

Hurry! This is your last chance to save!
SAVE \$15
 on this year's most unique gift!



Buy this hardcover book and get your holiday shopping done.

Buy Now!
 presented by
 Democrat-Herald LEBANON EXPRESS
 MID-VALLEY

ALBANY Democrat-Herald

Hot Topics [Munchys Delivery is expanding its operation into Corvallis](#) [Man convicted of 2010 firebombing at](#)

[Home](#) / [News](#) / [Local](#)

Linn woman recounts her early years, Apache heritage in memoir

BOOK REVIEW: 'BEAR WALKS WITH ME'



[x]

Author Donna Vail in her backyard near Tangent. (David Patton/Democrat-Herald)

[Buy Now](#)

May 15, 2012 6:00 am • [By Glenda Suklis, For the Democrat-Herald](#)

[\(0\) Comments](#)

"Bear Walks With Me" by D. Vail

Author D. (Donna) Vail has written an exciting, inspiring autobiography of her first 20 years. Vail is half Apache and proud of her Indian heritage. She lives in the country near Tangent with her husband, Gene, and they have two grown sons.

"Dickensian" is the word that kept coming to my mind as I read "Bear Walks With Me." Vail's childhood was filled with eccentric and sometimes evil people and amazing adventures.

Born in 1938, she was raised by her grandparents for her first six years, after their daughter-in-law abandoned her on their small California ranch.

The six years are filled with love and joy, and the couple taught her ethics, as well as giving her chores. In that short time she learned about ranching and animals, and even how to ride horses and milk cows.

Her "Apache father" (her grandfather) teaches her the rudiments of his culture and faith and tells her that her guardian spirit is a bear. The small child puts great faith in her protective bear spirit.

Then things start to go wrong. The book details her struggles in the custody of several dysfunctional families. There are heroes, inept thugs, really evil villains and the many people who mean well but don't listen.

Donna is kidnapped and almost murdered and placed in juvenile detention after running away because her life was in danger.

The book is written through the eyes of the child, and the reader is constantly surprised by what she sees and understands and the naivete that causes her not to understand some important things.

Vail is clearly a survivor, guided by her grandfather's motto for tough times, "This Too Will Pass," and by her faith in her guardian bear.

The book is both big and long: 8-by-11 inches and 510 pages. You have to sit at a table to read it.

But the child's journey as she first learns the important things in life and then learns about poverty, meanness, jealousy and greed, makes it worth the time spent. It would make a fantastic movie!

The author's drawings illustrate the book charmingly, as they also show the world through the child's eyes.

Copies of the book can be purchased by sending a check or money order for \$33.95 (which includes shipping) to Bear Walks With Me, P.O. Box 1774, Albany, OR, 97321-0494. Ask for an autographed copy if you want one.

Glenda Suklis is a retired employee of the Democrat-Herald news department.

Copyright 2015 Albany Democrat Herald. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed.

Tags [Apache](#), [Glenda Suklis](#), [D. Vail](#), [Donna Vail](#), [Bear Walk With Me](#), [Memoir](#)

You May Like

Promoted Links by Taboola

Transferring your credit card balance to a 21-month 0% APR is brilliant

NextAdvisor

Lowe's still plans to open shop in Albany

The Fastest Way To Pay Off \$10,000 In Credit Card Debt

LendingTree

Hurry! This is your last chance to save!
SAVE \$15
on this year's most unique gift!

Buy Now!
presented by
Democrat-Herald LEBANON EXPRESS
MID-VALLEY

Buy this hardcover book and get your holiday shopping done.

