



SISTERS in CRIME
CROAK & DAGGER
 ALBUQUERQUE CHAPTER



THE NOOSE LETTER

Volume V, Number 2—March 2009

†Expert Testimony†

From the Prez

It's spring! My favorite time of year! The robins came early, and the daffodils are abloom (is that like Sherlock's "afoot"?). Are you all inspired to write, with the new year blossoming? I know I am. Recently I've only been reading, but I've written short book reviews on what I've read. That counts, doesn't it?

I want to thank our vice-president, Olin Bray, for filling in for me at our last meeting, while we were out of state for our son's internment.

Don't forget to check out the websites of other mystery groups for upcoming conferences and workshops. There are some you can go to from our C&D website and find out about things like the 2009 Tony Hillerman writing contest

Bob's still in Australia, but he offered these comments to all:

Not writing anything new yet. Five Star turned down my Civil War spy novel (after 6-9 months having the MS), but NYC Agent Tony Outhwaite (met at the last Hillerman Conference) is waiting for it. Just bought a printer-scanner here for \$20 new (that's not a misprint) and will mail it him (his preferred method) soon. Regards to the board and the whole group. Rob

To keep Rob (and you other C&D writers) on track, here are a couple of deals made by SinC members lately:

Clea Simon has sold *Shades of Grey*, the first in the Dulcie Schwartz paranormal mystery series, to editor Amanda Stewart of Severn House in a nice two-book deal.

Kathryn Wall's *Canaan's Gate*, the tenth book in the Bay Tanner mystery series set on Hilton Head Island, was sold to Regina Scarpa at St. Martin's, in a two-book deal.

Carolyn Hart's next three books, two in the Death on Demand series and one in her new Bailey Ruth Raeburn series, sold to Carrie Feron at Harper, in a significant deal.

Not envious yet? See what else our Sisters have been writing and selling on page 3!

God bless and keep reading & writing. ♦

—Cheri B. Stow

Don't Miss It! **Tuesday, March 24, at 7 p.m.**

Our March speakers will be Larry Trujillo and Bob Gassaway.

Larry Trujillo, owner of Lawrence Trujillo Investigations, is a licensed NM private investigator. He has been a NM State police officer, a Bernalillo County sheriff's deputy, and a nuclear security police officer at Los Alamos National Labs.

Bob Gassaway, Ph.D. in Sociology, taught journalism at the University of Missouri and UNM. He has been a reporter and editor and has had unprecedented access to study the work of crime scene investigators in the Albuquerque Police Department. He is writing his second mystery novel.

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.

Who writes westerns? Are there Western mystery books? These burning questions will be answered when our April speaker, Melody Groves, talks about her books, characters, and the historical background on which her stories are based.

New Mexico native Melody Groves has a deep love for anything cowboy and Old West. As a re-enactor with the New Mexico Gunfighters, she “shoots” sheriffs and outlaws every Sunday in Albuquerque’s Old Town.

Winner of three first-place writing awards, including SouthWest Writers’ 2008 Parris Award, Melody is publicity chairman for Western Writers of America and public relations chair for SWW. She writes for *True West*, *New Mexico* and *albuquerqueARTS* magazines.

Her historical novels are *Arizona War*, *Sonoran Rage*, and *Border Ambush* (pub date spring 2009). Her nonfiction works are *Ropes*, *Reins*, and *Rawhide: All About Rodeo*, a guide to understanding the sport; and *Praising the Bar: A Look at Historic Bars of the Southwest* (spring 2010).

Meetings are held in the police briefing room of the James Joseph Dwyer Memorial Substation, 12700 Montgomery NE (one block east of Tramway). Unless otherwise noted, programs are free and open to the public.



Sisters in Crime was founded in 1986. *The mission of Sisters in Crime shall be “to promote the professional development and advancement of women crime writers to achieve equality in the industry.”*

Our vision is: “Raising professionalism and achieving equity among crime writers.”

And our motto is: “SinC into a good mystery!”

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

IN THE LOOP

If you haven’t joined Croak & Dagger’s online Yahoo discussion group, all members are invited. Exchange information about mystery books, movies, and TV shows; share news about local and national mystery events; and participate in occasional online classes. Join in! E-mail moderator Nancy Varian at nancy.varian@yahoo.com for sign-up instructions.

The Line Up

President/Treasurer – Cheri Stow –
Cheri3j@yahoo.com

Vice President – Olin Bray –
ohbray@nmia.com

Secretary – Fred Aiken –
FAAiken@aol.com

Programs/Publicity – Rita Herther –
RMHerther@aol.com

Membership – Jonathan Sacks –
jsacks@pobox.com

Website Technical Support Manager – Susan Zates –
smzates@quest.net

Library Liaison – Pari Noskin Taichert –
ptaichert@comcast.com

Nooseletter Editor – Linda Triegel –
newsette@earthlink.net

News and Good Advice from our National Sisters

More deals by our SinC siblings:

New York Times bestselling author Lorraine Bartlett, writing as Lorna Barrett, has sold the next three books (#4-6) in the Booktown Mystery series, and a new series, the Victoria Square Mysteries, written under her own name, both to Tom Colgan at Berkley Prime Crime, in a nice deal by Jacky Sach at Bookends.

M.M. Gornell's second novel, *Death of a Perfect Man*, has been purchased by Andy Zhang of Aberdeen Bay Publishing (imprint of Champion Writers) in a nice deal. Kitty Kladstrup of Kladstrup & Associates negotiated.

John DeDakis has sold *Bluff*, the second novel in his Lark Chadwick mystery-suspense series to editor Robert Gelinas at ArcheBooks in a nice deal. The agent was Barbara Casey of the Barbara Casey Literary Agency:

NOTE: "nice deal" \$1-\$49,000; "very nice deal" \$50,000-\$99,000; "good deal" \$100,000-\$250,000; "significant deal" \$251,000 - \$499,000; "major deal" \$500,000 and up

Help and Advice from SinC:

The SinC Links are intended to provide information that will help our career members make good business decisions. Have you made a deal lately? If you think your information will help a sibling learn about the industry, send to Nancy at nmartin@nancymartinmysteries.com.

For some articles on writing forwarded from Nancy Martin, try:

[http://www.publishersmarketplace.com/Track Deals, Sales, Reviews, Agents, Editors, News](http://www.publishersmarketplace.com/Track_Deals,_Sales,_Reviews,_Agents,_Editors,_News).

A UK article on the joys and miseries of being a writer:

<http://cts.vresp.com/c/?SistersinCrime/34ba52d80e/b84d89e81f/957faf5737>

Here's PW editor Sara Nelson blogging at The Daily Beast on the subject of whether or not book awards make any difference: <http://cts.vresp.com/c/?SistersinCrime/34ba52d80e/b84d89e81f/a59836ca75>

Still feeling the need for more Kindle news? They say they have a version for your iPhone:

<http://cts.vresp.com/c/?SistersinCrime/34ba52d80e/b84d89e81f/2e6d8b27c7>

Turns out, the fluctuation in currency has helped various publishers make a little dough selling books outside the US. Here's Harlequin's side of the story:

<http://cts.vresp.com/c/?SistersinCrime/34ba52d80e/b84d89e81f/22acce9ee>

And here's Penguin's:

<http://cts.vresp.com/c/?SistersinCrime/34ba52d80e/b84d89e81f/b025b18e02/pageid=144&pressid=2998>

Are you a writer who needs more things to keep you busy? Here's advice on promoting oneself online:

<http://cts.vresp.com/c/?SistersinCrime/34ba52d80e/b84d89e81f/e0654e4bac/#email>

[Thanks to Cheri Stow for forwarding all of the above!]

Constabulary Notes from All Over

Fingerprint test may catch US killer

A British inventor's new fingerprinting technique has given fresh impetus to half a dozen unsolved cases and could help police identify the killer of a man shot dead 10 years ago in the US.

For detectives in the city of Bristol, Connecticut, the 1998 murder case of Louis "Pete" LaFontaine remains the only unsolved killing on their books.

The local police team are determined to find the killer, prompting detective Garrie Dorman to travel 3,500 miles to see if a little bit of British inventiveness can help. He arrived carrying a polythene evidence bag containing shell cases from the scene of a shooting that has left police baffled for nearly a decade.

His journey appears to have paid off. A new forensic technique developed by Northampton scientist Dr John Bond could reveal previously hidden fingerprints on casings.

In February 1998, electrical repairman Mr LaFontaine was shot dead as he slept at his home in an affluent part of Bristol. There was no sign of forced entry—and as far as the police could tell, the 53-year-old, who was divorced with one son, was popular and well liked.

After many hours of work and numerous dead-end leads, the case had gone cold.

Det Dorman said: "We have a fairly good rate at solving murders in the past, and this is one that really kind of sticks with everyone. It'd be real nice to see this one come to a positive close."

The handful of shell casings brought to Britain were being tested by Dr Bond, the scientific support manager for Northamptonshire Police. Dr Bond has developed a technique that can reveal "hidden" fingerprints on metal—especially shell casings—by detecting the minute traces of corrosion on the surface caused by salt in the sweat on human fingers. Such corrosion cannot be wiped off, is impervious to the heat generated when a weapon is fired, and does not deteriorate over time. The technique has been described by Time magazine as one of the top 50 inventions of 2008.

Dr Bond said: "Normal fingerprinting requires a residue of sweat to be left on the metal, but my technique doesn't need that, and it can work when conventional techniques fail."

The process is deceptively simple. The shell case is held in contact with an electrical terminal that charges it with 2,500 volts. Then similarly charged ceramic beads are poured onto it. The beads are coated with very fine black powder which is transferred onto to the casing, but only where it has suffered corrosion.

"The black powder just reveals where the corrosion pattern is, then we heat the sample to bake the powder in place and photograph it for standard fingerprint comparison," Dr Bond said.

His technique works and has already given fresh impetus to half a dozen cold case investigations, nearly all in the US. "The Americans seem quicker to embrace new technology than we are," he added.

The technique is so new that many people are still awaiting trial. But Dr Bond confirmed that he has been asked to examine a shell case left at the scene of the murder of a village post office worker in Worcestershire recently.

Det Dorman is excited about the possibility of a result in his case. "My hope was always to find a new forensic technique that would enable us to identify Mr LaFontaine's killer, but I had no idea it would ever bring me to England." ♦

[The preceding was excerpted from a 22 Jan 2009 BBC News report by crime writer Ben Ando]

Dangerous Sea by David Roberts, Carrol & Graf, 2003, 248 pp (HC)

The fourth in a historical mystery series featuring Lord Edward Corinth and Verity Browne, *Dangerous Sea* is set on the Queen Mary in early 1937, which provides some nifty historical tidbits if the era interests you.

The plot too is serviceable, with the victims including a racist American senator and the suspects a Paul Robeson-like singer married to a blond actress. Lord Edward is aboard to surreptitiously guard a VIP who is traveling to the States to meet with President Roosevelt to convince him to provide Britain with arms and money if matters escalate to war with Germany. Verity is on her way to America to meet with Communists sympathizers there. An apparently running subplot in the series is the attractions between Verity and Edward, despite their wildly contrasting political views and backgrounds.

But the book never really comes alive, mainly because the characterization fails. Edward, who like many literary lords, seems to have Something Mysterious to do with the Foreign Service or, in this case, Special Branch, is the sort of crumpet intelligent romance writers adore, but the author never delves beneath his surface charms. Verity is an avowed Communist, doing her best not to consort with the dreaded Wastrel Classes (despite traveling first class), but she's politically naïve, and her naiveté isn't in the least adorable.

Such mysteries are often saved by secondary characters, and a couple of pseudo-Roosevelts (twins whose father changed their name from Ravelstein) almost fill the bill. Otherwise there are a lot of handsome young men dashing around (often literally), but it's hard to tell them apart.

It could be that the earlier books in the series provide some of the depth of character that *Dangerous Sea* lacks, and I'm willing to give them a try. I picked this one up at the Tony Hillerman (nee Wyoming) branch of the public library, which is obligingly displaying a variety of "gumshoe" novels lately, as well as those by Hillerman in his honor—and to celebrate their name change. ♦

—Linda Triegel (ljt23@earthlink.net)

ROB'S RANDOM SHOTS

March Case File Number One

Death at La Fenice by Donna Leon, Harper Collins Torch, 2001, 278 pp (PB)

The two books I'm reviewing in this issue have only two things in common: They were written by bestselling mystery authors near the start of their careers, and they both came out of our chapter book boxes. Have you found a treasure in there lately? Please consider reviewing a gem that comes your way. The *Nooseletter* can always use more reviews and your opinion counts as much as anyone's.

That said, *La Fenice* is the first of the Inspector Guido Brunetti of the Venice police mysteries, a series which went on to great acclaim. [Ed Note: See page 9.]

This is a classic "cozy," a traditional Agatha Christie-type mystery, in every sense. Violence takes place off stage. The victim, a noted German symphony conductor, is already dead on the first page, found poisoned in his room at the La Fenice Opera



House between acts of *La Traviata*. Suspects are few—the leading soprano, her lover, the maestro's wife, a set decorator, and an old woman whose career as a singer was ruined by the victim. Ordinarily, a classic cozy features a talented amateur sleuth, rarely a police detective, but in this case, Brunetti struggles to find a motive and the killer just as any amateur would.

He has to struggle against an incompetent superior who wants to rush to judgment because the press is having a field day. Two of Brunetti's subordinates are lickspittles who report to his superior. But he has helpers, too. His wife Paola is a sounding board. Her fabulously rich and noble parents are great sources of rumors and can invite leading suspects to their famous parties, where Brunetti can question them while their guards are down. And he has one or two assistants and some

competent support staff to help. Leon play fair and lays out the clues that count, but my sure bet turned out to be innocent and I didn't see the solution coming.

In novels of this type, everything is settled politely. In this case, Brunetti tells no one of the true identity of the killer and readers will agree with him. If you like gentle mysteries—no “on-screen” violence, no bad language, no sex (although much is implied and many historical misdeeds are recounted), then this is the type of book for you.♦

—Rob Kresge (*rkresge777@comcast.net*)

Key:

PB = Paperback

TP = Trade paperback

HC = Hardcover

March Case File Number Two

The Neon Rain by James Lee Burke, Pocket Books, 1988, 281 pp (PB)

This novel couldn't be more different from Ms Leon's. Burke's second Dave Robicheaux mystery is brimming over with sex (both on-screen and off) and violence (nearly all on-screen). Burke's protagonist went on to quit the force and become a PI, but in this novel, he's still a New Orleans police lieutenant, although he spends half the book under suspension.

The murder, the discovery of a dead black girl fished from a river, is solved halfway through the book, but Robicheaux's investigation stirs up a hornet's nest of skullduggery and vengeful mobsters, right-wing patriots, and assorted psychopaths who inflict more pain on him than on any protagonist since Mickey Spillane's Mike Hammer. Thus, although this book starts out as a nearly classic mystery, the protagonist goes off the rails and into a hyper-violent thriller as he races first to solve the murder, then to stay alive, and finally to avenge a slain Federal agent and his own critically wounded brother.

But the novel is not all sex and gore. Dave has a tender relationship with a former Kansas hippie he meets in the course of the investigation. Readers will form a sense of foreboding that Dave's actions and his deliberately self-destructive behavior (reverting to drunken weekends, making himself a target, outraging fellow officers and even his partner) may bring harm to his lover, too. Burke is a master of descriptive prose of everything about New Orleans—its justice system, the music, the best places to eat (and the best things to eat). New Orleans, like Leon's Venice, becomes virtually a character in the novel. It couldn't have taken place anywhere else.

Finally, the book closes with an almost Leon sense of propriety. Dave solves the case, delivers justified mayhem to some bad guys, but doesn't take down the man whose money set the whole cascade of violence in motion. He confronts him, tell him justice will come for him, but leaves him unharmed.

The novels of James Lee Burke are in many ways reminiscent of Robert Parker's Spenser series. My timing in reading this book couldn't have been better. Parker was named a Grand Master by the Mystery Writers of America several years ago (as was the greatly missed Tony Hillerman). Burke and Sue Grafton will both be honored in April as this year's Grand Masters.

Add Leon to your library if she's your glass of *vino*, and Burke, if he's your boilermaker. ♦

—Rob Kresge (*rkresge777@comcast.net*)

MYSTERIES FROM DOWN UNDER

Mission Impossible Review

Our *Nooseletter* editor asked me to review some mysteries by Australian authors since I'm over here. I hope to find some for the next issue who are well enough known and published on both sides of the pond that our members can find their books. However, this first one may be far more difficult. More to come. Rob.

Skin Deep by Cathy Cole, Duffy & Snellgrove, Sydney, 2002, PB, 307 pp.

The Sydney setting of this novel acts as another character. I can't imagine this book taking place anywhere else. Although Julie and I have only been here a few weeks, I've been to or heard of many of the places Cathy Cole describes—the Balmain Peninsula suburb, with its noisy pubs, Cockatoo Island and its now-closed dockyard, the rich and varied arts community that thrives here, local and national politics, and even the types of cars driven by protagonist and suspects and the foods they eat.

Nicola Sharpe is a six-foot blonde PI who's never moved far from her roots. In fact, she went to grade school with both her male associate and the male cop involved in her latest case. She's called in by famous painter Jane Davies to protect her teen daughter Emma after one woman is murdered in her neighborhood and another disappears. The murder is an ingenious puzzler—the victim froze to death on the hottest February night in years (remember, the season are reversed down here).

This novel easily qualifies as a cozy/traditional on all counts. We rapidly meet a cast of suspects who all know each other; there is no “onscreen” violence, and the sleuth has an amiable working relationship with the police. Nicola is followed from time to time by a green Holden Commodore (Aussie car) but cannot figure out why. Many of her bodyguarding chores involve sticking close to Emma during her forays with a political group protesting the activities of a national conservative figure. At last, the clues begin to come together as our heroine links the politician to Emma's ostensibly liberal painter mother. There is a thrilling climax, but, true to the cozy subgenre and to Australian gun laws, we never see a firearm during the whole novel.

I wish you could find works by this author in American bookstores. Google her name and perhaps you'll find used copies somewhere. I promise to review more mainstream names like Kerry Greenwood and Arthur Upfield next time. ♦

—Rob Kresge (rkresge777@comcast.net)

SHORT TAKES

The Messenger by Jan Burke, Simon & Schuster, 2009.

Jan Burke, a multi-award winning novelist in the mystery field, has written a thriller I could hardly put down. Although I felt a bit confused in the beginning, I was quickly intrigued with the supernatural aspect of the protagonist meeting and falling for a 200-year-old man.

She becomes involved with his plight of listening to the final thoughts of dying mortals, while an old friend of his begins



closing in on his current whereabouts in order to take back the powers he'd bestowed upon him. Meanwhile, Amanda has her own personal problems of always seeing her deceased parents and grandparents. Will the evil seeking out the couple kill them? ♦

—Cheri Stow (Cheri3@yahoo.com)

Charade by Sandra Brown, 1994, Warner Books.

Although this book is not new on the market, it was well worth reading for those who enjoy romantic suspense (a sub-genre of the mystery genre). It starts out a bit slow and somewhat tedious with what I feel are too many different characters and their problems. But then it quickly picks up with an excellent plot and moves along through the protagonist's goal of becoming involved in a televised adoption of kids with special needs. This is spurred by Cat, the protagonist, having had a heart transplant.

Soon Cat discovers that other heart transplantees are dying off one by one. Will she be next? Is her new boyfriend, an ex-cop and crime novelist, somehow involved in the murders? Is he her stalker?

Sandra Brown, a best selling novelist, has written many more novels, which I hope to read soon. ♦

—Cheri Stow (Cheri3@yahoo.com)

A Killing in the Valley by J.F. Freedman, 2006, Park Press.

This mystery keeps you guessing. Being a country girl, I especially like the isolated ranch setting where a woman's murdered body is found. The protagonist's daughter is befriended by the elderly owner of the old ranch, and then the daughter falls for the matron's grandson, who is accused of the murder. The protagonist PI's job is to build a case for the attorney she works for in order to defend the young man.

A Killing in the Valley is a detailed police procedural/courtroom case giving a good idea of a trial lawyer's job. The characters' interwoven lives are well developed. And the ending may be a surprise. ♦

—Cheri Stow (*Cheri3@yahoo.com*)

Noose News

David and Aimée Thurlo won both the *Romantic Times* Career Achievement Award and the New Mexico Book Award in the mystery category in December. "We're very proud of this recognition and want to thank all of you who make what we do possible."

Their latest Ella Clah mystery, *Coyote's Wife*, appeared in October. *Publishers Weekly* said, "In [their] solid 14th Ella Clah mystery the Thurlos' intimate knowledge of Navajo culture and legends make for another crowd pleaser."

The next Ella Clah mystery comes out in the fall. "In *Earthway*, Ella's own family and friends become targets as she confronts unknown enemies determined to prevent the startup of the Navajo Nation's first nuclear powered generating station.

David and Aimée were featured in the November issue of *New Mexico* magazine, a Collector's Edition showcasing Hollywood's movie industry in sunny New Mexico! "The cover made us laugh - 'Hooray for Tamalewood' was front and center!"

This November brings *The Bad Samaritan*, a new Sister Agatha mystery. In this adventure, our intrepid Sister Agatha finds herself defending the innocence of the man she once loved. To complicate matters, the Bernalillo monastery is being forced to close, and she and the other sisters are to be transferred to Colorado.

The Writer's Block

A Column on Writing Well

Parallelism is the repetition of the same grammatical form to balance equal elements in a sentence; its use often improves readability and reinforces the idea expressed. The Beatitudes in the Bible are a classic example. In modern writing, however, this principle is often violated ("The new editor was bright, hardworking, and wanted to change the system."—better to make all three elements into adjectives: She was bright, hardworking, and eager to make changes.)

Improve your own work by:

(1) looking at the individual items in your series to see that they match in grammatical form and that you haven't mixed adverbs in with verbs (as above), infinitives with gerunds, etc. Make sure, too, that you have been consistent about repeating (or not) initial articles, prepositions, conjunctions, or *Rockies*, the *Great Plains*, and the *Mississippi*.) (Note also that each of the three items in this series of recommendations begins with a gerund); possessive pronouns. (On our trip, we'll see the *Rockies*, the *Great Plains*, and the *Mississippi*.) (Note also that each of the three items in this series of recommendations begins with a gerund);



(2) noticing elements connected by *and* or *or* to be sure they are grammatically equivalent. (She began staying late at the office, *either* to catch up with her work *or* to impress her staff.) Be sure that the reader will recognize which items the conjunctions link; if items you had not intended as a pair sound as if they are, revise;

(3) making sure that you are comparing like elements, especially those that follow *than* or *as*. (We import more oil from *Mexico* than from *Saudi Arabia*.) Check prepositional phrases that begin with such words as *along with*, *together with*, and *among* to see that their objects belong in the same category as the words the phrases modify.

Three Bravas for Donna Leon

What? You've never heard of her? You might if you were a British subject, or a fan of mysteries set in Italy. Ms. Leon is the author of over a dozen contemporary crime mysteries, all set in Venice and surrounds. You've never heard of *Commissario* Guido Brunetti? Allow me. He is one of the most fascinating law enforcement officers I have ever met, real or fictional. He's also one of the sexiest, savoring good food and good conversation, and respecting a loving wife, Paola, a college professor, and two intriguing children, Raffi and Chiara.

He's a hero because he is sensitive, brilliant, and kind, even in the midst of being plagued with guilt over his inability to shelter his beloved Venice from the corrupt world of Italian politics, corporate greed, and the metastasis of the Sicilian Mafia. He is, in many ways, Everyman, torn between love of his family and loyalty to justice. He brings his worries home to Paola and the children, who capture our fascination as they mature. As we observe Guido, his serious concern for his beloved Venice grows, and our love of Venice grows as well.

Add to that mix his exceedingly clever and gorgeous secretary, the enchanting *Signorina* Elettra, who runs interference from *Vice-Questore* Patta, the handsome boss from hell. Guido would find out little without the expertise of Elettra. Another brilliantly described character is Vianello, Guido's police partner with whom he trusts his life.

To assist the reader, a map of Venice is included in each book and on a Web site. We traveled to that magical city recently and wished we had had the list that Ms. Leon has posted at www.groveatlantic.com/leon/alsoby.htm. It includes dozens of actual locations of the mysteries' actions.

What interested me was the food. We receive a brief review of every restaurant and *trattoria* Guido visits as well as Paola's creative everyday Italian cooking. The author's ability to place you within the setting (she lives in Venice) is profound, and her love of classical music is revealed in the excerpt of Mozart librettos starting every book.

According to Elaine Petrocelli, who did an insightful interview with Ms. Leon, her mysteries, written in English, haven't been published in Italy, although they've been translated into many other languages. It might be said that Ms. Leon is slightly eccentric, but her critical observations of Italian corruption make this a wise move. She pulls no punches, although her work is clearly fictional. Ms. Leon garnishes her pages with wry humor, cleverly induced through the voice of the third-person narrator.

Although an American by birth, she's lived and taught all over the world. Still, her favorite location is Venice, and she's able to make that fascinating city come to life, painting a vivid background of a city reminiscent of the past but living under the scourge of the present. Reading her reminds me of sitting in an old church listening to a Vivaldi concert. One doesn't want it to end.

She's won the Macallan Silver Dagger for fiction for *Friends in High Places*, but I would also recommend *Aqua Alta*, *Dressed for Death*, and *Blood from a Stone*. I'd start my Venetian journey with *Death and Judgment*. And don't be surprised if, once you take a trip by book, you yearn to book a trip to Venice. (Tip: Go in early spring or late fall. Avoid the summer—humidity, tourists, and odors.) ♦

—Carolyn Page (of "Page Erwin")

I Love a Mystery—Don't You?

Here is some more trivia for the mystery lover, thanks to Maxine Hermann of the Delaware Valley chapter of SinC (these quizzes originally appeared in *Belles Lettres*, the newsletter of DVSinC).

This issue's quiz features some mystery "couples."

1. "She Who Must be Obeyed" in John Mortimer's Rumpole novels is really Mrs. Horace Rumpole. What is her first name?



- A. Helga
- B. Helen
- C. Hildegard
- D. Hilda

2. *The Long Embrace* is a biography of a famous California-based writer and his wife. Who is he?

- A. Erle Stanley Gardner
- B. Raymond Chandler
- C. Ross Macdonald

3. Novels featuring Inspector Thomas Pitt and Charlotte Ellison Pitt are the creation of Anne Perry and are set in what time and place:

- A. 1920s Paris
- B. 1940s New York City
- C. 1880s London
- D. 1950s Sydney



4. Agatha Christie wrote mysteries, set in the Roaring Twenties, featuring a sleuthing couple named:

- A. Tippi and Tim
- B. Sammy and Sixpence
- C. Tommy and Tuppence
- D. Peter and Penny

5. *Third Strike* is the third collaboration of William Tappley and:

- A. Simon Beckett
- B. Philip R. Craig
- C. Thomas H. Cook

Sorry—no prizes! (Answers on page 11)

Check it Out...

Check out the Croak & Dagger Web site—
www.croak-and-dagger.com:

- The **Home** page contains information on upcoming Croak & Dagger events.
- **About Us** contains information on our chapter, including a list of current officers.
- **Meeting Schedule** lists all scheduled program meetings.
- **Membership** provides information on joining Croak & Dagger and supplies a printable membership form. If you are looking for reasons to join, you will find them here.

The Membership page also includes information on joining the Yahoo group, “an online community group, where members can exchange information about mystery books, movies, and TV shows; share news about local and national mystery events; and participate in occasional online classes. Croak & Dagger members may contact nancy.varian@yahoo.com, to sign up.

- **Speakers Bureau** lists Croak & Dagger members you may contact for information on topics of potential interest to mystery readers and writers. If you would like to be included in this list, e-mail your resume to croakdagger@yahoo.com.
- **Authors/Favorite Links** provides links to sites for member authors (published or unpublished) who write crime-related fiction or nonfiction and to sites developed by any members when those Web sites concentrate on crime-related fiction or nonfiction works. If your Web site fits any of these criteria and you would like to be listed, e-mail croakdagger@yahoo.com with your Web address. In addition, this page provides a list of Web site links of interest to those of us who are into felonious fun. If you know a Web site you think is of particular interest to think is of particular interest to Croakers, e-mail us with that information.
- **Nooseletter Archive** provides links to archived issues of the chapter’s *Nooseletter*.
- **Contact Us** provides visitors with the chapter’s e-mail address.

If you have any suggestions for improvements to the Web site, e-mail croakdagger@yahoo.com.

BOOKMARKS

Have you seen them? Bright pink, with blood-red accents? Do you have one? Do you have a handful?

The 2006 **Croak & Dagger** bookmarks are a great way to spread the word about our Sisters in Crime chapter. Hand out plenty, but keep one for yourself: they list all our meeting dates and times for 2006.



Sisters in Crime **Guppies**

SinC guppies come from across the United States and Canada. They have different occupations and avocations, but they share a passion for writing mysteries and a common goal of getting published.

“Few professions offer as many opportunities for rejection as writing does. Only the strong survive the path to publication. The encouragement and support of other writers can be the difference between giving up too soon and getting in print.” (SinC Guppies)

Guppies is an online writer’s support group, Subgroups represent cozies, noir, psychological and romantic suspense, and thrillers. The Mystery Analysis Group is a book discussion group aimed at discussing the craft, and the AgentQuest group can help with writing queries and synopses.

Answers to Quiz

- 1 – D
- 2 – B
- 3 – C
- 4 – C
- 5 – B

2009 MEETING DATES

Tuesday, March 24, 7:00 p.m.
Tuesday, April 28, 7:00 p.m.
Tuesday, May 26, 7:00 p.m.
Tuesday, June 23, 7:00 p.m.
Tuesday, July 28, 7:00 p.m.

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.

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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†Nooseletter Submissions†



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, January 20, 2009**

Board members present: President Cheri Stow, Vice President Olin Bray, Membership Chair Jonathan Sacks, Secretary Fred Aiken, Program Chair Rita Herther, Website Manager Susan Zakes.

Cheri called the meeting to order at 7:15 p.m. The board thanked her for hosting the meeting at her home.

Minutes of the December Board meeting was approved as corrected. After discussion, it was agreed that the yearly transitional board meeting be moved to January from December. Regular board meetings will be held on the third Monday of the odd months at 7:00 p.m. Rita agreed to host the March meeting.

A brief discussion ensued on the rationale of why other writing groups should be listed on our website. The reasons stated included reciprocity for being listed on their websites, publicity of Croak & Dagger's programs, and attraction of new members. The fee for the website is \$155, which Susan will submit at the next meeting.

Membership in the chapter now stands at 78. Treasurer reported a balance of \$1,902.70 as of the date of this board meeting (see next page for line items). Olin will be added as an authorized signer on the checking account. Fred will be added in the near future. This will provide the necessary two signatures.

Speakers are arranged through June. More engraved bookmarks given to the speakers will be ordered. Cheri suggested that we add a "Minute for Successes" at the program meetings. The Board concurred with the suggestion. The mystery dinner will be held this year. Planning for this event will be done in the next few months. At least one board member will be on this committee.

Several related items regarding the Chat Room were discussed. Susan is not sure why the chat room is not archived. Jonathan proposed that he send out an email from the website to new members in order to have the new member reminded of the benefit of belonging to Croak and Dagger. After learning that the web mistress was not a member of Croak and Dagger but continues to handle the website administrative duties, it was agreed that Nancy Varian will be granted membership into our chapter as an honorarium for her hard work.

The canceling of the December meeting that resulted from extremely low temperature in the meeting room sparked a review of the Snow cancellation policy. A decision to cancel a meeting is required to be made by 4 PM of the day of the meeting and emails sent to all members. The program that was canceled in December (panel of published mystery novel writers) will be considered for August.

It was suggested that a critique group be formed for writers in our chapter. Fred will shepherd this process. Readers will be permitted to join the group.

The meeting adjourned at 8:45.

Respectfully submitted by: Fred A. Aiken, Secretary

Croak & Dagger Treasury Report for year 2008

<i>Expenditures</i>		<i>Deposits</i>	
		Memberships	120.00
		Memberships	180.00
Speaker	500.00	conference & membership	187.00
Website	155.99	conference & membership	1,214.97
Stamps	40.00	membership	120.00
Office supplies	11.20	membership	140.00
Projector	640.49	membership	200.00
Office supplies	35.22	mystery dinner proceeds	455.00
Mystery dinner	577.16	membership	40.00
Mystery game	44.95	membership	60.00
Dinner refund	11.49	dinner refund	68.56
Gift cert. Reimburse	100.00	membership	80.00
Bookmarks	139.72	membership	60.00
PO box yr fee	94.00		
Total	\$2,350.22	Total	\$2,925.53
Difference \$575.31 PROFIT			

—Submitted by Cheri Stow, Treasurer