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## Napa's Oaks branches out with first novel

By RICH FREEDMAN/Times-Herald staff writer

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Tyler Oaks was in the graduate program at California State University at Sacramento with twins at home. A hectic life, to be sure.

Yet, while running a crammed physical schedule, Oaks' creative side didn't stop.

"I realized I just had to get some of these stories swirling in my head down on paper," she said.

So the Napan began to write. And write. And a short story suddenly became, "Ruby Rest," a 215-page mystery novel published by SterlingHouse out of Pittsburgh.

The writing was a snap, Oaks said.

"That part went quickly. Absolutely fabulously," she said. "After that, the editing and trying to get it published took a few years. Early on, I said to myself that writing is going to be heaven on earth and that getting a publisher is going to be hell.

"While it hasn't been hell, I've learned a lot," Oaks said.

Oaks, not unlike all if not most authors, had her share of rejections in trying to get "Ruby Rest" published.

"It's hard as a writer to learn the business aspects of the publishing industry," Oaks said. "That includes being rejected over and over."

Oaks had to often take note of the Winston Churchill quote: "Never, never, never give up."

"That's what it takes as a writer, as an artist. To never give

up," Oaks said. "Starting out, I didn't have a lot of guidance. I learned everything the hard way."

Even though she was told less than one percent of starting authors can get an

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Oaks said. "The encouragement I did get came from my agent. She was just great. Not a lot of agents will take on unpublished authors. She really believed in me and my work. She taught me how to edit and what I needed to do."

First editing chore: Delete from 40,000 to 50,000 words from the original manuscript which would have made the book "closer to 300" pages, Oaks said.

Then came the challenge of convincing book store owners and managers she and her book were worthy of public book signings.

"I have had some difficult rejections from book store people," Oaks said.

agent, much less a publisher, "there's always that hope," she said.

The key, Oaks believed, "is not to be hardened by the whole business. I've shed a lot of tears."

The rejection letters "were pretty standard,"

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