

Local author breaks romance novelist mold

By RACHEL MARKOWITZ
Collegian Staff Writer

Sally Hoover, whose latest novels, *Summer's Witness* and *Private Intentions* recently hit the local bookshelves, says romance authors are not the passionate, silkily clad sylphs many readers expect.

"On a 'romantic scale' from one to 10, I'm about a five," says Hoover, 46. "It's the same with all the other romance writers I know. We're all in it for the bucks now."

Hoover, known to readers as Pamela Lind and more recently Saranne Dawson, says top romance authors can gross \$35,000-\$40,000 a book, generally an \$8,000 advance plus royalties twice a year. She says she earns about \$20,000 per book, and her main income for this year has come from her writing. She has written two books this year, and seven since she began.

Hoover says when she started writing romance novels every romance writer used a pen name. Her first pen name, Pamela Lind, was derived from the way she got her start in writing. Pamela is her daughter's first name, and Linda is the name of the friend she was exchanging novels with. Her second pen name, Saranne Dawson, is her real name. Sally is the name she uses now.

Hoover, director of On Drugs, Inc., a local substance and general problems clinic on South Allen Street, writes at her home "in the middle of the woods" about 10 miles from State College.

She first cast her skeptical eyes on romance novels about five years ago, when her 17-year-old daughter was exchanging books with a friend.

A science fiction, mystery and horror enthusiast, Hoover had never read a romance.

"The first one I read was full of weak, passive women and cold, arrogant men — it was horrible," she says. "I said, 'I could write better than that. My daughter said, 'Try it!' so I did."

Hoover, who had never written serious fiction but had been praised for her writing skills, faced two rejections before her first book was published by Silhouette. Her books are sold worldwide and have been

translated into German, Italian, French, Spanish, Japanese and Swedish.

Debra Matteucci, Hoover's editor at Harlequin American Romance in New York City, says the author's strength lies in "a strong narrative voice and a style that is emotional from word one."

"Personable and articulate, Hoover says her strong point in writing is dialogue.

"Dialogue is not hard because I can envision people talking. Sometimes characters literally take over the typewriter," she says.

The hardest things for Hoover as a writer are pacing and sex scenes.

"Sex scenes are not easy to write," she says, puffing on a cigarette. "What's hard is wording, atmosphere, creating 'sexual tension'."

Hoover says she can not write successful horror stories, which, ironically, she loves to read. She is currently at work on a fantasy novel.

"My ideas come from anywhere," she says. "I write about places I've been, like Maine or England. For places I haven't been, I call a friend who lives there, and tell him to tell me all about the best restaurant or place to go."

"The characters are a composite of people I've known, maybe a dash of one I wish I'd known," she continues.

She says the hero must have more depth than the heroine because women are more interested in him.

Hoover says she is never completely satisfied with her work, even when the manuscript is on the way to the publisher.

"You never think it's right, and when the book comes out, it's even worse. You think, 'Oh my God, why did I write it that way?'" she says.

Hoover explains the formula that romance novels require:

"The hero and heroine already know each other or meet in the first chapter," she says. "Then there's the conflict, which is resolved. Finally, the couple gets married. And they don't live together first."

Hoover says she tried marriage and living together, but neither was satisfying.

"I strongly approve of marriage, but not for myself," she says. "I'm



Two of Sally Hoover's novels are pictured above. Collegian Photo / Timothy Archibald

unwilling to make the adjustment of living with someone. I'm self-centered. I like my life as it is. Men my age want to be taken care of."

A Penn State graduate, Hoover has a bachelor's degree in political science and a master's in public administration. She says that even if her writing career takes off, she won't give up her work in human service.

"Sally does a good job, she has a high level of commitment and she's a good politician," says Corinne Zupa-

nick, a co-worker at On-Drugs.

Hoover describes herself as a pragmatic and cynical liberal with varying interests. She works out her plots while she sews and falls asleep each night with a book in hand. Passionate for politics, she closely follows the media. She lives with three cats, who are "paranoid, psychotic and hopelessly obnoxious," respectively.

"If you plan to be a writer, have another job or a rich spouse," she says.

TV program shows fire sunk the Titanic

By SYDNEY RUBIN
Associated Press Writer

PARIS — Evidence recovered from the wreck of the Titanic indicates a fire in the luxury liner's hold played a role in its sinking 75 years ago, according to a program broadcast last night about last summer's treasure hunt.

Expedition organizers said physical evidence recovered in the dive shows that a coal fire softened the hull. When an iceberg hit the side, it indented the ship, causing an explosion that blasted outward through the hull, they theorized.

In addition, the position of two mechanical arms used by the Titanic bridge to communicate direction to the engine room indicates the ship may have been moving forward when it went down, they said.

A satchel of jewels and the contents of a safe scooped up from the wreck were to be opened during the live segment of the two-hour

international broadcast.

Viewers also were to see some of the artifacts recovered by the expedition, including the oceanliner's giant bell, porthole covers, delicate blue-and-white china and fluted silver serving trays.

The venture brought back about 900 artifacts, some of which were shown in the live telecast carried by 155 stations in the United States.

The show, featuring actor Telly Savalas, also was broadcast in Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Hong Kong, Italy and Peru. It was not shown in France.

The telecast from Paris' Museum of Science and Industry opened with film and interviews telling the story of the Titanic, which struck an iceberg and sank April 15, 1912 on its maiden voyage from Southampton, England to New York.

The wreck was discovered in September 1985 in a joint U.S.-French expedition.

U.N. asks Reagan to pay back dues

By VICTORIA GRAHAM
Associated Press Writer

UNITED NATIONS — Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar has appealed to President Reagan to pay a substantial amount in back dues to the United Nations to save it from financial crisis, a spokesman said yesterday.

Without U.S. aid, the world body may not be able to pay the 6,500 employees at its New York headquarters in December, according to spokesman Francois Guiliani.

Guiliani told reporters yesterday: "He sent a letter to President Reagan, expressing concern over the

very difficult financial situation." Guiliani said Perez de Cuellar presented the letter Monday to U.S. Ambassador Vernon Walters, who said he would try to deliver it personally to the president.

"At present, without some contribution from the United States or other countries, there will be a very difficult situation," Guiliani said. He added that the United Nations was not demanding immediate payment of all outstanding American dues.

The press section of the U.S. mission said Walters was expected to deliver Perez de Cuellar's letter today to the president.

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Sheriff Kunes and his wife Juanita reside in Snow Shoe Township and have three children

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