

Press Release

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Gothic Journal announced several major changes in early July, including redesigning its website, making 44 of its exclusive gothic romance Author Profiles available via download, and launching an Ambassador campaign to publicize its nonprofit Gothic Romance Lending Library (GRLL) that moved to a new location in late June.

From 1991 through 1998, *Gothic Journal* was the only news and review magazine for readers, writers, and publishers of romantic suspense, romantic mystery, and gothic, supernatural, and woman-in-jeopardy romance novels. When the magazine's purpose was eclipsed by the internet, it ceased print publication and made its extensive book lists and back issues available on its website, GothicJournal.com. To provide information and recommendations about current and upcoming titles in its genres, it maintains an Amazon.com store at <http://astore.amazon.com/gothicjournal>.

Gothic Romance Lending Library

In 1996, *Gothic Journal* set up and sponsored the Gothic Romance Lending Library to preserve gothic romance novels and make them available on loan to readers via mail order.

"We were seeing far too many wonderful gothic romances--the ones with a maiden fleeing a sinister mansion on the cover--winding up in dumpsters as the number of bookstores dwindled and publishers turned to vampires and werewolves to sell romantic suspense," said *Gothic Journal* Publisher, Kristi Lyn Glass. "I wanted to somehow save these books for future generations to enjoy, so I started the library.

Other gothic romance lovers, authors, and publishers jumped on the bandwagon and have since donated over 3,400 books to the GRLL with the stipulation that they will never be sold. Some have even designated in their wills that their personal libraries of gothic romances be donated to the GRLL.

For the past 14 years, the GRLL has been housed and managed by booklovers Rod and Pat Christian in Spokane, Wash. Now in their 70s, the Christians requested retirement from their labor of love, so their work is being carried forward by gothic romance author and former public librarian Lila Ekstrom in Eugene, Ore. Glass and her husband drove 2,000 miles round trip from their home in northeastern Nevada to move the library from Spokane to Eugene in early June.

Concurrent with its move and new management, the GRLL underwent some additional changes. Its pricing structure was revised to accommodate postal rate increases and make it easier to order books online. Lending fees, including round-trip postage, range from \$2.00 to \$10.00 per book, depending on the quantity ordered and the shipping method chosen. Books may be kept for approximately three months.

The library's online catalog also was converted to a format that will ultimately include cover photos and comprehensive publication data for each title. This new catalog is accessible on many handheld devices, such as iPads and iPhones. The GRLL Librarian will be adding data to the catalog over time.

"I would love to include pictures of each book's front and back cover," said Librarian Lila Ekstrom. "They tell prospective readers so much about the book. It will be a major effort to scan all the covers into the catalog, but I'll be working toward that goal."

Adequately publicizing the GRLL has been a challenge over the years. The Christians, Glass, and Ekstrom are retirees with minimal interest in online social networking. Other activities and pursuits also demand much of their time. To increase GRLL patronage, Glass recently decided to enlist gothic romance fans and authors to become volunteer GRLL Ambassadors to help publicize the GRLL.

"This library is a treasure trove of wonderful stories," said Glass. "We need gothic romance fans who are avid internet users to help spread the word that it exists."

According to Glass, she is offering GRLL Ambassadors some modest but potentially beneficial rewards for their volunteer efforts on the GRLL's behalf. These include posting GRLL Ambassadors' names and website/blog links on the GRLL's webpage and offering occasional free books and/or discounted GRLL book shipments to active GRLL Ambassadors. Complete program details are on the GRLL's webpage on GothicJournal.com.

Author Profiles

Each issue of *Gothic Journal* featured a comprehensive Author Profile of a prolific and popular gothic romance novelist. These profiles include a biographical sketch, a list of the author's published works by year, and descriptions and excerpts from several representative works. Many of these authors have never been profiled elsewhere.

"The profiles are particularly useful to genre researchers and those interested in exploring and reading all the works of one or more of these excellent story tellers," Glass said.

The redesign of the *Gothic Journal* website now makes 44 of these exclusive Author Profiles available via download in .PDF format.

Website Redesign

Most of the previous *Gothic Journal* website was static and becoming incompatible with some internet browsers. Over the past year, Glass has redesigned the site via Word Press and added a PCI-compliant shopping cart that offers secure payment via PayPal or a major credit card. The new site was launched in mid-July.

"Any income the *Gothic Journal* site generates will henceforth be used to support and help advertise the GRLL," Glass said.

Ever the entrepreneur, even in retirement, she has an additional project in mind for *Gothic Journal's* future.

"I have a fantasy that *Gothic Journal* someday may be able to acquire digital rights to many of the GRLL's books and offer them to gothic lovers via download," she added. "It would be another big body of work, probably best handled by someone younger than me, but I worry that our GRLL books will not last forever if we don't somehow convert them to digital. I promised to see that they were available to future generations, and I take that promise very seriously."

For more details or to donate books to the GRLL, see GothicJournal.com. Those interested in volunteering their time and expertise to help *Gothic Journal* and the GRLL meet their goals are encouraged to contact Kristi Lyn Glass at kristi@GothicJournal.com.

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