A Woman's Place is on the Case

Bay Area Mystery Writers

Michaelyn Burnette, Humanities Librarian

Famous for its temperate climate and gorgeous scenery, the San Francisco Bay Area is also widely known for its many fine writers of detective fiction. The most striking characteristic of the Bay Area mystery writers is the large number of women writers.

Perhaps this is not coincidental; Marcia Muller, whose Edwin of the Iron Shoes (1977) is often cited as the first contemporary American series featuring a woman, sets her books in San Francisco. Many other detecting women followed; this article is a brief overview of series set in the Bay Area written by area women authors.

The obvious place to begin is with Muller, whose Sharon McConne matures as a person and as a private investigator through facing the moral and intellectual quandaries presented by her cases. The reader comes to know Sharon and her family and friends through Muller's richly detailed characterizations. A graduate of Cal, Sharon begins her career as an idealistic investigator for All Souls Legal Cooperative, a law firm serving the poor. By the nineties, Sharon establishes her own agency and becomes a formidable investigator with national and even international importance. Few other writers can match Muller for the intriguing nature of the puzzles she sets for Sharon to solve and for the quality of her writing; even fewer writers can make the reader care so much for the protagonist. In 1993, the Private Eye Writers of America presented Muller with the Lifetime Achievement Award for her impressive body of work and contribution to the mystery genre.

Though the talented Laurie R. King only published her first Kate Martinelli novel in 1993 (when it won the Edgar for best first novel), she has gained a multitude of fans for this series and for her historical series featuring Mary Russell, student of Jewish theology and of crime. Kate is a San Francisco police officer with a secret, which the reader learns in the course of A Grave Talent; through her intelligence and insight, she brings to justice a serial child murderer. In To Play the Fool (1995), Kate
finds herself relying on Erasmus, a fool who speaks only in quotations, to solve the murder of a homeless man. In *With Child* (1996), Kate must deal with her own guilt as she tries to locate the daughter of her partner, kidnapped while on a trip with Kate. King's background, a bachelor's degree in religious studies from University of California at Santa Cruz and a master's in theology from Graduate Theological Union, is obvious in all her work as her characters struggle to maintain not only justice but also a moral center. Never is that background more obvious than in the Martinelli series—and never is the center in more danger of collapsing—but Kate, and King, keep all together.

A graduate of the Hastings College of Law, where she was editor-in-chief of the Constitutional Law Quarterly, and a former Teaching Fellow at Stanford Law School, Lia Matera has intimate knowledge of legal matters, and her expertise shows in her two series about San Francisco lawyers. Willa Jansen first appears in *Where Lawyers Fear To Tread* (1986); she's a law student who becomes a law review editor and a murder suspect when the previous editor is murdered. Willa is the daughter of sixties radicals, who instilled in her their distrust of wealth and power, and she struggles with her own desires for material success as she uses her intelligence and sense of humor to cope with murder, first at a radical law firm in San Francisco, then at a major corporate Los Angeles firm, and finally in her own Santa Cruz office. *The Smart Money* (1988) introduces Laura Di Palma, whose wit and sense of the absurd take her through adventures at a top San Francisco law firm to her own very south of Market office.

Both series have garnered Matera several *Anthony* and *Edgar* nominations for best mystery novel of the year.

Berkeley author Linda Grant is the creator of Catherine Sayler, a San Francisco private investigator (p.i.) who specializes in solving corporate crime. The compassionate, tough, and intelligent Catherine first appeared in the *Anthony*-nominated *Random Access Murder* (1988), in which she solves the murder of a corporate secretary. Her most recent case, *Vampire Bites* (1998), involves live-action role playing (LARPing) on Bay Area streets, the homeless children lining Telegraph Ave., and high-tech theft and murder. In between, Catherine takes on bank computer crime and the theft of experimental seeds from UCB. Grant is a former president of Sisters in Crime and has worked in the Peace Corps and as a high school English teacher.

Other San Francisco sleuths include Gloria White's Ronnie Ventana, a Latina p.i. who learned many useful skills from her cat burglar parents. Her first appearance, in 1991's *Murder on the Run*, earned White an *Anthony* nomination; subsequent outings have drawn multiple award nominations. In her first appearance (1987), Mary Wings's Emma Victor is a volunteer at a Boston woman's hotline and solves the murder of one of the callers. By the time of *She Came in a Flash* (1990), Emma is feeling at home in San Francisco and is part of
The Don Herron Collection of San Francisco Mystery Stories

The lesbian scene. Her creator, Mary Wings, is particularly adept at depicting the gay ambiance of San Francisco and the complexities of that city's politics. Readers wanting a change from the contemporary might try Dianne Day's Fremont Jones, introduced in *The Strange Case Files* (1995). Fremont flees her upper class Boston home to set herself up as a typist in turn-of-the-century San Francisco. When one of her clients dies mysteriously, Fremont sets out to find his murderer. *Fire and Fog* (1996) opens with the Great Quake, and Day's description of that event and its aftermath form a fascinating backdrop. In *Emperor Norton's Ghost* (1998), Fremont makes the transition from amateur to professional detective as she solves the murders of two spiritualists.

From their nineteenth century origins, fictional investigators are often outsiders, connected to society primarily by their dedication to punishing injustice. When we first meet Lora Roberts's fortyish Liz Sullivan in *Murder in a Nice Neighborhood* (1994), she is the ultimate outsider, a homeless woman living in a VW bus on the streets of wealthy Palo Alto. Liz ekes out a marginal living by writing magazine articles and growing vegetables in the community garden. Victimized by her husband and the criminal justice system that punished her for resisting his abuse, she shuns all but casual human contact. Liz draws herself back to society by solving murders that often literally land on her doorstep.

Susan Dunlap is the only American writer to publish series in the three primary mystery subgenres: the police procedural (Berkeley cop Jill Smith, introduced in 1981's *Karma*), p.i. (Kiernan O'Shaughnessy, former medical examiner turned La Jolla investigator), and amateur sleuth (Vejay Haskell, PG&E meter reader). In her attempts to bring justice to the Berkeley streets, Jill often runs afoul of her superiors in the police department and of the town-gown politics of the city. Dunlap has a keen eye for location, and part of the fun of reading the novels is tracing Jill's path through Berkeley and trying to identify local characters.

Down the sort of mean streets of Sacramento walks a woman alone; oversized-purse on one shoulder, her husband's dry-cleaning draped over the other, she listens on the cell phone to her mother hector her about a murder. Meet Theresa Galloway, size sixteen and a woman busy juggling the demands of family, civil service job, and a mother whose interest in the affairs of others keeps getting them involved in murder. Terris McMahan Grimes depicts the results in *Somebody Else's Child* (1996) and *Blood Will Tell* (1997). Grimes, the recipient of the 1997 Chester Himes Award for her work, attended school in Oakland and graduated from Cal State Chico with a degree in English. She writes of Theresa's forays into detecting with compassion, humor, and perceptive details about African-American life in Sacramento. Theresa learns to appreciate her own abilities and toughness as she helps justice along.

The Bay Area's women authors have garnered an impressive array of mystery awards. Their works present
puzzles to challenge the reader, fascinating characters to make the reader care what happens to them, and also present details about modern life and mores found in no other genre. Recognizing the talent among these Bay Area authors and the scholarly value of their novels, The Bancroft Library recently purchased the Don Herron Collection of San Francisco Mystery Writers so that future scholars will have access to a genre not widely available in research libraries.

The Bay Area is fortunate indeed to have so many women on the case. Happy sleuthing.
SETI at the Astronomy / Mathematics / Statistics Library

A Librarian's Tutorial on How to Use the Digital Library

Ann Jensen, Librarian

Editor's Note: Using the topic of SETI (please see sidebar), Librarian Ann Jensen has created for the reader a detailed guide to using the

Astronomy/Mathematics/Statistics Library with the latest electronic tools and resources.

Most of us have heard something about the search for extraterrestrial intelligence, known as SETI, if not officially then through the media which informs our popular culture. And probably almost as many of us have also quickly dismissed this topic as quasi-science or on the outer fringes of legitimate academic research. But when we read in the mainstream press, as we did this spring, of the establishment of the Watson and Marilyn Alberts Chair for the Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence at the University of California, Berkeley, we sit up and take notice. And indeed, the appointment of esteemed Professor William J. Welch to this chair is recognition of a body of highly regarded research by astronomers, astrophysicists, planetary scientists, and engineers, as well as a commitment to continuing exploration.

Using SETI as an example, what follows is one strategy for using some of the electronic tools and resources of the UC Berkeley Library to pursue a newly sparked interest in any field which might be entirely new to you as a topic of serious study. In some cases, you will be led to further electronic resources; in many other cases, electronic tools will lead you to traditional books, journal articles, and conference publications. And as in most productive library research, you may end up reading materials which you had no idea existed before your focused, yet serendipitous, research.

The Magazine Index (MAGS) on the California Digital Library System (CDL, formerly MELVYL), is a great place to
Professor William "Jack" Welch, former director of UC Berkeley's Radio Astronomy Laboratory, holds the new Watson and Marilyn Alberts Chair for the Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence (SETI), that will serve to enhance the status of this field of astronomy as an area of serious scientific inquiry. In one of the first SETI Institute projects, Berkeley professors and scientists from the SETI Institute in Mountain View, California, are building what will be the world's largest telescope devoted mainly to the search for extraterrestrial intelligence. A grouping of nearly 1,000 antennas (like a backyard satellite dish) that provide a collecting surface of 10,000 square meters, will be assembled at Berkeley's Hat Creek.
Observatory near Mount Lassen to listen for signs of intelligent life.

locations indicates the cross-disciplinary nature of this emerging field.

Once you have selected a few volumes, you will soon discover that SETI, while a newly endowed chair on the Berkeley campus, is a research area with a multi-faceted history and an exciting but unknown future. Using contemporary library tools, you can find the new and old almost simultaneously. After a short time, you will know a bit about the vast reaches of our universe, and will have new respect for the many scientists engaged in this exciting venture.

Another SETI program is the SETI@home screen saver: software that allows anyone with a desktop computer to aid in the search for intelligent life in space. In the three months since its release, the number of participants worldwide is now surpassing one million. Statistics show that of the million people who have signed up with SETI@home and downloaded the software to let them analyze radio data from space, about 600,000 have completed at least one unit of data analysis, and some 370,000 are steady contributors. SETI@home works in this way: on Windows and Macintosh computers, the computer program acts as a screen saver, kicking in when the computer is idle and crunching data collected from a radio telescope in Puerto Rico, the 1,000-foot diameter dish at Arecibo. While no signs of alien life have yet been found, the SETI craze has infected offices and classrooms in some 223 countries since the screen saver was made available on May 17 by a team of UC Berkeley scientists at the SETI Institute. For more information on SETI@home, please visit their Web site at: setiathome.ssl.berkeley.edu/.
You Know How to Whistle, Don't You?

Hollywood Celebrities in the San Francisco News-Call Bulletin Photograph Archive

Mary W. Elings, Archivist for Pictorial Collection, The Bancroft Library

The Bancroft Library has recently completed a two-year project funded by the National Historical Publications and Records Commission to make the finding aids of the photograph archive of the San Francisco News-Call Bulletin newspaper available online. The archive, which consists of over 400,000 negatives documenting San Francisco and the Bay Area dating from approximately 1915 to 1965, includes many images of noted celebrities and dignitaries who visited San Francisco during these years. To a movie aficionado, among the most memorable of these are two of Hollywood's legendary couples, "Bogart and Bacall," and "Joe and Marilyn."

The images of Humphrey Bogart and Lauren Bacall, taken at the Mark Hopkins Hotel on October 31, 1946, during the filming of Dark Passage, show the couple with scripts for that movie open across their laps. They had been married for one year at that time, having fallen in love two years before on the set of To Have and Have Not. Few can forget the on-screen sparks that flew between them when Bacall delivered her famous line in that movie: "You know how to whistle don't you, Steve?" That same chemistry is evident as she stands closely behind Bogie as he gazes through the hotel window.

Even more poignant are the images of Joe DiMaggio and Marilyn Monroe on their wedding day and leaving for their honeymoon. Married on January 14,
1954, in San Francisco City Hall, the rising young starlet and America's retired baseball hero were constantly in the camera's eye. Marilyn seems to revel in the attention, while the tall, quiet Joe cheerfully abides the intrusion. Though the couple was to divorce less than a year later, the two remained close friends until Marilyn's untimely death in 1962. Joe kept the details of their relationship to himself, taking those private memories to his grave when he died at age 84 earlier this year.

These images of American icons and two of Hollywood's most celebrated couples are just a few examples of the rich and varied holdings in *The San Francisco News-Call Bulletin* newspaper photograph archive. These subjects as well as many other topics may be searched in the archive finding aid located in the Online Archive of California under UC Berkeley-Bancroft Library Finding Aids at [http://www.oac.cdlib.org/](http://www.oac.cdlib.org/). Digital images are not available, but negatives from the archive may be viewed by appointment in the Heller Reading Room of Bancroft.
Ted Joans Papers Come to Bancroft

Anthony Bliss, Rare Book Librarian, The Bancroft Library

It was about eighteen months ago when Ted Joans came to visit Bancroft. Ted's literary, artistic, and surrealist career dates back to the 1950s hip scene in Greenwich Village, where he was mentored by Langston Hughes and encouraged by Allan Ginsberg. Recently, we sat down in the Norman Strouse Seminar Room in Bancroft Library to discuss his literary archive, but mostly we discussed...rhinoceroses.

In a tense, two-hour conversation, we finally agreed that the world's foremost rhino fanciers included Ted, Salvador Dali, Albrecht Durer, and myself. Once that crucial point was settled, we got down to the business of bringing the Ted Joans papers to Bancroft.

Ted Joans is described by the Dictionary of Literary Biography as "...curiously neglected by many standard anthologies of both American and Afro-American literature." Perhaps this is because Ted is not concerned with self-aggrandizement or literary career building. When he has something to say, in art, jazz, or words, he says it and pulls no punches. Yes, he has an African-American perspective, but he is above all human, speaking to our common fears as well as to our common joys.

His writing tends to be short and pointed, with a mix of surrealist humor that makes the message more memorable. From my point of view, Ted has neither written enough nor published enough, but he is wonderfully unconcerned. He travels the world for the sheer joy of it with a pocketful of garlic cloves ("powerful preventive medicine"). The garlic works: he is the youngest, most vigorous septuagenarian that I know. At a reading he gave here a few months ago, it was clear that he had mellowed somewhat and felt entitled (as he is) to advise the assembled students on the value of truth, honesty with oneself, and personal effort. He has a kind way of making his points without a hint of preaching.

We arranged the purchase of the Ted Joans papers with the help of the Richard Henry Chabot Dieckman Fund. What we received and will soon begin to process is a wonderful panoply of writings dating back to the early 1960s, some
published, some unpublished. There are collages; writings in English, French, and German; articles; poems; essays; notes; ephemera; magazine appearances; reviews; a draft of his guidebook, *A Black Man Guides All Y’allo Africa*; a draft autobiography; and other works that defy classification. It is bewildering and delightful: five large cartons of material that is original, novel, and not well known.

There is strong interest in this archive in the African Studies Department as well as the English Department, and, if we can secure the funding, we have a student anxious to go to work on the processing of the collection this summer. In the meantime, Ted Joans continues to globetrot, sending me terse reports from various destinations (Timbuktu, Paris, Seattle, among others). Every Ted Joans missive presents its own challenges: where to start reading, where to stop, how to interpret the enclosures? All of them are covered with rhinoceros stamps. I try to respond in kind, but Ted is unbeatable.
**CAPITAL CAMPAIGN UPDATE**

**Library Closing In on Goals**

Reflecting the strength and diversity of the University, and standing at the very center of the academic experience on Cal's campus, is the Library. Ranking second in size among American public university research libraries, Cal's library is very heavily used by both the University community and the public.

Recognizing that the strength of the Library is crucial to the excellence of the University, the Library is an important component of the Campaign for the New Century. Priorities in the campaign include new facilities for the Music Library and the East Asian Library and Studies Center. The Library's collections are also a high University campaign priority; to that end the University included in the campaign priorities a $25 million goal to support Library collections.

Approximately $20 million of the collections goal has been raised. And we are delighted. Many donors have responded generously to the premise that the *excellence of the University is closely allied to the excellence of the Library.*

In fact, since the campaign began July 1, 1993, the Library has recorded 25,283 individual gifts!

Included in the $20 million are more than 60 new collections endowments. Named endowments are a wonderful way for a donor to honor someone special while simultaneously supporting Cal's collections. Endowments are structured so that they will grow over the years and assure that future generations of Cal students and scholars will have adequate library materials to support their research and classwork.

Because so many have been so generous and supportive of the Library, it occurred to us that readers might find it interesting to learn something about how the dollars of donors are being used. Hence, we dropped in at the office of James H. Spohrer, current associate university librarian and acting director of the collections. Spohrer is also the librarian for the Germanic and Finnish collections. Though he readily agrees that he "doesn't see the money actually coming in," it is his responsibility to identify and prioritize the projects that come before the many librarians who make selections for the collections, and to decide which projects to pursue for collection enrichment.

In discussing recent gifts to the Library, Spohrer detailed how the Library is using the income from the *Mario Savio/Free Speech Movement Collection Endowment* that was established in 1997.

A word of background first. The endowment is part of a three-part gift made to the Library by Stephen M. Silberstein, classes of '64 and '77, in honor of Mario Savio and the Free Speech Movement that occurred on this campus in 1964. The other parts of the gift include the *Free Speech Movement Cafe*, which opened in January 2000 (more about the cafe in the next issue of the newsletter), and the establishment of the *Free Speech Movement Archive* in the Bancroft Library, which includes photographs, newscloppings, broadsides, and other documentation of the movement, as well as oral histories of many of the participants.
Last year, the first year that it produced income, the *Mario Savio/Free Speech Movement Endowment* provided an opportunity to obtain some important material, which we could not normally have afforded to buy:

...$5,000 was spent on materials on Algerian politics and culture. This is the first time in several years that Algeria has been deemed safe enough to permit a book-buying expedition.

...$2,000 was used to purchase a microfilm run of *Rzechpospolita* (1995-98), the main Polish daily newspaper in the post-Soviet period. No other western library has this material.

...$4,000 was spent to purchase *Meiji No Takara* (Treasures of Imperial Japan), an eight-volume set documenting the world's greatest collection of Meiji decorative art, comprising nearly 1,000 works by most of the known masters from the middle of the 19th century to the middle of the 20th century.

...$5,000 was directed to purchase English and American poetry. A few years ago local poets Robert Hass, Thom Gunn, and Ishmael Reed identified a core list of poets and presses whose works we should own.

...$5,000 is being used for materials on Latin America, including contemporary political issues and current poetry. According to Carlos Delgado, Latin American selector, "The Caribbean is an area of increasing interest to Berkeley researchers. Among our purchases is the newspaper, *Periodico Claridad* (1959-89), from San Juan, Puerto Rico. *Claridad* provided an outlet to the opinions and commentaries of the important academic and political leaders barred from the mainstream press."

As well, last year income from other endowments presented us with expanded buying opportunities. Income from the $4.8 million endowment resulting from our *National Endowment for the Humanities Challenge Grant* supported the purchase of a microfiche collection of historic newspapers from Switzerland and Austria. The collection consists of 60 newspapers from 1850 to 1975, which will make available a unique perspective of the foundations of modern Europe and the world wars. It is a cooperative purchase by all UC campuses, the University of Southern California, and Stanford University. Another planned cooperative purchase is the microfilm archives of the National Socialist Party in Germany, which include lists of Party members, SS Officers' service records, and material on Nazi leaders. These archives will be particularly useful for researchers in the field of German wealth and banking during the Holocaust, including for those tracing missing bank accounts formerly held by Jews. This particular acquisition will be a cooperative project with Stanford, UCLA, and Harvard.

Not all of Cal's Library endowments are capitalized with hundreds of thousands of dollars. In fact, few are. Requiring a minimum investment of $10,000, many individual endowments have a corpus of much less than $100,000. These endowments produce valuable and important annual income that is spent on materials specific to the donors' instructions. Camille Wanat, head of the Kresge Engineering Library, reports that she oversees the *Horatio Stevens Library Fund*, which is limited to materials on thermodynamics. The Bancroft Library manages the *Fontana Library Fund*, which concentrates on rare books on Italian culture; and the *Essig Memorial Library Fund*, specializes in entomology.
Another way of ensuring that a gift to the Library will have a lasting impact is by a donation to an endowment that is made up of many small gifts. When we completed our National Endowment for the Humanities Challenge Grant in 1998, the resulting endowment included approximately 6,000 gifts. Some were as small as a few dollars, but all were meaningful and appreciated.

Now, to honor the millennium and the new century, we have established the Millennial Fund. This holiday season, thousands of prospective Library donors will be asked to make a gift to this unrestricted collections endowment. A generous response helped to ensure that Cal's Library will remain in the forefront of acquiring new knowledge and make it available to Cal's students and scholars as well as the general public.
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The Library Associates
Join more than 6,000 other friends, book lovers, alumni, and faculty who recognize that the influence of a great research library reaches beyond the university it serves to the many communities of which it is a part.
Library Associates receive complimentary copies of the quarterly newsletter Bene Legere, as well as invitations to special occasions at the Library. For more information on the Library Associates program, please write or telephone: The Library Development Office, Room 188 Doe Library, University of California, Berkeley, CA 94720-6000; telephone (510) 642-9377. Or, check our website.

Calendar of Exhibits

Bridging the Bay: Bridging the Campus
December -- April 2000
Bernice Layne Brown Gallery, Doe Library
Bridges are essential to the life of the Bay Area. At a time when Bay Area bridges are being analyzed and new structures are being planned, Bridging the Bay: Bridging the Campus features rare historical documents, drawings, photographs, maps, publications, and artifacts showcasing existing bridges in the Bay Area. It also includes documents detailing Bay
Carquinez Bridge, 1926. These nattily-attired gentlemen, members of the Central California Newspapermen's Association, pose with a detailed model of the original Carquinez Strait Highway Bridge.

Area bridge projects that were never built, including visionary designs by Bernard Maybeck and Frank Lloyd Wright.

The libraries represented in the exhibit are the Bancroft Library, the Earth Sciences and Map Library, the Environmental Design Library, the Harmer E. Davis Transportation Library, the Institute of Governmental Studies Library, the Kresge Engineering Library, and the Water Resources Center Archives.