



SISTERS in CRIME
CROAK & DAGGER
 ALBUQUERQUE CHAPTER



THE NOOSE LETTER

Volume V, Number 3—May 2009

†Expert Testimony†

From the Prez

With June just around the corner, I hope everyone has been reading and possibly writing! Why? Because that means half a year has already passed, and procrastinators have only empty hope.

So for those who have been active—congratulations! For all others, make this the day you start something. Whether you read some new how-to-write book and write out the exercises, read an extra book per month, or start/finish that backlogged novel, give yourself a goal for the rest of the year.

What have I done, you might wonder? Well talk is cheap, but yes, though I haven't done as much as I'd like so far, I've written two poems, a short story, an essay, three reviews, and contacted a new agent for my novel. And heaven forbid, I'm trying to enroll in an English class for fall. (Maybe I'll graduate by the time I retire—or turn 80, which ever comes first).



The point is, it's fun to listen to others' accomplishments, but it's even more satisfying to have our own. So whether you're a reader or a writer, set yourself a goal to be accomplished by the end of the year.

And you'll be able to start the next year knowing you did something fun in the world of literature. ♦

—Cheri B. Stow

Don't Miss It!

Tuesday, May 26, at 7 p.m.

Our May speaker will be U'liana Sisombath, a Certified Handwriting Analyst based in Albuquerque. By day a software analyst, by night a handwriting analyst, under her business, *A Write Transformation*, she has researched and authenticated a Remington sketch in collaboration with Karen Weinberg, QDE. A member of CHAI since 2002, her role has included Board member, Digest Editor and Research Director. Every week, she provides information for members on upcoming weekly chat discussions, events and web resources.

She has given seminars for singles groups in Arizona on such topics as an introduction to handwriting analysis and how to navigate the dating scene using handwriting analysis as a tool. She has also written numerous articles for such organizations as the Graphologists Conference held in the UK in 2003 as well as for CHAI Newsletters.

Currently U'liana is studying an advanced course of certification in graphotherapy which will be geared towards helping teachers and parents better assist children with learning disabilities. U'liana lives with her husband, James, in Albuquerque. When not working on handwriting, she enjoys gardening, hiking and reading books on what else—handwriting.

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.


Our June speaker will be Richard Benke, author of *The Ghost Ocean* and more recently, *City of Stone*, an action-packed mystery involving a lost cache of gold that has trapped guilty and innocent alike in a web of intrigue and murder for nearly a century.

The gold, dangled as incentive in a scheme to capture Pancho Villa after his 1916 border raid, was to be assigned to the care of a young lieutenant, George Patton, but the bullion never arrived. The sons of a slain British agent, whose body was found in a Mexican river bottom, suspect the gold was connected with his death. One by one, they are also caught in the tangle of deceit.

The border, with its illegal traffic in drugs, cattle, and immigration, proves more than a match for them and for a unique cast of characters, north and south.

Richard Benke spent nearly 30 years as an Associated Press newsman and currently resides in Albuquerque.

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 –
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Secretary – Fred Aiken –
FAAiken@aol.com

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Nooseletter Editor – Linda Triegel –
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Henning Mankell – a Caring Writer

If you aren't familiar with the internationally acclaimed Swedish writer, Henning Mankell, where have you been? Mankell has written novels and a few plays as well as short stories, but the most relevant to this readership are his Kurt Wallander mysteries, currently being dramatized on PBS's *Masterpiece Mystery* series.

There have been nine Wallander mysteries thus far, plus one featuring Kurt and his fictional daughter, Linda. Throughout the nine we watch the brooding Kurt struggle with his increasing despondency over the decaying social fabric of his beloved Sweden. In a recent interview, the author expressed similar views. Mankell, through his characters, posits the belief that the uptick in drugs and violence is caused by the change in Sweden from utopian welfare state to a more Darwinian capitalistic model. This colors the mysteries with an aura of political gloom.

Easy access to drugs due to the bridge that now links Sweden to Copenhagen, Denmark, has affected idyllic Sweden. Other problems involve the influx of immigrants that has occurred since the 1950s. Spousal abuse, theft, and other crimes have made law enforcement more challenging.

Kurt Wallander faces all of these elements in his work as Chief Inspector on the police force of Ystad, a growing coastal city. In these meticulously crafted police procedurals (which are much more than that label would suggest), Wallander has the help of his colleague, Ann-Britt Hoglund, and a faithful peer, Martinsson. Kurt is guided by the voice of his late colleague, Rydberg, who taught him many things, among them to listen to the room in a crime scene.

A lonely divorcée with a colorful daughter who sees him through most crises, Kurt must cope with his unpredictable grouch of a father, who makes his living as a landscape painter. Kurt becomes increasingly depressed as each major crime haunts him even after he solves it. His health gradually declines as he partakes of a diet of pizza, hot dogs, and coffee. Like other mystery cop heroes, he takes liberties such as not waiting for warrants and entering crime scenes without backup. Wallander's sensitivity and unfailing courtesy prompt the reader to overlook such errors in judgment.

The PBS series stars Kenneth Branagh as Wallander—perfect casting as Branagh transforms himself into the carelessly dressed, unshaven Kurt and faces each new day with dread combined with the spark of hope that keeps him getting up and going out into the world day after day into the sordid lives of victims and criminals alike. This fine actor has absorbed the role and brings new depth both to the character and the body of Mankell's stories.

Like the fictional character he has created, Henning Mankell has a lot of heart. He destroyed his last Wallander mystery, mostly completed, because it involved heinous crimes against children, and he couldn't bring himself to complete it. In an interview, which is a "feature" of the DVD of three TV episodes, Mankell discusses spending part of every year in Maputo, Mozambique, where he directs at the Teatro Theatre and works for causes such as literacy and Aids. He helped fund the 2008 First World Congress.

If you are a beginner Wallanderite, you might start with *Faceless Killers* followed by *The Dogs of Riga*. You'll be hooked. Incidentally one of Wallander's novels was translated by Albuquerque's own Tiina Nunnally. Her husband, Steven T. Murray, translated *The Fifth Woman*. One of Mankell's newest books is a novella-length story collection entitled *The Pyramid* (2008), a great read. ♦

—Carolyn Page

Carolyn Page's new poetry chapbook, *The Leavings of the Sea*, poems about her town in Maine, is now available from her. Info at: royandcal@roadrunner.com)

Twenty Rules for Writing Detective Stories:

Here are S.S. Van Dine's rules, in abridged form. For the full article (from *American Magazine*, September 1928), go to Gaslight at <http://gaslight.mtroyal.ab.ca/vandine.htm>.

—Sarah Schwartz (schwartzse@comcast.net)

1. The reader must have equal opportunity with the detective for solving the mystery.
2. No willful tricks or deceptions may be placed on the reader other than those played legitimately by the criminal on the detective himself.
3. There must be no love interest.
4. The detective himself, or one of the official investigators, should never turn out to be the culprit.
5. The culprit must be determined by logical deductions—not by accident or coincidence or unmotivated confession.
6. The detective novel must have a detective in it; and a detective is not a detective unless he detects.
7. There simply must be a corpse in a detective novel and the deader the corpse the better. No lesser crime than murder will suffice.
8. The problem of the crime must be solved by strictly naturalistic means. Such methods for learning the truth as slate-writing, Ouija-boards, mind-reading, spiritualistic séances, crystal-gazing, and the like are taboo.
9. There must be but one detective—that is, but one protagonist of deduction.
10. The culprit must turn out to be a person who has played a more or less prominent part in the story.
11. A servant must not be chosen by the author as the culprit. . . . The culprit must be a decidedly worthwhile person—one that wouldn't ordinarily come under suspicion.
12. There must be but one culprit, no matter how many murders are committed. The culprit may, of course, have a minor helper or co-plotter; but the entire onus must rest on one pair of shoulders.
13. Secret societies, camorras, mafias, *et al.*, have no place in a detective story. A fascinating and truly beautiful murder is irremediably spoiled by any such wholesale culpability. To be sure, the murderer in a detective novel should be given a sporting chance; but it is going too far to grant him a secret society to fall back on. No high-class, self-respecting murderer would want such odds.
14. The method of murder, and the means of detecting it, must be rational and scientific.
15. The truth of the problem must at all times be apparent—provided the reader is shrewd enough to see it.
16. A detective novel should contain no long descriptive passages, no literary dallying with side-issues, no subtly worked-out character analyses, no *atmospheric* preoccupations.
17. A professional criminal must never be shouldered with the guilt of a crime in a detective story.
18. A crime in a detective story must never turn out to be an accident or a suicide.
19. The motives for all crimes in detective stories should be personal. International plottings and war politics belong in a different category of fiction.
20. And (to give my Credo an even score of items) I herewith list a few of the devices which no self-respecting detective story writer will now avail himself of. They have been employed too often, and are familiar to all true lovers of literary crime. To use them is a confession of the author's ineptitude and lack of originality. (a) Determining the identity of the culprit by comparing the butt of a cigarette left at the scene of the crime with the brand smoked by a suspect. (b) The bogus spiritualistic séance to frighten the culprit into giving himself away. (c) Forged fingerprints. (d) The dummy-figure alibi. (e) The dog that does not bark and thereby reveals the fact that the intruder is familiar. (f) The final pinning of the crime on a twin, or a relative who looks exactly like the suspected, but innocent, person. (g) The hypodermic syringe and the knockout drops. (h) The commission of the murder in a locked room after the police have actually broken in. (i) The word association test for guilt. (j) The cipher, or code letter, which is eventually unraveled by the sleuth. ♦

ROB'S RANDOM SHOTS

May Case File Number One

Man of Two Tribes by Arthur Upfield, Duffy and Snellgrove, Sydney, 1956, 224 pp (PB)

OK, last issue I teased you with a Mission Impossible—a mystery by a contemporary Australian crime writer that I knew you'd never find even on Amazon. This issue, I'm relenting. Here are a couple of highly worthwhile classics you should have little trouble finding at a library or used bookstore.

Arthur Upfield was the best-known Australian mystery writer up until his death in 1964. His character, half-breed sleuth Detective Inspector Napoleon Bonaparte (Bony), like Sherlock Holmes, became famous during his career and, like Holmes, uses that notoriety to increase his effectiveness. This book was well along in the series and I chose it because it features a most unusual missing-person case and an even more unusual locked room mystery. Please feel free to Google Upfield, Bonaparte, and any of the places cited in this review.

Bony arrives in Chifley, a tiny railroad service stop on the Indian Ocean Express that covers more than 2,000 miles from Adelaide to Perth along the Nullarbor Plain, the longest and most desolate train track in the world. A passenger, freed by a jury after killing her husband, has disappeared from the train in the middle of the night. No one saw her go. Search parties have found no tracks. It is a hundred miles to the nearest station (ranch) across the most barren, unforgiving desert in the world.

The only clue is found the diary of a dead dingo trapper. Before drinking himself to death, he heard a helicopter somewhere in this wilderness the night the woman vanished. Bony passes himself off as the dead man's nephew and heir and sets out to find her. We get intimate details of camel driving, finding water, food, and shelter, a real bonus for getting involved in this mystery. We've almost given up, as he has, when a party of Aborigines seizes him and lowers him into a cave in the middle of

the desert, where he finds his quarry and five other murderers who have served their sentences and been released.

Imprisoned with them miles from nowhere with no radio and only the food and water provided to his felonious companion, Bony has to solve the murder of one of them just before he arrived (everyone's in the same "locked room"), find a way out of their prison, and get his charges hundreds of miles across searing sands, risking Aborigine pursuit. Oh, and along the way he has to figure out who put these people there, how, and why. Not your average tasks for even a famous sleuth. Hope you can find this one. ♦

—Rob Kresge (rkresge777@comcast.net) in Sydney

Key:

PB = Paperback
TP = Trade paperback
HC = Hardcover

May Case File Number Two

Cocaine Blues by Kerry Greenwood, McPhee Gribble, Sydney, 1989, 316 pp (PB).

Being in Australia lets me explore this author, today's best-known crime writer Down Under, who has taken the world of traditional (cozy) mysteries by storm. She has been nominated for several U.S. prizes and has the highest worldwide following of any writer from this continent since Upfield. I'm pleased to add, "deservedly so."

Greenwood combines a winning character with a unique timeframe that enhances sleuth and author's popularity in a way that only Alexander McCall Smith's *Mma Precious Ramotswe* comes close to.

It's 1929 in Melbourne, at that time the largest city in Australia. Phryne (rhymes with shiny) Fisher is an heiress who grew up poor. Dissatisfied with endless parties in England, she makes a spur-of-the-moment decision to go home to the land of her birth and resolve a

mystery for friends—is their daughter’s husband poisoning her?

Readers have to hang on tight for this ride. Phryne is a straight-ahead, take-no-prisoners, no-risk-is-too-great modern woman who enjoys her wealth, fast cars, danger, and the occasional man. Sort of a cross between aviatrix Beryl Markham and Lara Croft, tomb raider.

Told from the first person, with loads of self-deprecating humor, period (and Australian) slang, entrancing details of the city and its social milieu, automobiles, drinks, and witty secondary characters from taxi drivers to police, suspects to members of the state parliament, an abortionist’s victim to Phryne’s newly hired and bewildered maid, we follow Cyclone Phryne as a force of nature as she investigates poisons, tracks down a drug lord, delivers an abortionist butcher to the police, and still finds time to romance a Russian dancer. Little violence, no really bad language, and only one sex scene, but I found that eminently satisfying.

Greenwood has written nearly 20 of these madcap adventures, most of which are being published in the U.S. at the rate of one a year. If you get hooked on these the way I did, you should be able to find copies of even the most current Australia-only ones via Amazon, ABE Books, or Alibris. I will be following Miss Fisher here courtesy of my local library and may be unable to resist reviewing her again. Ta-ta, old things. ♦

—Rob Kresge (rkresge777@comcast.net)

Frostline: A Ben Abbott Mystery by Justin Scott, Poison Pen Press, 2003. 328 pp (HC)

Justin Scott’s first Ben Abbott mystery, *Hardscape*, caught my attention when I realized that the fictional New England town where it’s set bore a remarkable resemblance to Newtown, Connecticut, near to where I lived at the time. I also knew, from having enjoyed the author’s historical thriller called *A Pride of Royals* and investigated him, that he lived in the same town. I hadn’t seen any of his other mysteries until a

friend gave me *Frostline*, however, so I’m glad to have some to catch up on.

Ben Abbott is a real estate agent in Newbury, a small town with big old white Colonial homes, a town hall that’s as much a gathering place as the red brick general store, and an extra-tall flagpole in the center of town. Having spent a spell in the slammer for insider trading a few years back, Ben finds life in Newbury mostly peaceful, even if the real estate business isn’t making him the kinds of profits he used to make, less legitimately.

Things don’t stay peaceful for long, of course. Ex-diplomat Henry King (not to tell tales out of school, but Henry Kissinger lives in Kent, Connecticut...) summons Ben to his McMansion, he envisions a huge payoff for handling the sale of Fox Trot. Instead, he’s wanted to mediate a dispute between King and his stubborn old neighbor, Richard Butler. When King’s dam at his newly built lake bursts, apparently drowsing Butler’s son Dickie, Ben finds himself in deeply muddy waters, literally and figuratively. He negotiates a perilous course between the feds sent to investigate, and the local police, one of whom is a Very Good Friend of Ben’s.

Frostline is full of colorful local characters, including the Chevalleys, sort of a Yankee Hatfield or McCoy clan, who are distant relations of Ben’s, and his closer relative, an aunt who lives in one of the big Colonials and takes an annoyingly persistent interest in Ben’s comings and goings, particularly if he’s coming or going with a lady friend.

Justin Scott is a skilled writer and must have had fun writing this series, an enjoyment that he passes on to the reader. ♦

—Linda Triegel (ljt23@earthlink.net)

The Green Mill Murder by Kerry Greenwood, Poisoned Pen Press, 1992 (first US edition 2006) 307 pp, \$22.95 (TP)

Ah, what a pleasure to return to the escapism of another Phryne Fisher, female PI, adventure in 1920s Melbourne. Poisoned Pen

Press is reprinting all her books with great success, and you can easily find new and used copies of her works in U.S. bookstores, libraries, and online.

After my review of her first adventure (above), I should be reviewing her second outing, *Flying Too High*, but I must rely on availability of titles in my local library, so you're getting book number five this time. *Flying* must involve the purchase of Phryne's Gypsy Moth biplane, since she uses it to great effect in this adventure. You'll just have to get a copy of that book until I can catch up.

The murder occurs near the conclusion of a dance marathon, right on page one. Witnesses include Phryne, other couples, and members of the band. However, no one is certain how the man was stabbed, and no one can find the murder weapon. Phryne's dance partner, Charles Freeman, runs off to be sick in the men's room just before the police arrive. No one can find him afterwards. Other suspects include the remaining two competing couples and the band members. Phryne herself is cleared immediately by her friend, Detective Inspector Jack Robinson, who quickly takes over the case.

In short order, Phryne is able to clear the other dancers, so suspicion centers on Charles. His hysterical, hypochondriac, domineering mother commissions Phryne to find him before the police do. In addition, she wants Phryne to find her other surviving son, now heir to the family fortune, but missing since he returned from the Great War ten years ago and presumably living in the Outback. This multitasking for the sleuth has become a standard feature of modern mysteries on TV and in novels, so that our heroine has to accomplish one, then the other. In addition, Phryne is hired to find the missing husband of the band's blues singer.

Suffice it to say that Phryne disposes of all three tasks through research, inquiry, and flying her plane off to the bush to track down the missing son. Readers are treated not only to the mores of Melbourne at the time, but to stories of battles in Turkey and France, the music and fashions of the era, and the pulse-racing suspense inherent in the danger of flying a little

plane made of wood and fabric amid high mountains and suddenly lowering cloud banks.

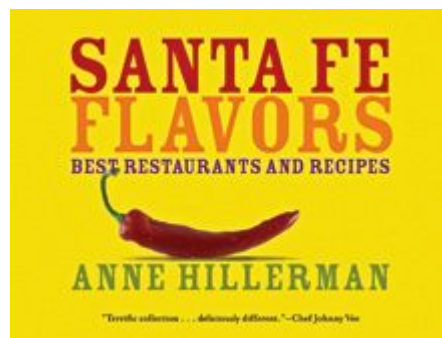
If you're not already reading Phryne Fisher, I urge you to try her. This is light entertainment coupled with easily digested education, frosted with amusing characters, and sprinkled with romance. I intend to follow Phryne to the end.♦

—Rob Kresge (rkresge777@comcast.net)

Noose News

Tony Hillerman's Landscape: On the Road with an American Legend will be released October 27, 2009, by HarperCollins. The book, written by Anne Hillerman with photos by Don Strel, pairs Tony's descriptions of Indian country scenery from the Chee/Leaphorn books with Don's pictures and Anne's memories of her father.

Anne also published ***Santa Fe Flavors: Best Restaurants and Recipes*** this spring with GibbsSmith Publisher. That cookbook and restaurant guide is available in many local book stores. Anne will be signing, and sharing treats created from recipes in the book, on Sunday, June 7, 3 p.m. at Bookworks, 4022 Rio Grande Blvd, Albuquerque.



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And what better time of year to attend a writers/fans conference? Check these out:

June 5-6

Murder in the Grove, Owyhee Plaza Hotel, Boise, Idaho. Master classes in writing and editing. Workshops on getting ideas, plotting, outlining, point of view, characters, and the current markets. Contact: inform@murderinthegrove.com

June 13-14

Inaugural **California Crime Writers Conference**, at the Pasadena Hilton in Pasadena, California. Cosponsored by the Los Angeles chapter of Sisters in Crime and the Southern California chapter of MWA. “Breaking In and Breaking Out: Plotting the *Write Course*” targets the needs of emerging and established writers alike. Craft workshops, forensic sessions, manuscript critiques. Keynote speakers: Robert Crais and Laurie King. Contact: sistersincrimela@yahoo.com



June 27-28

Deadly Ink, Sheraton Parsippany, Parsippany, NJ. Guest of Honor: multi-published author Lincoln Child. Contact: info@deadlyinke.com

July 8-11

ThrillerFest, Grand Hyatt, New York, NY. David Morrell is the 2009 ThrillerMaster. Other special guests include Robin Cook, Katherine Neville, David Baldacci, Steve Berry, Sandra Brown, Clive Cussler, and Brad Meltzer. Contact: info@thrillerwriters.org

July 16-19

16th Book Passage Mystery Writers Conference, Corte Madera, California. Covers everything mystery writers need—from developing ideas and writing skills to finding a publisher. The 2009 faculty includes co-chairs Sheldon Siegel and Jacqueline Winspear, along with luminaries like David Corbett, Hallie Ephron, and more. Contact: bpconferences@bookpassage.com

July 31-Aug 2

PulpFest 2009, Ramada Plaza Hotel, Columbus, Ohio. Guest of Honor: Edgar Award-winning writer, editor, and publisher Otto Penzler, whose recent anthology is *The Black Lizard Big Book of Pulps*. Contact: jassways@woh.rr.com

Aug 14-16

4th Annual Killer Nashville 2009, Nashville, Tennessee. Guest of Honor: J.A. Jance, author of the Sheriff Johanna Brady series of mysteries set in Arizona, as well as two other mystery series and many single-title books. Contact: Contact@KillerNashville.com

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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.

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. ♦

†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

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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, March 16, 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, and *Nooseletter* Editor Linda Triegel.

President Cheri Stow opened the meeting at 7:20 PM. She thanked Rita Herther for graciously hosting the board meeting. There was no president's report. The year-end Treasurer's Report was summarized in the March *Nooseletter*. The consensus of the Board was that this practice of reporting our financial health should be continued in future years. The proper IRS forms have been filed for this past fiscal year. As of March 15, the balance in the chapter's checking account was \$1,940.71.

Olin Bray led a discussion on what to do with the large number of books in our lending library. Currently, we have four plastic boxes filled with books, with more being added monthly. The thinning process will occur over a two-meeting period – Olin and Cheri will bring their boxes to the March meeting, while Jonathan and Fred will bring their boxes to the April meeting. At each meeting, the books will be spread out and the members in attendance will help judge which books to retain and which should be donated. Books for donations will be given to an organization such as APS literacy program or to the jails/prisons.

Jonathon Sacks reported a total of 85 members on the membership roster, about a dozen of whom joined as last year's conference. He believes that some of these conference registered members will not renew their membership. A discussion followed on the need for publicity, either paid or free. Rita said that she sends out releases the first of each month to publicize our upcoming speaker.

Susan Zates led a discussion about the possible uses for the Yahoo Discussion Group. Among the suggestions were sending C&D press releases to this group and to attempt to get a discussion thread going on particular topics. The question of whether this group should be an open group or remain closed to nonmembers will be debated at a future board meeting. The training of members on how to become a participant in the Yahoo Group will be demonstrated at an upcoming program meeting.

New Business:

- a) A request from Nancy Glass West to have her ARC read was discussed. Susan will write to the parent organization Sisters-in-Crime about the issue of chapter endorsements of a writer's book. Since it was unclear what Ms. West actually wants C&D to do, Jonathan Sacks will contact her to clarify her intent.
- b) Field Trips – The board agreed with President Cheri Stow that field trips are an important aspect of chapter activity. Among the suggestions given were a tour of the Office of the Medical Examiner (morgue), going to a gun range to experience shooting firearms, tour of a prison/jail, tour of the 911 Call Center and a Ghost Tour of Santa Fe with possible use of the Rail Runner. Jonathan will contact the office of the Medical Examiner; Cheri will contact a West Side gun range; Rita will investigate the Santa Fe Ghost Tour; Olin will follow up on the 911 Call Center idea; and Fred will investigate a possible prison/jail tour.
- c) Book Marks – Palms Trading is unable to provide the engraved bookmarks that we give to speakers, due to the artist moving out of town. Various board members suggested alternative sources and will check these out.
- d) Mystery Dinner – We will hold another mystery dinner in October. Cheri Stow suggested that we need a small room with a few round tables set close together. Several possible sites were mentioned and will be investigated as to suitability.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:45 p.m.

—Respectfully submitted by Fred A. Aiken, Secretary

**Summary of the Board Meeting Minutes of Sisters in Crime,
Croak & Dagger Chapter, ABQ, NM, May 14, 2009**

Board members present: President Cheri Stow, Vice President Olin Bray, Membership Chair Jonathan Sacks, Program Chair Rita Herther, Website Manager Susan Zakes, and Nooseletter Editor Linda Triegel. The meeting was called to order at 7:15 p.m. Olin Bray hosted the meeting at his home.

Cheri presented information she'd received from authors promoting their books and workshops. In her capacity as Treasurer, she reports two membership renewals paid and one new member added to the roster. Our bank account balance stands at \$1,851.20 as of today.

Jonathan confirmed the new members and reported the current total of members at 75, but cautioned that this was largely the result of last year's joint SWW -C&D conference and that the number of paid-up members is likely to settle to about 65 later in the year.

Linda asks for submissions of all kinds for the *Nooseletter*—not just articles and reviews but any suggestions for same, as well as short features, website recommendations, upcoming workshops and conferences, and filler material—anything connected to writing and reading mysteries.

Mystery Dinner:

Susan has checked out the restaurants she enjoys in terms of their capacity to host C&D's Mystery Dinner this year. She found the Macaroni Grill and Monroe's very accommodating, although the former was deemed too expensive per head, while Monroe's on Osuna, which serves New Mexican food, is very reasonably priced and willing to accommodate the needs of the game participants.

An extensive discussion ensued. A date for the dinner was set for September 29, a week after the September meeting, so that a last push for participants could be made at the September 22 meeting. It was agreed that a horseshoe-shaped table arrangement would probably work best. Cheri will check a variety of mystery plot games online. It was also agreed that several token gifts will be given away, so that everyone goes home with a memento, with prizes for best costume, and so on (to be voted by everyone present) and a Grand Prize given to the first attendee to guess the murderer.

Cheri will begin promoting the dinner at upcoming meetings, and we will collectively keep checking out other restaurants and make a decision about venue by the July board meeting, which will be held at Jonathan's house on July 20.

The meeting adjourned at 8:47.

Respectfully submitted by: Cheri Stow, Pres/Treas