

# Writer finds success in romance

By MARK HOLMES  
Staff

Some people chew on sour grapes. Others take life's lemons and make lemonade.

Take Jill Metcalf, a Streetsville native now transplanted to Georgetown, where she is celebrating the publication of her fourth novel.

Metcalf, an alumnus of Streetsville's Russell Langmaid Public School, was struck by rheumatoid arthritis in 1982 and the disease kept her down for three years as both her hips were replaced.

"I always liked reading," said Metcalf, who tore through the works of Tom Clancy and Robert Ludlum and dozens of other authors while she recovered.

"I got tired of reading all of the time and decided to do some writing myself," Metcalf said, noting that she began her first book on a handful of Bic pens and some three-hole binder paper.

Despite plenty of encouragement

from family and friends, she felt *Tides Of Fate* just wasn't good enough to publish.

"I wouldn't show it to anybody, but it was a good learning experience," she said of her first novel that wound up in the trash bin.

Her second attempt, *Spring Blossom*, came a year later and the 365-page manuscript was shopped around several Canadian publishing houses only to generate a flow of rejection slips that drifted in over the next few years.

Her so-called agent didn't even give her book a chance and sat on it for eight months before Metcalf retrieved it and made a call to New York.

New York agent Adele Leone loved the book. She sent it to Berkley Publishing and the timing couldn't have been more perfect.

The publishers were about to launch a new line of books, dubbed Homespun. The idea was to publish fictional romance novels involving American families in the 19th century. Metcalf's book and one other tome fit the bill and the marketing machines were set in motion.

*Spring Blossom* was nominated as the 1992 Romantic Times Reviewer's Choice Award as best new historical novel.

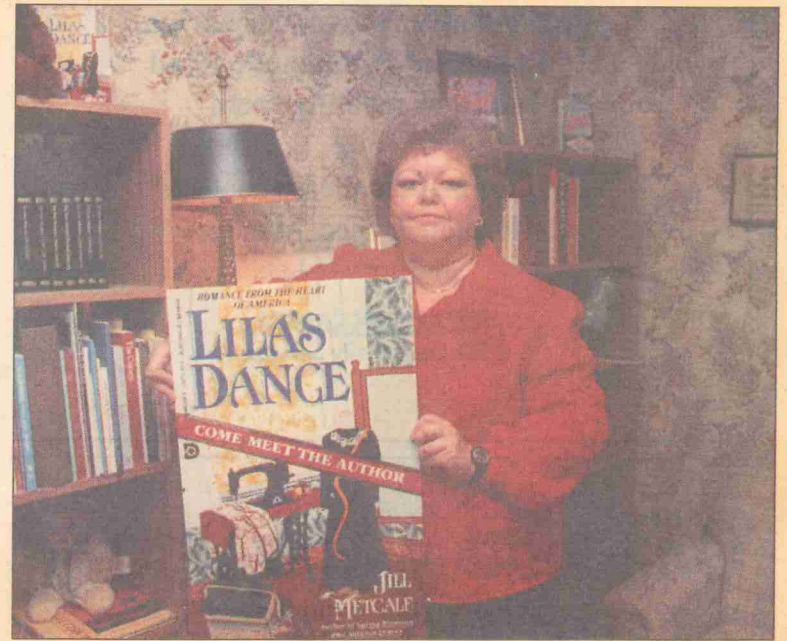
Less than a year later the Bic pens were replaced by a word processor and *Autumn Leaves* was on the shelves earning a spot on the Publisher's Weekly recommended read list.

Last October *Lila's Dance* was released to the acclaim of fans and critics whose purchases put her book right on to the romance best seller list.

This month *Emma's Day* comes off the presses along with an audio tape version of the book and, in June, a novella sequel to *Spring Blossom* will be released under the moniker Family Reunion.

Metcalf said she travels to Virginia, Kentucky and Ohio to research her books. The characters, she said, "come right out of thin air."

Fans can meet Metcalf at Georgetown's Oxbow Book Store, located at 102 Main St., May 7 from 2-4 p.m.



Staff photo by Mark Holmes

Former Streetsville resident Jill Metcalf has been working her word processor overtime. She wrote her first historical romance novel 10 years ago but it wasn't until 1992 it was finally released. Her work has since been in high demand and her fourth book is due to hit the bookstores later this month.

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