

Niles man publishes memoir

By John Eby

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Kent Kaiser spent three years writing a book that “drained me.”

It’s not the memoir you might expect of a Niles native who guided custom outdoor adventures and hunting trips in Alaska and New Zealand.

“Hard Way Back,” coming out next week (www.hardwayback.com), opens with a raid on his Kalamazoo home by four federal agents and two Michigan Department of Natural Resources officers.

Kaiser, who grew up in Fairbanks, where his mother has lived since he was 12, reveals why a U.S. Special Agent chased him across the globe and details his jailing in a New Zealand “dungeon,” where he passed time doing sit-ups and reading his Bible.

Kaiser, who lives on Mayflower Road, promises a true story of political corruption and perjury and his perseverance against great odds, including the end of his marriage, to emerge from spiritual soul-searching content with his life and God.

His memoir was almost called “Trumped Up” for charges he faced carrying potential penalties of 45 years in prison and more than \$2 million fines in the United States and seven years and \$100,000 in New Zealand.

On Nov. 2, 2007, the birthdate he shares with Daniel Boone, he was splashed across the front page of The Nelson Mail as a “fugitive” who fled U.S. authorities and set up a hunting business without mentioning on his application for residency he was being investigated in America.

“God put me through all this adversity for a reason,” he said Wednesday, scrolling through breathtaking 16 pages of color photos of the diverse tropical beach paradise with snow-capped mountains in the background.

Penguins lived under his house. The two islands’ vistas double as Middle Earth in “Lord of the Rings” movies. Imported animals include red stag and tahr (mountain goats), plus lobsters the size of “tomcats.”

One experience that merits a chapter, the “luckiest day of my life,” when the father of two in November 2005 hunted blacktail deer on Kodiak Island, also home to 3,500 grizzlies, including the nine-foot bear which charged him.

Kaiser returns to Alaska in September to film wilderness adventures on moose and bear hunting for DVDs. Tacked up by his computer is Ted Nugent’s Jackson address to send him one of the first books.

“New Zealand is like going back in time,” Kaiser said.

“The dungeon was filthy and the food was hot peppered steaks where I’d be thirsty all the time. They wanted to keep me in a long time. The book tells how I finally got out. When

you're incarcerated in a foreign country and the U.S. embassy blows you off, it's an awakening. It's a fantastic story that's got motion picture written all over it."

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