

SAM VENABLE

Sam Venable is a humor columnist for the Knoxville (TN) News Sentinel. He assumed that position in 1985 after serving as the newspaper's outdoors editor for 15 years.

Sam is a native of Knoxville. He is a graduate of the University of Tennessee with a degree in journalism and minor studies in forestry and wildlife management. Prior to joining the News Sentinel's staff, he worked as a police reporter and feature writer for the Knoxville Journal and the Chattanooga News-Free Press.

Winner of more than three dozen national and regional writing awards, Sam has also been widely published outside the newspaper field. He sold his first magazine article as a senior in college and since has compiled more than 150 periodical credits to his record.

He is the author of ten books:

- "An Island Unto Itself: The Story of Little Pecan"
- "A Handful of Thumbs and Two Left Feet: Sam Venable's Best Outdoor Stories"
- "Two or Three Degrees Off Plumb: Sam Venable's Unique Look at Life"
- "One Size Fits All and Other Holiday Myths: A Walk Through the Four Seasons"
- "I'd Rather Be Ugly Than Stupid...and Other Deep Thoughts"
- "From Ridgetops To Riverbottoms: A Celebration of the Outdoor Life in Tennessee"
- "Mountain Hands: A Portrait of Southern Appalachia"
- "Rock-Elephant: A Story of Friendship and Fishing"
- "You Gotta Laugh to Keep from Cryin': A Baby Boomer Contemplates Life Beyond Fifty"
- "Someday I May Find Honest Work: A Newspaper Humorist's Life"

Sam has been a contributing author for numerous other books, including

- "150 Southern Fishing Hotspots,"
- "Fireside Waterfowler"
- "The Great Duck Misunderstanding: The Very Best of American Fishing and Hunting Humor"
- "The Tennessee Encyclopedia"
- "The Encyclopedia of Appalachia"

He also wrote the new introduction for Carson Brewer's classic collection about the Great Smokies, "A Wonderment of Mountains," and has been the subject of articles in such publications as Southern Living magazine and "The Encyclopedia of Appalachia."

In recent years, Sam has become increasingly popular on the stand-up comedy circuit. He delivers his bizarre look at life on a wide variety of topics—everything from how to speak "hillbillyese," to the insanity of ever-present warning labels, as well as coping with the nutty life in which we live, and the perils of growing older.

In his spare time, Sam enjoys hunting, fishing, hiking and swimming. His wife, Mary Ann, is also a native Knoxvillean and a graduate of UT. She is a computer training specialist. They have two grown children, Clay and Megan, plus a son-in-law, Tommy Smith, and daughter-in-law, Kim Venable—all of whom are UT graduates. Kim and Clay are parents of Sam's grandchildren, Max and Lucy.