

New book channels Tolkien, hunt country

 Sunday, Nov. 25 | By [Betsy Burke Parker](#)

Karen Myers credits fantasy writer J.R.R. Tolkien for steering her into an impractical course of study at Yale University.

She said Tolkien's work inspired her need to grasp the script and vocabulary of ancient Greek, the basis for several of Tolkien's created Elvish languages.

While she knew there was little she could do with an advanced Ivy degree in the fairy tales of long-gone civilizations, years later it has helped her create her own Otherworld realm. She has written "To Carry the Horn," a stand-alone work and the first in a fantasy series Myers calls "The Hounds of Annwn."

The idea for the series came when she and husband Da vid Zincavage were driving through the Crooked Run valley north of their home in Hume and talking about the future.

"David was off on some tangent, saying we should just retire to 'Elfland,'" Myers said with a laugh. "Something about it just tickled me. I mean, how would you live in Elfland? What would you do, what would it be like, what would it look like?"

From that moment, as she looked at the stunning landscape, Myers' story took shape.

She considered different genres of fantasy, settling on so-called urban fantasy that links the contemporary world to elf-land, intersecting modern era with ancient realm.

Drawing from a special affinity for northern European myth, Myers' story began as she typed late into the night and early each morning. She took the notional "Wild Hunt," a traditional trope involving a mythical pack of red-and-white hounds hunting for justice, linking it to modern day foxhunting.

It was a perfect intersect of Myers' familiar Virginia hunt country and traditional myth.

A graduate of Yale who grew up in Kansas City, Myers married Zincavage in college, and they have lived and worked — she in computer programming, he in real estate — in Connecticut, New York City, Chicago and California.

They've called Virginia's hunt country home for a decade — since Myers took a job at Insight in Manassas.

They first settled in Blue Ridge Hunt territory in Bluemont, but for the past three years they've lived in a traditional old Virginia farmhouse on a well-tra veled game passage in the center of the Old Dominion Hounds territory between Hume and Orlean.

Myers' backyard is often filled with hounds enthusiastically coursing the foxes in the neighborhood and providing material she used in "To Carry the Horn."



Karen Myers of Hume has taken her real-life experiences in the foxhunting field and married it to her love of elf-lore to produce "To Carry the Horn," the the first in a hunting fantasy series. Photo by Betsy Burke Parker



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An avid car-follower of Old Dominion and Blue Ridge, as well as foot-follower of local beagle and basset packs, Myers also took up photography to capture the other-worldly images of the hunt field, something she says feeds her imagination.

Myers published "To Carry the Horn" through their Perkunas Press, named for the Lithuanian mythical equivalent of Thor.

Zincavage is a writer as well, writing scholarly works on the history of fishing and hunting for trade magazines and periodicals.

To follow Myers and The Hounds of Annwn series, read her blog and updates on her Web site: www.PerkunasPress.com .

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