

# A hopeful story of alcoholism, redemption

**READERS, MARK** your calendar for a Cache Valley literary event this evening, Dec. 4, at The Book Table in downtown Logan. The author who is featured in this week's column, Frank Richardson, and a host of other authors will be appearing at the store from 4 p.m. to midnight for a special event called "Midnight Madness."

Appearing with Richardson will be Dorothy Keddington, Jeff Jeppson, Linda Chadwick, Pam June and Koltn Burbank. Here is your chance to meet and talk books with several authors and get a signed copy of your favorites for yourself or Christmas giving.

**"Where the Sun Rises" by Frank Richardson (Bonneville Books, 2009, \$14.99)**

Utah author Frank Richardson makes his fiction debut with "Where the Sun Rises." His book shows none of the obvious markers of a new author. He exhibits the mature writing style of an old pro — tight storyline, well-developed characters and a topic that is worth the few hours it will take to read his book. Of added interest to my Utah and Idaho readers are the locales the protagonist visits during his life-changing journey.

Hatcher Stephens III has lived it all — from the heights of success and wealth to a Seattle gutter where he awakens from an all-too-frequent drunken binge. Having lost family, friends and profession, he is touched by an urgency that he must go east — "where the sun rises" — in order to turn his life around. A series of unlikely events brings Hatcher to people who help him start the long journey back from alcoholism and toward something he has lacked his entire life: character.

"Fighting a headache and dizziness, he gradually opened both eyes. He was lying beside his own car, his BMW Z4 3.0 Road-

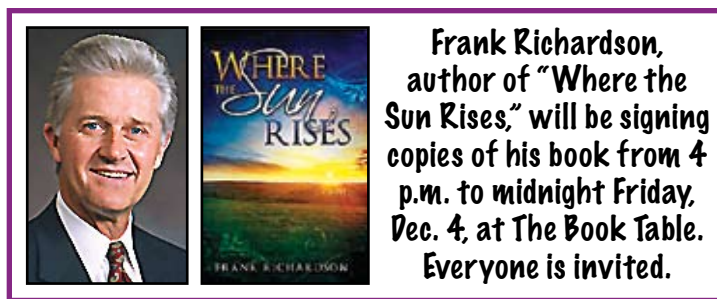


## Regional Reads

By Charlene Hirschi

ster. The car was his first — and these days, his only — love, one of the few vestiges of his vanishing world." He finds he is unable to get up from the curb and realizes not only has he disgraced himself by wetting his pants, but that this is also the "very sort of thing people scorned in the behavior of drunks. Loss of control. Slurred speech. Public display of bodily functions." As his mind clears of his drunken stupor, he realizes he has managed to lose the keys to his car. After finally standing upright, he takes the first few steps of the fateful walk that starts him on his way to sobriety.

Hatcher, soon to be Hatch, has never asked for help from anyone, never said thank you or apologized to another human being. Hatcher was born with the proverbial silver spoon in his mouth. Yet on this first night of his odyssey, he is broke, hopeless and taking refuge in a doorway of St. Mark's Presbyterian Church in Bellevue when he is discovered by a security guard. Trevor Martin quickly recognizes a man in the throes of drying out and takes him home, where Hatcher wakes up several days later unable to understand why Trevor is trying



**Frank Richardson, author of "Where the Sun Rises," will be signing copies of his book from 4 p.m. to midnight Friday, Dec. 4, at The Book Table. Everyone is invited.**

to help him or his tough-love approach to rehabilitation.

Through Trevor he meets Sylvia, who becomes another mentor and his first employer. Sylvia is a bit skeptical of hiring an attorney to work in her little shop, but decides to give him a try. Both she and Hatch are surprised at his aptitude for retail sales and although he toys with the idea several times of returning home to his ex-wife and children, he realizes his current situation is a buffer between him and the problems that face him in the real world.

He promises Sylvia he will stay until after the Christmas holidays and continues to enjoy his work and sobriety until some unfinished business from his old life catches up with him and Trevor literally beats him up for endangering Sylvia's life. After four months of sobriety, Trevor decides it is time for Hatch to learn a lesson in character building. In a confrontation over why Hatch would hide behind Sylvia rather than being a man and standing up for himself,

Hatch admits his motivation was his fear of being hit in the face — "without warning, Trevor's right fist flashed in front of Hatch's face, striking him full in the mouth." Failing to defend himself, Trevor continues to pummel Hatch until he explains, between punches, "I'm showing you that you can survive having your face busted! I'm hoping you'll discover that your face is not the most valuable asset you have to protect."

Enter mentor No. 3: Mark Lester of Nampa, Idaho. Mark picks up Hatch from the side of the road after he leaves Bellevue, again headed for Denver. In the course of their ride, they discover they have a common interest in prestige cars and Mark convinces Hatch to sojourn in Nampa for a while before moving on. His stay in Nampa extends for more than six months and once again Hatch learns a lot about himself and character building. When he finally leaves Nampa he has money in the bank, he is still sober and his confidence in himself and his life

has grown in leaps and bounds, but he still feels the urgency of continuing his search for "where the sun rises."

To his complete surprise, that place turns out to be Snowville, Utah, a small stop in the road near the Utah/Idaho border. Here Hatch finally comes face to face with his demons and, through a dying woman, finally finds the courage to make the fateful call to Patty, his ex, and "travel with the sun as it moved west."

Will Patty believe his recovery and accept him back? Will all Hatch has learned in this extended wandering and soul searching be enough to rebuild his life and regain his family and profession? Or like so many others, will the struggles and realities of life push him back to the bottle?

These are valid questions. As the daughter of an alcoholic, I know from personal experience the good intentions and struggles of a drinker who finally drank himself to death at the young age of 52. This book has strong messages about character and the destructiveness of alcoholism for the inflicted, his/her family and business associates. I could sympathize with Hatch, having seen my dad struggle with these same demons, but at the same time I could understand Patty's dilemma when she says, "I'm afraid to hope again."

Feedback at [www.charlenehirschi.com](http://www.charlenehirschi.com).

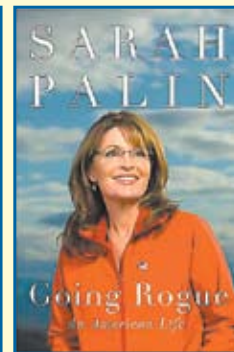
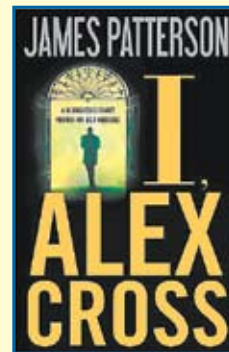
## \* This week's New York Times Bestseller List \*

### HARDCOVER FICTION

1. "I, Alex Cross" by James Patterson
2. "Under the Dome" by Stephen King
3. "The Lost Symbol" by Dan Brown
4. "Ford County" by John Grisham
5. "The Help" by Kathryn Stockett

### HARDCOVER NONFICTION

1. "Going Rogue" by Sarah Palin
2. "Open" by Andre Agassi
3. "Have a Little Faith" by Mitch Albom
4. "Arguing With Idiots" by Glenn Beck
5. "A Simple Christmas" by Mike Huckabee



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