



SISTERS in CRIME
CROAK & DAGGER
ALBUQUERQUE CHAPTER



THE NOOSELETTER

Volume IV, Number 3—May 2008

†Expert Testimony†

From the Prez

There are pros and cons to attending mystery readers' conferences. As a reader, the pros include meeting and talking with some of your favorite authors, getting books signed, and hearing your favorite authors on panels tell you how and why they write the way they do. A bonus, of course, is that you are exposed to many authors you may or may not have heard of but hadn't yet read, broadening your horizons or indulge your existing tastes, whether you like cozies (traditional mysteries), hard-boiled (noir), PI novels, police procedurals, or thrillers.

As a writer, your pros are initially the same as those for readers. After all, writers are still readers. But special pros for writers include the chance to get advice from more seasoned authors and to meet and pitch editors and agents. Editors and agents attend many of the major and regional mystery conferences each year, such as Left Coast Crime (winter), Malice Domestic (April), the MWA Edgars (April), and Bouchercon (October).

But they don't hold formal pitch sessions at those conferences as they do at the smaller regional conferences like the one Croak and Dagger co-hosted with SouthWest Writers in February this year. To find editors and agents at the major conferences, you have to become an investigator, check every attendee's name (hundreds) against the names in Literary Marketplace, then stalk the conference looking at name tags of the folks you've identified. Not an easy task.

The National Sisters in Crime offers one more opportunity for SinC members at two of the largest conferences, Malice Domestic in DC and Bouchercon (venues vary; Baltimore in 2008, Indianapolis in 2009). National SinC hosts meetings and breakfasts at both conferences and this year at Malice for the first time, two hours of training for chapter members interested in building membership, hosting events, improving their newsletters, and other topics. Watch this space or for articles in future *Nooseletters* about ideas I gleaned in these classes at Malice. ♦

—Rob Kresge

Don't Miss It!

Tuesday, May 27, at 7 p.m.

Because our originally scheduled May speaker had to cancel, Croak & Dagger past president Lucinda Schroeder will be filling in, speaking on the topic of Understanding Informants.

Create havoc in your story by including a character who is prone to lie, doesn't show up for assignments, is in it for the money, and nearly gets the protagonist killed! Lucinda will explain how informants are motivated and how these motivations can cause trouble. Her presentation is full of true-life informant stories that are both entertaining and educational.

Lucinda holds a B.A. in Criminology and worked for 30 years as a special agent for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, investigating crimes against wildlife. She is the author of *A Hunt for Justice*, a true crime story based on one of her undercover cases. Since her retirement in 2004, she has been active in giving workshops and writing about law enforcement topics.

Broaden Your Horizons at a Writers' Conference

If you've never attended a writers' conference (see Rob's remarks on page 1), why not make 2008 the year you try a new adventure? Your vacation this year could be tax deductible! Here's a list of some conferences being held through August (later events in the June *Nooseletter*). For more information, check them out online or e-mail the contacts listed. (Listings from www.blackravenpress.com/calendar.)

June 5-8

The first ever **CrimeFest**, Bristol, England. Following the success of the one-off visit to Bristol in 2006 of the American Left Coast Crime convention, the organizers are putting on a new biennial international event called CrimeFest. Featured Guest Authors: Lee Child, Karin Fossum, Ian Rankin. Contact:

info@crimefest.com

June 6-8

Bloody Words VIII, Toronto, Ontario, Canada. Bloody Words is Canada's oldest and largest gathering of mystery readers and authors. This year's International Guest of Honour is Carolyn Hart. Contact:

chair2008@bloodywords.com.

June 6-8

Murder in the Grove, Boise, ID. Sponsored by The Popular Fiction Association of Idaho, this popular conference has activities for both fans and writers. Guest of Honor: J.A. Jance. Master Class instructor: David Morrell. Contact: info08@murderinthegrove.com.

June 12-22

International Mystery Writers' Festival, Owensboro, KY. Boise, ID. Unique opportunities to discover new mysteries in the form of plays, screenplays, short stories, and children's works that have never before been professionally performed, published, or produced. Contact: sales@newmysteries.org.

June 20-22

Deadly Ink Mystery Conference, Parsippany, NJ. A small, friendly mystery convention outside New York City. (Ye editor has attended a past conference and vouches for the friendly part.) Guest of Honor: Jane Cleland. Toastmaster: Troy Cook. Contact: info@deadlyink.com.

June 26-29

Book Passage Mystery Writers Conference, Corte Madera, CA (SF Bay area). The 2008 conference is chaired by mystery writers Sheldon Siegel and Jacqueline Winspear. Contact: kwest@bookpassage.com

July 10-13

3rd Annual **ThrillerFest**, New York, NY. ThrillerMaster: Sandra Brown. Spotlight Authors: Eric Van Lustbader, Dr. Kathy Reichs, Brad Thor. Contact: info@thrillerwriters.org

Aug 5-18

British Mystery and Crime Writers Summer Program, London and Oxford, England. Explore the intriguing world of British mystery and crime writing. In London, listen to British mystery and crime writers talk about their craft, enjoy an evening at the theatre with the group, and immerse yourself in the city of Sherlock Holmes in your leisure time. In Oxford, spend an afternoon on your own and then listen to and mingle with British mystery and crime writers at the St. Hilda's Mystery and Crime weekend.

Contact: kackley@kconline.com

RECYCLING

by Carolyn Page*

Writers must write. Like musicians or artists, we feel an obligation to create. Our tool is the keyboard rather than a violin or a palette of paints. The writer who sits idly by waiting for inspiration to hit him on the head isn't likely to succeed. We must make things happen, but first let's listen to our inner voices. Mine grows louder every day. Rather than experiencing writer's block, it's a flood of ideas, slightly disorganized, and involving many unpublished projects. Sometimes these ideas keep me awake at night, as my inner voice whispers, "Why not recycle?"

But which ideas are ripe for recycling? Being a Pisces I'm at a loss, so I list the ideas, printing in large letters on a newsprint pad: "Consider completed manuscripts!" Completed in what sense? I ask myself. Well, a beginning, a middle, and an end would be good. Face it. Are any manuscripts really finished? Some I've sent to peers for sandpapering and polishing. Others graduated to "group." A few have been rejected by editors. My best mate and I have been writing for dozens of year so we have stacks of these orphaned manuscripts lying about: his, mine, and ours. At the moment, I'm concentrating on mine.

Ratcheting up my confidence, I pore over dog-eared manuscripts. Hmm. Timing is everything, so the novel set in 1962 at Cape Canaveral just won't cut it.

Romance novels are always in, the Hallmark channel being living proof. Picture this. Missouri between 1868 and 1876 when poor Great Aunt Mary tries to survive despite TB, grass fires, Confederate renegades and a lazy poet husband. So many hardships as to render it unbelievable, though it's based on facts.

Next manuscript box. Ah-ha! How about an epistolary novel of New England education as described by teenage twin sisters who teach to earn tuition to Mt. Holyoke Female Seminary. Nah. Way too dry, unless I kill off a few girls and turn it into a mystery.

Better yet, explorer Uncle Daniel writing from the Santa Fe Trail in 1859. Problem—he survives, marries an Indian gal, and fathers 11 kids who all live to adulthood. Short on pathos. Too much success; not enough failure.

Suddenly it comes to me. Recently I've enjoyed three fictionalized accounts of women who influenced famous artists, composers and musicians in centuries past. They were a marvelous mix of fact and fiction. Now a great aunt's memoir has legs. A well-educated Boston young lady goes from nurse to dance instructor to professional photographer. After her physician father's death she flees to Europe, thanks to an inheritance, uninhibited by societal restrictions placed on lesbian ladies in Boston. Her mysterious companion has the initials E.W. If only it were Edith Wharton! Wait! Why not? Isn't that what writers do? My aunt was in Hyeres and Nice precisely when Miss Wharton was. Kismet! Now I know which manuscript to rewrite. I dust off the box and open it up.

Please don't disturb me for at least a year and a half. ♦

*Carolyn Page is co-author with her husband, Ross Zarucchi (w/a Page Erwin), of *Bloodsport at Hiram Bog* (Hilliard & Harris 2007) and its sequel, *Bones of Contention, A Maine Mystery*, (Hilliard & Harris, August, 2008). Carolyn and Ross were two of the founders of the Croak & Dagger chapter

Writer Request: Do you have a favorite guacamole recipe? Do you know an arcane fact about guacamole? For a book of guacamole recipes (meant for Christmas presents, but who knows!), please submit recipes to Linda Triegel at ljt23@earthlink.net. Credits and free copy given.

CRIME SCENARIOS, BAD GUYS, AND OTHER FUN STUFF

Detective Jay Barnes of the Albuquerque Police Department's Child Exploitation Detail (CED) was the compelling speaker at C& D's April meeting, providing both inside information about how his "pedophile detail" works and some "stuff we can use" in our writing and reading.

Instances of child abuse are reported up to 80,000 times in this country, but the number of unreported crimes is likely much higher. Child victims often do not "tell on" their abusers out of loyalty to that person, embarrassment or self-blame, or fear for the stability of their family unit.

However, there are some signs that the police know to look for in a possible victim, such as sleep problems, depression, withdrawal from family and friends, and seductiveness or unusual interest in or avoidance of things of a sexual nature. Det. Barnes stressed that not all victims are alike, so none of these signs may exist, or there may be others. "Don't put people (including children) in a box," he advised.

A pedophile targets prepubescent children and is usually someone the family knows (only 10% are strangers). They are generally men, very intelligent, well liked and respected, and will often spend money on the victim to "court" him or her. But again, "Don't put people (even pedophiles) in a box." They cross all social, racial, educational, and socioeconomic classes.

As an aside, Det. Barnes explained that most child abductions aren't really abductions. Why? Kids lie, and parents lie, kids because they think they're in trouble and don't want to get in deeper, parents because they don't want to look like bad parents or because they think the police won't look for a child if he or she hasn't been abducted.

Sex offenders often do not have a diagnosable mental illness. They do not consider themselves "child molesters." According to one pedophile, "As long as you continue to confuse loving pedophiles with monsters ... the problem will continue.... You must stop seeing kids as morons. You must accept that they ... are sexual!"

The CED gets the initial information about a possible child abuse case when the child tells someone or when a citizen or the CED field unit comes into contact with a "suspicious person." Reports from field officers may be termed an "incident" or "information," often because not enough information is available. When a report is sufficiently detailed, including evidence collected from a physical scene, interviews, and/or witness accounts, a suspect is advised of his rights and interviewed.

Det. Barnes described a variety of reactions from a suspect on being interrogated. Personalities emerge, dubbed "The Blubberer," "Mad Dog," "Mr. Nice Guy," "The Christian," "The Explainer," or "Mr. Confused"—all self-explanatory to an experienced crime fiction fan!

Once a case is submitted by the detective, it is reviewed by his sergeant, lieutenant, the DA's screener, and an ADA before being set up for a grand jury. The ADA may propose a plea agreement (meaning less prison time for the offender). If it is not accepted, the case goes to trial. If the plea is accepted, the last step in the judicial process is sentencing and actual prison time.

Lastly, Det. Barnes stressed that police officers cannot be put into a box either; they are human too. Some are bothered by case situations that others can tolerate more easily. Most cops like their job and will work even if they don't have to. They like people (happily working charity events and the like), are proud to serve them, and want to send the bad guys to jail. That makes them look good—and feel good.

NOTE: Det. Barnes kindly provided a comprehensive handout as well as his e-mail address. If you were not at the April meeting and want more information or to contact him, see Rob Kresge. ♦

The Albuquerque Croak & Dagger chapter of Sisters in Crime welcomes mystery fans, readers, and writers who want to enjoy felonious fun, absolutely criminal companionship and sensational speakers.

June's speaker will be Michael McGarrity, who will speak on the topic, "The Importance of Place" on Tuesday, June 24 at 7 p.m.

Michael McGarrity has published numerous bestselling and award-garnering novels, including his debut novel *Tularosa*, which was nominated for an Anthony Award, a Dilys Award and a Spur Award from the Western Writers of America. *Serpent Gate*, the third novel in the Kevin Kerney series, was a Booklist top-ten crime novel of 1998-1999. *Under the Color of Law* garnered kudos as a Top 10 bestseller list for 2001 of the Independent Mystery Booksellers Association.

McGarrity's career in criminal justice includes work in corrections, law enforcement, security, police officer training, and serving as an expert witness to the court. He also has served as an instructor at the New Mexico Law Enforcement Academy, an investigator and caseworker for the Public Defender's Office, and an investigator for a state government agency.

McGarrity holds a Master's Degree in Clinical Social Work and was responsible for reestablishing mental health services for the New Mexico Corrections Department after the infamous prison riot of 1980, creating school-based counseling services for children and youth, setting-up intensive therapy programs for patients with serious mental disorders, and developing halfway houses and residential treatment programs for drug abusers and felons released to the community.

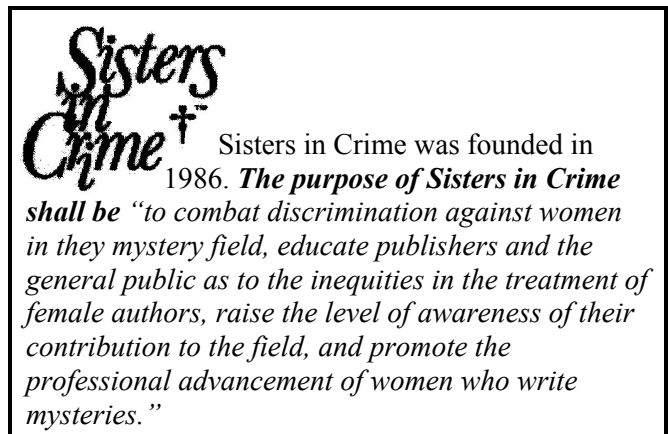
He has been on the faculty of several colleges and universities, teaching courses in psychology and counseling, functioning as a field supervisor for undergraduate and graduate clinical social work students, and as a college instructor within the New Mexico prison system.

He lives in Santa Fe with his wife and college sweetheart, Emily Beth (Mimi).

Check Out the Croak & Dagger Website for all your Croak & Dagger information needs.

www.croak-and-dagger.com

- Upcoming Programs
- 2008 Meeting Schedule
- Membership Form
- Speakers Bureau
- Links to Mystery Websites & Websites for Your Favorite Croak & Dagger Authors
- *The Nooseletter* Archive



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The Cairn of Albertvs

Travels in Syria and the Holy Land by John Lewis Burckhardt. BiblioBazaar, 2006, 578 pp, \$19.95 (TP)

Readers of novels expect accurate research, be it about Tutankhamen, Tolkien, or Texting. Writers of historical fiction especially value primary sources, material written by someone living at the time of their story's era.

An excerpt in the Jan/Feb 2008 *Biblical Archaeology Review* related an incident from John Lewis Burckhardt's *Travels in Syria and the Holy Land*, published in 1822. The passage details the restitution price to a Bedouin tribe in Sinai, following the murder of one member. The man was a robber killed in self-defense by the potential victim, yet Bedouin law required that a fine be paid in order to waive the right of retaliation.

Swiss-born Burckhardt was raised in Germany, traveled to England, and was hired by the African Association to explore Arabic Africa. The 22-year-old studied Arabic and medicine at Cambridge and put himself through rigorous physical hardships in preparation for whatever lay ahead; the last six Association explorers had vanished without a trace!

In 1809 Burckhardt was at Aleppo in northern Syria, then under the Ottoman Turkish Empire, as was all the Middle East. He dressed as a Muslim and called himself Sheikh Ibrahim Ibn Abdullah. So complete was his disguise that he traveled to Mecca and remained undetected for three months as a pilgrim-beggar. After three years in Syria he traveled to Egypt, Nubia, Arabia, and Mt. Sinai. He rediscovered Petra, the Nabataean tomb-city carved from sandstone cliffs, now in Jordan and a popular tourist stop.

The BiblioBazaar edition—without maps—is a reprint of the book. (A somewhat worn original is available for \$1,900!) A 19-page preface by William Martin Leake, Acting Secretary of the African Association, gives background about Burckhardt's itinerary. The book's six sections and Appendix cover journals

that describe the area from Syria to the Sinai during the years 1810 to 1816.

Burckhardt was a meticulously observant writer, the bane of some sections, which tediously describe the number of hours from one wadi or mud-poor village to another. The Cairn admits to skip-reading in places, yet fascinating passages tell of communities where Muslims, Druze practitioners of Islam, Greek Orthodox or Latin Christians, Arabs and Bedouin live in harmony with one another. Descriptions abound of life in the Jewish quarter of Tiberias, a joyous tribal wedding, the unstinting hospitality provided to strangers, and the Turkish system of governing through local Pashas, who collect four main taxes: those levied on each village for the quartering of soldiers; as tribute to marauding Arabs, and "extraordinary collections" demanded by the Pasha at his pleasure.

After a bit of reading, the explorer's route can be traced on a modern map. Ancient-modern names such as Izra-Ezra; Szaffad-Safad, Tabaria-Tiberias, and Szalt-Salt provide clues to his route. *Travels* is a first-hand account of Middle Eastern lands on the cusp of the colonial age—Napoleon dined at Nazareth before withdrawing French troops—and still critically in today's headlines.

The fine for that killing? Two camels were assessed as the fair value of a tribesman's life.♦

Valere... Be in good health!

—Albert Noyer (www.albertnoyer.com)

Perfection by Walter Satterthwait. St. Martin's Minotaur, 2006, 327 pp, \$24.95 (HC).

I started reading Walter Satterthwait's mysteries before I moved to New Mexico and enjoyed his Santa Fe series. Lately, I've become even more enamored of his historical mysteries (*Escapade*, *Masquerade*, and *Cavalcade*) featuring real historical figures like Arthur Conan Doyle, Harry Houdini, and a hilarious Earnest Hemingway. So when a friend lent me *Perfection*, I jumped right in, despite its modern day Florida setting and a serial killer plot.

I'm getting really tired of serial killers. I don't know why they're so prevalent in fiction, including TV dramas like *Criminal Minds*, when they are (fortunately) so rare in real life. Whatever happened to the whodunit? Oh, wait, that's *Masquerade*, *Escapade*, etc.).

The serial killer in *Perfection* preys on fat ladies...beg pardon, "women of size" (a very PC Greek-American female cop keeps her partner, of the old hard-drinking school, in line). He kills them and starts trimming off the fa...flesh so as to make them look "perfect." Yuck. This hits way too close to home.

Still, Satterthwait's narrative moves along briskly, and a reader can get really caught up in it (even when this reader was analyzing the action and dialogue to try to figure out how exactly he *does* that). All the characters, major and minor, are well drawn, the viewpoint more or less equally divided between Det. Sophia Tregaskis and old warhorse Det. Frank Fallon, a technique the author perfected in his historicals, which featured a couple of Pinkertons. The familiar setting is Gulf-coast Florida, an area I know from many family vacations when I was a child.

All that keeps *Perfection* from perfection is the ending, which is really over-the-top. Possible but not particularly plausible. But then, we're dealing with serial killers here; what did I expect. ♦

—Linda Triegel (ljt23@earthlink.net)

Old Friend from Far Away by Natalie Goldberg. Free Press, 2007. (HC)

Natalie Goldberg, author of *Writing Down the Bones*, gives writers a new practice guide for writing memoirs. She has taken her original idea of the practice of writing and applied it to writing the memories of one's life.

Don't think you can remember? Natalie finds ways to bring up the forgotten past. Little things that happened long ago are prodded up from childhood and forward. Natalie tells the writer how you don't have to unfold an entire life's history from day one, but rather lets the writer's own mind pick and choose a moment in

time. To quote one of Natalie's great lines of wisdom, "It's like combing the ocean, calling up an abyss—you don't know what you will receive."

She reminds the writer to use all of the senses when recalling and writing, and gives ways to do that. Then, for encouragement, she includes examples of published memoirs and says to read them aloud, "... listening with your whole body, with your heart and the hairs on your arms and the small toes of your feet." What a wonderful way to describe how to really burrow deep inside of oneself for a true listening experience.

She gives so many short easy exercises that I wanted to do them all at once. But I restrained myself to writing only three or four at a time. Most of these quickly went into the trash, but now and then, a descriptive sentence or paragraph would stand out from that long suppressed memory, and I would think, *Where did that come from?* From this I found a little treasure to keep for future writings.

This is a well thought-out book to help any writer, and don't think you have to be writing a memoir to learn from these exercises. The powers of observance and description are working well here. The little phrase that comes out of your inner mind might surprise you too. ♦

—Cheri B. Stow (cheri3j@yahoo.com)

ROB'S RANDOM SHOTS

May Case File Number One

Faded Coat of Blue by Owen Parry. Avon Books, 1999, 334 pp (HC)

A pair of choice historical mysteries this time, both revolving around the Civil War. *Faded Coat* is the first of Owen Parry's Abel Jones series. His sleuth is a wounded officer, veteran of First Bull Run. This book opens in late fall of 1861. "That was a dark time, that first autumn of the war. We had no victories, and few heroes. The country was impatient with Mr. Lincoln. It seemed we could not bear another blow."

Captain Abel Jones tells the story in his own words. A married Welsh immigrant, veteran of the British Army in India, he's recruited by new general-in-chief George McClellan to look into the murder of celebrity abolitionist-turned-soldier Anthony Fowler, who has been found shot to death on the picket line of a Federal unit in northern Virginia, close to Washington.



Jones must travel to the young man's home in Pennsylvania to interview his mother and her servants.

He finds several discrepancies at the murder scene: Fowler was not a member of this unit, but was, like Jones, on logistics staff in Washington. Sentries heard no shots fired that night. The bullet passed through Fowler's body, but his overcoat has no holes in it. Several suspicious characters emerge: shady businessmen who may be war profiteers, Jones's fellow officer friends, scions of wealthy Philadelphia families.

Parry does a masterful job of describing Washington at this time as a teeming cesspool of squalor, vice, and corruption. He faces opposition from superiors, old Army friends, and local thugs. In the end, he solves the case, not to McClellan or Lincoln's satisfaction, but the President persuades him to become a special agent to investigate cases in the wartime Army.

I loved this book, but I'm glad I didn't read it before completing my own Civil War spy novel. Too many coincidences. Like Parry, my male protagonist is a captain with a limp, but wounded at Shiloh. In the course of his work, Jones meets LaFayette Baker, my protagonist's superior. Finally, both are promoted to major at the end of the novel by the President himself, Jones in 1861, my Walter Bates in 1865. It turns out we used many of the same literary resources, but Parry's depth of description vastly outclasses my six or eight chapters set in wartime Washington. I plan to follow Abel Jones through the rest of the war. Hope he makes it. ♦

—Rob Kresge (rkresge777@comcast.net)

Key:

PB = Paperback

TP = Trade paperback

HC = Hardcover

May Case File Number Two

Gunshy by Louise Titchener. Hard Shell Press, 161 pp (TP)

The French and Indian War of 1756-1763 and the American Revolution have both had their public turns as “The War That Made America.” But it's the Civil War that made modern America. Industrialization, isolation of the South, economic disparities, robber barons, and racism all have their roots there. And this is nowhere more evident than in Louise Titchener's short novel.

The title makes you think “Western,” since it has been used for Western movies. But this book is set in 1882 Baltimore, like Parry's Philadelphia and Washington, a city greatly affected by the recent conflict. In fact, everyone we meet is, if not a veteran, then the widow or other survivor of the war.

The novel begins with the collision of a runaway railroad car with another that leaves three prominent Baltimoreans dead. That incident, and the investigation into whether it was really an accident, leads to the main plot of the novel, an impending sense of dread as President Chester Arthur comes to town for a great Grand Army of the Republic reunion. Baltimore, the major city of border state Maryland, was and remained a hotbed of Southern sympathy. Union veterans are not the only former soldiers gathering for the event.

We are introduced to protagonist Oliver Redcastle (I love the name), a former Union sharpshooter and ex-Pinkerton detective, hired by the city to take out a kidnapper of children in a hostage situation. He does so and returns to his daughter Chloe and dreams of setting up some sort of business. In short order, Oliver is hired to look into the railroad accident and meets Mrs. Hannah Kinchman, a war widow who wants to

become a Pinkerton on Oliver's recommendation. He refuses to endorse her, but with her help is able to penetrate a thicket of red herrings to determine why the men were killed and what part it plays in the upcoming Presidential visit.

Titchener's mastery of historic Baltimore is both exceptional and expected. Author of more than forty novels in a variety of genres, she lives in Baltimore. Oliver and Hannah are sympathetic protagonists, and I'm sorry that this novel is a stand-alone. I'd love to read more of their adventures. ♦

—Rob Kresge (rkresge777@comcast.net)

The Dying of the Light by Michael Dibdin.
Vintage Crime 1995, 151 pp (TP)

The Dying of the Light starts out as a classic Agatha Christie whodunit—but that only lasts through page 1. When you get to the parade of typical characters—The *Times*-reading Colonel, the wealthy invalid widow, the Jewish financier—on page 2, you begin to realize that this is not your typical drawing room mystery. Maybe it was the introduction of the corned-beef billionaire.

The sleuths are a pair of elderly Miss Marples, Rosemary Travis and her bosom buddy Dorothy Davenport, who is somewhat less quick-minded than her friend but is happy to go along with Rosemary's imagined crime-novel scenarios as a distraction from her unhappy lot.

When Dot dies halfway through the story, Rosemary realizes with a shock that she was murdered, and she goes to extremes to convince a skeptical police Inspector Jarvis that this is so. Jarvis, taking one look at the denizens of Eventide Manor, is more inclined to classify the lot of them as loonies, but Rosemary finally convinces him to take a longer look at the brother and sister duo who run the manor-turned-nursing-home—or are running it into the ground.

This still sounds like a typical whodunit, but believe me, the twists and turns have only incidentally to do with who did it, even though

Rosemary's deductions follow all the rules and cleverly implicate, one by one, all the suspects in the case. The reader sees well before the end, which is both sad and sweet, that Rosemary's and Dot's plotting the perfect logical and rational mystery is simply a way to keep the chaos and cruelty of their lives at bay.

The Dying of the Light is a satire, but also an affectionate homage to the genre. ♦

—Linda Triegel (ljt23@earthlink.net)

Noose News

Judith van Gieson, the author of 8 mysteries in the Neil Hamel series (published by HarperCollins) and 5 in the Claire Reynier series (Signet) reports that she will be teaching two crime writing workshops this summer.

Characterization in Crime Fiction will be taught at the Taos Writers Conference at the Sagebrush Inn July 13-19. It's an intermediate workshop limited to 12 writers that will focus on creating unforgettable characters and integrating them into suspenseful and compelling plots. Students will be asked to submit samples of their work for discussion.

She will also be teaching an **Intensive Workshop in the Crime Novel** in Albuquerque the week of August 18. This class will workshop 300-page manuscripts and will be limited to 6 people. This is for writers nearing completion of a crime novel and interested in polishing and preparing the manuscript for submission to editors and agents. Particular attention will be paid to elements essential to successful crime fiction: plotting, pacing, revealing critical information about solving the crime, creating suspense, and building to an exciting and satisfying climax. "I taught a similar workshop in Taos last summer and found the feedback to be very helpful to the students."

For more information, go to Judith's website (www.judithvangieson.com) or e-mail her jvg24@aol.com

2008 MEETING DATES-

Tuesday, May 27, 7:00 p.m.
Tuesday, June 24, 7:00 p.m.
Tuesday, July 22, 7:00 p.m.
Tuesday, August 26, 7:00 p.m.
Tuesday, September 23, 7:00 p.m.
Tuesday, October 28, 7:00 p.m.
Tuesday, November 25, 7:00 p.m.
December TBA

Meetings are free to the public.

Unless otherwise noted, meetings are held every fourth Tuesday of the month, at 7:00 p.m., at the James Joseph Dwyer Memorial Police Substation, 12700 Montgomery Blvd. NE, one block east of Tramway.

(If the substation lot is full, there is more parking available just below the substation, accessed via a driveway below the substation on the right.)

Check our Web site, www.croak-and-dagger.com, for schedule changes.

†Nooseletter Submissions†

Croak & Dagger friends are encouraged to contribute articles, reviews, and essays on aspects of mystery writing *and* reading for publication consideration. Information on relevant conferences or events is also welcome. Especially let us know if you have published a new book or story, or have an upcoming local author event. (Unbridled enthusiasm for your own mystery book is encouraged here.)

Length: Articles should average 500 words, but short items are also welcome.

Deadlines: Publication is every other month, starting in January. Submission deadlines are the 15th of the month prior to publication: Feb 15, April 15, June 15, Aug 15, Oct 15, and Dec 15.

The Living and the Dead: As a general policy, articles and information should focus on living authors rather than dead ones, but that's not set in concrete shoes. Articles about specific historical development of the crime-mystery writing genre, for example, would be welcome.

Submissions: Please submit via e-mail to newsette@earthlink.net, with "Nooseletter" in the subject line.

The *Nooseletter* is distributed to all members electronically. ♦

—Linda Triegel

Summary of Findings

The *Nooseletter* is the internal organ of the Croak & Dagger chapter, Albuquerque, of Sisters in Crime (SinC). Opinions expressed herein are those of the authors and editors. ♦

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Still not a member of Sisters in Crime?

\$20/year brings mystery to your life! The Albuquerque *Croak & Dagger* chapter welcomes mystery fans who want to enjoy felonious fun, absolutely criminal companionship, and sensational speakers.

Benefits of membership in the *Croak & Dagger* chapter include a subscription to our *Nooseletter*, close contact with local mystery writers, and fun events with other mystery fans.

You do *not* have to be a member of the national organization to join us. Come hear our next program speaker and meet the gang. We promise to bring mayhem and murder into your life.

Contact our membership chair, at contact@croak-and-dagger.com. **Summary of The Board Meeting Minutes of Sisters in Crime, Croak & Dagger Chapter, ABQ, NM, 5 Feb 2008**

**Summary of The Board Meeting Minutes of Sisters in Crime
Croak & Dagger Chapter, ABQ, NM, 1 April 2008**

The meeting was called to order at 7 p.m. at the apartment of Linda Triegel.

Board members present: President Rob Kresge, Secretary/Treasurer Cheri Stow, Membership Jonathan Sacks, Website Technical Support Manager Sarah Schwartz, Nooseletter Editor Linda Triegel

Absent: Vice President Penny Rudolph, Program/Publicity Chairman Ruth Jimenez.

Old Business:

Rob reports that encouraging readers to take home books worked quite well.

He suggests readers take books to Bookworks with C&D bookmarks inside each book

New Business:

President's Report: Rob says our C& D chapter is more conducive to readers as well as authors than the larger writers' organizations. We are trying for 50% authors and 50% technical professionals.

Rob suggested buying a roll of stamps for membership correspondence

Discussion:

A possible potluck for the summer meeting was discussed.

There was discussion about having another solo yearly writer's conference. A suggestion to put out feelers for a solo conference will be posted on the bulletin board

It was noted that Gloria Casaley suggested at the last meeting that anyone is interested in starting a writer's critique group contact her.

Sec/Treas: Report: Cheri notes that the Treasury has a total balance over \$2,000 with money from the conference and new memberships. For a copy of our tax return, contact Ira at irimson02@comcast.net

Membership: Jonathan reports that we now have a total of about 70 members. 10 new members were garnered at the conference. Jonathan reminds members that they will only receive two reminders for dues and then they will have 30 days before their membership lapses.

Nooseletter: Linda reports her the newsletter of her previous chapter carries a copyright notice, confirming that content belongs to the authors, and suggests that C& D do the same. Also Linda is hoping to include a "Letter to the Editor" column (if she gets any letters!).

Website: Sarah Schwartz says to check out C& D website, which is open to all members.

Sarah will check out when the next library liaison meeting will be and whether our chapter will have a table/booth for our club.

Future News:

Rob and Penny will be away for the April 22 meeting, so Margaret will pick up the key. Linda will do the introductions if Ruth is absent. Jonathan will bring the refreshments, name tags, and name sheet
Ruth will do the writer write-up with Linda as backup

The next board meeting will be June 3 at Cheri's home.

—Submitted by: Cheri Stow, Secretary/Treasurer