

'The Veterinarian's Wife, A Memoir'

Susie Berta set to publish memoir in 2021

BY LAUREL HUSTER
laurel@newnan.com

Writing comes naturally to Susie Berta, and so do stories about her life married to a veterinarian.

Berta's memoir "The Veterinarian's Wife, A Memoir" is a collection of essays that are snapshots in time of her life, and is due to be released in 2021.

Writing beginnings

Berta said she has always been a writer from the time she was born in Phoenix, Arizona. Her dad worked for a newspaper, and her mom was a ghostwriter, so Berta said writing is in her blood.

Her family moved to Atlanta when she was 7 years old, and all through school she would labor over her essays and book reports. She wrote all kinds of different things.

"My mom was my editor," Berta said. "She was my biggest fan and worst critic."

Berta was also a talented singer and focused much of her attention there. She said as time went on, she focused more on singing and less on writing.

Through adulthood she had a career as a vocalist singing in shows, cabarets and weddings.

She sang with the Atlanta Symphony and even toured Europe with the group.

Berta said as she got older, her voice began aging, and she wasn't happy with the sound she was producing, so she decided to stop performing.

"I was lost for a little while about what I would do with myself," Berta said.

In 2003, she decided to return to school to earn a degree in art. She went to school for a full four years, starting at the Atlanta College of Art and graduating from the Savannah College of Art and Design. After



Susie Berta and her husband, Rick.

PHOTOS COURTESY SUSIE BERTA



Susie Berta designed the cover of her memoir, "The Veterinarian's Wife, A Memoir."

she earned her degree, she had knee surgery.

During her recuperation, she started a "Word Nerd" blog, writing about interesting words she came across while reading the New York Times. Berta also started a blog about gardening.

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Blogging brought Berta back into the swing of writing. She said she had tried for years to get her husband,



Susie Berta with her family at the botanical gardens. Pictured from left are Berta; her son, Scott; grandsons Sawyer and Harper; and husband Rick.

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The following is a description of "The Veterinarian's Wife, A Memoir" written by Susie Berta from her website, www.susieberta.com.



Rick and Susie Berta on their wedding day in 1971.

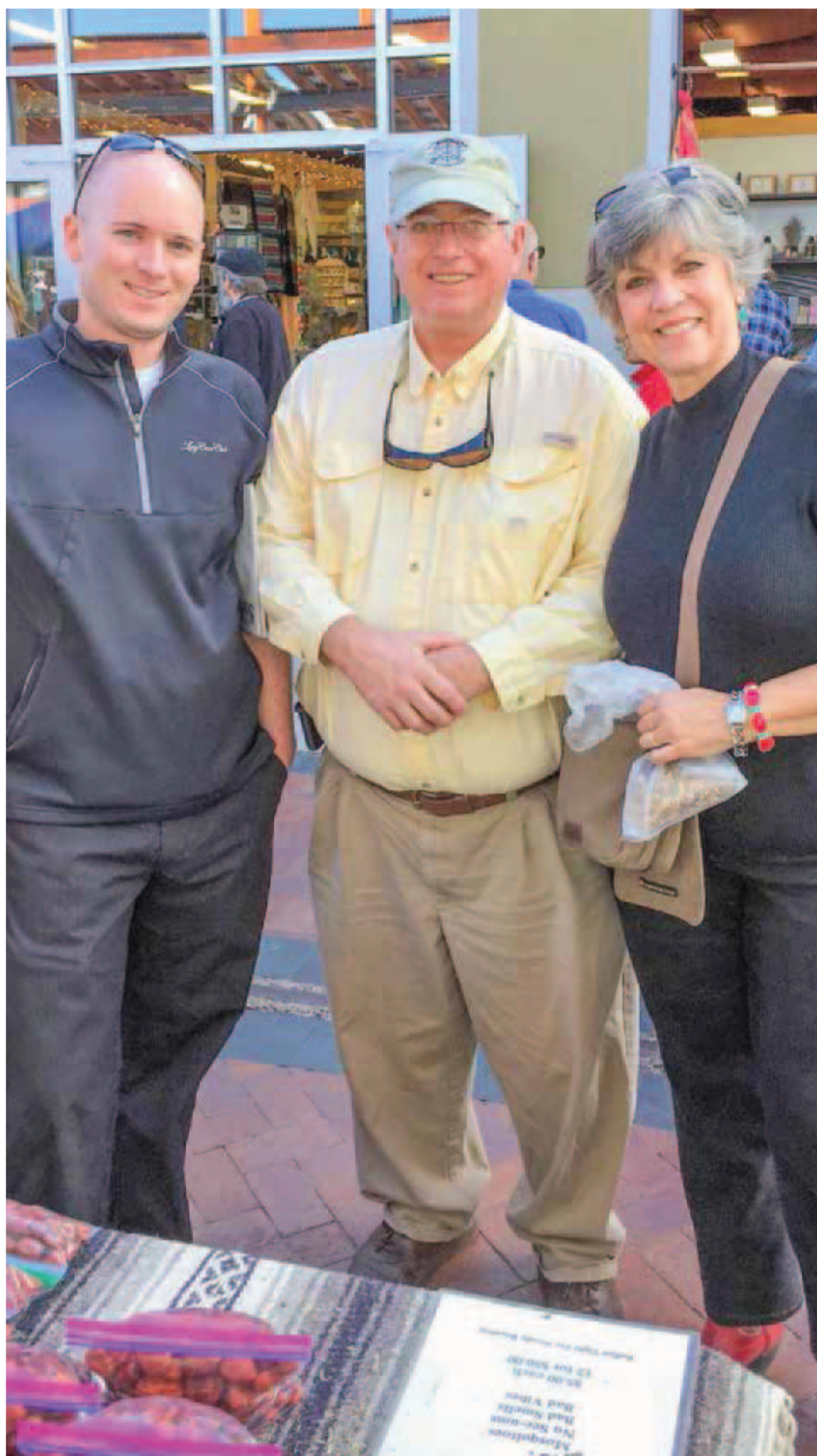
Why was there a calf in our bathtub, and a pig in my car? Who was the leggy blonde who became the love of my life when we rescued him from a pseudo psychiatrist, an abusive, real-life Cruella Deville? What happens when a wife and mother spins all the domestic plates: marriage, children, career, depression, therapy, a return to school late in life, aging, grandchildren, and retirement while her husband focuses on a career requiring life and death decisions every day?

As the wife of a veterinarian, I have so much to tell from my perspective. I've written a memoir full of personal essays, snapshots in time. My stories are an inside peek into the veterinarian's world and that of his wife. Who doesn't love stories with animals? Along with the animals are reflections of our personal lives. All these stories engender laughter, tears, joy, despair, insight, anger, and wonderment. We have experienced fully human, impactful lives, full of triumphs and losses,

professional and personal, his, mine, *and* ours.

How did we manage together? We couldn't be more different: he is a rugged outdoorsman and workaholic; I am a city girl with refined tastes and was a diva with a singing career. He cares nothing about clothes. I have a walk-in closet full. He is quiet. I performed for a living. I toured Europe with the Atlanta Symphony, while he took our boys mud-boggin' at the county raceway. He has no sense of aesthetics. I have a degree in art. If it weren't for me, he says, we'd be living in a block hut with dirt floors. I say over my dead body. How did we make it through fifty years together? How did we support each other? What happened when we lost our way for a while? How did we save our marriage? Why are we happy? What did each of us sacrifice and compromise in favor of our careers, marriage, and children?

And really, why *was* there a calf in our bathtub, and a pig in my car?



Susie Berta, right, and her husband, Rick, center, with their youngest son, Nick.

BERTA

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Rick, to write a book about the stories he told about his life as a veterinarian.

"I said, 'If you don't, I'll do it, and I'll do it from my point of view,'" Berta said.

Berta said she sat down and started writing some of the stories that tell about so many parts of her life. She said the essays range from stories about being a veterinarian's wife to everyday struggles with marriage and having children.

"Everybody loves stories about animals," Berta said. "It's an interesting book that not many people can tell from my viewpoint."

She said there are books written from a veterinarian's point of view, about what the job is like and what they had to sacrifice to make it

work, but not many from the point of view of their spouse.

Berta said the essays in "The Veterinarian's Wife, A Memoir" come together as a picture of her life. She said the essays are funny, tragic, interesting and have a little bit of everything.

The Berta family

Berta and Rick, met on a blind date in high school. They were married in 1971, and shortly after that they moved to Tuskegee, Alabama, for Rick to attend veterinary school.

She said they spent four years in Tuskegee before moving to Virginia, where Rick worked at an equine clinic for two years. They moved to Newnan in 1977, and Rick started his own veterinary practice using one of the bedrooms in their house as an office.

Berta said Rick was a vet for large animals for a number of years before

deciding to work with smaller animals. Now he works one day a week at the Moreland Animal Hospital.

Berta and Rick have two sons and two grandsons. Scott, their eldest son, lives in Newnan with his girlfriend, Valerie Noland, and his two sons, Harper and Sawyer.

Their youngest son, Nick, works as an executive chef in Hong Kong.

Berta is still working on "The Veterinarian's Wife, A Memoir," but said it will be released in 2021. Using her art degree, Berta designed the cover of the book herself.

A chapter from her memoir about pregnancy loss entitled "May Day May Day" was recently published on herstryblg.com.

Updates about "The Veterinarian's Wife, A Memoir" and links to Berta's social media accounts can be found on her website, www.susieberta.com.