

Off the Clock -- Mary Ann Bernal publishes her first novel

by Vicky Cerino, UNMC public relations

Mary Ann Bernal -- could it be the next big name in historical fiction?

Bernal -- an administrative assistant in the department of pathology and microbiology -- just published her first novel -- titled "The Briton and The Dane."

The story is about Anglo-Saxon Britain in the ninth century under the reign of Alfred the Great, a benevolent king who kept his land free from Viking rule by fending off the Danish King Guthrum.

Bernal took a year to write the book and she has plans for several future novels. Below, she takes a few minutes to talk about the story, the writing process and her inspiration.

Why did you write about this subject?

I have been interested in English history since my sophomore year in high school when I read Sir Walter Scott's "Ivanhoe." His depiction of 12th century England gave rise to my interest in the Middle Ages.

Tell us about Alfred the Great

This story dispels the misnomer for the term "Dark Ages." The lack of documentation about events in Europe from the fall of the Roman Empire through the Renaissance gave rise to the term "Dark Ages." Barbarian invaders may have destroyed the written word but the Heathen could not suppress the pursuit of knowledge. Alfred the Great encouraged the translation of manuscripts and texts from Latin into English. He created schools and established seats of learning, which enticed scholars from abroad. Alfred is the only monarch the British named Great.

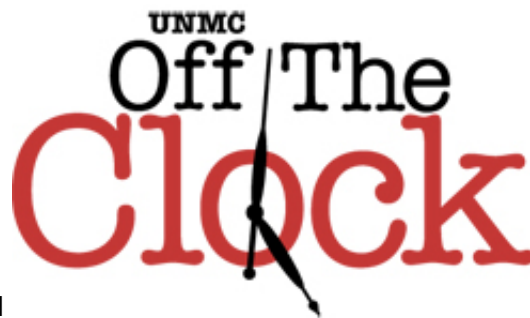
How did you get started writing?

I have written short stories and poetry since graduating from college. I have taken creative writing courses, participated in writing workshops and completed an online novel writing course to learn the craft. The human element has not changed over the centuries. I enjoy breathing life into the historical characters I research. These people did exist and these people did experience the range of emotions we deal with today.

Where can we get your book?

You can order it at the Bookworm (87th and Pacific streets) and Barnes and Noble or you can order it online at http://www.canonbridge.com/Our_Releases.html or Amazon.com. Also, you can contact me and I can get you a copy.

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Mary Ann Bernal with her novel, "The Briton and the Dane."