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## **Belmont to Belarus: Michelle Carter's eventful year in Russia**

By John Horgan  
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At first blush, Belmont author Michelle Carter's latest book, "From Under the Russian Snow," appears to be a chronicle of her year working in Russia as a journalism consultant in 1995-96, a pre-Putin era when there was some hope that democracy, or some form of it, might flower in the former Soviet Union.

But the tidy tome is much more than that. It's really Carter's life story. And quite an autobiography it is.

Though an easy and relatively quick read, her memoir has a number of moments of triumph and tragedy, not the least of which is the shocking loss of her husband, Laurie Carter, in an accident on a fast-flowing California waterway while she was working 11 time zones away in the former Soviet Union.

Carter, a former managing editor at the defunct San Mateo Times (she was my boss for a decade), lays out her grief (and her guilt for being focused on her own career at the time) in stark detail.

The reader can't help but feel empathy for a woman caught between her love of family and her passion for her chosen profession.

Carter's deft writing touch is marked by a very personal, conversational style that almost gives the impression that she's right there chatting with the reader on each page.

It's poignant stuff. Fortunately, to lighten some of the emotional load as she moves forward with her sometimes painful narrative, Carter provides some moments of humor, not the least of which involves a description of an urgent call of nature while she's traveling by auto in the isolated, desolate Caucasus region.

It might be more than we need to know, but, hey, it works in the context of her otherwise serious experiences.

In its promotional materials, the book appears to be targeted specifically at women: "Who could pass up a story told by a woman of 50 who embraced a great adventure without her family in an exotic setting, only to absorb one of life's harshest blows? It's every female reader's secret desire and gut-piercing fear."

But that doesn't really do the book justice. It is certainly more than suitable for male readers as well.

On the whole, this book, published by Bedazzled Ink Publishing, is a well-done effort worthy of examination. It's available in hardback at \$27.95, in paperback at Amazon.com for \$11 and on Kindle for \$8.99.

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