



Cedar Roe Library is the setting. Four women reveal their lives as they share through voice and paper.

Four Ordinary Women tells of difficulties in marriage, children, importance of friendship, conflict, facing death, balance, personal solitude, inspiration. This is a compelling account of four women who meet twice a month at Cedar Roe Library to share, through their writing, the stories of their lives. But this isn't just their story. It is all of our stories. You will identify. You will say, "I know just what you mean." Share the heartache, the joy, sadness and self-examination.

The honesty will make you flinch, but not move away. It is riveting and you will be drawn into not-so-ordinary perspectives of women who have taken off the game face.

Come share their lives.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**SEVEN LOCKS PRESS ANNOUNCES THE RELEASE OF *FOUR ORDINARY WOMEN*,
A BOOK WRITTEN BY FOUR KC-AREA WOMEN**

(Fairway, Kan.)... Seven Locks Press, a California based publisher, will release a book written by four Kansas City-area women on June 11, 2009. *Four Ordinary Women*, by Pat Antonopoulos, Patti Dickinson, Shawna Samuel and Jo Ann Stanley, is a collection of non-fiction short stories and essays that focus on a wide array of issues including marriage, friendship, and inspiration as well as topics like solitude and balance all from four distinct points of view and showing us no one is truly ordinary.

In 2001, Patti Dickinson and Pat Antonopoulos sent a letter inviting a group of women to the Cedar Roe Library Meeting Room in Roeland Park, KS to explore the definition of friendship and to share their stories about family, relationships, happiness and adversity. The goal of these meetings was not to just find comfort and offer strength to each other. Instead, Antonopoulos and Dickinson, wanted to produce an inspiring collection of stories with the power to encourage women everywhere to reach out and share their lives to build lasting and meaningful relationships.

"Four Ordinary Women exemplifies the resilience of the human spirit," says Stephen R. Covey, author of *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*. "These essays are forged of grit and honesty and speak to all of us."

Book Signings and Appearances

- June 11, 1:00 – 2:30 PM at Keeler Women’s Center, 2220 Central St. Kansas City, Kansas – Open to the public.
- July 30, 7:00 PM at Rainy Day Books, 2706 W. 53rd St. Fairway, KS - (913) 384-3126 – Admission is \$21.95 plus tax and includes a copy of *Four Ordinary Women*. Call for reservations.
- September 16, 7:00 – 8:30 PM at Cedar Roe Library, 5120 Cedar St. Shawnee Mission, KS – Open to the public.

For more information, go to www.fourordinarywomen.com.

ISBN: 978-0-9822293-3-0 * June 2009 * 262 Pages * 6 "x 9 " Hardcover * \$21.95**

Praise for Four Ordinary Women

4 Ordinary Women exemplifies the resilience of the human spirit. These essays are forged of grit and honesty and speak to all of us.

Stephen R. Covey, author, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*
and *The 8th Habit: From Effectiveness to Greatness*

Just as there are no normal families, so there are no ordinary women, and, despite its engaging title, this book proves that. Each of the four women who participated in this intriguing project is unique and each, thus, resists being labeled as ordinary or labeled as anything other than endlessly interesting. What these women show is that we all have our stories to tell because we all have been both blessed and battered by life. Readers will find countless points of intersection with their thoughts and experiences because we all share a common humanity. But readers will not simply be looking in a mirror here at their own lives played out by another. Rather, they will find new insights into - common experiences.

Bill Tammeus
Faith Columnist
The Kansas City Star
wtammeusffl~kc.rr.com
Web log: <http://billtammeus~pepad.com>

These four ordinary women have given us a book that is both brave and inspiring. By turns funny and sad, serious and flippant, impassioned and reflective, this collection of short pieces on a variety of subjects provides a glimpse into the lives and experiences of these women. Their commitment to honesty is praiseworthy, and one hopes that their example will serve to inspire others throughout the country to come together to share their lives in writing.

Brian Bowles, Ph.D.
Philosopher and Counselor

4 Ordinary Women is an extraordinary journey! What a gift to find not only one woman sharing her life in such a real and honest way but all four! I found myself relating to each woman at different times as I read this book and in different places of their lives and in mine. A wonderful and heartfelt work of love that is obvious on every unique and different page.

Mary B. Lucas
Author of *Lunchmeat & Life Lessons: Sharing a Butcher's Wisdom*

4 Ordinary Women is beautifully written. Brutally honest. Funny. Powerful. Comforting. It's impossible to read this book without relating the stories to one's own life - and being moved to treasure some things and to change others.

Patricia (Pat) Schudy
former youth columnist, "Talk to Us,"
Universal Press Syndicate

These writers have engaged in a remarkable process of self-discovery and insight resulting in an enlightening peek into the human family and the far-reaching effects of the family's predictable patterns and repetitions.

Dori Moore, Family Systems Therapist

WOW...this was the most powerful, touching, and uplifting piece of reading I have ever read. There are hundreds of books under the heading "Spiritual Reading." This book gives a whole new meaning to the heading...

Father Ed Lisson, S.J.



BIO - Patricia Antonopoulos

For 46 years, beginning at age 19, I was defined by perimeters—twice married, once divorced, mother of five, committed Catholic, teacher, grandmother, caregiver, friend, retiree, volunteer.

Not now.

Now I am *becoming*.

I treasure spontaneity and laughter, am impatient with ritual routine, with the mundane. Sitting still, even with a book, is increasingly difficult. Comfort in relationships feels much safer.

Yet, for at least the last five years, I have eaten a whole-wheat bagel each morning, and have worn the *same pair* of Birks each day for those five years. Five pair of jeans and seven denim shirts hang center stage in the closet. Small talk is an art form I have yet to master. Listening is better than talking.

I require a reason for each day, a measure of time and success. The measure is always the people in my life.

This contrast between rigid and free mixes into an annoyingly responsible woman with future plans for singing and dancing.

BIO - Patti Dickinson

I was born on the twenty-third day of June in 1953. I married Wood when I was twenty-one, and by twenty-seven had earned the title of "mom". I would repeat that seven more times over the next fourteen years. We would be teased unmercifully by friends who said that we had the market cornered on "front-row Catholic names": Matt, Elizabeth, Claire, Kathleen, Mary Morgan, Andrew, Meghan and Margaret. Unwavering Irish Catholic.

I feel like I began this motherhood journey thinking I was going to run a 5K and make pretty good time. It has been more like a marathon --- alternating between "hitting the wall" and gasping for breath.

My favorite part of parenting is listening to my kids retell stories. Then I am reminded that we've had a riotous good time on many, many occasions. And sometimes, in the day to day, I forget that it hasn't all been lost library books, dead fish, broken curfews, dented fenders, soggy washcloths on the floor of the shower, a sticky refrigerator door handle, or whose turn it is to clean out the bunny cage or the cats' litter box, or to ride in the front seat. That we've celebrated personal and public victories and we've settled our differences and confronted pain in many ways --- through tears, slammed doors, quivering chins, stony silences, sobbing, retreating.

My friends would tell you that I am generous, funny, willing to do just about anything for any of them, most likely a stockholder in Gap khaki shorts. My 38 spices are alphabetized but I only use pepper, cinnamon and basil, the rest are for decoration. I am set-your-watch-by-me reliable, always clutching a list of things to do.

My kids would say that I am available, that I know who they are, maybe even when they don't, that I have a big heart, and am a great mom. They say that I am passionate about not incarcerating children, the death penalty, knitting, dimples, honesty, putting their napkin in their lap, mowing every blade of grass --- with no residual fringe, curly hair and saying goodnight.

I would tell you that I am sometimes "stuck". Not sure who I am, where I fit. I am estranged from a family that functioned, but sometimes not very well. I am not good at letting much of anything unpleasant run its course,

but I enter, stage left, too quickly to fix whatever I perceive to be broken. I am not good with silences --- you probably don't want to sit next to me on a cross-country plane trip or stand in front of me to renew your driver's license. I have no fashion sense and carry the same purse until it wears out. (I don't wish I had a fashion sense.) I have a non-existent ability to say no, and I laugh - a lot.

My husband would tell you that I am a morning person, recoil at the mere suggestion of clutter, make a great fried egg sandwich and that sometimes love hurts. That I believe in happy endings and honesty is my guiding principle. That I call it like I see it and don't play games. That I can beat the socks off him in backgammon and it makes him grumpy - because I gloat --- just a little.

I dedicate my writing to Wood, the man who shared this thirty year marital journey and to the kids - Matt, Elizabeth, Claire, Kathleen, Mary Morgan, Andrew, Meg and Margaret, who helped us define ourselves as a family.

Shawna Samuel

My name is Shawna Samuel. Born in 1963, I am a work in progress, always changing striving to be true to myself and who I want to be. My best friend, my husband Duncan, would probably say that I'm a fun person to be with who has a zest for life he envies. I am innately happy. My glass, and everyone's around me, is full to overflowing. My eternal optimism and passion for doing my best at everything I take on is my mainstay. I have to say I enjoy a great sense of humor. One of my best qualities is that I can laugh at myself.....and opportunities afford themselves daily. While marveling at my multi-tasking and balancing the many activities as mother of two, volunteer and employee, he gets frustrated with my inability to look out for myself, say no now and then, and be my own gatekeeper.

As a daughter, an only child, born of two only children, I am reliable, good, kind and mature beyond my years. My mother feels immense pride in who I have become, a comforting fact as I make my way through this life. As a child, I rarely had to be disciplined because I was usually so hard on myself.

My daughter Caitlin, born in 1988, and son Alex, born in 1995, like and respect me, overall; although I can be frustratingly exacting and demanding sometimes. But even as kids, I think they would give me an A + for effort. For even at my worst, they can see that I'm really committed to them and on their side, for the long haul.

For my friends, I am loyal, steadfast and supportive. I can keep a secret, listen forever, and come back with some pretty dam good advice now and then. I'm someone you could call at 2 o'clock in the morning, and you know I wouldn't be mad. I might even make you laugh.

Both a blessing and a curse, I was born an old soul, wise beyond my years.

Jo Ann Stanley

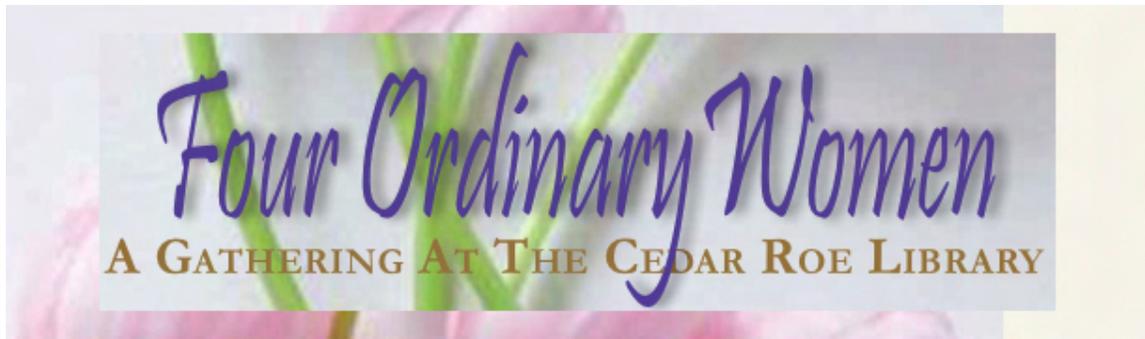
My name is Jo Ann Stanley. I am 52, born in '52: cosmic numbers. I am wife, mother, teacher, learner, and traveler. I use the word "traveler" literally and figuratively. As a young adult-- 21 on the 21st__ I fell in love with travel when I backpacked through South America. This experience largely defined who I am today: it gave me confidence, global awareness, my love of the Spanish language. Since then I've been completely unable to tame my wanderlust. Have passport, will go everywhere! Metaphorically, I am a traveler seeking directions. I find community with friends and family, I care what happens to humanity and the earth, but I'm unclear about my ultimate path.

As lifelong learner, I'm constantly reading. I feel lost when I'm between books, so I'm usually reading several. Inevitably the one I want is in the wrong place: in the car when I'm in the kitchen, in the kitchen when I'm in the car. I'm always looking for things: my book, glasses, or keys.

I am a teacher by vocation. I stumbled into the profession in college, but realize now that it was fate.

Being a teacher has served me well as mother to my two girls, Corinne and Brooke, who have suddenly morphed into teenagers. When they were toddlers, we enjoyed many hours of reading and creativity together. Now they have little use for my teachings if offered unsolicited, but still ask for help now and then.

I'm not exactly a lousy homemaker, but this isn't my forte either. I do love to cook. My darkest secret is my narcolepsy. There I am on the couch, every afternoon, falling asleep with a book in my lap and the cat curled up close. Yet I have a husband-Kerry -- who loves me despite my flaws, and in return, he remains the love of my life.



CONTACT INFORMATION

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BLOG: [HTTP://www.fourordinarywomen.blogspot.com](http://www.fourordinarywomen.blogspot.com)

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'Four Ordinary Women' hope to inspire others

By RACHEL SKYBETTER
The Kansas City Star

It all started with a letter.

A letter composed by two unlikely friends who wished to start a writing group with one extraordinary goal in mind: to publish a book that would inspire other women. Now, eight years later, the authors of "Four Ordinary Women: A Gathering at the Cedar Roe Library" are ready to share their precious project with the rest of the world.

It was Pat Antonopoulos, 70, of Parkville, and Patti Dickinson, 54, of Fairway, who penned the invitation sent to about a dozen women they handpicked from around the area.

Antonopoulos had been Dickinson's son's first-grade teacher. (He is now preparing to start college.) Through the years they became close — writing each other, sharing ideas and bonding over life's lessons.

"One day we were talking and said, 'Let's do something more with this, let's trade this in for a bigger experience,'" said the soft-spoken Antonopoulos. So the friends decided to create a writing group.

"And it was just great from the beginning," Antonopoulos said.

Although a handful of women replied and attended the bimonthly meetings at the Roeland Park library over the years, it was Shawna Samuel, 46, and Jo Ann Stanley, 57, both of Westwood Hills, who stuck with Dickinson and Antonopoulos until the end.

Their book is a collection of nonfiction stories about life and relationships, good times and bad. The women enjoyed and supported one another, but their ultimate goal was to produce a book that would encourage other women to reach out and share their lives the way they were doing.

"We're all very different people, and we're all in different stages of our lives ... and we aren't in each other's daily lives," said Samuel, account vice president at Trozollo Communications Group. "It's not like we were all best friends who saw each other every day."



ALLISON LONG/Kansas City Star

Jo Ann Stanley (left) and Shawna Samuel were two women invited to join the writing group. They stuck it out for years and are co-authors of the new book.



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By keeping their relationship at arm's length, they were able to work together more efficiently to create their finished product.

"It's kind of like rooming with your high school friends in college — not very often it's a good idea — and I think it was the same thing for us," Dickinson said.

The leader of the pack is undoubtedly Dickinson, a superhero stay-at-home mom of eight and grandmother of four. She's outspoken and determined and somehow always finds a way to squeeze in a blog post among days filled with activities and endless to-do lists.

"The more I blog, the better — the easier — it is for me to blog," Dickinson said. "If I go three or four days between blogs, it's really difficult for me to get traction again."

Antonopoulos, 70, a mother of five and grandmother of four, is the historian of the group. She organized everything in the publishing phase and saved all the rejection letters. She, too, is remarkably handy with the blog, posting gentle and wise entries about the complexities and joys of life. She cherishes the connections the women made.

"It was freeing, and no matter what problem you came in with, you knew there would be eyes making eye contact with you, nods of the head, and ... the remarks that you needed to hear," Antonopoulos said. "It was wonderful."

And then there's Stanley, a worldly elementary school teacher with two daughters. Her eyes light up when she speaks of her travels — she has been all over South America and Europe, but also has explored the expansive terrain of her imagination.

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Authors of Four Ordinary Women

Pat Antonopoulos



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