

Books

The Ladies' Room

FIVE AUTHORS FROM CHICAGO and the 'burbs have recently written "chick lit" novels—a popular new genre that stars hip young urban women, usually casting about for romance and adventure. As it happens, not only have our local authors created heroines who mirror the target audience—they themselves could be characters in their own books (though four of the five are married).

Here's a look at Chicago's new author chicks and their lit. —**KOREY KARNES**



After practicing law for eight years, **LAURA CALDWELL**, 36, quit to follow her dream of becoming a published writer. She lives in Lincoln Park with her husband and also teaches law part-time at Loyola University Chicago.

Thirty-three-year-old Chicago native **STACEY BALLIS** works as the director of education and community programs at the Goodman Theatre. She lives in Logan Square.

Cleveland native **LESLIE STELLA**, 35, lives in Mundelein with her husband, Chris. She works as a freelance writer and was a founding editor of the Chicago-based satirical magazine *Lumpen*, which closed its doors in 2000.

JENNIFER O'CONNELL, 35, lives in Lake Barrington with her husband, John, and their kids. She received an M.B.A. at the University of Chicago and now owns her own consulting firm, Mark Strategy Partners.

Texas-born **CARA LOCKWOOD**, 30, worked as a reporter in Austin before moving to Evanston three years ago with her husband, Daren.