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## ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

### Eureka! Sequim author pens her first novel

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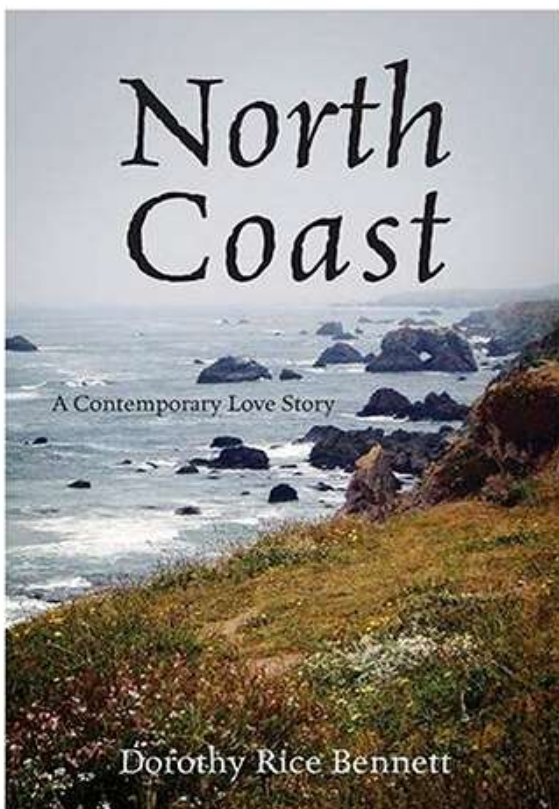
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by [MATTHEW NASH](#), Sequim Gazette Reporter  
Jul 29, 2015 at 10:29AM



In her first book, “North Coast” by Alice McCracken, aka Dorothy Rice Bennett, follows two women’s love story in Eureka, Calif. — *image credit: Submitted art*

When it comes to writing what’s important, author Alice McCracken says she chose love.

The retired family therapist and journalist recently released her first book, “North Coast,” a lesbian romance novel.

“Loving someone is the most important thing we can do,” she said.

So, McCracken, 73, chose to begin writing her book in 2002 while living in San Diego.

Her main character, Valerie, a 50-something aspiring artist, is inspired by a real-life artist McCracken knew who moved on a whim from San Francisco to Eureka to buy a home. Once settled, she rents a room to a wandering soul Gina, in her early 30s.

McCracken says Valerie wonders why Gina opts to waitress instead of use her PhD and teach. Over time, the two become close and attraction grows but they have different goals. Gina wants to move to San Francisco to pursue her ambitions while Valerie likes her life in Eureka.

“Despite the attraction, the friends agree to go their separate ways,” McCracken said.

In San Francisco, Gina asks herself if that life is everything she wanted or if it was better with Valerie.

McCracken said her inspiration for the book came from her relationship with her partner, Vera Foster, who was several years older than her. “I wanted to validate that,” she said.

While “North Coast” is a love story, McCracken said it’s not about sex but there are some intimate moments.

“It’s a girl-gets-girl story,” McCracken said. “What I’ve been told is that the characters feel like real people. (Readers) liked it because it’s romantic and mature.”

## **Inspiration**

McCracken moved to Sequim in 2010 with Foster but five months after moving, Foster died after 17½ years with McCracken.

She said her relationship with Foster was so positive it inspired her to write “North Coast.”

“My relationship with Vera validated my identity as a lesbian,” McCracken said. “From then on, I was comfortable with myself and able to emerge as a creative person.”

McCracken was married to a man and went on to become a counselor in private practice for 10 years in Scottsdale, Ariz.

She moved to San Diego and said that’s where she realized she was a lesbian and went on to work in journalism covering the San Diego waterfront to senior citizens’ activities for different publications.

McCracken went on to retire from the U.S. Geological Survey in San Diego working as a scientific editor and production editor before retiring in 2006. She moved to McMinnville, Ore., for 18 months but found Sequim to be a better fit with Foster.

Here, she’s used her three theater degrees for the first time since college volunteering with Olympic Theatre Arts in different capacities including with its board of directors for the past two years.

## **Self-publish**

For “North Coast,” McCracken uses a pen name she adopted some time ago — Dorothy Rice Bennett — using her mother’s middle name and her maiden name (Dorothy and Rice) and her grandmother’s maiden name (Bennett).

In one way, it’s a tribute to her mother, she said.

“(My mom) wanted to be a writer but was busy working and being a mom but she wrote letters,” McCracken said.

During McCracken’s time as a journalist, an aspiring actress tried to sell her story as a single woman trying to adopt a child. McCracken asked the Bennett name be used to protect her daughter who was underage.

To finish the book, McCracken said she went the self-publishing route with Outskirts Press which offers paperback (\$16.95) and digital copies (\$5) along with Barnes and Noble and Amazon offering paperback versions.

She said the first publisher rejected the book but the second publisher showed an interest and provided some valuable feedback before going out of business.

“Thanks to them, they gave me some good advice,” she said. “It was extremely helpful and I felt it was ready after they told me what to do.”

McCracken said her book is in a niche market – fiction/lesbian – but hopes going this route it’ll be picked up by more people. “I believe in the story,” she said.

“Book stores only carry a little bit of LGBT authors and if they are carried at all, it’s put in a corner and only if the author is known. For now I’m going online with Barnes and Noble and Amazon and if there’s enough interest, we’ll do digital versions through them, too.”

McCracken said there are “a lot of drafts in the drawer” for more stories and she continues to work on a second story.

To order McCracken’s book “North Coast,” visit <https://outskirtspress.com>, Amazon or Barnes and Noble online.