



SISTERS in CRIME
CROAK & DAGGER
 ALBUQUERQUE CHAPTER



THE NOOSE LETTER

Volume II, Number 3—May 2006

†Expert Testimony†

From the Prez

There's something exhilarating about attending a conference dedicated to mystery fans and authors. Where else can you ask how to poison people you don't like without raising eyebrows?

Sisters in Crime actively participates in the annual Malice Domestic Conference, which is always held in Arlington, Virginia, on the outskirts of Washington D.C. We had a table strategically located at the entrance to the Book Dealers' room, where we could hand out flyers and sell souvenir items. SinC members took turns staffing the table, and SinC authors could promote their books during their shift. It was a great opportunity to meet other attendees and exchange ideas.

Albuquerque Croak and Dagger members Rob Kresge, Pari Noskin Taichert, and I attended Malice. We were so proud that Pari's book *The Belen Hitch* was one of five nominated for Best Novel. The competition included such well-known novelists as Margaret Maron and the category winner Katherine Hall Page—a very illustrious and talented group!

I learned that Sisters in Crime plans a joint venture with Borders bookstores (across the country) sometime in September. So stay tuned for further details as they become available. ✓

—Margaret Tessler

Don't Miss It!

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

Judith van Giesen, a noted New Mexico mystery author and Albuquerque resident, will speak on her two mystery series and the ins and outs of publishing. She wrote the popular series featuring lawyer Neil Hamel and also five novels (so far) featuring UNM librarian Claire Reynier. She and fellow Albuquerque author Don Bullis recently formed a joint publishing venture, ABQ Press.

—TRUE CRIMES—

Selected biographies of your Croak & Dagger board members.

Stephanie Hainsfurther (secretary, member-ship) is a freelance business journalist and editor with 20 years' experience. With Emily Esterson, she coauthored *Covering the Business Beat: Strategies for Publishing What You Write* (Purdue University Press, August 2004). She has published more than 650 articles in regional and national magazines and newspapers, and in international trade journals in the fields of the arts, architecture, energy, the environment, health care, and commercial real estate.

She now teaches writing to businesspeople for Anderson Schools at UNM, in their certificate program and for their private corporate clients, and she writes business features for clients such as the online *Small Business Review*. She is half of Kup & Sourcer, a publicity firm and online blog.

Stephanie also is the author of *Pocket Gardening for Your Outdoor Living Spaces: Tips for Creating the Perfect Garden in Small Places* (Hobby House Press, 2004). She is the Southwest region writer for *Gardening How-To* magazine, with more than 600,000 subscribers in the U.S. and Canada, and she writes "The Goddess in Her Garden" for www.cauldronliving.com.

Stephanie is finishing up her first garden-mystery novel, entitled *Kill to Keep*, and beginning her first noir thriller, *Thief*. ✓

Croak & Dagger Lineup

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Seven Habits of Dismally Failing Writers

Presented March 25, 2006

(With apologies to Steven Covey, author of the best-selling book *7 Habits of Highly Effective People*.)

1. **Avoid networking**—Avoid writers' conferences, and don't join writers groups. Suffer alone. Gripe loudly. Spend more hours per week watching than writing.
2. **Don't make writing goals**—that way you won't be disappointed if you don't achieve them.
3. **Think like a loser, act like a loser**—Remain a postage piddler for the rest of your life. Don't learn from other's successes. Don't explore new possibilities. (For example, Joyce Milton's *Dinosaur Days* [Random House] is in its 64th printing; how can knowing this change your life as a writer?)
4. **Resist doing market analysis and research**—Your remarkable talent should be enough to make you succeed. (But keep in mind that 45,000 *new* books titles are available every year; there are 1,700 *daily* newspapers, and 98 percent of American families have TV with the average family running *two* sets seven hours a day. From *Margin* by Richard Swenson, MD.)
5. **Don't be curious**—Never ask, "*But what if...?*" It might lead to a mystery novel plot.
6. **Don't ever think outside the box**—For example, don't do what James Tully did in *The Crimes of Charlotte Bronte*.
7. **Give up right away**—Do this if your submission is rejected or your great idea is already taken.

—Shirley Raye Redmond

A New Voice Joins the Nooseletter!
(You could be next...)



CITIZEN POLICE ACADEMY

So you don't actually feature a police detective as a character in your new series, but you do have a homicide in your story and you only have a TV-based idea of how a crime scene is processed. Or your suspect is "tazed" by the police, and you're not sure how that feels. Or you want to meaningfully portray a drug addict, repeat offender, or gang member, but you're a little leery of interviewing such a person.

Well, don't despair. Now there's a way to get some hands-on learning and a local perspective on crime and policing. The Albuquerque Police Department's Citizen Police Academy (CPA) is a wonderful opportunity to meet and talk with local detectives and officers and ask those thorny questions you have about law enforcement.

You need to apply and be approved to attend CPA, but the course itself is free. It runs for 12 weeks, encompassing two evening sessions per week. Special visits to the APD Crime Lab, Communications/911 Center, and Firing Range, and the opportunity to participate in a Ride Along may be included.

Detectives and officers, as well as civilians, from many different areas of APD come to speak to the class regarding their area of expertise. While the specific topics offered vary from session to session and may even change during a session due to the availability of instructors, the topics included in the session I attended ranged from Crime Prevention, Domestic Violence, and Internal Affairs to Narcotics, Bomb Squad, and Office of the Medical Investigator. The Office of the Medical Investigator presentation by Steve Nunez was one of the most informative trainings I've ever attended of any kind and made a fairly gruesome topic understandable and, dare I say it, fun.

While the presentation skills of the individual officers may vary, it is almost impossible not to learn something from each speaker, and in particular, not to learn a lot about the culture of police work. Jokes, horror stories, tall tales, and cop lingo abound, which the audience highly enjoys.

(*cont'd. on next page*)

(Citizen Police Academy, cont'd.)

For sheer volume of information, access to resources, and cost, the APD Citizen Police Academy is an unbeatable value and a heck of a lot of fun. If you make it through all 24 sessions, you will “graduate” in the presence of such notables as the police chief and the mayor! For more information about CPA, APD’s new CSI class, the Women Against Crime program, or any other awesome opportunity to interact with our local police department, surf your way to www.cabq.gov/police and get started learning about the bad guys and the good guys who catch ’em. ✓

—Ruth Brown Jimenez, ruth@senorabooks.com

Dastardly Duels

Rocky Mountain Fiction Writers announces its annual contest for *unpublished* novel-length fiction writers. Submissions will be accepted April 1, 2006, through June 1, 2006. Enter in any of four commercial fiction genres:

- Mystery (cozies, P.I., amateur detectives, hard-boiled, police procedurals)
- Romance (genuine romance novels)
- Speculative fiction (science fiction, fantasy, horror, tie-ins)
- General fiction (action-adventure, chick lit, historical, Westerns, mainstream, women’s fiction, war)

Winners will be announced at the annual Colorado Gold Conference in September. *Note:* All judges for the final round are professional literary agents or editors who work in these genres.

For complete details, go to www.rmfw.org or call 303-331-2608. The entry fee is \$25 per manuscript; a thorough critique is an additional \$25.

DON’T FORGET:

Tuesday, May 23, 7:00 p.m.
 Saturday, June 24, 1:00 p.m.
 Tuesday, July 2, 7:00 p.m.

SinC Links

Check out these great resources dealing with poisoning:

☠ *Poisons, A Guide for Law Enforcement, Toxicologists, and Attorneys*

by John Trestrail, Humana Press

☠ *Deadly Doses: A Writer’s Guide to Poisons*
by Serita Deborah Stevens, from the Howdunit series published by Writers Digest



And the Edgar Goes to...

Mystery Writers of America announces the winners of the 2006 Edgar Awards published in 2005:

Best Novel

Citizen Vince by Jess Walter (Regan Books)

Best First Novel by an American Author

Officer Down by Theresa Schwegel (St. Martin’s Minotaur)

Best Paperback Original

Girl in the Glass by Jeffrey Ford (Dark Alley)

Best Fact Crime

Rescue Artist: A True Story of Art, Thieves, and the Hunt for a Missing Masterpiece by Edward Dolnick (Harper Collins)

Best Critical/Biographical

Girl Sleuth: Nancy Drew and the Women Who Created Her by Melanie Rehak (Harcourt)

Best Short Story

“The Catch” Greatest Hits by James W. Hall (Carroll & Graf)

Best Childrens

The Boys of San Joaquin by D. James Smith (Simon & Schuster Children’s Books)

Best Young Adult

Last Shot by John Feinstein (Knopf Books for Young Readers)

Best Play

Matter of Intent by Gary Earl Ross (Theater Loft)

Best Television Episode Teleplay

Sea of Souls “Amulet” by Ed Whitmore

Best Motion Picture Screenplay

Syriana by Stephen Gaghan, based on the book by Robert Baer (Warner Brothers)

The Cairn of Albertvs

The Roman Way of Death

*Dulce et decorum est,
Pro patria mori.*

It may be “Sweet and fitting to die for one’s native land,” but in Roman times, as in any other, dead was dead. The words are from Horace, and World War I poet Wilfred Owen called them “The old Lie” in a poem about the horror of life in the trenches:

“...You could hear, at every jolt, the blood
come gargling from the froth-corrupted lungs,
Obscene as cancer....”

Owen’s lines could well describe a Roman legionary transfixed by an enemy spear. In life before MASHes, wounded legionaries were treated by *capsari*, field medics who bandaged wounds. The injured were brought to the nearest camp or fort, where surgeons treated sword slashes or spear thrusts and amputated limbs. Roman medical instruments have been discovered where scalpels, probes, and forceps are identical to those used today. The wounded recuperated in a military *valetudinarium*, the prototype for hospitals first built in Christian times. The healing complex featured an operating theatre, wards, treatment rooms, baths, and latrines.

Soldiers died, and legion *quaestors* subtracted from each man’s pay the “pre-need” cost of a funeral banquet. The *Landesmuseum* at Mainz, Germany, displays headstones of men from the legions once stationed there. There’s a poignancy to the inscriptions, which list the man’s name, rank, legion number, town of origin, years of service, and age at death: the youngest was eighteen, one year of service; the oldest fifty-five, twenty-two years in Legion XIII.

Did Julius Citizen believe in life after death? The Roman state religion was not big on beliefs about an afterlife, salvation, or morality. Religion consisted of gory ritual sacrifices to friendly gods, and weird spells to control nasty ones. Doing the rite thing was more important than believing the right thing. Hades was god of an underworld that was reached across several rivers. A three-headed dog kept souls from going back. You were judged and sent either to: (a) eternally wander on a stark mesa along with other anonymous ghosts, (b) a place of perpetual Happy Meals, or (c) Tartarus, where you had never-ending lousy casino luck.

Libitina was the goddess of funerals. Professional undertakers prepared a corpse for burial or cremation. Even the poor could join a club that

paid funeral expenses, but their bodies were shunted out at night, by the shortest route to a cemetery. On the other hand, funerals of the Rich and Famous were a sort of Mardi Gras parade cum corpse. Undertakers rounded up women mourners, musicians, belly dancers, and Marcellus Marceau-trained mimes to entertain the plebs. Family members wore death masks of ancestors and rode in chariots. On reaching the Forum, the corpse was propped upright and forced to endure—one hopes, short—speeches under a broiling Italian sun. After the interment, a catered lunch from Little Caesar’s was served in the cemetery. Modern-day Romans still picnic among the tombs.

The task of a historical fiction writer is to breathe life into characters as remote as Time itself. The further back the era, the harder the writing because literary sources and physical remains are lost. I found that in the fifth-century, corpses were often encased in plaster before burial. This gave me a chance to have Arcadia discover that, just as the deceased woman’s face was reached, she was not the one who had supposedly died in a fire! “End chapters on a page turner . . .”

Ars longa, vita brevis.

Vade in pace—Go in peace ‘til the next
Nooseletter.✓

—Albert Noyer

IN THE LOOP

If you haven’t joined already, all members are invited to join the *Croak & Dagger* community group, an online gathering place. 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!

Contact Nancy Varian, thule21@att.net, for further instructions.

Croak and Dagger

Coming Events—

On **Saturday, June 24**, Poison Control Center toxicologist **Jess Bensen** will speak to us about poisons—including poisons popularly used in mystery fiction, accidental poisonings, and misconceptions about poisons.✓



Sisters in Crime was founded in 1986. *The purpose of Sisters in Crime shall be "to combat discrimination against women in they mystery field, educate publishers and the general public as to the inequities in the treatment of female authors, raise the level of awareness of their contribution to the field, and promote the professional advancement of women who write mysteries."*

Sleuthing, Lesbian Style

The mystery/suspense/thriller/crime genre has many subgenres, not the least of which are legal thrillers, cozies, police procedurals, and detection novels. Some subgenres are subgenres of subgenres, for example, the gardening or culinary cozy or the detection novel teeming with sleuthing cats.

One little-known subgenre of subgenres is the mystery/suspense/thriller or crime novel featuring lesbian characters. Despite astounding ups and downs in the lesbian publishing world in the last ten years—it's such a small industry that it rises and falls based on the decisions of a handful of houses and distributors—the lesbian genre novel is alive and well and the crime category is bursting at the seams!

These novels feature everything from lesbian heroines to lesbian victims to lesbian bad girls: police detectives, FBI agents, private investigators, accidental sleuths, assassins, and serial killers. Some fall in love, some remain celibate, some lust from a distance, some struggle with their sexuality, and some embrace it without a qualm.

Since these novels are a form of escapist romantic fiction, the girl does often get the girl, sometimes quite explicitly, but just as often the heroine has too little left after fleeing from villains, rescuing damsels in distress, unmasking secret agendas, or solving the crime to indulge her desires.

The original lesbian novel was largely a true confession or discovery type of tale (often) bemoaning a lesbian fate. Due to the unstinting labor of some hardy pioneers, the literature evolved in the 1970s to incorporate works of significant literary import by major authors and a steady offering of positive, proactive fiction, centered largely on romance titles.

In the last ten years, however, the industry has grown up to encompass a much wider variety of genre fiction, with stronger writers, more complex character and plot developments, and an audience that is far more demanding of its storytellers than the one that existed in the 1980s and even in the early 1990s. Some of the larger publishing and distribution entities for this new market are Bella Books, Star Crossed Productions, Regal Crest Enterprises, Alyson, Cleis, and Bold Strokes Books.

In fact, the lesbian publishing world and readership has evolved sufficiently to make it possible to establish the Golden Crown Literary Society (GCLS) and to hold an annual conference to present the Goldie Awards for lesbian fiction in a number of categories, including a mystery/thriller/adventure category. While the GCLS Conference is not strictly for mystery writers or mystery writing, several workshops planned for this year's conference incorporate the topic of mystery, thriller, and adventure writing for this audience of writers and readers.

Do you have to be a lesbian to write a mystery novel featuring lesbian characters? Absolutely not! But you do have to be a good writer! The GCLS Conference will be held in Atlanta, Georgia, June 8–11, 2006. For more information, go to www.gclscon.com.✓

—Ruth Brown Jimenez, ruth@senorabooks.com

More Dastardly Duels

The American College of Forensic Examiners, publishers of *The Forensic Examiner*, the "world's most popular forensic magazine," is sponsoring a mystery writing contest. Enter in one or more of four categories: a) nonfiction forensic study, b) fictionalized forensic study, c) nonfiction psychological profile, and d) fictionalized psychological profile. Stories must be 1,500–3,500 words, and each must be written as a puzzle, with the solution written separately.

Deadline is May 15. Entry cost is \$15. First prize is \$500. Selected winners get published in *The Forensic Examiner*.

Pertinent Web sites are:

- www.mysterywriterscontest.com
- www.TheForensicExaminer.com

Good luck. And may the best writer win.

ROB'S RANDOM SHOTS

May Case File Number One

Nothing but Trouble by Michael McGarrity, Dutton, 2006, Hardback, 305 pp.

The most recent Kevin Kerney police procedural takes local favorite Santa Fe author McGarrity's hero into a new phase of life and to a new level in his relationship with his wife and family. Kerney, the chief of police in Santa Fe, has been a beat cop, an investigator, and deputy chief of the New Mexico State Police. A few books ago, he married a military police officer, Sara Brannon, who's now a lieutenant colonel in the Pentagon. They have a three-year-old son, Patrick, but by necessity they have to live apart due to Sara's career. She keeps Patrick with her.

This looks like subplot, you say? Cut to the chase. Well, it becomes increasingly hard for Kerney and Sara to compartmentalize their lives in this novel. Kerney's boyhood friend and adult hell-raiser Johnny Jordan offers him a short-term job as technical adviser to a film being shot in the NM boot heel. At first wary, Kerney and Sara decide it would make an ideal vacation for the three of them. When the mayor of Santa Fe indicates he won't run again, Kerney decides he ought to retire and announces his intention.

No sooner is that done than Sara is given an unusual assignment to investigate and apprehend a fugitive U.S. financier in Ireland with ties to the current U.S. administration. She leaves Patrick with Kerney, who goes through what readers will identify as child care angst while trying to juggle his Santa Fe and boot heel responsibilities. He solves the problem by taking Patrick to the movie location with him, while Sara goes to Ireland. En route to the location, he stumbles across a murder and learns of shady doings that may involve some kind of smuggling along the border.

Now McGarrity pulls a bold stroke and shifts the action to Sara for several chapters. She works with an Irish police officer to apprehend their suspect, but things go awry amid Pentagon politics and she is recalled to Washington short of the arrest. This is not an arbitrary decision on McGarrity's part. Many readers might think this was a needless distraction from the main plot, but those who have faith in McGarrity are amply rewarded.

Kerney is able to juggle Patrick's care and the movie job. Needless to say, he cracks the smuggling case. But Sara runs afoul of an embittered Army general and is transferred to a combat zone. As the book ends, Kerney is retired, saddled with a young

son, and unable to be with his wife. McGarrity has admirably snared his legion of readers, and we will wait for his next Kerney novel on pins and needles.

May Case File Number Two

Hello, Stranger by Virginia Swift, Harper Collins, Feb 28, 2006, Hardback, 260 pp.

I don't usually put the actual date of publication for a book, but Virginia Swift addressed our February program the very issue day of her fourth Mustang Sally mystery series. Those who were there or have read her previous novels (*Brown-Eyed Girl*, *Bad Company*, and *Bye, Bye Love*) know Swift is really UNM history professor and Albuquerque resident Virginia Scharff. It's also unusual when I get to review two New Mexico authors in the same issue of the *Nooseletter*.

On to the chase. University of Wyoming women's history professor "Mustang" Sally Alder, former lead singer in a rock band, helps one of her students, "Charlie" Preston, badly beaten and penniless, leave town by giving her some money and Sally's own coat. She determines that the girl may have an abusive boyfriend. Her father, Brad, is a prominent local attorney and her mother, Bea, is a leading spokesman for conservative Christian values who opposes Sally's courses and modern teaching and mores.

A few days after the girl disappears, Sally helps a friend get another girl into an abortion clinic. A noisy and violent protest by Bea's church group ends suddenly with an apparent car bombing nearby. That causes no casualties, but as she flees for cover with her longtime boyfriend, Professor "Hawk" Green, Sally stumbles over the body of Brad Preston. He has been beaten to death with a jack handle.

Did the handle come from Charlie's car? Was her boyfriend the one who beat her, or was her father the abuser? What did her stepmother know and when did she know it?

Sally is of course an amateur sleuth. She has ample reason to become involved in the investigation, and she ranges as far afield as Ft. Collins, Colorado, the nearest "large" city, in pursuit of clues and suspects. Needless to say, she runs afoul of Albany County Sheriff Dickie Langham for this, as she has before. Unlike her previous adventures, this investigation nearly claims her life and raises obstacles in her relationship with Hawk.

(cont'd. on next page)

(Rob's Random Shots, cont'd.)

Unraveling the mystery and staying alive brings Sally into contact with many of our favorite Swift characters at the university and in Sheriff Langham's family. Readers will not be disappointed either with the part played by a new character, worldly fourteen-year-old athlete Aggie Stark. And we get another dose of Swiftian realism. Laramie is not the idyllic small town or the movie image most of us have. It is populated by real people with modern problems.

The solution hinges on an urban problem that most Albuquerque residents can identify with, and the exciting conclusion lives up to the standards Swift has set for herself in her previous novels. You can jump into this series at any point, but my personal favorite remains Sally #2, *Bad Company*, which Tony Hillerman called "good company, indeed." ✓

—Rob Kresge, rkresge77@comcast.net



at SIBA

The Southern Independent Booksellers Alliance Conference and Trade Show will be held in Orlando, Florida, September 8–10. Independent booksellers will roam the trade show halls looking for books to stock their shelves. Major publishers will be there in full force, showing off their titles, and so will we!

Sisters in Crime is celebrating our twentieth anniversary this year, and we plan to be all tricked out at SIBA. Booksellers looking for those great mystery titles will have no trouble finding our table.

Here's how it works: Sisters in Crime volunteers work in shifts, setting up the booth and staffing it the entire weekend. We give away members' promotional materials (bookmarks, postcards, and so on) and information regarding Sisters in Crime's Books in Print.

You may send any promotional material to me at Pamela King Cable, 4118 Huff Road, Archdale, NC 27263. I am driving to Florida and will ensure its safe arrival and display. The deadline to mail your material to me is August 30, 2006.

Authors will have specific signing times to sign and give away their books to booksellers. That's right—give them away! We give our books to bookstore owners so they can read them, love them, order them, and hand sell them to their customers. Last year, our authors gave hundreds of books away. (So bring a hundred copies of your book!) Your

publisher will usually give you books to distribute to booksellers. If you're self-published, reserve a box of books for this show.

Attending SIBA, you'll experience one of the most effective means for introducing your work to booksellers or letting them know you have a new book. You have to travel and pay for room and food, but it's worth it. Traffic at the SinC booth, one of the conference's traditional favorites, is always heavy. You know how critical promoting your book is to your success, and this is a great opportunity to get noticed! Remember, the people who come to book signings are already your fans.

SIBA is fun too! You can roam the exhibit hall, meeting booksellers and other exhibitors. SIBA badges entitle you to sign up for other events. (You may have to pay for tickets; the badge just gets you in the door. Check www.sibaweb.com for more information.) And the SinC group always has dinner together on Saturday night.

Now is the time to begin thinking about volunteering at the Sisters in Crime table. If you're interested in this opportunity, email me at cable854@earthlink.net. ✓

—Pamela King Cable, Chairman, Sisters in Crime

Some Swell News

When Shirley Raye Redmond spoke to *Croak & Dagger* in March, she told us she had met the basic requirements (including being a published author) and was applying to be a writer for the Nancy Drew mystery series. Here's the scoop:

"Speaking to Sisters in Crime brought me luck. I got my Nancy Drew contract. My first mystery *Nancy Drew and the Jane Austen Tea Scandal* will be released in January 2008. Needless to say, I'm thrilled. Thank you and take care." ✓

—Shirley Raye Redmond



BOOKMARKS

The Albuquerque Croak & Dagger Chapter welcomes you to the 2006 Albuquerque Book Fair (September 15-17) and the 2006 Albuquerque Book Fair (September 22-24).
 (Sisters in Crime is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. All proceeds go to support our programs.)

2006 Meeting Dates:

January 24
 February 26
 March 22 (Sat.)
 April 22
 May 23
 June 24 (Sat.)
 July
 August 22
 September 22 (Sat.)
 October 24
 November 26
 December 12 (Sat.)

Locations: 7:00 p.m., unless otherwise noted.
 (SIBAs are \$100.00)

2006 Albuquerque Book Fair
 12700 Montgomery Blvd. NE
 (27th block east of Broadway)



www.sibaweb.com

BOOKMARKS

Have you seen them? Bright yellow, with bloodred markings? Do you have one? Do you have a handful?

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

Great Literary Taunts

For authors in need of good put-downs:

- “I feel so miserable without you, it’s almost like having you here.” —Stephen Bishop
- “A modest little person, with much to be modest about.” —Winston Churchill (about Clement Atlee)
- “I’ve just learned about his illness. Let’s hope it’s nothing trivial.” —Irvin S. Cobb
- “I have never killed a man, but I have read many obituaries with great pleasure.” —Clarence Darrow
- “He has never been known to use a word that might send a reader to the dictionary.” —William Faulkner (about Ernest Hemingway)
- “He is not only dull himself, he is the cause of dullness in others.” —Samuel Johnson
- “He had delusions of adequacy.” —Walter Kerr
- “I’ve had a perfectly wonderful evening. But this wasn’t it.” —Groucho Marx
- “They never open their mouths without subtracting from the sum of human knowledge.” —Thomas Brackett Reed
- “He loves nature in spite of what it did to him.” —Forrest Tucker
- “I didn’t attend the funeral, but I sent a nice letter saying I approved of it.” —Mark Twain
- “His mother should have thrown him away and kept the stork.” —Mae West
- “Some cause happiness wherever they go; others whenever they go.” —Oscar Wilde
- “He has no enemies, but is intensely disliked by his friends.” —Oscar Wilde
- “He has Van Gogh’s ear for music.” —Billy Wilder

—Ira Rimson

Trois Riviere Fiction Writers (TRFW) Conference

From the hustle bustle of Washington, D.C., where I attended the Malice Domestic conference along with about 550 other folks, I went to the slower-paced town of Farmington, New Mexico, to attend the TRFW conference with about 35 other writers and guest speakers from April 28–30.

I’ve decided that the number of attendees has nothing to do with the energy level at a conference. Both conferences were filled with enthusiasm and a

sense of camaraderie—oh, and excellent programs, by the way.

While Malice is specifically geared for mystery writers, TRFW is open to writers of all genres. However, we had the opportunity to meet and mingle with two editors who were looking for new mysteries: Barbara Moore, an editor for Mystery Ink Books (a mystery imprint of Llewellen), and John Helfers, of TEKNO books, who acquires mysteries for Five Star, Thompson-Gale. Barbara and John were personable and helpful, and a number of people had the opportunity to pitch their stories to them.

Jerry Weinberg was the other Albuquerque SinC member who attended, and we both met people who were interested in knowing more about Croak and Dagger. With Farmington just a hop, skip, and jump away, we hope to have more interaction with TRFW in the days to come.✓

—Margaret Tessler

Read All about It!

Croak and Dagger announces successes for members Jerry Weinberg, for the recent publication of his book, and April Radbill, for her contributions to a new magazine. Congratulations!

In *Weinberg on Writing: The Fieldstone Method—Banishing Writer’s Block* by **Gerald M. Weinberg** (Dorset House Publishing, 2006), Jerry reveals his secrets for collecting and organizing ideas for writing projects. If you’ve ever wanted to write a book or an article—or need to revitalize your writing career—don’t miss this intimate glimpse into the mind behind some of the software industry’s best books.

April Radbill published a number of articles in the initial publication of the new magazine *POSH*. A humorous article, “It All Began Innocently Enough,” will appeal to all animal lovers; a sidebar gives information about the Animal Humane Society and dog parks in Albuquerque. Her other articles include: “Colored Pencil” (promoting an art exhibition by the Colored Pencil Society of America that will be held here in July), “Platinum Lifestyles” (about a show produced for KOB-TV, featuring luxury homes by Eric Spurlock), “Andy’s Painting, Inc., Not Just Another Painter” (about Andy Warren, a local painting contractor), “For Love of the Outdoors” (about Woodfield’s), a couple of restaurant pieces, and the initial defining article about the meaning of *posh* (unfortunately, there was no byline on that one!).✓



The Nominees (and Winners) Are . . .

The Agatha Awards honor the traditional mystery—books best typified by the works of Agatha Christie. The Agatha Award is a fan-generated award; Malice Domestic convention registrants and Friends of Malice nominated books from 2005 and then voted on the winners at the April 2006 convention. (*Denotes winter; congratulations to all the nominees!)

Best First Novel

- **Better Off Wed* by Laura Durham, HarperCollins Publishers
- Blood Relations* by Lisa Tillman, Hilliard & Harris
- Jury of One* by Laura Bradford, Hilliard & Harris
- Knit One, Kill Two* by Maggie Sefton, Penguin Group
- Witch Way to Murder* by Shirley Damsgaard, Avon/HarperCollins Publishers

Best Novel

- Owls Well That Ends Well* by Donna Andrews, St. Martin's Minotaur
- Pardonable Lies* by Jacqueline Winspear, Henry Holt Books
- Rituals of the Season* by Margaret Maron, Mysterious Press & Warner Books
- The Belen Hitch* by Pari Noskin Taichert, University of NM Press (*Croak & Dagger member!*)
- **The Body in the Snowdrift* by Katherine Hall Page, William Morrow
- Trouble in Spades* by Heather Webber, Avon/HarperCollins Publishers

Best Nonfiction

- Behind the Mystery—Top Mystery Writers* by Stuart Kaminsky, Hothouse Press
- **Girl Sleuth: Nancy Drew and the Women Who Created Her* by Melanie Rehak, Harcourt
- The Heirs of Anthony Boucher* by Marvin Lachman, Poisoned Pen Press
- The New Annotated Sherlock Holmes* by Leslie S. Klinger, W.W. Norton

Best Short Story

- **Driven to Distraction* by Marcia Talley—Chesapeake Crimes II, Quiet Storm Publishing,
- House Rules* by Libby Fischer Hellmann—Murder in Las Vegas, Tor
- Mother Love* by Harriette Sackler—Chesapeake Crimes II, Quiet Storm Publishing
- Murder at Sleuthfest* by Barb Goffman—Chesapeake Crimes II, Quiet Storm Publishing
- Rear View Murder* by Carla Coupe—Chesapeake Crimes II, Quiet Storm Publishing

Best Children/Young Adult Fiction

- Danger at the Zoo* by Kathleen Ernst, American Girl-Pleasant Company Publications
- **Down the Rabbit Hole* by Peter Abrahams, HarperCollins Publishers (*Tie*)
- **Flush* by Carl Hiaasen, Alfred A. Knopf (*Tie*)
- The Coastwatcher* by Elise Weston, Peachtree Publications
- The Curse of Ravenscourt* by Sarah Masters Buckey, American Girl-Pleasant Company Publications



Book Passage Conference

The four-day Book Passage Mystery Writers Conference, July 13–16, 2006 (13th Annual), has a strong tradition of great authors and teachers. It covers everything mystery writers need—from developing ideas and writing skills to finding a publisher. Students work closely with mystery writers, agents, editors, and publishers as well as investigators and crime-fighting professionals. In this conference, mystery writers learn the clues to a successful writing career.

Faculty includes Robert Crais, John Lescroart, Martin Cruz Smith, and Hallie Ephron. Guests include an ex-San Francisco police chief, a criminal attorney, a homicide investigator, a former P.I., and an agent who is the FBI's Safe Streets Program coordinator. Publishing people include the president of Little Brown and Warner Books, the former president and CEO of Time Warner Publishers, and others. Here's a snippet from the Web site:

The conference will be held in Corte Madera, California. For more information, go to www.bookpassage.com. ✓

—David Wiley

Mystery and Other Writers' and Readers' Conferences in 2006

Here is a list of all the conferences of potential interest this year. Most are held at about the same time each year. Many are held in the same location each year. Many of these conferences have already occurred this year, but you can save this list and the contact data for future reference.

Check the various Web sites to can find out which authors will be attending and the registration fee and lodging costs. The three major expenses are: registration fees (generally \$95–400), transportation (airfare unless it's close to Albuquerque), and lodging (say \$75–200 per night, including taxes). If you can eliminate one or more of the expenses, you should consider attending one of these conferences. Readers, writers, and authors from our chapter ought to consider attending at least one conference at some point. Be sure to go if you're going to be somewhere near one of the conferences (and can save transportation cost) or have relatives in that city that you could stay with (saving lodging cost). Don't have any relatives or friends there, but still want to save on lodging? SinC members are often willing to take in out-of-state guests.

In the table, **boldface** indicates the date and/or city of conferences that are held at approximately the same date and/or place each year; otherwise, I have noted that the venue and date vary.

An asterisk (*) next to a conference title means I have attended one or more runnings of that conference. You can email me for more information, impressions, usefulness, and so on. If other chapter members have been to any of these conferences, you can ask them, too.✓

—Rob Kresge, rkresge77@comcast.net

2006 Conferences						
Date in 2006	Event	Location in 2006	Sponsor	Comments	Awards	Contact Info
March 2–4	Sleuthfest	Ft Lauderdale, FL	MWA, Florida chapter	Always held somewhere in Florida ; usually in February or March.		www.mwa-florida.org/sleuthfest.htm
March 16–19	Left Coast Crime XVI*	Bristol, UK		Always held somewhere in the West , with about 500 attending (this is the first outside the U.S.). Dates and venues vary. XVII to be held February 1–4, 2007, in Seattle.	The Lefty Awards	www.leftcoastcrime2006.com www.lcc2007.com
March 24–27	Hi-Jinks on the High Seas Men of Mystery Cruise	Out of Los Angeles				itcgolf@juno.com
March 25	Second Annual Cochise County Book Fair	Sierra Vista, AZ	SinC, Cochise County chapter	Adult and children's mystery and suspense.		www.clik.to/sister sincrime rebeccadahlke@yahoo.com
April 1	Murder in Spa City	Hot Springs, AR	MWA, Southwest chapter and Break-Through Promotions	New conference.		www.mwasw.org
April 21–23	Malice Domestic XVIII*	Washington, D.C.		Celebrating the traditional mystery like those of Agatha Christie. Usually held the last weekend of April, after the Edgars (see below). 700–800 attend.	The Agathas	www.malicedomestic.org

2006 Conferences						
Date in 2006	Event	Location in 2006	Sponsor	Comments	Awards	Contact Info
April 26–27	60th annual MWA Symposium and Banquet*	New York City, NY	MWA	Oldest mystery conference. 500–600 attend awards banquet.	The Edgars (premier mystery awards)	www.mysterywriters.org
May 25–28	Mayhem in the Midlands	Omaha, NE				www.omaha.lib.ne.us/mayhem/
June 2–3	Murder in the Grove	Boise, ID		Costs only \$95 with \$69 hotel rooms. Carolyn Wheat workshop on June 2. Sara Paretsky guest of honor on June 3.		www.murderinthegrove.com
June 10	Of Dark and Stormy Nights	Near Chicago, IL		Guest of Honor Carolyn Hart.		jdams@jeannedams.com
June 29–July 2	ThrillerCon*	Phoenix, AZ	International Thriller Writers	First annual conference.	The Thrillers (first time presented)	www.thrillerfest.com
July 13–16	Mystery Writers Conference	Corte Madero, CA	Book Passage	Thirteenth annual; “Learning All the Clues” covers all aspects of the mystery writing business		www.bookpassage.com
July 14–16	ConMisterioso	Austin, TX		Held annually.		www.conmisterioso.org/
September 8–10	Rocky Mountain Fiction Writers Annual Conference	Denver, CO		Guest authors; scheduled meetings with agents and/or editors. Contest for unpublished novels in mystery, romance, other fields.		www.rmfw.com
September 28–October 1	Bouchercon * 37	Madison, WI		The largest annual mystery conference (1,200–1,500 attend). Venue changes each year; dates move, but always in September or October. Has been held in Philadelphia, Denver, Washington, D.C., Chicago, and Toronto in recent years. 2007 conference will be September 27–30 in Anchorage, AK.	Anthony Awards. Many other awards are also announced at this conference	www.bouchercon.com
November 3–5	Third annual Tony Hillerman Mystery Writers Conference*	Albuquerque, NM		Held at the Hilton Hotel. One day of workshops, two of panels. \$400; all meals included. Organized and run by two of Tony’s daughters, who run writer’s workshops out of Santa Fe all year.		www.wordharvest.com

†**Nooseletter Submissions**†

Croak & Dagger members are encouraged to contribute articles, reviews, and essays on various aspects of mystery writing *and* reading for publication consideration. Information on relevant conferences or events is also welcome. Articles should average five hundred words or less.

Publication is every other month, starting in January. Submission deadlines are the 15th of the month prior to publication: February 15, April 15, June 15, August 15, October 15, and December 15.

Please submit via email to shirleycoe@comcast.net, with “Nooseletter” in the subject line.

The *Nooseletter* will be distributed to members electronically. ✓

—*Shirley Coe*

Summary of Findings

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

2006 MEETING DATES

Tuesday, January 24, 7:00 p.m.
Tuesday, February 28, 7:00 p.m.
Saturday, March 25, 1:00 p.m.
Tuesday, April 25, 7:00 p.m.
Tuesday, May 23, 7:00 p.m.
Saturday, June 24, 1:00 p.m.
Tuesday, July 25, 7:00 p.m.
Tuesday, August 22, 7:00 p.m.
Saturday, September 23, 1:00 p.m.
Tuesday, October 24, 7:00 p.m.
Tuesday, November 28, 7:00 p.m.
Saturday, December 16, 1:00 p.m.

Free to the public in the briefing room at the James Joseph Dwyer Memorial Police Substation, 12700 Montgomery Blvd. NE, one block east of Tramway.

For more information, call Rob Kresge, program chair, at 797-1874.



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 Stephanie Hainsfurther, membership chair, at 505-298-2155 or words13@osogrande.com.