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May 21, 2001

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Author Publishes Novel on Molly Maguires and Modocs of Pennsylvania

Steve Varonka of Bloomsburg has published his first novel, Molly Justice, a story of the Molly Maguires of Mahanoy City, Pennsylvania, and their multi-front war of survival against the Welsh Modocs, the English and German vigilantes, and the Coal and Iron Police of the Philadelphia and Reading Railroad.

The fast moving book centers around Pat Casserly, an Irishman caught in the middle of all of these groups and the town vigilance committee. A very popular man, Pat is sought by the Mollies to become a member and, as a result, increase their numbers since he commands such great respect in the community. Ethnic prejudice, class distinction and corporate greed themes are present throughout the book. Although a novel, Molly Justice is rich in anthracite history.

In addition to his work as a writer, Varonka is facilities manager for the Geisinger Health System at Geisinger Wyoming Valley Medical Center in Wilkes-Barre. A graduate of Thomas A. Edison State College in Trenton, New Jersey, with a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration, he was born and raised in Mahanoy City, scene of his book. He and his wife, Joan, reside in Bloomsburg. The couple has two children, Heather—a physical therapy assistant residing in Dover, Delaware—and Matthew, a sophomore at Penn State University.

Illustrations for the book were provided by Leslie Young, a member of the facility development design and construction department at Geisinger. A graduate of Lock Haven University with a degree in early childhood education and a minor in art, she resides in Danville with her husband, Kevin.

Molly Justice is available at many fine bookstores including Friends in Mind, Bloomsburg; Tudor Books, Kingston and Clarks Summit; the Mauch Chunk Museum, Jim Thorpe; and The Museum of Anthracite Mining, Ashland. It is also available on-line at www.coalhole.com.

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