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Carroll finds new career as a writer

By Ginger Grantham Staff
Writer

With the help of her friend Bertha, Jane Carroll of Moulton, has walked off a bluff to follow her dream. She has completely changed her life and her life's work.

She walked away from a fulfilling occupation in the medical field to become an author, motivational speaker and personal coach.

Carroll grew up in Moulton and graduated from Lawrence County High School. She got her nursing degree, got married and had two daughters.

"I have worked in private practice and at the hospitals in Moulton and Foley," Carroll said recently as she relaxed in a comfortable chair in her little rented house in Moulton. In her lap was a lovely, long-haired white cat with the improbable name of Pepper.

"I was director of home health at Lawrence County," she continued. "And I was head maternity nurse in Foley."

Carroll was living in Gulf Shores when life began to change for her. She was divorced and had raised her daughters.

She had always enjoyed writing but had never done anything except pieces for professional journals and seminars. She wrote for her own recreation. Still, she decided to write a book anyway.

"I started out wanting to do something on the 'empty nest' thing," she said. "But I didn't take to it."

That is when she met Bertha. Or rather, that's when she created Bertha as a sort of alter-ego who helps Carroll achieve a balance in her life.

In the book, "Bertha-Size Your Life" free spirit Bertha comes to life in a series of short motivational and inspirational messages in very short stories.

Bertha, you see, has one goal in life and that is to feel good. But it isn't in the hedonistic feel good of "if it feels good, do it." Bertha's philosophy is that people should always choose to feel good and you do that by choosing to have good thoughts and not bad ones.

"Bertha-Size Your Life" is Carroll's first book. Carroll called on the talents of her sister Cindy Collins, to illustrate the book and give a face to the sometimes outrageous Bertha.

As she was creating Bertha, Carroll began to think that changing her life would be a good thing so with Bertha's help she did change.

She wrote the book while living in Gulf Shores.

"I was lucky that the property values had gone up so much," Carroll said. "I sold my house there and moved back home to Moulton. That has allowed me to make the change and finance myself."

Carroll is now developing a career as an author. She has another book about Bertha that she must have to her publisher in a couple of months for a fall publication and she is working on a guided journal.

She has spoken to high school classes, Even Start classes and church groups.

Her plans to become a personal coach are also progressing.

"I want to work with individuals who have a goal to reach or a problem to solve and help them move forward," Carroll said.

A personal coach begins with where a person is in their life and works with them to achieve

change.

"No one likes change," Carroll said. "We will often keep on doing something we don't like rather than make a change."

Like Bertha, Carroll wants to coach people into making changes they like.

"The idea is to de-program what doesn't fit and redefine or re-invent yourself into something that does fit," she said. "I also want to help women achieve more balance in their lives,"

Carroll believes that people who can balance their lives enjoy life more and are happier.

She has made those changes herself and re-invented herself. But not all has worked out as she planned.

"I sold my house and quit my job to write more," she said. "but I think I had more time when I was working."

Carroll isn't too worried about what she will do if this career as author and speaker doesn't work out.

"I am doing what I wanted to do," she said. "I can always change again."

Right now she has Bertha to keep her headed in the new direction she has chosen for her life.

"Her whole purpose is to make you look at your life just a little differently," Carroll said.

By this time Pepper had found her way to the rug in the dining room floor and sat like a regal queen, twitching her tail. Her attitude was a little like Bertha's. Although the cat's name sounded like something Bertha would come up with, Carroll said Bertha was not to blame.

Pepper and Bertha are interesting companions for Carroll. No doubt, Bertha would have something to say about Carroll's procrastination over meeting the upcoming deadline.

Bertha does make some good points.

If you are interested in what Bertha has to say, "Bertha-Size Your Life" can be found at Vickie's and the Gift Room in Moulton.

