



SISTERS in CRIME
CROAK & DAGGER
ALBUQUERQUE CHAPTER



THE NOOSE LETTER

Volume VI, Number 1—January 2010

†Expert Testimony†

Happy New Year! from your new president and board. Thank you for electing us and for your support for the next year. We will be experimenting and trying some new things this year, in addition to our usual outstanding programs.

We are starting off the year with something new. In addition to our regular January meeting, we will have a special event Saturday January 30. The Albuquerque Little Theatre is doing the classic mystery *Dial M for Murder* (see next page). We are also getting together for dinner before the play. Although the deadline has passed, if you are interested and did not sign up yet, check with Rob. We may still be able to get some additional tickets. Our annual mystery dinner has become a tradition, but we are planning to have more social events during the year. If you have some ideas for events, talk to me or any of our board members.

Another idea that has come up several times is a mystery book discussion group. If people are interested, we can pick a book and try it. With so many local writers, we could even select one of their books and probably get the author to come. We can try it a couple of times and if there is enough interest continue them.

For a New Year's resolution, those of you who have never attended a mystery conference might want to consider trying one. There are big ones and small ones. Some are more writer-oriented, others are oriented more to readers or fans, but most have a mixed audience. I know

some of our members regularly go to one or more every year. Perhaps we can provide a few minutes at the start of our meetings to alert members to upcoming conferences.

Speaking of which—be sure to mark your calendars for Left Coast Crime 2011 in Santa Fe. It will have a lot of connections with our local chapter. Pari is chairing it, Rob is the program chair, Sarah Schwartz is handling registration, and I am the treasurer. Hope to see you there, but I will definitely be seeing you a lot between now and then.

Again, Happy New Year and be sure to give us your ideas for things you would like to see Croak and Dagger trying in 2010. ♦

— Olin Bray

Don't Miss It! **Tuesday, January 26, at 7 p.m.**

Rob Kresge will be showing a professionally made video of testimonials to Tony Hillerman. Authors recalling Tony and his help to them included Joe Badal, Judith Van Gieson, Steve Havill, Margaret Tessler, and Pari Noskin Taichert.

Would-be authors and non-writers also addressed Tony's family on the inspiration they derived from his many novels and his nonfiction. Croak and Dagger members and friends who spoke, besides Judith, Margaret, and Pari, included Pat Wood and Rob Kresge.

Also, Rob will be bringing and demonstrating a Kindle e-book reader that has been loaded with some mystery books and newspapers.

Starting the New Year Off Mysteriously

Croak and Dagger, the Albuquerque chapter of Sisters in Crime, offers all of you the opportunity to see one of the best-loved mystery plays of all time, Frederick Knott's classic *Dial M for Murder*, which will be performed by the Albuquerque Little Theatre from January 20 through February 7. We qualify for group rates (\$18 per person) and have selected the 8 p.m. showing on Saturday, January 30.

We encourage all members and friends of Croak and Dagger to consider joining us that night, but if you can't, then we hope you'll see the play at another showing. The ALT website is www.albuquerquelittletheatre.org. We encourage our attendees to dress "mysteriously," asking yourselves, "What would Hercule Poirot, Miss Marple, Sherlock Holmes, or Philip Marlowe wear?"

We also want to invite those attending the January 30 performance to gather for supper beforehand, say 6 p.m. Among the nearby restaurants that have been mentioned are St Clair Winery and Bistro on Rio Grande near I-40, Little Anita's at the corner of Rio Grande and Mountain Rd, and the Hotel Albuquerque, formerly the Old Town Sheraton, also on Rio Grande. Further suggestions are welcome.

If you want to attend the January 30 showing, please contact Rob Kresge at rkresge777@comcast.net and tell him how many seats you want. Please tell him also if you'd like to attend the dinner; the venue for that may be decided later.

 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!"

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.

February's speaker will be Jose Toro, who will talk about his experiences in intelligence and criminal investigation, including for NCIS (yes, as in the TV program). He will discuss his upcoming book, *Mutual Security*, and give examples of how intelligence works to solve crimes, referring to recent events such as the Christmas airline bombing attempt.

Meetings are held in the police briefing room of the James Joseph Dwyer Memorial Substation, 12700 Montgomery NE (1 block east of Tramway). Unless otherwise noted, programs are free and open to the public.

Check Out the Croak & Dagger Website for all your Croak & Dagger information needs.
www.croak-and-dagger.com

- Upcoming Programs
- Membership Form
- Speakers Bureau
- Links to Mystery Websites & Websites
- *The Nooseletter* Archive
- Information on our Yahoo discussion group.

The Line Up

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The Year's Most Mesmerizing Mysteries

The following is excerpted from an article by [Maureen Corrigan](#), book critic for NPR's *Fresh Air* and lecturer at Georgetown University. For the full list, go to www.npr.org.

G.I. Bones, by Martin Limon, hardcover, 336 pages, Soho Crime, list price: \$24

Limon's mysteries take place in and around a U.S. Army base in mid-1970s Korea. But what a great gift any of Limon's six mysteries starring Army Sgts. George Sueno and Ernie Bascom would make for those mystery lovers who haven't yet discovered them! The latest in the series, *G.I. Bones*, is brilliant—imbued with affecting characters, a morally knotty storyline, and a last chapter that just plain stuns.

The trouble begins when Sueno (the more upstanding of this military intelligence duo) is urgently summoned to a fortuneteller's shack in Itaewon (Seoul). It seems that the fortuneteller, Auntie Mee, is being visited by the spirit of a dead American soldier who was murdered at the close of the Korean War in 1953. The soldier, says Auntie Mee, wants someone to find his bones and give them a proper burial.

Armed only with the wobbliest information—Auntie Mee claims that the dead GI told her his name was Mori Di—Sueno and Bascom begin digging through crumbling incident reports. What they uncover is a two-decades-old murder mystery that's one part Edgar Allan Poe, two parts *The Godfather*. Through it all, the rough and ready decency of our narrator, Sueno, glints like a set of lost dog tags in the mud.

Sueno might not be a smooth talker like his rakish partner, Bascom, but the series in which they star is a hard-boiled charmer.

U is for Undertow, by Sue Grafton, hardcover, 416 pages, Putnam Adult, list price: \$27.95

Sue Grafton's Kinsey Millhone series is as comfortably familiar as my knockoff pair of Ugg boots. But though I've been a steadfast reader for decades, there have been occasions when I've wondered whether Grafton might not be better off abbreviating her Mother Courage slog through the alphabet. Happily, *U is for Undertow* makes me wish there were more than 26 letters at her disposal.

As the series has progressed, Millhone, like every self-respecting noir private eye, has become more explicitly haunted by the past. There are personal mysteries surrounding the late-life reappearance of her maternal stepmother (who pressures Millhone for a reunion), and then there are the mysteries she is paid to solve.

One afternoon, a young man named Michael Sutton walks into Millhone's office and drops a doozy of a conundrum on her desk. It seems that a newspaper story about a long-unsolved child kidnapping case has jogged Sutton's memory: Now he's pretty sure that when he was small, he witnessed two men burying a mysterious bundle in an isolated stretch of woods. Could the bundle have been the body of the kidnapped little girl?

Millhone's skeptical investigation of Sutton's story alternates with even more fascinating chapters in which Grafton takes readers back to the 1960s to delve into the vexed relationships among a clique of Santa Theresa country club couples and their mutating-into-hippies children. Interred in the intricate story of those relationships are the answers to the kidnapping.

U is for Undertow, Grafton not only once again flaunts her mystery-writing chops but also proves herself to be a discerning social chronicler of the turbulent decade that ushered gal gumshoes like Millhone into the forefront of American detective fiction.

Hardball, by Sara Paretsky, hardcover, 464 pages, Putnam Adult, list price: \$26.95

Like Grafton, Sara Paretsky is a Founding Mother of the new(ish) wave of mysteries featuring feminist female PIs. Since the moment that Paretsky's heroine, Chicago private eye V.I. Warshawski,

made her debut in the 1982 mystery *Indemnity Only*, she—and her creator—have been accused by detractors of being humorless feminists. Warshawski may certainly be a tad grim, but she’s still the gal you want beside you in a fight—be it short, dirty, and physical, or a longer campaign for social justice.

Hardball is a standout, a nuanced mystery about civil rights struggles past and present. In it Warshawski is pulled back into the past when she rescues a homeless man from the streets, takes him to an emergency room, and is asked by the hospital’s chaplain to locate the missing son of an elderly African-American woman who is in the hospital’s assisted living facility.

This will be no easy task. It seems that the missing young man, Lamont Gadsen, vanished during a blizzard in the winter of 1967. Gadsen had been part of a neighborhood gang who had helped protect Martin Luther King Jr. during desegregation marches that previous summer. There’s the slightest wisp of a possibility that Gadsen’s disappearance might have been linked to his political activity.

Hardball is an ambitious novel, layered in the grit of recent American racial history. Paretsky has always written intelligent mysteries, but sometimes—as she did in *Blacklist*, her excellent 2003 Warshawski novel that wrestled with the legacy of McCarthyism—she strives for more, realizing the potential of the homegrown hard-boiled detective genre to investigate the more troubling mysteries at the heart of our national identity.

The Ghosts of Belfast, by Stuart Neville, hardcover, 336 pages, Soho Crime, list price: \$25

Chicago may be freezing cold in winter, but Ireland is chilly and damp, and that’s worse. I know. I once took bus tour of Ireland in December and felt, the whole time, as though my body were entombed in a melting ice cube. I thought of that trip all the while I was reading Stuart Neville’s terrific debut novel, *The Ghosts of Belfast*. Every page of Neville’s story—about an IRA killer named Gerry Fegan, who, upon his release from a long stretch in the Maze prison, foolishly confesses to the mother of one of his victims—exudes the kind of damp chill that I associate with the Auld Sod during winter solstice.

Fegan is a tough guy, but he doesn’t walk alone. He’s haunted by the ghosts of his 12 victims who hunger for retribution. Everywhere he goes, “the followers” trail along. Among them are a Royal Ulster Constabulary policeman and a woman and her baby who were blown up by an IRA bomb that Fegan planted in a butcher shop.

It’s a testament to Neville’s skill as a storyteller that never once during this harsh suspense tale does he give readers reason to scoff at what could be a very hokey plot contrivance. It’s never entirely clear whether the followers are figments of Fegan’s anguished imagination or actual apparitions. No matter. As cruel as Fegan’s spectral tormentors may be, he has more to fear from his IRA comrades once they suspect him of betrayal.

The Ghosts of Belfast is a smart and atmospheric thriller about the many causes served and corrupt pockets lined courtesy of sectarian hatred.

Dial H for Hitchcock: A Cece Caruso Mystery, by Susan Kandel, paperback, 320 pages, Harper Paperbacks, list price: \$13.99

For those readers who prefer their mysteries to be screwball rather than hard-boiled, here’s a final suggestion: Susan Kandel’s fizzy new CeCe Caruso novel, *Dial H for Hitchcock*. Caruso makes her living as a mystery biographer and, in previous outings, she has submerged herself in the lives and plots of Agatha Christie, Carolyn Keene, Perry Mason, and Dashiell Hammett. Here, Kandel pays homage to Alfred Hitchcock, and the plot (which is as thin and preposterous as Grace Kelly’s stiletto heels in *Rear Window*) winks at *Vertigo* and *Psycho*, as well as many of the MacGuffins in the Hitchcock canon. Also fun is the fact that Kandel laces her story with anecdotes about Hitchcock and his leading ladies—including Hitch’s infamous quip about *Lifeboat* star Tallulah Bankhead and her aversion to underwear.

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NoveList is an invaluable source of all of the above—and also information on mystery and suspense titles, including the 100 favorite mysteries of the (last) century.

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- Doctor
- Ecumenical Sleuths
- Elderly Rogues
- Forensic Detectives
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- Husband and Wife Teams
- Immortal Detectives
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- Latino Detectives
- Legal Thrillers
- Native American Detectives
- Police Procedurals
- Private Detectives
- Rogue or Thief
- Senior Sleuths
- Serial Murderers
- Settings and Subjects (another list that includes such topics as Cookery, Historical Mysteries, Locked Room, Hospital Setting, Strip Joints, *and more*)
- Smuggling
- The Underworld
- Women
- Women Detectives



Whew!

NOOSE NEWS – STOP PRESS!

Southwest Writers presents a conference about “The Business of Being a Writer” and “Showcase New Mexico Novelists” on Saturday, February 20, at the National Hispanic Cultural Center. Featured speakers include agent Sara Toto, attorney Deborah Peacock, and authors David Morell, Steve Havill, Bob Gassaway, and Keith Pyeatt.. For information, go to www.southwestwriters.com

Robert B. Parker

1932-2010

Robert B. Parker, whose spare, eloquent sentences turned the tough private investigator Spenser into one of Boston's most recognizable fictional characters, suffered a heart attack in his Cambridge home Monday and died. He was 77. Helen Brann, his long-time agent, said that Mr. Parker had been thought to be in splendid health, and that he died at his desk, working on a book. He wrote five pages a day, every day but Sunday, and had just completed a new Jesse Stone novel, *Split Image*

Mr. Parker wrote more than 60 books all told, including westerns and young-adult novels, but he churned out entertaining detective stories with a remarkable alacrity that made him one of the country's most popular writers. In recent years he had come up with two new protagonists: Jesse Stone, an alcoholic ex-ballplayer turned small-town chief of police, who was featured in nine novels written since 1997, including *Split Image*, to be published next month; and Sunny Randall, a fashion-conscious, unlucky-in-love, daughter-of-a-cop private eye.

It was Spenser, though—spelled “like the poet,” as the character was wont to point out (his first name was never revealed)—who was Mr. Parker's signature creation. He appeared for the first time in 1973 in *The Godwulf Manuscript*, in which he is hired by a university to retrieve a stolen medieval document, an investigation that triggers a murder. The first pages of the book revealed much of what readers came to love about Spenser—his impatience with pomposity, his smart-alecky wit, his self-awareness and supreme self-confidence.

“Look, Dr. Forbes,” Spenser says to the long-winded college president who is hiring him. “I went to college once. I don't wear my hat indoors. And if a clue comes along and bites me on the ankle, I grab it. I am not, however, an Oxford don. I am a private detective. Is there something you'd like me to detect, or are you just polishing up your elocution for next year's commencement?”

Mr. Parker wrote the Spenser novels in the first person, employing the blunt, masculine prose style that is often described as Hemingwayesque. But his writing also seems self-aware, even tongue-in-cheek, as though he recognized how well worn such a path was. Mr. Parker's regular readers became familiar with the things that provoke Spenser's suspicion: showy glamour, ostentatious wealth, self-aggrandizement, fern bars, fancy sports clubs and any kind of haughtiness or presumption. He was a great cook, a boxer, a consumer of doughnuts and coffee, a Red Sox fan, a dog lover (Mr. Parker owned a series of short-haired pointers, all named Pearl, like their fictional incarnation.)

Mr. Parker's marquee character was turned into the TV series, *Spenser for Hire*, and his Western, *Appaloosa*, was made into a 2008 film directed by and starring Ed Harris, who filled a shelf with Mr. Parker's books. “Robert wrote about this friendship between these two guys that tickled me,” Harris said. “It just felt right. It felt good.”

Mr. Parker, he added, “was a national treasure. I loved him and I'll miss him.”

Muscular and gruff like his creator, Spenser shared other traits with Mr. Parker. Behind the pugnacious exterior, both men liked to chase fine food with a cold beer. Both had a sharp wit and lived by a code of honor. He was as unpretentious and self-aware as Spenser, his agent, Ms. Brann said.

“All he needed to be happy was his family and writing,” she said. “There were always wonderful things in his refrigerator. People were always after him to do cookbooks.” She paused.

“He loved doughnuts,” she said.

He was born in Springfield, Mass, on Sept. 17, 1932, the only child of working-class parents. His father worked for the telephone company. He attended Colby College in Maine, graduating in 1954, then served in the Army. He earned an M.A. and Ph.D. in literature from Boston University and taught there

Mr. Parker first met his wife, Joan, at a birthday party when they were 3 years old, or so the story goes; in any case, they encountered each other at Colby and married in 1956. Much of the relationship between Spenser and Susan—including a period of trouble when they are apart—reflects Mr. Parker's with his wife. She survives him, as do two sons, David, of Manhattan, and Daniel, of Los Angeles.

Every one of his books was dedicated to his wife.

[Condensed from obituaries by Bryan Marquard in The Boston Globe and Bruce Weber in The New York Times.]

Rob's Random Shots

January Case File Number One

The Lineup, edited by Otto Penzler. Little, Brown, and Company, 2009, Kindle edition, \$9.99

Although this is my first Kindle review, interested readers can undoubtedly find this 400-page book at local bookstores and libraries. Kindle counts screens, not pages, of which there were about 5,800 in this volume. This will be a review of the content. You can find my review of the Kindle II itself elsewhere in this issue.

Penzler is the most influential short-story anthology compiler in America and owner of the Mysterious Bookshop in New York. Using that position, he was able to cajole 22 current best-selling mystery and thriller authors into writing essays on their careers, how they got published, and how they created their best-known characters.

Some of your favorites are bound to be on this list: Jack Taylor by Ken Bruen, Jack Reacher by Lee Child, Harry Bosch by Michael Connelly, Charlie Parker by John Connolly, Elvis Cole and Joe Pike by Robert Crais, Lincoln Rhyme by Jeffery Deaver, Inspector Morse by Colin Dexter, Charlie Resnick by John Harvey, Bob Lee Swagger by Stephen Hunter, Peter Decker and Rina Lazarus by Faye Kellerman, Alex Delaware by Jonathan Kellerman, Dismas Hardy by John Lescroart, Tess Monaghan by Laura Lippman, Rambo by David Morrell, Mallory by Carol O'Connell, Spenser by Robert B. Parker, Lou Boldt by Ridley Pearson, Charlotte and Thomas Pitt by Anne Perry, Aloysius Pendergast by Douglas Preston and Lincoln Child, Inspector Rebus by Ian Rankin, and Precious Ramotswe by Alexander McCall Smith.

The best of these essays are short stories themselves and could be part of an anthology. Some are interviews of the character by the author, others of the author by the character. I know and love the works by nine of these authors. I recognize or have read works by

another eight, and five were completely unknown to me. I was fascinated by the biographic, publication, and character details offered up by such favorites as Connelly, Crais, J. Kellerman, Parker, Pearson, and Smith. Profiles by Child, Deaver, Hunter, Lippman, Morrell, and Preston and Child were amusingly written and intriguing. I won't rush right out and become a fan or reader of Bruen, Connolly, Dexter, F. Kellerman, O'Connell, or Rankin. I have read and don't like Lescroart and Perry.

But I am sure you will find satisfaction with the work of your favorite authors in here. I read all the entries and learned some useful things from all of them, even if it was just how they "paid their dues" before becoming famous, gradually or "overnight." ♦

—Rob Kresge (rkresge777@comcast.net)

January Case File Number Two

The ABC Murders by Agatha Christie, Audiobook CDs (Unabridged), \$21.24

By now, the better detectives among you will have noticed that the content of this column has suddenly gone high-tech. Not for long, however. I return to the pages of conventional books in the next issue. But as long as I was striving for my usual balance of one male author (or editor) and one female author, I decided that reviewing this excellent reading of a favorite Hercule Poirot mystery that Julie and I listened to on a car trip this summer would make a nice counterpoint to my Penzler review.

First the basics. Almost always choose an unabridged version. I do so myself, but I cherish a couple of shorter versions of Tony Hillerman novels read by the author. This mystery is read by Hugh Fraser, who played Colonel Hastings opposite David Suchet in the PBS mystery series. His renditions of character voices, including Poirot, are excellent.

For those who haven't read and savored this particular outing, it can take its place beside the best-known Christies, like *Murder on the Calais Coach* (later the *Orient Express*).

This novel was Christie's only foray into the serial killer subgenre, and her take on it was fresh, original, and ground-breaking, according to reviews when it was published in 1936. Without giving too much away, a person signing himself as A.B.C. writes Poirot taunting letters advertising the locale of his upcoming murders. His first murder of Alice Asher, a shopkeeper in Andover, goes off as predicted. The second murder is of a waitress named Betty Barnard from Bexhill, and the third is Sir Carmichael Clarke of Churston. Are we on our way to Zachary Zimmerman from Zanzibar?

To say the least, Poirot is troubled. His little gray cells are working overtime. Finally a man with the intriguing name Alexander Bonaparte Cust is arrested after a fourth and unsuccessful attack involving the letter "D". Witnesses then identify Cust near the scene of each previous crime. His typewriter was used to type the insulting notes to Poirot. Open and shut? You know better than that. Poirot is not satisfied.

The ABC Murders was a bit of a departure for Christie in that two of the victims were everyday citizens. She usually wrote the type of mysteries with a small cast, fixed locale, and generally genteel suspects. She offers insights that would do a modern day " profiler" proud when Poirot speculates upon the nature of the murderer.

The denouement is intricate, so much so that some readers may find it entirely too clever, as were some of her other solutions (*Death on the Nile, Cards on the Table, Evil Under the Sun*). The "McGuffin" in this plot has been used many times since, but it was a joy to hear Hugh Fraser make this story as fresh as the day it was written. ♦

—Rob Kresge (rkresge777@comcast.net)

A Purist Approves of the New Holmes Movie

Holmes fans, transcend your skepticism. While the new movie with Robert Downey Jr is not lifted word for word from the Conan canon, it is no more blasphemous than previous films

that featured *Sherlock Holmes in New York* or Holmes fighting the Nazis in World War II. Granted, the film takes various liberties with the characters and flirts with the supernatural until all is explained at the end, but this is an enjoyable romp even for Baker Street Irregulars like myself (no, they don't appear in this already crowded film).

To start with, this is a Holmes-Watson buddy film, even though the two bicker like an odd couple over the latter's impending marriage to Mary Marston and moving out of 221B Baker Street. Jude Law is terrific as Watson and Downey holds his own as a Brit (much better than Kevin Costner and Tony Curtis did). Although this is no Jeremy Brett/Masterpiece Theatre classic, one quickly suspends disbelief. London has never seemed truer or grittier. Holmes and Watson physically battle villains more than we've read, but the slugfests are reduced to comedy in one or two instances. Irene Adler returns to play a major role in this case and we are set up to expect Professor Moriarty in the inevitable (this film is doing big box office) sequel.

The reason this Holmes will resonate with most viewers is that unlike previous treatments, the detective does not doggedly encounter suspects and clues, then pop the solution on an audience which has not been privy to his thought processes. Thanks to rapid-fire flashbacks, we see the significance of clues we didn't understand and, through a few judicious flashforwards, we see what Holmes has thought of before he acts. Make no mistake, this Holmes is as much a man of action as of intellect, but viewers get taken for a wonderful ride on his coattails. But not under his hat. Downey thankfully never wears the "trademark" deerstalker, but then Holmes only did so on rare forays to the country. Jeremy Brett was the first to eschew that headgear.

I believe this film will have legs. But see it while you can. It's in local theaters now and may well be in dollar theaters by February.

I'm sure the *Nooseletter* would welcome receiving contrasting views. ♦ (You bet—Ed.)

—Rob Kresge (rkresge777@comcast.net)

Santa Brought Me a Kindle II

And I wrote a first draft of a horribly boring review of it. So here's my try at a more interesting description. I like mine, but an e-reader may not be for everyone.

There are about 10 e-readers on the market, ranging from I-phones to the much larger Sony readers and the Kindle DX. Screen sizes vary from business-card size to 6x9 inches. The Kindle I, II, and DX account for about a million units sold in the last two years, more than all the others combined, if you count only phones with the e-reading feature. The largest single seller is the Kindle II, which is also, not coincidentally, priced at \$259, where it was recently joined by the Barnes and Noble "nook" (lower case intentional).

The three Kindles include a key feature that no other e-readers have: The ability to push a couple of buttons and have most books, magazines, and newspapers read to you, the "text-to-speech" option, which lets you continue to enjoy your reading while driving (built in stereo speakers), mowing the lawn (with earphone in jack), knitting, or whatever. The larger and more expensive DX has a 6x9 screen which would be better for graphics and perhaps newspapers.

You can buy books (400,000, of which more than 18,000 are mysteries and thrillers), newspapers (more than 60 in the US alone, many foreign) by single issue or subscription, and the same for popular magazines. They can all be ordered from your computer or from the Kindle itself and are delivered wirelessly in a minute or less. With the newspapers and magazines, you get all the content of the paper version except the ads. Newspapers and magazines I've sampled have the text-to-speech feature. You can set male voice or female, slow it down or speed it up, and adjust the volume. Just as you can make the type font larger or smaller.

As evidence of Amazon's commitment to supporting these devices, they sent me Kindle software upgrades that included a 50% increase in battery power (3 weeks instead 2), the ability to turn and read the device sideways (either

way) or even upside down, and the ability to send your own PDF documents direct to your Kindle without the previous process of sending them by way of Amazon.

Books range in price from \$2 for unpublished works (yes, you read that right) to \$15 for big books like the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy, with \$10 for current novels and bestsellers. Under mysteries, you can find public domain compilations (Christy, Doyle, Chesterton, Collins, Green) amounting to thousands of pages for well under \$10.

Any drawbacks? Well, it won't replace all your books. You can't have your favorite authors sign your Kindle. But it's great for traveling. I have about 10 installed on my device and will use it extensively on a week-long trip to California. I will have the device at the January 26 meeting to pass around. If you can't make it that night, I expect I'll bring it to every meeting for the rest of the year. Happy reading. ♦

—Rob Kresge (rkresge777@comcast.net)



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... (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.

Interested in joining this online writer's support group? Check them out at www.sinc-guppies.org.

Conferences for 2010 – Still Time to Sign Up!!

Below are some additional, regional conferences and workshops on offer for 2010 (See the September 2009 *Nooseletter* for more). For details, click on the link and check them out individually online, or e-mail the contacts noted.

March 26-27

Northern Colorado Writers Conference, Hilton, Fort Collins, Colorado. Featured speaker: writer and producer Stephen Cannell. Agent appointments, 29 workshops, meals included in conference fee. Information: www.northerncoloradowriters.com.

April 23-25

Pikes Peak Writers Conference, Marriott, Colorado Springs, Colorado. Featured speakers: Agent Donald Maass; authors Kelley Armstrong, Jodi Thomas, Tim Dorsey. Information: www.ppwcon.org.

May 27-29

Mayhem in the Midlands, Embassy Suites Hotel, Omaha, Nebraska. Guest of Honor: Deborah Crombie; Toastmaster: Marcia Talley. Extra events include a Thursday Gritty City Trolley Tour and Friday night Sisters in Crime buffet. Information: www.omahapubliclibrary.org/mayhem/.

June 4-7 & June 19-21

Writing the Rockies: The Gunnison Creative Writers Workshop, Gunnison, Colorado, and ***Readers in the Rockies & Crested Butte Writers Conference***, Crested Butte, Colorado. Well-known authors and publishers will come together with aspiring writers and avid readers for literary workshops; both conferences hosted by Western State College. Information: www.gunnisoncrestedbutte.com

June 24-27

Jackson Hole Writers Conference, Jackson Hole, Wyoming. Featured speakers include mystery writers Craig Johnson and Patricia Smiley, travel adventure writer Tim Cahill, and poet Kate Northrop. Information: www.jacksonholewritersconference.com.

Sept 11-13

Colorado Gold Conference, Denver, Colorado. Rocky Mountain Fiction Writers annual conference featuring actively acquiring agents and editors, guest speakers to encourage and inspire attendees, and workshops on every topic under the sun related to the art of writing and the business of selling commercial novel-length fiction. Information: www.rmfw.org/conference

Oct 30-Nov 1

The Great Manhattan Mystery Conclave #6, Holiday Inn at the Campus, Manhattan, Kansas. Guest of Honor: Earlene Fowler; Toastmaster: Mike Hayes. Information: www.manhattanmysteries.com

And Don't Forget:

March 24-27, 2011

Left Coast Crime—The Big Chile, La Fonda Hotel, Santa Fe, NM. Left Coast Crime comes to the City Different! Guests of Honor: Margaret Coel, Steve Havill; Toastmaster: Steve Brewer. Information: www.leftcoastcrime.org/2011 or coordinator Pari Noskin Taichert's bog, www.murderati.com. Sign up by March 14, 2010, for the best rate—and watch this space!

2010 MEETING DATES

Happy New Year!

Tuesday, January 26, 7:00 p.m.

Tuesday, February 23, 7:00 p.m.

Tuesday, March 23, 7:00 p.m.

Tuesday, April 27, 7:00 p.m.

Tuesday, May 25, 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, November 23, 2009**

Board members present: President Cheri Stow, Vice President Olin Bray, Membership Chair Jonathan Sacks, Secretary Fred Aiken, Website Manager Susan Zakes, and *Nooseletter* Editor Linda Triegel.

President Cheri Stow called the meeting to order at 7:48 p.m. She thanked Olin for graciously hosting the board meeting. The meeting agenda was distributed.

The procedures for the annual election were reviewed. A ballot will be made up for the four elective positions. Jonathan agreed to provide a review of the duties of the four positions at the November 24 general meeting. At the present time, we have nominations for the positions of President (Olin Bray) and Secretary (Fred Aiken). There have been no nominations thus far for the positions of Vice President and Treasurer. Nominations will be solicited at the general meeting.

The person who won the membership at the mystery dinner is returning it to the chapter to give to a person who wants to be a chapter member. The board will discuss how to implement this request at the January Board meeting.

The treasurer reported that the balance in the treasury stands at \$1,748.52 as of this date. Pending bills are for the post office box rental and two to be submitted by Fred Aiken for drinking water provided at the general meeting and for the table favors for the mystery dinner.

There will be no general meeting in December because of the Christmas holiday. The January program will be the Tony Hillerman tribute video. The program chair is arranging programs for the remainder of 2010.

A long discussion ensued on ideas to increase membership. Possible ideas are 1) to survey out members and list of friends for their input; 2) increase the number of social events; and 3) focus on ways to increase publicity. This discussion will continue during our next board meeting. Cheri will contact Rob Kresge for information on how to procure our bookmarks (listing the dates of the 2010 meetings).

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

—Respectfully submitted by Fred A. Aiken, Secretary

Ed note: New board members officially took office at the January meeting. See page 2 for a list of the current board. January meeting minutes will be included in the March *Nooseletter*. Dates for upcoming general meetings are listed on page 12.