacket. She had made a choice, Beckett said. She chose to change the outcome.

And when the son was in the car accident that his mother had predicted, Beckett recalled, the boy did not die.

Beckett has been hearing stories such as this one, giving advice and channeling Jared for decades, now. She has lived in Gainesville since the late ‘80s. Her husband, Pete Beckett, has been in Gaines-

ville 20 years longer. He has also been her biggest help in editing along the way.

“It was a lot of wonderful reading,” he said.

Beckett said that her husband would cook while she would write, and then he would be the first person to give feedback on her work. He is now happy that “Between” is finished and ready to be shared.

“It’s very rewarding to be able to get to this point and help others,” he said.

The two met at a dance on New Year’s Eve in 1999 and have been together ever since. Her husband worked for a long time at funeral homes, although he is now retired. Beckett, who was expecting to do the same, is surprised that she is now starting a new career at 75.

She wants her novel to inspire any Seniors who think they cannot start new projects. Working on “Between” has made life more interesting and exciting, she said.

“If you really feel you’ve got something to say, go ahead and say it.” ■