



## Identify the common element in these books

The plots:

- Autistic twin boys and their teacher are the only living witnesses to a drug cartel murder. They are whisked into the witness protection program, which fails them, so they are on the run to try to stay alive.
- Vampires, the science of genetics, and an evil government agency are entwined in this story in which a pregnant vampire is an unwilling participant in a government experiment.
- A woman begins having psychic visions about a serial murderer. She reports the visions to the police. The authorities are skeptical, but release the information to the press nevertheless. The serial killer realizes he can escape capture if he murders the psychic.
- A man's Internet friendship with a woman ends when she disappears mysteriously. He hires a private investigator, along with two women to pose as characters in a virtual chat room, to trap the suspected murderer.

The common element? The four books are romances.

Barbara Samuel, author and renaissance woman, spoke at the Rocky Mountain Book Festival about why she writes romance. An excerpt of her speech is presented here.

Oh — for those of you who would like to read any of the books listed above, they are (in order):

*See How They Run*, Bethany Campbell

*Born in Twilight*, Maggie Shayne

*Dream Man*, Linda Howard

*Don't Talk to Strangers*, Bethany Campbell

## Romance: Women Writing for Women

by Barbara Samuel

email:<samuel@rmi.net>;URL<<http://shell.rmi.net/~samuel/romance/index.html>>

I'm an artist and woman who has chosen romance novels as my vehicle. There is a strange assumption out there that I somehow "stumbled" into this. I didn't stumble at all. I chose romance novels from a vast array of choices — though I didn't start out that way.

When I first planned to be a writer, in the fifth grade, the romance we read and write with such enjoyment now had not truly been born — and for a very good reason: there weren't enough women writing yet.

I read a lot of romance through my teens (everything from the old-style Harlequins to Mary Stewart, Helen McInnes to Anya Seton), but it always seemed to me a writing career was made of something else. My mother certainly thought so. When I was 16, my father suggested I might be able to be published if I tried writing a romance, and my mother, who has one of the most brilliant and incisive literary minds it has ever been my honor to meet, responded primly, "She would never prostitute her talent that way."

She hates when I tell that story. In her defense, I must tell you that her opinion has evolved dramatically in the 20 years since that day, and she is now one of the most passionate supporters of a woman's right to choose the vehicle for her art. She especially champions the cause of women writers who are reclaiming the lost history of women in historical romance.

On my quest for a writing career, I went to college and gave up the romances I loved reading to study journalism and literature and, at the time, would not have been caught dead with a romance in my hands. If I had any time to read it was the politically and socially intense writings of authors such as James Baldwin,

Dee Brown, Vine DeLoria, and Alice Walker. I took a class on women in literature and found myself aching to write fiction.

Like any good intellectual, political college student, I began with angry writing about things I cared about. I shipped off short stories to literary magazines: short stories that were sometimes returned with encouraging notes about voice or style, but were always returned.

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*Continued on page 3*



Barbara Samuel

# It's happening ...

FROM THE STATE LIBRARY AND ADULT EDUCATION OFFICE

by Nancy Bolt, <nbolt@csn.net>

## School Librarians Help Kids Meet Standards

In light of the recent report of the reading and writing scores of Colorado's third- and fourth-graders, it is imperative that we continue to make the point that school library media centers and (even more important) school librarians have a positive impact on these scores.



You may remember that in 1992, Dr. Keith Lance, who runs the Library Research Service for the State Library, conducted a landmark study, *The Impact of School Library Media Centers on Academic Achievement*. Here is a brief review of his findings:

- ◆ Students at schools with better-funded library media centers (LMCs) tend to achieve higher average reading test scores, whether their schools and communities are rich or poor, and whether adults in the community are well or poorly educated.
- ◆ Students whose school librarians either identified materials to be used with teacher-planned instructional units or collaborated with teachers in planning instructional units tend to achieve higher average reading scores.

It is important to stress that this doesn't just mean that the rich schools can afford good LMCs. These findings are *independent* of the total investment of schools in all of their programs. The investment in the school library media programs — their collections, staff, and collaboration with classroom teachers — makes the difference.

Keith's findings are indirectly supported by other studies as well. In *The Power of Reading*, Stephen Krashen reports that free voluntary reading (where the kids read what they want to read rather than what they are forced to read) also has a powerful positive impact on a child's ability to read — and, thus, achievement scores. Krashen looked at in-class free reading programs and at the existence of school library media centers. His results consistently show that kids with access to books read more than kids without (this is, of course, a no-brainer). Even where there are classroom collections of books or even unstaffed media centers, kids read *twice as many books if there is a school library media center with a trained school librarian*. And the books they read are likely to be "better," in that they are selected by the media specialist.

Numerous articles over the last two years in *School Library Journal* have emphasized how a caring school librarian can reach out to students, particularly those with low reading ability or desire, and help them learn to enjoy reading. How can a child score high on a reading test when s/he hates reading? In "No Time, No Interest, No Way" in the February 1996 *School Library Journal*, Dr. G. Kylne Beers describes numerous ways that school librarians can reach out and help poor readers obtain skills and satisfaction from reading.

Despite all of this research about the benefits of school library media centers, school library media programs in Colorado are static or being cut. Based on Keith Lance's latest survey of school library media programs, overall staffing of media centers held steady between 1994 and 1997 — BUT *the number of endorsed school librarians per 100*

Continued on page 3

## It's happening ...

Continued from page 2

*students fell 33%. Also disturbing: media expenditures per student have dropped, even though we know that those expenditures relate strongly to student achievement. Total library media expenditures per student fell 11%; per student expenditures on books dropped 15%; expenditures on non-print materials dropped 42%.*

So, we need to make it clear that school library media centers and school librarians make a difference. There is much concern about how to raise the reading and writing scores of students. We need to show that one answer is clear: ***School librarians help kids meet standards.***

### CLC Update

December 31, 1997

#### Corrections to CLC directory:

- Schools:

Boulder Valley Schools, Foothill Elementary School, contact person Fran Grzenda

Broomfield Heights Middle School, delete Fran Grzenda as contact person

Sheridan School District #2, Sheridan - contact person Ellen Sallé

- Academic:

Change name of National College Library to National American University

#### Romance: Women Writing for Women *Continued from page 1*

I was 23 years old, and had lived my life on my own terms, thanks to the feminist revolution that had gone before me. I didn't even feel the need to declare myself a feminist. *We all* were, weren't we? We could do anything. Any door was open to us.

At the end of my junior year, I got married and had a baby — and watched the entire world slam its doors on me, watched in stunned astonishment as my intellectual crowd of women friends hurried off to obligations that had nothing to do with the making of homes. I could see their almost invisible shudders when they rushed away.

I was lonely. I was writing, but felt alienated from the body of work I'd been so in love with. My world was no longer political on a world-wide scale. And I could not find my life in the literary fiction I read so avidly before my children were born. Not any more. I became invisible: an aspiring writer with a tight budget and two babies and a husband, who needed not some elegant little supper offering, but a good 2,000 calories of meat and potatoes.

My sister said, when I wept bitterly about my continuing rejections, that she thought I ought to try romance novels. She had always been my biggest fan, my most ardent supporter, and she thought my voice would be right for the books she read in such huge numbers. I had nothing to lose. I let her bring me a paper grocery bag full of her favorites. This was 1985. I had not read a romance since 1977.

Oh, my — things had really changed!

At last, here I found stories about women who were like me. Intelligent women with a lot to give, women who struggled, who sometimes had faced terrible traumas or survived brutal losses, but persevered. Women who, like me, were not afraid to make a commitment to a man worth loving for life, women who found joy in children as well as outside pursuits, women who were struggling to balance a huge array of conflicting expectations for their lives. Women who were midwives and bankers and artists and rape counselors. Men who no longer lived in castles in Spain, but were carpenters in small cities in America.

I so remember the day I realized this was the realm I could use to tell my stories. It was quiet and golden, a summer afternoon. My boys were blissfully both asleep and I was struggling with a literary short story about canning plum jam. I was frustrated and irritated and sad because I knew it just wasn't going to make the impact I wanted to make. I wanted to weave the wonder of grandmother-to-mother-to-daughter connections. I wanted to talk

#### Romance: Women Writing for Women *Continued on page 4*

## Colorado State Publications

### State Information on the Internet

by Maureen Crocker, <Crocker\_M@cde.state.co.us>

More and more facts and publications from state agencies are appearing on the Colorado Homepage and/or ACLIN. Below are examples of the types of questions that can be answered using these Internet resources. Some of the publications are also available in print format.

#### **Where can I get tax forms?**

<[http://www.state.co.us/gov\\_dir/revenue\\_dir/home\\_rev.htm#State Tax Forms](http://www.state.co.us/gov_dir/revenue_dir/home_rev.htm#State%20Tax%20Forms)>

#### **Where can I find employment information?**

<<http://www.state.co.us/jobinfo.html>>

#### **Is there information about towns and cities in the state?**

<[http://www.state.co.us/communities\\_dir/communitiesmenu.html](http://www.state.co.us/communities_dir/communitiesmenu.html)>

#### **I need a list and explanation of the Colorado state symbols.**

<[http://www.state.co.us/gov\\_dir/gss/archives/arcembl.html](http://www.state.co.us/gov_dir/gss/archives/arcembl.html)>

#### **How can I find the phone number of my state legislator?**

<[http://www.state.co.us/gov\\_dir/leg\\_dir/pinkbook/pb.htm](http://www.state.co.us/gov_dir/leg_dir/pinkbook/pb.htm)>

#### **Where can I find profiles of school districts?**

<<http://www.cde.state.co.us/#statistics>>

#### **Is there recreation and vacation information available?**

<[http://www.state.co.us/visit\\_dir/visitormenu.html](http://www.state.co.us/visit_dir/visitormenu.html)>

#### **How can I get a copy of a birth certificate?**

<[http://www.state.co.us/gov\\_dir/cdphe\\_dir/hs/certfaq.html#Birth Certificate](http://www.state.co.us/gov_dir/cdphe_dir/hs/certfaq.html#Birth%20Certificate)>

#### **Can I find a list of the 25 largest private sector employers?**

<<http://www.aclin.org/other/business/facts/top25.htm>>

#### **Can I locate the phone numbers of state agencies without using the phone book?**

<<http://www.state.co.us/wp/WhitePage.html>>

#### **Where are the most current road and weather conditions?**

<[http://www.state.co.us/conditions\\_dir/conditionsmenu.html](http://www.state.co.us/conditions_dir/conditionsmenu.html)>

### Romance: *Continued from page 3*

about jam that won a state fair competition, and how much that meant as a creative outlet for the over-worked woman who was my great-grandmother.

And I realized, between breaths, that in a romance novel I would not have to *explain* all of that. It would be two sentences between women because we all have great-grandmothers or aunts or other female relatives who had to work too hard to ever find creative fulfillment in anything but something she could use to feed or clothe her family. The poignancy and beauty are there. We feel it in our hearts, in our bones. We remember. It would only be to men or to the male-thinking literary establishment that I had to spend time explaining.

In a romance novel, I would never have to pause. I'd simply bypass all of that and tell my stories directly to the women I hoped would be my audience anyway.

It occurred to me that my own life was so rich with female lore that writing for women was the only logical choice. My childhood was spent with my two sisters, with my mother, with my grandmother. Nearly everything I had ever learned came from the mouths of women in the way women tell stories — rich with imagery and metaphor and tales of good romance and bad, dangerous sins and fatal flaws, all woven around the simple, daily acts of ironing and dishes and hems being pinned up for a mother to stitch.

There was another aspect to finally deciding to try writing romance novels. I was happy! Bursting with love for almost everything I encountered. I loved the sight of rows of the plum jam on a stainless steel counter, collecting quilt pieces, and making dinner in a steamy kitchen on a winter evening. I loved writing on my babies' tummies with blue soap crayons, puttering in my garden, and sitting peacefully with my husband in the still of an evening. All those mundane things that had sent my friends running in terror for

### Romance: *Continued on page 5*

**Romance: Continued from page 4**

fear they might be infected by my domesticity had made me deeply happy for the first time in my life.

It isn't fashionable to be joyful in our society. It's okay to be *striving* toward happiness. It's okay to be in therapy to fix whatever is wrong so you can *someday* be happy. It's *really* fashionable to give up meat and tobacco (except cigars), and to exercise and eat like a bird so you can live a really long time *trying* to be happy. But we don't trust joy.

I recognized on a very deep level that one thing I had to include in my work was joy. Not that we were without problems. If I tell you that I didn't have a phone and hadn't had one for almost a year when I sold my first book, you'll know things were not exactly peachy. There were lots of times we had no idea how we'd keep the lights on, and there were often times I had to wait a few weeks until payday before I could afford to mail a manuscript.

But that didn't matter much when I was sitting in the backyard on a summer afternoon, watching my toddler urchins dance in the sprinkler, in pure celebration of simply being alive to twirl in the sunlight.

My sister turned out to be right about my voice. In romance novels, I found it. Almost immediately. Within one year of settling in to aim my stories at my sisters in the world, I sold my first novel to Silhouette.

It never occurred to me that I ought to stick to lighter things for a first book in the romance arena. My husband, a Vietnam veteran, had just lost a friend who'd never been able to overcome his experiences in that war. Vietnam vets were on my mind, and I simply worked through my own feelings by writing about the widow of a vet who'd committed suicide, then finds herself attracted to a man who also bears scars from the war. My heroine carried such great guilt over being unable to give her husband enough love (as she saw it) to save him, that her own creative life was on hold. By confronting the past through her attraction to the hero, she is able to reclaim her life and move on.

Like all first novels, it has flaws, but it did set the tone for what I've done since — a recognition of the sorrows we face, met by the power of love and the strength we can find

in joy. I write redemption and survivor stories, partly because that's where I come from, but partly because I do recognize the harshness we all face. I have to do what I can to offer hope in my work, to give joy if I possibly can.

In that year when I was studying romance novels, before I sold, I discovered what became one of my favorite places: the local used bookstore, stuck at the end of a tiny strip of shops on a busy street a few blocks from my house. I loved that place. I felt at peace when I would come in out of the cold, cloudy day, into the steamy warmth and into the smell of dust and paper and glue that is so beloved to book lovers.

I'd head back to the giant, unsorted back room, where the history of modern romance novels would lie, scattered among the shelves: the Mary Stewarts, Victoria Holts, and Norah Lofts that I'd read as a young woman; the Anya Setons, Daphne DuMauriers, and Roberta Gellis with their powerfully historical feel, the dated covers that speak of a time when people read a lot.

Then Bertrice Small, Rosemary Rogers, and Kathleen Woodiwiss, a whole generation of sexy romance that I'd missed by going to college. I fingered them, curious how they fit into the revolution, but not particularly drawn to them. The period during which I could have appreciated them is gone, already gobbled up by a newer, more streamlined form.

Romance novels belong to women. The whole room was filled with books written by women. I could see how the genre had grown as I looked at copyright dates, see how the explosion had burst out of us in a 10-year span, a lot of it very bad, but just as much very good.

In 1979, there were a handful of women writing romance. Another good handful were writing literary or historical or other kinds of fiction. I was unable to discover actual statistics for fiction writers, but if there were more than a 100 or so earning their living by writing fiction, I would be very surprised.

In 1997, there are more than 1,000 published member of the Romance Writers of America (RWA) alone, 1,000 women finding outlet through this genre. We take a lot of ribbing, but the sheer power of those numbers is exciting

**Romance: Continued on page 7**

## Colorado Library Resource Sharing and Information Access Board

### Call for Nominations for 1998/99

Nominations are being accepted for representatives to the Colorado Library Resource Sharing and Information Access (CLRSIAB) Board. Current needs are for:

- Four-year academic institutions
- Two-year academic institutions
- Public libraries serving 25,000 or more.

Nominations can be made for oneself or for someone else by letter to be addressed to the CLRSIAB Selection Committee. The name, library, address, and phone number of the nominee should appear at the top of the page, as well as the seat for which the person is being nominated or applying. Criteria and characteristics should be included in a letter of no more than one page.



#### Criteria

The nominee must:

- ✓ be employed at the type of library he or she would be representing on CLRSIAB;
- ✓ have been employed at a Colorado library for at least one year;
- ✓ have a commitment to the mission and role of the Board;
- ✓ agree to communicate with and seek input from the libraries the nominee would be representing, with regard to Board activities and decisions;
- ✓ be aware of and willing to avoid conflicts of interest.

#### Characteristics

The ideal nominee should:

- ✓ be an able spokesperson for the interests and concerns of the libraries represented through that Board seat;
- ✓ have a broad perspective with regard to resource sharing issues: statewide, national, and international, as well as beyond the library community to other contributors and participants.
- ✓ have expertise in, experience with, or a commitment to the following:
  - library and information telecommunications networking
  - fiscal support for resource sharing and information access
  - coordination with non library entities
  - legislation related to resource sharing and information access
  - equitable access to information resources for all residents
  - the role of resource sharing and information access in personal, professional, educational, cultural, and economic development in Colorado
  - coordination with other resource sharing and information access entities.

*Nominations must be received by April 17, 1998 and should be sent to: Selection Committee, CLRSIAB Nominations, Colorado State Library, 201 E. Colfax Ave., Denver, CO 80203; fax 303/866-6940; or e-mail <Davila\_L@cde.state.co.us>.*

Questions? Contact: Jeanne Gardner, Selection Committee Chair, Pueblo Community College LRC, 719/549-3308, <gardner@pcc.ccoes.edu>.

### Kudos to ACLIN

Nancy Simon, Director of Library Services for the Denver Art Museum, wrote:

*"I was working at home this morning (Saturday) on a bibliography for work and had three incomplete citations. Logged onto ACLIN and went to Norlin Library, found what I needed, and completed my bibliography. What a wonderful resource!"*

**Romance: Continued from page 5**

because, to me, it means we are finally creating something in the literary world that belongs to us. That originates with us. There might be a stray man here or there, but for the most part, it is a woman writing for women about all kinds of things.

On one level, we're providing entertainment. I love the idea that my books can provide rest and enjoyment and a pocket of relief for a woman like myself. It makes me really happy to provide a place for her to run away.

But on another level, we're doing something I don't think even many romance writers realize we're doing. Romance writers as a group have created a community of thought and dialogue in which we are defining for ourselves what our art means, where it will take us, what kinds of opportunities it will provide generations to come.

I am a member of the Genie Romance Exchange, an online service where hundreds of romance writers and readers, very intelligent, thoughtful women for the most part, come together to discuss the genre on every conceivable level. We discuss craft and business, marketing and ideas, and how to manage the financial insanity that is a part of every writer's life. There are times our discussions are downright yawners, but there are also times a discussion takes off, excites and inflames all the writers involved, and we discover new truths about ourselves, our work, the process of putting a book on the page, or the process of living life as an artist in a society that finds it foolish.

I have a fantasy that 100 or 200 years from now, some fresh young students, passionate about the history of women writing, will discover those dusty library archives at Genie, and will see a kind of Left Bank of the romance community, a time of formation and development in the powerful history of women artists. Our world, the one we are living and working and contributing to as booksellers or writers or readers, will be marked as an exciting period of struggle and change.

It thrills me to be a part of that. To be one of the women claiming my art by claiming romance novels, to have added my voice to the hundreds of other women like me, women writing for women in a form we have claimed for ourselves. ❖



**Janet Swan Hill**, University of Colorado Norlin Library, Boulder, is a member of the American Library Association (ALA) Outsourcing Task Force and Committee. The committee's charge includes advising ALA on issues related to outsourcing, subcontracting, and privatization of library services.

The 29th Annual **Colorado Interlibrary Loan Conference** will be held May 7-8 at the Marriott in Colorado Springs. Nancy Bolt, Assistant Commissioner, Deputy State Librarian, Colorado State Library and Adult Education Office, will be the keynote speaker. Tony Melvyn, Consulting Product Support Specialist, OCLC, will discuss ILL developments. Tom Delaney, Colorado State University, will discuss the CSU flood and its impact on ILL. George Machovec, Technical Director of the Colorado Alliance of Research Libraries, will address licensing and proprietary software and how that can impact on ILL. Dr. Joseph Michelli will present his unique vision of the world through the use of humor.

If you would like to be included on the mailing list for information, please email your name and address to Maggie Witmer <[mwitmer@csn.net](mailto:mwitmer@csn.net)> or Franca Rosen <[frosen@jefferson.lib.co.us](mailto:frosen@jefferson.lib.co.us)>.

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## Notes to Note

The National Endowment for the Humanities announces a **special initiative for public libraries** to create endowments to support humanities programming. Awards of up to \$150,000 are available. Federal funds must be matched by two times that amount in non-federal donations. The grants are open to public libraries that have not held NEH Challenge Grants. The deadline is May 1. For information, contact the Office of Challenge Grants, 202/606-8309; email <challenge@neh.fed.us>. Visit NEH on the Web at <<http://www.neh.gov>>.

High school students with a talent for creative writing, a passion for social studies, a keen eye for scientific detail, and a favorite television show could win \$500 in an innovative essay competition. The Zero Population Growth (ZPG) **Pop-TV Essay Contest** invites students in grades 9-12 to write a plot for an episode of a current TV show featuring the birth of the six billionth person. Entries should be 1,500 words or less and must be received at ZPG's office by March 1, 1998. Full contest details and a free poster can be obtained by contacting ZPG by phone at 800/POP-1956, by email at <poped@zpg.org>, or at the Web site <<http://www.zpg.org>>. Entries are to be sent to: ZPG Essay Contest, 1400 16th St., NW, #320, Washington, DC 20036.

The **Basic Young Adult Services Handbook: A Programming and Training Manual** compiles over 50 creative programs used in libraries throughout New York. Each entry describes the preparation, program content, and evaluation of a specific program activity for adolescents that can be easily replicated in school or public libraries. The book is available for \$25 from NYLA Publications, New York Library Association, 252 Hudson Ave., Albany, NY 12210-1802, and includes library rate domestic postage. Add \$2 per item for first class delivery. All orders must include a purchase order number or be prepaid with check or money order for the total amount, made payable to the New York Library Association. Please allow four weeks for delivery.

**Project Vote Smart**, a nonprofit non-partisan voter information service, is offering public libraries the opportunity participate in a new program that will provide libraries with unique information systems and

publications, at no cost, to enable citizens to access the voting records, campaign finances, issue positions, and performance evaluations of over 13,000 elected officials and candidates for political office. Public libraries can partner with Project Vote Smart by qualifying as a participating or sponsoring library. Qualifying libraries will be provided with special research services and materials to be distributed to patrons. Participation will be limited for testing purposes. Libraries interested in participating in the free program or those with questions may contact Project Vote Smart's Library Service Director, Whitney Wilcox, at 541/754-2746, or email <libraries@vote-smart.org>. To learn more about the program, visit the Web site at <<http://www.vote-smart.org>> or call the 800/622-SMAR(T).

A multimedia CD-ROM with Jean Michel Cousteau, **Cities Under the Sea: Coral Reefs**, focuses on looking at coral reefs from a systems ecology standpoint. Libraries and non-profit groups receive a discount mail order price of \$25 with free priority mail shipping. Ten percent of the profit from the sale of the disc will be donated to coral reef education projects. Please visit the Web site for information about the disc and samples. Purchase orders can be faxed or mailed to: Jeffrey H. Reynolds, Wave-forms, 5236 Locksley Ave., Oakland, CA 94618; phone 510/653-8929; 510/653-8909 fax; email <cteno4@earthlink.net>; URL <<http://www.interactive.com/jmcousteau>>

The American Library Association (ALA) Video/Library Video Network announces a newly-produced video program, **An Introduction to Microsoft Internet Explorer**. The 17-minute video explores basic functions of the Microsoft Internet Explorer. The tape (order #10460A) is available for \$50. Pre-paid orders are shipped free. Another new video is **Video, CD-ROM and the Web: Motion Media and the Library of the Future**. The 115-minute video features the May 1997 teleconference of the same name. This video (order #10487V) is available for \$50, and prepaid orders are shipped free. The tapes are guaranteed by a 30-day purchase approval policy. To order, phone 800/441-TAPE, fax 410/887-2091, or mail to 320 York Rd., Towson, MD 21204. Visit the network on the Web at <<http://www.bcpl.lib.md.us/~inlib/alavideo.html>>.

## Centennial

### STATE LIBRARIES

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