

For romance fans, love's worth reading

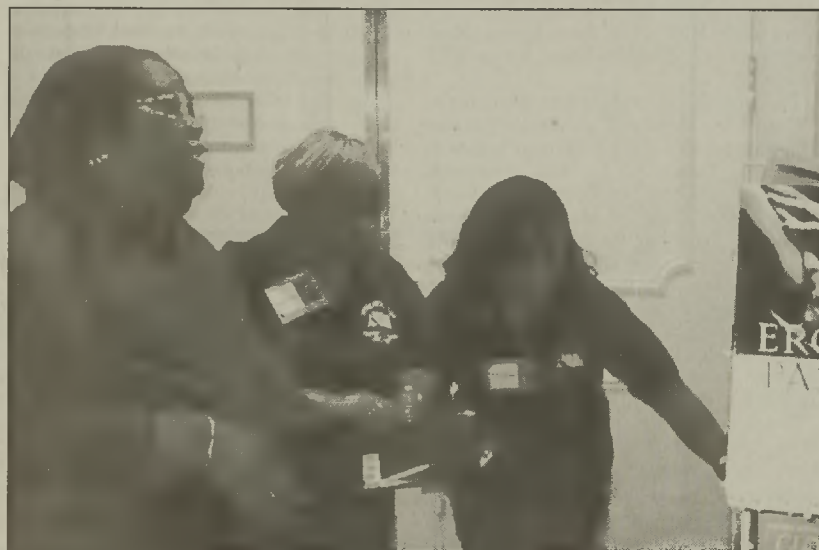


PHOTO: CHERIS HODGES

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NEW YORK — Sometimes Brenda McDade just wants to escape reality. So, she picks up one of her favorite romance novels and does just that.

At the Romance Slam Jam conference, McDade was just one fan of the genre who made the trek to the Big Apple loaded down with books to have them signed by her favorite authors.

Some other fans who attended the conference brought suitcases full of books.

Why? What sets romance apart from other fiction? Why are these fans so loyal?

"(The books) mirror real life, but it comes out pretty decent in the end," said McDade, who is from Houston.

Fans Emma Rodgers, Ashira Tosihwe and romance author Francis Ray started Romance Slam Jam in 1995 in Dallas. According to the conference's web site, the Jam grew out of a desire to recognize romance authors, and to celebrate their craft with avid fans. The conference has grown from just a few attendees to several hundred, and has

welcomed writers and fans from more than 25 cities and four countries.

Romance novels make up 55 percent of popular paperback fiction and generate \$1 billion dollars in sales each year, according to Romance Writers of America, Inc.

In the early 1990s Black Entertainment Television launched Arabesque, a line of romance novels geared toward African Americans. It produces at least 20 books a year.

Evelyn Palfrey, a romance author and fan, said she had been reading traditional romance novels since she was a child.

"I would imagine the heroine had nappy hair, that the tall dark and handsome hero was really dark. It didn't make much sense that my nappy headed heroine and dark hero were running through the streets of Scotland," she said.

Debra Ross, a fan from Houston, said when she first started reading romance, some of her favorite authors were white. She admittedly stumbled into African American romance novels, but has been hooked ever since.

"I have stacks and stacks of books," she said.



Meet Laquesha

Likes Biking Riding
Football and Swimming
Music and Singing

Has accomplished many of her goals
and needs assistance with others
Looking for parents to believe in her
and all that she can do.

"Laquesha has a very pleasing personality. She's a happy Child. She needs a family that will understand her needs." Foster Mother.

Laquesha (DOB 7/25/92) would like to have a forever family. When asked what kind of family she would like, she stated a "good, kind, friendly family." She hopes to maintain contact with her brother and sister. She has great potential and can succeed if properly motivated. She needs a family that will set and maintain firm guidelines.

Mecklenburg County
Youth & Family Services
720 East Fourth Street
Charlotte, NC 28208
For more information contact:
Nichole Gause
704/432-1024



Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. Charlotte Alumnae Chapter Presents Its 2004 Debutantes "Rubies in the Sand"



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Willie &
Deborah Washington



Zibiah P. Burden
Providence High
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Winston Cleveland &
Angela Roddey



Brittany Cuthbertson
Vance High
Anthony Cuthbertson &
Dottie Crenshaw



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Cambrea Freeman
West Charlotte High
Randy &
Carletta Freeman



Joselynn Freeman
Hopewell High
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Joyce Freeman, Jr.



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South Meck High
Boyce &
Marilyn Friday, Sr.



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Rachel M. Johnson
Myers Park High
Cindy Scurry-Johnson



Shaughnacie Johnson
Northwest High
Derrick & Andrea Johnson



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West Charlotte High
Stephen & Narell Joyner



Alana E. Kennedy
West Meck High
David & Jayne Phoso



Yuri L. Kennion
Myers Park High
Robert & Brenda Kennion



Latoya J. Love
West Charlotte High
Kenneth & Cynthia Love



Christina Mayfield
Harding High
Phillip & Sallie Mayfield



Larilyn C. McGee
Independence High
James & Cheryl McGee



Awnya R. Miles
Vance High
Alvin & Cynthia Miles, Sr.



Ivey P. Moore
Harding High
John & Patricia Moore



LaMonica P. Moore
Harding High
Tracy & Cynthia Moore



Shannon Morrison
West Charlotte High
Michael Morrison &
Dorothy Ann Mayo



Charissé T. Motley
Hopewell High
Gregory & Tracey Motley



Courtney D. Nichols
Vance High
George & Angela Nichols



Jordan M. Nivens
Vance High
Moses & Sandra Nivens



Tyra Pendergrass
Harding High
Norman Pendergrass, Jr. &
Debra Pendergrass-Finklea



Raquel J. Ramseur
Vance High
Calvin & Vanessa Ramseur



Whitney Sessoms
Independence High
Connie & Flo Sessoms



Latesha S. Spears
Butler High
Kenneth & Carolyn Spears



Ebony L. Staten
Garinger High
Lee Staten &
Christian Bell



Kate Sturdivant
Garinger High
Herbert & Betty Sturdivant



Zavonda C. Tate
West Charlotte High
James & Jeannette Logan



Tiffany J. Taylor
Harding High
Sheila Robinson



Witney L. Thaxton
Butler High
Darryl & Lisa Thaxton



Tomeka Thompson
Vance High
Gregory &
Phyllis Thompson



Latavia Turner-Drakeford
Independence High
Kelvin &
Cassandra Drakeford



Tiffany Waddell
Vance High
David & Nelbra Waddell



Amanda J. Walker
Butler High
Crawford &
Stephanie Walker



Erica Wallace
Harding High
Robert & Felice Wallace



JoVonne S. Walls
West Charlotte High
Drayton Pagan &
Millicent Ann Walls



Paris Washington
Garinger High
Michael & Paris Washington



Amisha V. Woods
Garinger High
James Adams &
Dorothy Woods

Saturday, April 24, 2004, 6pm
Charlotte Convention Center, Downtown Charlotte
Debutantes' information includes Name, High School and Parents.

Melody Harris & Jo Ann Rodgers, Cotillion Co-Chairs
Ann Boyd, President Charlotte Alumnae Chapter