

For Immediate Release
Stephanie Gregerman
Mobile: 860.857.1737
sgregerman@gmail.com

SheWrites.com
Deborah Siegel
Wilson Sherwin
Wilson@shewrites.com

Why can't our Heroes be Heroines?

Writers unite to spotlight a new breed of heroine.

SheWrites.com and author **Teri Coyne** (*The Last Bridge*) present

Ordinary Women: Extraordinary Heroines – A Literary Event
with acclaimed authors Terese Svoboda (*Cannibal*)
Diane Meier (*The Season of Second Chances*)
and
Virginia DeBerry and Donna Grant (*Uptown*)

KGB Bar – 85 E. 4th Street, NYC
May 12, 7pm

New York, 15 April 2010: Let's face it – female protagonists have not gotten a fair shake. In a culture where women are prized for their beauty, care giving and plain-old niceness, is there a place for flawed, unapologetic and bold heroines? Teri Coyne and SHE WRITES say, "Yes." Now more than ever.

"When an end-of-the-year top ten list like Publisher's Weekly's excludes female authors entirely, as they did this year, it's not only women writers who are marginalized and devalued, but their powerful, real and nuanced female protagonists as well," says She Writes Founder Kamy Wicoff.

Author Teri Coyne (*The Last Bridge*, Ballantine) and ground-breaking web community SHE WRITES co-host the second in a series of literary events at KGB Bar entitled, "Ordinary Women: Extraordinary Heroines - A New Paradigm for the Modern Heroine," on May 12, 2010. Featured authors include Terese Svoboda, (*Cannibal*), Diane Meier (*The Season of Second Chances*) and New York Times best-selling authors Virginia DeBerry and Donna Grant (*Uptown*). The event will expose a roster of fresh female characters who are often flawed but willful protagonists, who use their intelligence and wit (and sometimes socially-inappropriate survival skills) to achieve self-actualization.

Los Angeles Times, crime and mystery blogger Sarah Weinman said of the trend in female characters: "They don't let the baggage of brutal childhoods and emotional damage keep them from their quests, and, as Chicago Tribune cultural critic Julia Keller wrote in a column titled, "Girls Gone Wild": 'They're not meek. They're not mild. They do as they please and they don't play well with others. They're misfits with moxie.' And they don't have to apologize for their behavior -- not much, anyway."

The "Ordinary Women: Extraordinary Heroine" authors are part of a growing legion of writers creating a modern identity for the female protagonist that's transformed from the stereotypical supporting player or romance-driven damsel to a more modest, often damaged female that is imperfect and unapologetic. Often they are liberating themselves from the past, their families or a culture that dismisses them. These are ordinary women leading extraordinary lives; they defy convention and show courage under fire even if it looks like they are fumbling to the finish line.

"I have long believed the most radical thing a woman can do is to speak honestly about her life, accept her flaws and abandon a need to be liked or agreeable," Coyne says. "I gravitate toward stories that reflect this

reality back to me. My passion is to help all women see themselves as extraordinary heroines of their own story."

"She Writes is thrilled to co-host this event. We're committed to supporting and promoting women's right to speak and be heard, as entitled representatives of the human experience, outside the confines of the stereotypes that silence us," says Wicoff.

The evening promises to be filled with great stories, insights and engaging discussions.

Teri Coyne's novel, *The Last Bridge*, was named a Target Breakout Book and called, "...a compelling debut..." (Publishers Weekly) and a "...psychological tour de force..." (Booklist). Writing since she received her first typewriter on her 10th birthday, she studied poetry with Philip Shultz, novel writing at Iowa Summer Writers Workshop, memoir with Frank McCourt and fiction with Masha Hamilton. A former stand-up comedienne, she also explored filmmaking, playwriting, acting, producing and directing. Teri lives in New York. (www.tericoyne.com) The paperback of *The Last Bridge* is available on May 25th.

Diane Meier

Marketing guru, author of *The New American Wedding* and president of MEIER, a NYC-based marketing firm whose clients have helped define luxury marketing (from Neiman Marcus and DeBeers to Maximilian Furs, Kohler, Elizabeth Arden and Pierre Balmain). Her career has honed skills from strategy, writing and design to public speaking. Married to best selling author and BBC broadcaster, Frank Delaney, she has had much to observe about writing and speaking - from a front row seat. Her new book, *The Season of Second Chances*, hit shelves on March 30, 2010. (www.dianemeier.com)

Teresa Svoboda

Svoboda's writing has been featured in The New Yorker, Times Literary Supplement, The New York Times, The Atlantic Monthly, Slate.com, Bomb, Lit, Columbia, Yale Review and The Paris Review. Her honors include an O. Henry for the short story, a nonfiction Pushcart Prize, a translation NEH fellowship, a PEN/Columbia Fellowship, two New York Foundation for the Arts Fellowships in poetry and fiction, a New York State Council on the Arts grant and a Jerome Foundation grant in video, the John Golden Award in playwriting, the Bobst Prize in fiction and the Iowa Prize in poetry.

A University of British Columbia and Columbia graduate, she has taught at Sarah Lawrence, Fordham, Williams, the College of William and Mary, the University of Hawaii, the University of Miami, Fairleigh Dickenson, the New School, St. Petersburg, Russia, Nairobi, and held the McGee Professorship at Davidson College. Her new book, *Pirate Talk, or Mermalade*, will be released in September, 2010. (www.teresesvoboda.com)

Virginia DeBerry and Donna Grant

With five novels to their credit, Virginia DeBerry and Donna Grant, best friends for 25 years, have turned a friendship into the most successful and enduring writing collaboration in African American fiction. Their first novel, *Tryin' to Sleep in the Bed You Made*, was a critical success, an Essence Bestseller, as are all three of their books, and won the Merit Award for Fiction from the Black Caucus of the American Library Association, as well as the 1998 Book of the Year Award from the Blackboard Bestseller List/African American Booksellers Conference-Book Expo America. *Far From the Tree* became a New York Times Bestseller, and *Better Than I Know Myself* received two Open Book Awards, and been included on the Best African American Fiction of 2004 lists of both Borders and WaldenBooks. Their latest book, *Uptown*, hit shelves in March, 2010.

Donna attended Barnard College and is a graduate of New York University. A Brooklyn native, she currently lives in the borough with her husband. Before becoming a novelist, she spent more than a decade as a plus size model, represented by the 12 + division of Ford Models.

Virginia is a former high school English teacher from Buffalo, New York attended Fisk University and is a graduate of SUNY at Buffalo. After almost 10 years in the classroom, she moved to New York and started a successful career as a plus size model. Virginia now lives in New Jersey.

She Writes

She Writes is the leading online destination for women writers today. Since its inception in June 2009, more than 8000 women writers from more than thirty countries and all fifty states, including many bestselling and award-winning authors, have been sharing support, organizing their knowledge, and doing business on She Writes. A unique community where women writers can create networks and get the services and support they need at every stage of their writing lives, She Writes is a business on a mission: to forever transform the landscape in which women write, publish, and read. We believe writing has the power to change the lives of women; we believe that when women write and publish, they have the power to change the world. She Writes is the brainchild of founder Kamy Wicoff, an author and salonniere based in New York City, and her founding partner Deborah Siegel, an author and blogger.

KGB Bar has become the premiere venue for all ranges of the literary world, and has been named best literary venue by New York Magazine, the Village Voice and everyone else who bestows these awards of recognition. The bar and its literary figures have been featured in several New York Times articles as well as featured in an eight-page New York Times Magazine spread. Since 1993, writers hooked up in the publishing world read here with pleasure and without pay to an adoring public over drinks almost every Sunday evening (fiction), Monday evening (poetry), and most Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays.

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