



CITY BEAT

Resident pens more than a dozen books after age 50

*Enjoys working
both sides
of his brain*

BY JASMINE LEYVA

After working for more than 30 years, early retirement seemed like a dream for Campbell resident Russ Towne.

In his early 40s Towne had left a lucrative business during the dot-com boom, and spent some free time managing investments for friends and family while reading to elementary students on the side.

With an overwhelming amount of free time, he asked himself: "Now what?"

"I got bored very fast," he said.

Towne found that reading to children gave him a sense of fulfillment. He decided to try writing for them as well.

The result? More than a dozen books published over the past three years and a few songs, too.

"The biggest difference is that I'm using one side of my brain, the logical side, for investment management. The books are all the creative side. I get to use both halves of my brain. The books give me a feeling of better balance in life," said Towne.

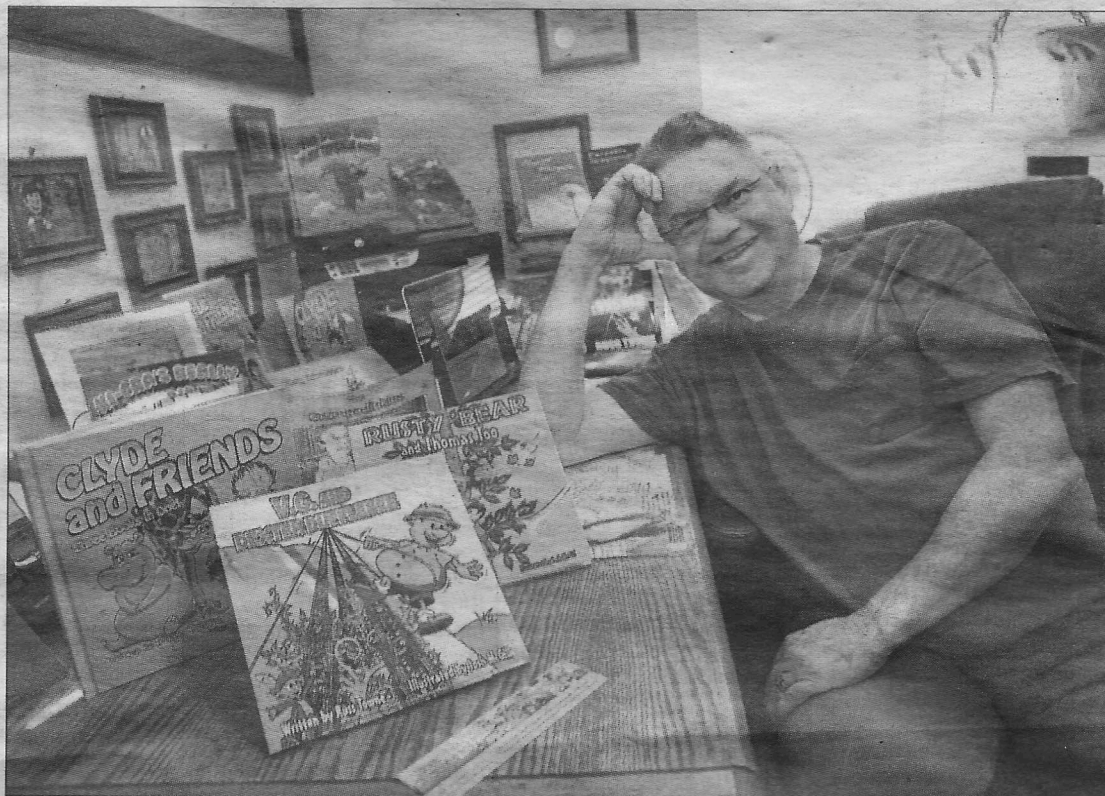
Towne's first experience in creative writing was when a friend asked him to critique some song lyrics. His input proved beneficial to his friend and Towne's own future.

"He said, 'Boy, you corrected the weak spots.' He invited me to co-write a song with him," Towne said.

From there he developed an interest in composing even though he does not play an instrument, sing or read music.

Towne has written a number of country songs. His goal is to find an artist to sing them.

"We've been fortunate enough in that most of the songs have



PHOTOGRAPH BY GEORGE SAKKESTAD

Russ Towne believed he didn't have a single creative bone in his body until he became an author after age 50. He's written multiple books for children, nonfiction books, songs and short stories.

been picked up by a music executive in one place or another," Towne says, noting four years ago he took a trip to Nashville to present music executives with songs.

He's waiting for his big break but content being "at step one of the process."

The process of making demos of his songs to send to music executives is time consuming and costly. So he's put music on the back burner but hasn't stopped writing.

His "Clyde and I" series about a green giraffe is the most popular of the dozen children's books he's written. The inspiration came from Towne explaining to friends that when song lyrics are carefully crafted they can tell any kind of story, even ones about a green giraffe eating a blue banana on his head in the rain.

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— Russ Towne

"It's strange. I'll be mowing the lawn or doing a brain-dead activity and all of a sudden a thought will come to me,"

Towne said. "I have two choices: I can ignore it, in which case I won't be sleeping that night, or I can just get it out on paper. I've learned it's just better to get it out on paper."

In addition to children's books, Towne has also penned advice books on relationships based on his own marriage.

"The books are meant to be humorous," Towne said. "The first two books were a compilation of 53 years of life experience."

Towne is currently writing three more children's books, one of which he is co-writing.

His books are available for purchase on amazon.com.

To learn more about Russ Towne and his writing, visit russtowne.com.