

Ross enjoying life as published author

By MATT SHURRIE
Signal-Star Editor

Reta Ross is the latest in a growing list of published authors.

And she couldn't be happier about it.

Thanks to a new company called InstaBook Canada, the Goderich native has already published *Artful Deception* and a second novel – *Focused Desire* – is in its final edit and will be published very soon.

"It's like a dream come true for me," said Ross when asked about InstaBook's technology that works like a photocopier but makes books. Through the process books are made one at a time and are similar to those found on bookstore shelves.

Ross, a former University of Western Ontario writing student, earned her creative writing certificate from The Writing School, Quality of Course (Q.O.C.) in Ottawa and has been a member of the Goderich Book Club for more than a decade. As a former advertising/copywriter with Volvo/Champion Road Machinery – she retired in 2000 after 28 years – writing has always come naturally to Ross and sparked a desire to tackle a novel.

"I wanted to write a romance novel that wasn't really predictable," Ross said. "To me it's escapism. Writing is a great method of relaxation."

Ross called *Artful Deception* "pure fantasy" for both readers and the author.

"It's a chick book and not meant to be taken seriously," Ross said. "The characters exist only in my mind. I often get the inspiration for a character from a real person but by the next time I process the idea through my imagination the results seldom bear a resemblance to anyone."

Ross said one of the biggest challenges she faced as an author was the prospect of trying to sell the book to potential publishers and then being left to deal with upwards of 10,000 books being printed at a time. Thanks to InstaBook Canada, a company based in Stoney Creek, Ont., Ross was able to get 10 books printed initially and 30 each time after that.

An accomplished painter, Ross was even able to design her own book covers selecting two of her paintings.

"I was a little bit afraid of printing 10,000 books at a time," Ross said. "That's why I put my book in the drawer for six years. Then I saw an advertisement in the *London Free Press and Globe and Mail* and went to their website.

"It encouraged me to start writing again."

Ross described her second book, *Focused Desire*, as a modern-day romance with a corporate setting thanks to her career with Champion/Volvo.

"The other localities are a little more exotic including South America, especially Venezuela and

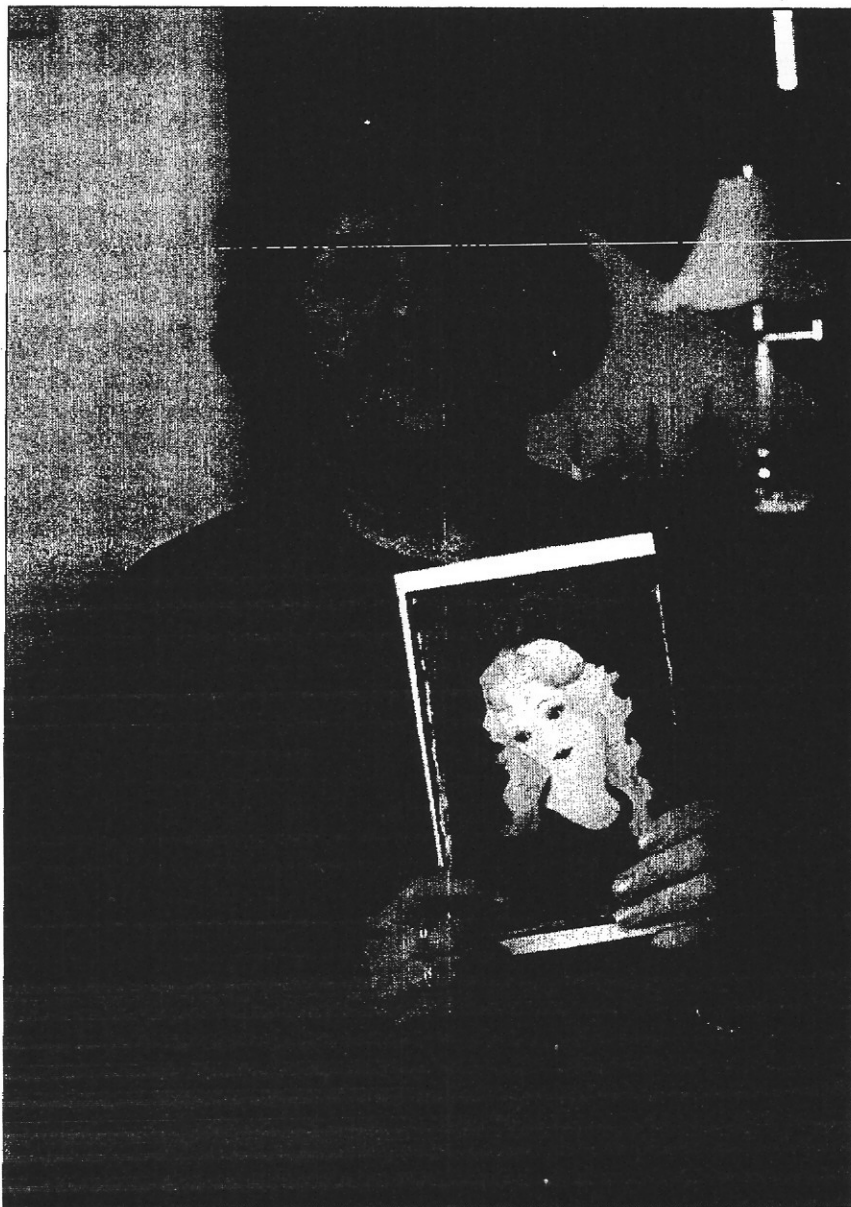


Photo by Matt Shurrie

Goderich resident Reta Ross is the latest in a growing list of published authors thanks to a new company called InstaBook Canada. Her first book, *Artful Deception*, is available at Fincher's on The Square.

Angel Fall and Cuba," Ross said. "These are some of the places where I traveled with my late husband."

InstaBook Canada president Dave Di Marcantonio said the idea for his product first came to light almost three years ago after reading an article about major problems the book industry was facing with returns and books going out of print.

"I didn't have any experience with the book industry but the notion came up in my mind and I said why don't they just produce those kinds of books as they're needed," Di Marcantonio said.

From there Di Marcantonio found a company in the United States – InstaBook Corporation – that had been working on just that for a number of years. A partnership between the two was formed and soon the former plastics injection and moulding developer was a publisher.

"It's interesting to note that the applications for InstaBook go well beyond the traditional book industry," Di Marcantonio said. "We've assessed applications for doing procedural materials, human resource materials, family histories for the person who wants to record their lineage and to provide something for their family as a memory."

"My fiance and I are going to put a

book together for the people at our wedding whereby there's a little history of the couple and we talk a little bit about our family and our favourite recipes."

Di Marcantonio said where InstaBook Canada differs from traditional publishing firms is the fact that their customers are the publisher and his company is just providing a self-publishing service to them.

"We don't undertake the marketing or the promotion of our customer's books," Di Marcantonio said. "We provide all the technical mechanisms that are needed to get their book into print including what we call technical design."

InstaBook Canada's technology allows for a desk-sized copier to be placed anywhere within a space of seven feet by two-and-a-half feet. To date the company has set up two 'Digital Bookstores' in Oakville and Cambridge.

Ross has already started to work on her third book based in the fictional community of Watersburg – a town very similar to Goderich. In fact, the story opens with the arrival of the Tall Ships.

Ross's books are available for purchase locally at Fincher's on The Square. For more information about InstaBook Canada visit www.instabook.ca.