

Sarah Wolfe and her cat 'Rocky'

Spy thriller author to speak

Spy thriller author S. K. Wolf of Livonia will be the guest speaker at a book and author luncheon noon Tuesday, March 6 sponsored by the Friends of the Libraries of Northville, Plymouth, Novi and Canton.

Wolf, author of "The Harbinger Effect," will talk on "Is Anybody Out There?" at the Novi Civic Center, 45175 W. Ton Mile Road. The book is an alternate selection of the Book-of-the-Month Club and will also be published in Great Britain, Germany, Holland, Japan and Brazil.

Wolf has also written "MacKinnon's Machine" which will come out later this year. It, too, will be published in Great Britain and on the Continent.

Her first mystery was "Long Chain of Death."

ALL PROCEEDS FROM the benefit luncheon will be used to provide goods and services for

the libraries of the sponsoring Friends groups.

The luncheon will be catered by Home Sweet Home restaurant of Novi. Donation is \$10. Tickets are available at any of the libraries until March 1. Groups of six or seven may reserve a table.

Copies of "The Harbinger Effect" will be available to buy at the luncheon and Wolf will sign them.

Wolf has been a Livonia resident for 20 years, with a brief interruption when she lived in Greece for three years and two in Turkey where her husband, Kent Shoemaker, taught math as a Fulbright Scholar. She has traveled widely, including in Africa where her daughter served with the Peace Corps.

A former part-time librarian at the University of Michigan library, she passed up a full-time position to devote more time writing.

Books-on-tape can ease travel woes

YESTERDAY, when you were trapped (again) in bumper-to-bumper, rush-hour traffic, wouldn't it have been nice to have spent the hour with a good book? Or last week, when you were out running, wouldn't it have been a little less tedious if you could have lost yourself in one of your favorite novels as you went along?

And think about how it would have shortened that long trip you recently took, had someone like John Lithgow, Lynn Redgrave or James Earl Jones read you an exciting story along the way.

All these things are possible, you know, with an audio book cassette.

As you're probably aware, an audio book is a recorded version of an original written work, usually contained in a package of two, 90-minute cassettes. Available at book stores (and soon, at video centers), prices average about \$15 each. They're also available on loan at your local library.

Keep in mind that these books-on-tape are not the same as Talking Books for the blind. The audio packages are usually abridged versions of the book itself. A great many books lose much of their essential effectiveness, of course, when this happens, and nobody is suggesting that audio books will ever replace the pleasures of the complete, "real thing." But their fast-growing popularity does indicate that audio books have a certain appeal in our fast-moving, I-wish-I-had-more-time-to-read society.

HEREIN, SOME hot-selling current titles:

• "Clear and Present Danger" by Tom Clancy. Read by David Ogden Stiers. (Simon and Schuster, \$15.95) Clancy's adventure tale is still on the New York Times best-seller list after 21 weeks. But, while it's now in fourth place, this audio book remains the No. 1 audio best seller.

It's hard to imagine a more successful reading of "Clear and Present Danger" than this one by Stiers. You'll be deliciously entranced by his dramatic, incisive interpretation of Clancy's gripping story, which focuses this time around on the CIA, the FBI, and villainous henchmen in Colombia's powerful drug cartels. Much of the fun here is Stiers' reading of Clancy's dialogue.

• "The Vampire Lestat" by Anne Rice. Read by Michael York. (Random House, \$14.95) If you're among the faint-of-heart, listen to York's absolutely masterful reading of Rice's sensuous and saddening horror tale only during the daylight hours.

• "Straight" by Dick Francis. Read by Simon MacCorkindale. (Caedmon/Harper, \$15.95) Francis fans will delight in this fast-moving story about injured steeplechase jockey Derek Franklin and the troubles he encounters when he inherits his brother's gem business. Actor MacCorkindale seems to be enjoying himself as he takes on the different voices of Francis' extensive dramatic personae, and his enthusiasm is contagious.



Victoria Diaz

• "Cat Chaser" by Elmore Leonard. Read by Ken Howard. (Listen For Pleasure, \$14.95) Leonard's remarkable gift for dialogue makes any of his works especially well-suited for audio entertainment, and "Cat Chaser" is no exception.

This is the tale of a freelance adventure seeker and a second-rate detective, who get involved with an exceedingly sleazy band of low-lives in and around Florida and Latin America. Ken Howard's reading will pull you into Leonard's suspense thriller from the very start.

• "Shelley II: The Middle of My Century" by Shelley Winters. Read by Shelley Winters. (Simon and Schuster, \$14.95) Sit back, relax and let Shelley tell you more than you thought you ever wanted to know about her life. Somehow, in the telling, it's never tedious.

• "The Good Times" by Russell Baker. Read by Arte Johnson. (Dove, \$14.95) Comic Arte Johnson may seem an odd choice to narrate Baker's look back at a career in journalism that began in Baltimore when he was a police reporter, and culminated in his position as a columnist with the New York Times.

• "As Far as You Can Go Without a Passport" by Tom Bodett. Read by Tom Bodett. (Bantam, \$14.95) From the 1965 book by Tom ("Motel 6") Bodett, this collection of personal observations will charm the reader/listener who is charmed by that other folksy observer, Garrison Keillor. Bodett, who grew up on a Michigan farm, has a background in radio which is evident here as he relates his thoughts on such matters as doing the laundry and building a home. Commentary is complemented by the piano artistry of Johnny B.

• Other popular audio books you may want to lend an ear to: James Michener's "Caribbean" read by Roscoe Lee Brown, John LeCarre's "The Russia House" read by Lynn Redgrave, Barrie Konicow's "Stop smoking" read by the author, and John F. Kennedy's "Profiles in Courage" read by John F. Kennedy Jr.

• FBI: Grand Rapids author Tom Kikonis will be signing his new book, "Crisis Cross," from 1-2 p.m. Saturday in Borders Book Shop in the Novi Town Center, off Novi Road, south of I-96. Set in Grand Rapids, Kikonis considers his latest work "funnier and more shocking than 'Michigan Roll.' It was a challenging project," he said.

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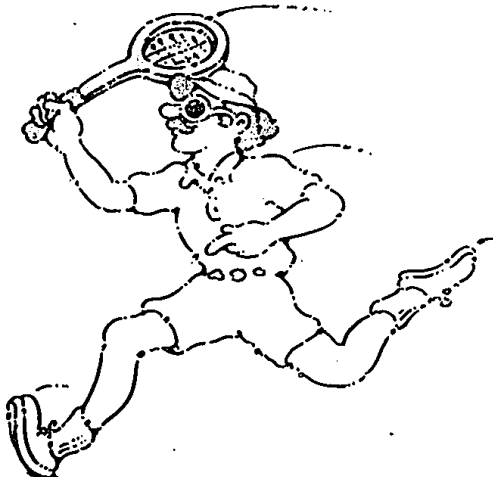
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