

INTERVIEW

Please Welcome
Barbara Custer



Contributed by Delores Thornton

Interview with **Barbara Custer**
Author of *Night To Dawn*

Meet Barbara Custer, a respiratory therapist by day and author by night. Her first book, *Twilight Healer*, was a tremendous success, and now she's entered the world of magazine publishing, with *Night To Dawn*. The magazine takes a look at vampires via articles, reviews, poetry, and short stories.

I shivered while reading NTD, and thought of years past when I looked at the television show, *Dark Shadows*, featuring Barnabas, the vampire. "The Little Vampire" by Brett Blumfield, spoke of a little girl who's become a vampire. Ridiculed at school, she is ready to repay her classmates. "Count Dracula's Commencement Address To the Graduating Class of The Lord Charles D. Razar School For Hemophiliacs", by William Lengeman III, is the story of an ageless Count. He became distracted after two students had blood trickling down their faces; one from being accidentally hit in the lip, and the other suffered a nosebleed. Feeling that he couldn't continue his speech, the Count excuses himself leaves the stage.

NTD also has an outstanding review of Bram's Stoker's *DRACULA* (1993) by Mary Catherine Schisler. Says Schisler, "Opulent, lush and dazzlingly irresistible, this is Dracula as you've never seen him."

Emily Veinglory has several offerings included in NTD, including "The Old Watchmaker" a poem which starts off with, "It is always silent for the dead."

Other contributors include: Ricky D. Cooper, William Douglas Goodman, Christopher Harris, Harrison Howe, Nancy Jackson, Tom Johnson, Aurelio Rico Lopez III, Douglas McKinstry, Elizabeth Hattie Pierce, David B. Riley, and David Wilson.

[Blackrefer.com's Interview With Barbara Custer](#)

DT: I know you've been busy marketing and promoting your book, *Twilight Healer*. How difficult was it for you to publish the magazine *Night To Dawn*?

BC: Publishing had its difficult moments, but I count myself blessed to have a good friend who has talked me through the procedures. Editing and formatting is easy, but takes a lot of time. I love picking out the artwork for each story. I got lucky again with the printing, and found a commercial printer who charges reasonable fees.

DT: What made you want to go into the publishing business?

BC: When I started writing in earnest, I found myself admiring the work editors did with their magazines. I particularly loved writing for The Vampire's Crypt and Night To Dawn. Sometime before the last issue, Dawn informed her readers that the magazine would fold unless someone agreed to take over the reins. It sounded like a great opportunity, and after talking it over with some good buddies, I offered to keep the magazine going.



Author of Night To Dawn
Barbara Custer

DT: What has been your greatest obstacle? What have you done to try to overcome it?

BC: : Formatting the magazine covers. The artwork comes in full page size (necessary for most pages), but the scanner will only go to 50% size for the covers (to allow room for title and other things). The thing is, 50% is too small, so it means working the mouse to stretch it, and making sure it goes in the center of the page (such pictures love to stray). My friend's been real nice about helping with the covers. In the meantime, I keep practicing until I get it right.

DT: Where did you find the authors who submitted material? Who did the artwork?

BC: Ginger Johnson, former editor of Detective Mystery Stories, sent many writers my way; also, some of Dawn's writers now send me stories. Ginger also referred me to www.ralan.com, a listing for SF/F/H magazines, and I've gotten great submissions through that site. I also picked up some tales from members of the authors' on-line support groups.

DT: Are you seeking contributors for upcoming editions?

BC: At the moment, I have enough fiction and poetry submissions for issue 7 (due in April) and most of 8. I am actively seeking review submissions. I'd like to include about 3 to 4 reviews with each issue. I will probably be looking for more fiction / poetry during the spring months.

DT: Since your publication deals with vampires I'm hoping you can tell Blackrefer.com readers how popular this genre is today.

BC: From what I've seen, I'd say that it depends on where you live. In my town, many people shy away from reading horror. But I get a lot of submissions from England, and readers in Chicago. Ralan advertises a lot of vampire magazines on his site. The young adults and teens seem to like it. The trick is, having a twist to the original vampire theme.

DT: Where can readers purchase copies of Night To Dawn? Approximately how many subscribers do you have?

BC: Readers can order copies through Pay Pal by logging on to <http://www.bloodredshadows.com>. For those who do not use Pay Pal, they can mail a check (\$7.00, which includes postage) to me at: Barbara Custer, P. O. Box 643, Abington, PA 19001. For those living near Philadelphia, Doylestown Book Shop has copies of Twilight Healer and Night To Dawn available. At this point, I have five subscribers, but I've gotten decent sales from friends of writers whose work appeared in issue 6; also coworkers and people I've met through the on-line groups.

DT: What are people saying about the magazine?

BC: Most people have told me that they were really impressed with the stories, poetry, and artwork. My website offers a page devoted to Night To Dawn. At the bottom, I've included comments from different readers. I was pleasantly surprised by the favorable comments.

DT: Where do you see the magazine in next three years? What are your plans to increase circulation?

BC: At this point in time, I'm seeking to elevate vampire fiction to a more creative plane. I hope to garner more sales and favorable reviews. If the demand becomes significant, I'm open to publishing 3 to 4 times a year. To increase circulation, I plan to bring copies of the magazine to

book signings. I am considering doing a press release and sending to newspapers. I'm publishing more new writers this time, and I'm hoping that their friends will want to buy copies. Another good buddy did a flyer for the magazine, and I've had business cards made up as well. I'm also leaving flyers, cards, and sample copies on table at writers' conferences.

DT: Do you have any tips for others who may be thinking of starting their own magazine?

BC: Yes. For starters, read many magazines to see how it's done, particularly in your specific genre. Also, I recommend finding a mentor to talk you through the production process. Perhaps an editor you've written for a long time might be willing to help. Finally, start your promotion about three months or so before the magazine goes into print.

DT: We here at Blackrefer.com commend you on your literary success and we wish you well!

Contact Barbara at <http://www.bloodredshadows.com>



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