

*The Wacky
fun
treasure world
of
imagination writer*

Mike Romano

By JEAN BARTLETT | THE WEEK OF 2-18-19–2-24-19

*Read this interview and link to
6 Romano Tales*

"When I was a kid, I was a Boy Scout and I used to see all kinds of things in the forest," longtime Pacifican Mike Romano said. "I always thought it would be cool if I found a Sasquatch boy my age to play with because the other kids just couldn't keep up with the way my brain worked."

In 2018, this prolific children's book writer made his never-found, but never-forgotten, Sasquatch friend the inspiration for his book, "**Sasquatch Junior High.**"

"Three sisters live in a rural wooded part of Montana," Mike explained. "Their family's property butts up against a National Forest region of many thousands of acres of beautiful woods, meadows and water in many forms. It's their last campout together before school begins. On their second night out, they hear a muffled cry and decide to investigate."

Thankful to be guided by a bright moon, the sisters follow a thin trail upwards from their camp, into a tall cave.

"Our three flashlights really lit up the place," Mike's narrator Isla notes. "WHOA!! What the heck was that!!" one of us, or all of us yelled. I wasn't rightly sure at that point."

"The sisters see a young person with his leg caught by a rock," Mike said in an incident-type whisper. "They all point their flashlights at him and they see he's around their age. They know instantly they have met a new friend. But he's a friend who is a little off the beaten friend path. He's a Sasquatch. However, his English is pretty



(Jean Bartlett photo)

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perfect and he's a curious guy and hey, with a few snips here and there – okay some serious shaving and waxing, and maybe a vacuum – he can come to their house, meet their folks and stay for dinner."

How will a curious, smart Sasquatch do hanging out with non-Sasquatch folks? Find out at the end of this interview, where "Sasquatch Junior High" is linked, along with five other original "Romano" tales. Right now the focus is on the author – a page turner in his own right. Here is an abridged version of some of his life's bullet points.

His folks introduced him to Danish author and prolific fairy tale writer Hans Christian Andersen when he was little. Andersen remains Mike's favorite author of all time. As a pre-teen in East Los Angeles, he and some friends ran *The El Sereno Voice*. The kid newspaper was six pages and sold at two cents a copy, providing its staff with a profit. That's when Mike realized he had a knack for sales, a knack that continues to serve him well.

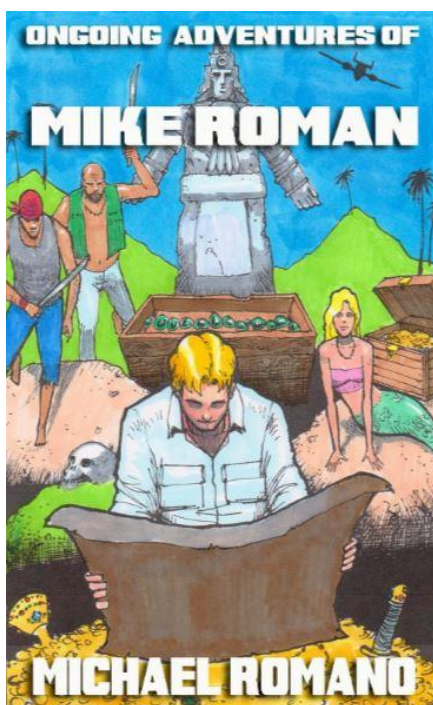
During Vietnam, he served as a corpsman in the Marines. Home from Vietnam, he went to work for Glendale Ambulance. Then he moved to Northern California to work for San Francisco Ambulance. He was the first licensed paramedic in California "or anywhere."

It was medicine that introduced him to Joanne. She was a medical assistant at a doctor's office in San Francisco's West Portal neighborhood. San Francisco Ambulance got the emergency call and Mike arrived to assist with a patient having a heart issue in the reception area. Mike saw Joanne, Joanne saw Mike, and they've been married now for 43 years. Oh, and the patient lived too.

The husband, father and grandfather is 85 percent Southern Italian, 10 percent Greek, 1 percent Mongol and the rest is Austrian, with the latter providing ancestors like Marie Antoinette. Very successful in business, Mike has been an insurance agent with Farmers since 1988. His office is in Pacifica's Rockaway neighborhood.

He's always told his kids stories. Back in 2012, one of his daughters told him he had better start writing these stories down. And so he did.

"I have 20 stories in the can and 66 either done, pretty done or in some incarnation or another," Mike said.



Like Hans Christian Andersen, Mike creates each story while in the process of telling it.

"I have no idea what is coming up next. It just pours out of me. I am as excited as the kids are when I read it. I want to know what happens next."

The ideas generally arrive at 2:38 a.m., when he wakes up to use the facilities. Then he immediately starts typing. He might start seven different stories in a week or continue just to work on one. He goes with however the muse strikes him.

"One of my completed stories is 'The Ongoing Adventures of Mike Roman,' with artwork by Hoeh Kim. This story was unusual in that the whole story played itself out (in my head) in color, all at once and from beginning to end. I wrote it in three days. In this 'Mike Roman' story (I have to put a version of myself in one of my stories!), this character studies everything he can about his favorite thing, Peter Pan. Now in real life, Peter Pan is my favorite character. So, the fictional Mike Roman gets all the notes and stories by Peter Pan's author, J.M. Barrie. He even gets the Barrie map that shows the way to the second star on the right.

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Then he flies to the Peter Pan's famous island, Neverland. But the only one still there is a lone mermaid. She cooks him a meal and talks to him about Peter. Then she gives this Mike Roman fellow a cloth that has little bows on it and each time he pulls one of those bows, a hologram comes up and he is able to travel to places that everyone thinks are myths but are actually very real – like The Seven Cities of Gold."

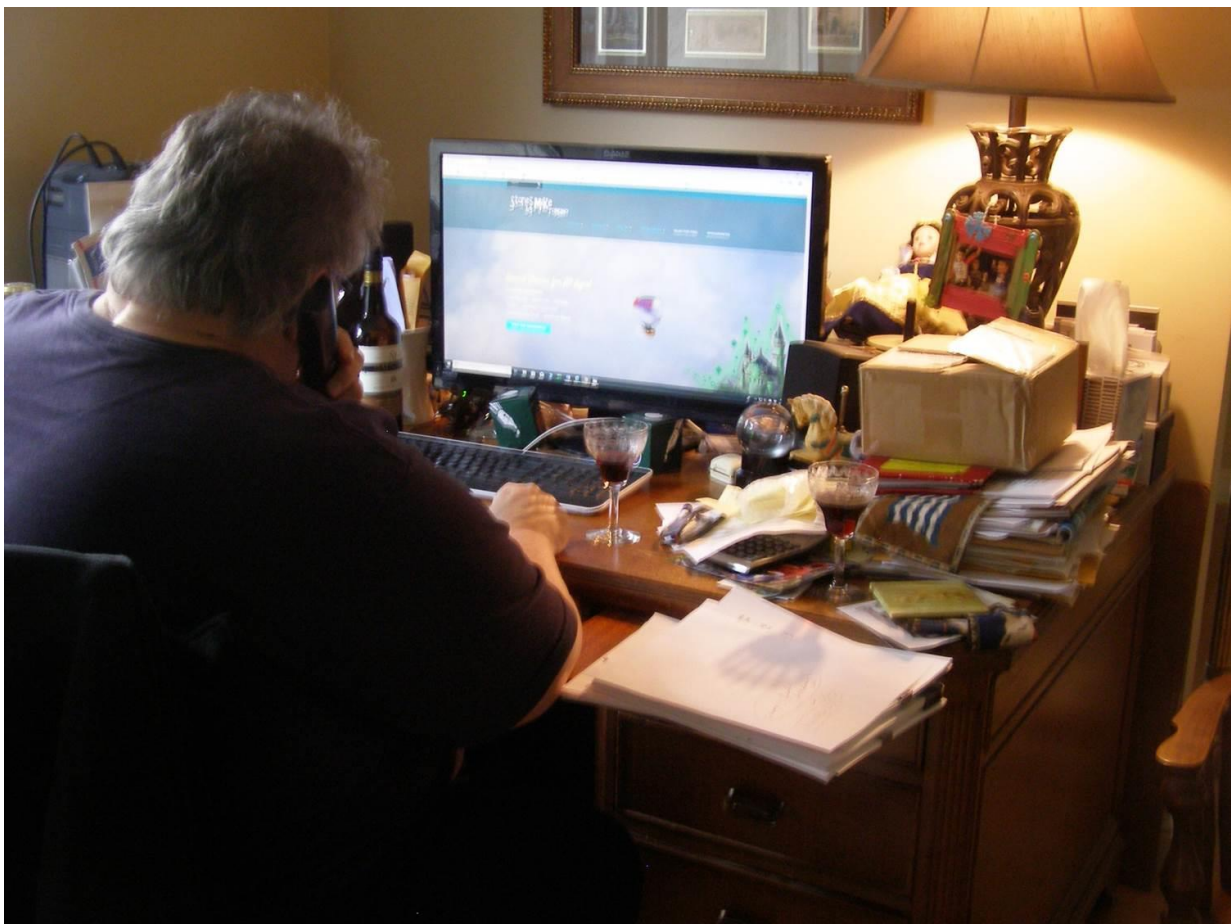
A teaser of "The Ongoing Adventures of Mike Roman," can be found on Mike Romano's website: <http://storiesbymikeromano.com/the-ongoing-adventures-of-mike-roman/>.

"In every one of my tales," Mike continued, "there is a modicum of truth somewhere, because it started 'somewhere.' In Mike Roman's story, his grandpa used to tell him all these stories. In my life, my uncles told me all these stories."

In the fictional Mike Roman tale, the character goes in search of the truth behind his grandfather's stories. In the author life of Mike Romano, he journeys the chambers of his mind to offer the truths of his imagination.

"In my life, I've been lucky enough to travel all over the world: Asia, Europe, the islands, South America, Central America, Canada and Mars. Though that latter one on weekends only!

"When I travel, I go into the outskirts of the big cities where real people tell me stories. I listen and I learn and later, parts of some of these stories might weave their way into my books."



(Jean Bartlett photo)

Mike Romano at his writing desk.

Mike said that his "kid" discovery and admiration of both Hans Christian Andersen as well as inventor and engineer Nikola Tesla, permanently fueled his own imagination.

"At the age of 10, I learned about Nikola Tesla and immediately admired him. His mind was so far ahead. I wrote a book about that called 'Why I Am What I Am.' This is my theory.

"5,000 years ago man was living in caves. But then suddenly we had pyramids, giant statues, monuments, weapons and the wheel, etc. You know that wasn't spontaneous intelligence. Someone came down from another planet and they went, 'Hey, these Earth babes are cute.' So they had quite a number of romances and as time went on, that gene became more diluted, but people like Michelangelo, Leonardo Da Vinci, Marie Curie and Tesla – they've got this gene or genes. Here's the deal. If you've got this gene from some ancestor, one makes you smarter. If more than one ancestor had this gene and you get two of them, you are really smart. With three of these genes, you are Da Vinci."

"My book '**Many Rooms Many Destinations**,' which can be linked through this interview, was inspired by my knowledge of Tesla. It opens with Dad introducing his daughter and son to their new home. The home was built around the 1880s, and Dad is all proud of the fact that the home was once owned by an assistant to Tesla and that Tesla himself performed some of his experiments in this house. Dad is an electrical engineer and somewhat of a 'mad scientist' in his own right. Later, when his two teenage children are investigating the family's new digs, they find a room with a panel of bizarre knobs, a chair large enough for both of them to sit in it, and a throw switch. Could this house hold hidden secrets of Tesla?"

"The story," Mike said, "is for 9 and up." He immediately launches into a sneak peek of another one of his stories, "**The Boys in the Moon**."

"Eons ago, when a meteor hit the earth in the 'Way-Back,' it ripped a chunk of the Earth off and that chunk coalesced into the Moon. Well the people that lived on that chunk, found that the atmosphere of their new world was getting weird. Then the plants and animals started to die. Thankfully people saw this big old cavern and they entered it and went down below. There was oxygen down there and water. So these people went back to the surface of the Moon, and got all their stuff and brought it to where the oxygen and water was. Eons later it is like a utopia beneath the surface. You see the oxygen didn't really go away, it just solidified. It's under six inches of dust on the Moon's service."

The Moon people in Mike's book know how to work with the oxygen that formed in Moon rocks. With one of these rocks, they can breathe underwater for 30 minutes or walk on the surface of the Moon for two days. One day, when the Moon kids are walking around, they find a lunar rover from an active Apollo mission. Curious, they push the rover's red button, which then goes "beep, beep, beep." Unbeknownst to them, it sends a signal to Cape Canaveral. When the U.S. astronauts that are on the Moon get wind of this, they go to investigate. What happens next? Read the linked story at the end of this interview.

"This book teaches people that sometimes it is best to shut your mouth if that means the safety of other people," the author said. "All of my stories preach something but they are not preachy. But there has to be a moral in every story I write."

"**The Pyramid, the Treasure and the Boy**" is the next story on Mike's imagination list.

"Jo, Mom and Dad, go to Egypt for the summer," Mike said. "Just like Dad, who is a college professor, Jo can speak Egyptian and read hieroglyphics. They are going to the area in Egypt that has the most tombs. Now I write about Egypt because I like Egypt. There is so much treasure there and so much treasure yet unfound."

"But in my book, 'The Pyramid, The Treasure and the Boy,' this is not only a story of treasure. It is the knowledge of a 2,000-year-old boy. The boy is the treasure. The gold is secondary."

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Author Mike Romano holds the final drafts of the books linked within this interview.

Next we discuss swap meets – those large gatherings where vendors and everyday people, barter or sell their stuff and their "stuff" is either old, new, or ancient. These "meets" are often filled with treasures even their current owners don't know about.

"Imagine all the stuff you might find at an intergalactic swap meet," Mike stated, with his eyes a-twinkling.

As it happens, "**Intergalactic Swap Meet**" is the name of the next story presented by Mike Romano.

"A girl from our planet," Mike winked, "owns a small company. It's essentially like a junkyard shop in front of her house where she fixes things. One day she finds this one thing, in the middle of all her stuff, and it's weird. It's like a stretched-out baseball with this silver thing sticking out of it. She goes to push the silver thing back in and boom, she's in another junkyard only much, much bigger and on another planet. That's all I am going to tell you. You'll have to read the book to find out what happens."

There's one more Romano tale to introduce via this interview: "**The Mirrors of the Broken Glass.**" This one is about a girl and her dad. They go to stay at the beach house they have and when she is walking on the beach by herself, she notices there are all these little pieces of glass, but some are round and pearly in color. She picks those up and realizes they are puzzle pieces. She and her dad clean these pieces up and skillfully put them

together in a puzzle. Once the puzzle takes shape, they realize there is a girl locked in the mirror pieces. She's been locked in these pieces since some witches put her in there in the 1600s. Her mother is in there too. How can Isla and Dad save them? What will happen to Isla when the witches, who entrapped that poor girl and her mother centuries before, come after her too?



"With every one of my stories you will find friendship and honor," the author said. "There is no greed or selfishness. And equally important, I'm trying to tell kids of all ages that it's not about all your Pokémon Cards. It's not about your handheld stuff. The best place to travel is in your mind; and then go there! Anything you can imagine, you can make it so!"

Storyteller Mike Romano at: <http://storiesbymikeromano.com/>.

Link to six of Mike Romano's stories below. These "imagination" reads are for ages 9 and up.

1. **Sasquatch Junior High:** https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/5ea9c3_354451350b704ff78bc9966978d25909.pdf
2. **Many Rooms Many Destinations:** https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/5ea9c3_076244a3e9a040e583d56db8e48e86ed.pdf
3. **The Boys in the Moon:** https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/5ea9c3_56d3950e8fc6494f91e8555110658277.pdf
4. **The Pyramid, the Treasure and the Boy:** https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/5ea9c3_107dd1c0cf4d4e5d89da219b789d9ffa.pdf
5. **Intergalactic Swap Meet:** https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/5ea9c3_1086c80e14ab42839ae305a233d77510.pdf
6. **The Mirrors of the Broken Glass:** https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/5ea9c3_118962a274bb4a1694d9499acce0123f.pdf



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Jean Bartlett is a longtime Bay Area features writer: Pacifica Tribune, Oakland Tribune, San Jose Mercury, San Mateo Times, Portraits & Roots, Marin Independent Journal, Twin City Times, Ross Valley Reporter, Peninsula Progress, Coastal Connections, Contra Costa County Times, Bay Area Business Woman and Catholic San Francisco.