

# 'Monsoon Madness' hits bookshelves

■ *Hawaiian author, is daughter of Banning residents, tells a tale of her adventures in Nepal*

**BY BETTY KIKUMI MELTZER**

FOR THE RECORD GAZETTE

Gae Rusk, daughter of Jim and Eva Rusk of Banning, has just published her first novel, "Monsoon Madness."

Gae, who lives in Hawaii with her three children, attended Banning High School and earned a B.A. at UC Irvine and an M.A. at Stanford University.

She taught in Nepal (the setting for "Monsoon Madness") and in El Salvador and has worked in television and film production since 1982, making documentations and specials on cultural and musical themes. And, she has traveled throughout the U.S. and even to China and Mongolia to do filming.

"Monsoon Madness" was written during her 1977 to 1979 stay in Nepal, specifically during the 1978 monsoon season. The first draft was written on a manual Olivetti typewriter, often by kerosene lamplight. At that time she and her husband lived in the Rabibhawan section of Kathmandu.

The novel opens as monsoon season approaches, when diplomat Stewart Havenshank is packing for a three-months' mission, while his wife Cecily fears being left to fend for herself during the rains.

Left alone, Cecily walks through the city's bazaars, shrines and sensory-laden streets, with author Rusk imparting sounds, smells and sights in vivid, realistic detail.

Through an unfortunate encounter, she meets a predatory stranger who leads her through a forced trek into a steep, muddy trail in the Himalayas. In this perilous situation, although she is hurt and dazed, Cecily marshals

strength and awareness in a desire to survive. That unwanted journey forces her to become truly conscious of life because she has to employ all her senses and awareness to outwit her captor.

Each of the five parts of the novel has a corresponding quote from Greek mythology and in the manner of a Greek tragedy, the antistrophe returns to the original problem and resolves it, as Cecily, damaged as she is, declares her independence.

"Monsoon Madness" is available through Amazon.com or can be ordered through bookstores.

Gae recently returned from Mexico, where she did research for her second novel, "Alvarez," which is set on the border where New Mexico borders Chihuahua, Mexico.

Her house in Kilauea, Kauai, is set within a farm of Samoan coconut trees, macadamia, tangerines, avocados, star fruit and other tropical trees.

In addition to writing novels, Gae maintains two websites, [www.gaerusk.com](http://www.gaerusk.com) and [www.odd signs.com](http://www.odd signs.com). On the former she publishes her poems, essays and short stories each month.

The latter site covers inexplicable, often funny, signage she has discovered in her world travels.



KILAUEA - Gae Rusk sits with one of her pets in her office in her Kilauea home.



NUTS - Thousands of macadamia nuts dry in a wooden bin at the Rusk house. The hard outer shell of the nut can only be cracked by a special device that is stronger than a standard nutcracker.