



SISTERS in CRIME  
**CROAK & DAGGER**  
ALBUQUERQUE CHAPTER



# THE NOOSELETTER

Volume IV, Number 5—September 2008

## †Expert Testimony†

### From the Prez

I only get to write one more of these columns, for the November issue, so I thought I should devote some space to what the national Sisters in Crime organization does. With more than 3,500 members—readers and authors—SinC is now 21 years old. Founded to promote the equal treatment in publication and review of the works of female authors, SinC now has more than 50 chapters in nearly every state, chapters that regularly host traveling authors, sponsor annual mystery conferences, and send speakers to libraries, schools, and other institutions to promote mysteries and suspense novels and short stories.

The National SinC board is spread out geographically and conducts most of its business by e-mail. It convenes in person twice a year, in the spring at Malice Domestic in Washington, DC, and in the fall at Bouchercon, whose venue moves every year. Illustrious past presidents have included Sara Paretsky, Nancy Pickard, Margaret Maron, Susan Dunlap (banquet speaker at our chapter conference last winter), Carolyn Hart, Barbara D'Amato, Kate Flora, Libby Fisher Hellman, and, for 2008 Roberta Isleib. Elections in October at Bouchercon will bring a whole new slate to carry on the good work.

Title-9 organization, SinC welcomes male members, of which I am one of hundreds. Every year, SinC sends a bound list of members' books in print to thousands of libraries and booksellers.

Our chapter holds elections each November. Our top four positions—President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer—are elected and must also join the national organization. As we approach the November elections, the positions of president, VP, and secretary are open for nominations. We have a candidate for treasurer, and the current *Nooseletter* editor and membership chair will serve again next year. We are also looking for a Programs and Publicity chair. The three previous incumbents have pledged to find early 2009 speakers and assist the 2009 Programs chair in our fifth year. Please get in touch with any board member if you'd consider serving. ♦

—Rob Kresge

### Don't Miss It!

**Tuesday, September 23, at 6 p.m.**

In lieu of our regular meeting at the Dwyer Memorial Police Substation, SinC members and friends will convene for a special event on September 23—a mystery dinner at Weck's on Lomas & San Mateo.

Dinner is a choice of ham, turkey or roast beef with trimmings, beverages and desert. Cost is \$13 for members and \$15 for non-members. The game features Sherlock Holmes and other literary characters such as Alice in Wonderland, Peter Pan, and Huck Finn.

There's still time to sign up. Contact Program Chair Ruth Jimenez at [rcbrojim@yahoo.com](mailto:rcbrojim@yahoo.com)

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.

October's speaker will be Paula Paul, the award-winning author of 23 published novels, of which 12 are mysteries. She is a former journalist who has written for newspapers in New Mexico and Texas and is the recipient of several state and national awards for news coverage and reporting. She has also taught writing at the University of New Mexico.

Her most recent novel, *Inherited Sins*, a literary novel, was published in August of this year. She is currently working on a mystery/suspense novel called *The Creation Formula* and has another suspense novel, *The Madonna Conspiracy*, making the rounds with publishers.

Paula will speak on Tuesday, October 28, at 7 p.m. 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.

## Noose News

**Caroline Page** (see page 4) who writes under the pen name Page Erwin with her husband, Ross, have a new book just released.

Second in the Sam Barrows series, *Bones of Contention* (ISBN:1-59133-253-2 TP \$16.95; 232 pp) is a literary mystery novel that offers a down-and-dirty look at the life of the townspeople of Venice in rural Maine. *Bones of Contention* showcases the real Maine of Carolyn Chute, not the glossy L.L. Bean version.

Writes Lloyd Ferriss of the Maine Sunday Telegram (7/20/08), (*Bones of Contention* is a) "fast-paced, quirky crime novel set in Down East rural Maine. ... skillfully weaves humor, pathos and evil.... Mystery fans will find much to enjoy in *Bones*, not the least of which is its cast of clearly drawn Maine characters...."

**Check Out the Croak & Dagger Website for all your Croak & Dagger information needs.**  
[www.croak-and-dagger.com](http://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

The logo for Sisters in Crime, featuring the words "Sisters in Crime" in a stylized, handwritten font. The "S" is large and prominent, and the "in" is smaller and positioned between "Sisters" and "Crime".

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."

## The Line Up

Rob Kresge – President –  
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# BANNED BOOKS WEEK—CELEBRATING THE FREEDOM TO READ

Banned Books Week is observed during the last week of September each year. Observed since 1982, the annual event reminds Americans not to take for granted this precious democratic freedom, not only to choose what we read, but also to select from a full array of possibilities.

Banned Books Week is sponsored by the American Booksellers Association, the American Booksellers Foundation for Free Expression, the American Library Association (ALA), the Association of American Publishers, the American Society of Journalists and Authors, and the National Association of College Stores. The Library of Congress Center for the Book endorses it.

Many bookstores and libraries across the nation join in the celebration with displays and readings of books that have been banned or threatened throughout history. These include works ranging from the Bible to John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*.

Each year, the American Library Association's (ALA) Office for Intellectual Freedom receives hundreds of reports on books and other materials that were "challenged" (their removal from school or library shelves was requested). The ALA estimates that the number represents only about a quarter of the actual challenges. "Most Challenged" titles include the popular Harry Potter series of fantasy books for children by J.K. Rowling. The series drew complaints from parents and others who believe the books promote witchcraft to children.

The challenges reported reflect a continuing concern with a wide variety of themes:

*The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain, for its use of language, particularly references to race;

*It's Perfectly Normal*, a sex education book by Robie Harris, for being too explicit, especially for children; and

*I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* by Maya Angelou, for the description of rape she suffered as a child.

Some of the most frequently "challenged" books during 2007 include:

*And Tango Makes Three* by Justin Richardson/Peter Parnell for, among other reasons, "Sexism, Homosexuality, Anti-Family, Unsuitable to Age Group" (and this is a children's book about two penguins!),

*The Chocolate War* by Robert Cormier ("Offensive Language, Violence"),

*Olive's Ocean* by Kevin Henkes ("Sexually Explicit, Offensive Language"),

*The Golden Compass* by Philip Pullman ("Religious Viewpoint"),

*The Color Purple* by Alice Walker (a perennial on the list for "Homosexuality, Sexually Explicit, Offensive Language,") and

*The Perks of Being A Wallflower* by Stephen Chbosky ("Sexually Explicit, Unsuitable to Age Group").

Banned Books Week—Celebrating the Freedom to Read is from September 27 to October 4 this year and will kick off in Chicago, with a "Read-Out!" The event will feature popular banned or challenged authors and local Chicago celebrities on Saturday, September 27.

**For more information, contact the Office for Intellectual Freedom at 800-545-2433, ext. 4223, or by e-mail to [oif@ala.org](mailto:oif@ala.org).**

## MESSAGE FROM THE MASTER

Our July 23 speaker had been announced as Tony Hillerman, New York Times best-selling author of the mystery series featuring Navajo police officers Joe Leaphorn and Jim Chee. But at the last minute, health problems prevented him from attending. His daughter Anne graciously filled in for him and spoke to a SRO audience of more than 50 chapter members and guests.

Anne let us know that *Finding Moon* was Tony's favorite novel, a story that started out in its earliest form in the Belgian Congo in the 1960s, but when published had morphed into a tale of rescue amid wartime chaos during the 1975 fall of South Vietnam.

Anne gave us Tony's best advice to aspiring authors—persevere, know your deadlines, observe word count limits, and know how to please editors. That was his credo when he was a practicing journalist, first for the Associated Press and later for the Santa Fe *New Mexican*. Journalism, according to Tony, is a good starting place for a novelist to learn all the tricks of the fiction trade.

Reader-fans were disappointed to hear that *The Shape Shifter* is likely Tony's last novel. But Anne is helping him write and edit a coffee table photo book, *Tony Hillerman's Southwest*, that will feature photographs by Don Strel of locations in Tony's books paired with quotes from his books and comment from Tony.

In a fascinating vignette, Anne let us all in on how Jim Chee came to be. After *Dance Hall of the Dead*, Tony's second Leaphorn novel, won the Edgar for Best Mystery, the nascent series was optioned for movies in Hollywood. However, as the third volume, *Listening Woman*, was published, Tony found that the language of the option contract gave Hollywood exclusive rights to Joe Leaphorn for five years. Faced with this dilemma, Tony created Jim Chee and wrote three adventures featuring his younger detective. In order to write *Skinwalkers*, the first of the many collaborative Leaphorn-Chee mysteries, Tony had to buy back the rights to his character. He cautions young authors to read their contracts very carefully so as not to repeat his mistake.

Tony continues to be active with the annual Hillerman Conference: Focus on Mystery, which will convene for the fifth year November 5-9 at the Hyatt Regency Hotel. The contests associated with the conference have been a boon to young writers. The winner of the annual Hillerman short story contest is published in *Cowboys and Indians* magazine. Craig Johnson's story, "Old Indian Trick," won the prize in its second year. Craig, who acknowledges his debt to Tony having opened the way to the Western regional mystery, has become a fixture of the Hillerman Conference and will be a speaker again this year.



Last year, St Martin's Press sponsored the first annual Tony Hillerman prize for the best first mystery novel set in the Southwest. Christine Barber's *The Replacement Child* won, and she will be a guest at this year's conference. ♦

—Rob Kresge ([rkresge777@comcast.net](mailto:rkresge777@comcast.net))

**SAN JOSE, California (AP)** — Garrison Spik, a 41-year-old communications director and writer, took top honors in San Jose State University's 26th annual Bulwer-Lytton Fiction Contest with this opening sentence to a nonexistent novel:

"Theirs was a New York love, a checkered taxi ride burning rubber, and like the city their passion was open 24/7, steam rising from their bodies like slick streets exhaling warm, moist, white breath through manhole covers stamped 'Forged by DeLaney Bros., Piscataway, N.J.'"

The contest is named after Victorian novelist Edward George Earl Bulwer-Lytton, whose 1830 novel *Paul Clifford* famously begins: "It was a dark and stormy night..."

## Female Cops

How are female law enforcement officers portrayed in literature and on television? We recently pursued that question during a forum and tour at the Portsmouth, NH, Police Department, hosted by the ME/NH wing of the New England SinC. Portsmouth has a very progressive department, comprising 51% females. One of the key presenters was Captain Jan Champlin, recently voted New England's top female law enforcement officer.

"Women in Law Enforcement" was the topic, and the discussion included memories of the old days with those smart and capable detectives, *Cagney and Lacey*. Then there was sassy Betty Thomas in *Hill Street Blues* portraying Sergeant Lucy Bates, respected by her male counterparts.

*NYPD Blue* seemed to focus more on dalliances with ADA's and secretaries, but there were smart, hip female officers on board. Unfortunately, Steve Bochco's take on women doesn't dwell on strength. Remember Kim Delaney's Detective Diane Russell and her struggle with alcohol and abuse? Other U.S. cop shows featured women, among them the highly rated *Homicide*, set in Baltimore. Despite being burdened with family issues, Melissa Leo as Detective Sergeant Kay Howard solved crimes, no-nonsense.

Across the pond, females got shorter shrift. P.D. James wrote the great Inspector Dalgleish series, and we wanted Dalgleish to connect with his DI. Instead, he prefers poetry. Then came Inspector Morse, but soon our hopes were dashed, as he proved hopeless with women, sometimes falling for the perpetrator. The only powerful females were his Medical Examiners. The follow-up *Inspector Lewis* series is excellent, and Lewis proves to be a more sensitive bloke, but Hathaway is male. What is it with these Brits?

The *Poirot* and *Maigret* series were devoid of female cops. Then along came *Prime Suspect* with a highly intelligent woman, Detective Chief Inspector Jane Tennison, brilliantly played by Helen Mirren. We sympathize with her loneliness, but her addictive personality gets the best of her, and she's always verging on loss of control. We have seen numerous other British imports and one has an amazing profiler, another an MI-5 expert, but there are few top female law enforcement officers.

Then came Elizabeth George's Inspector Lynley series. We had hopes for Havers, although the chip on her low middle-class shoulder hinders her. Splendidly acted, this series ends soon, but the books will keep coming. We also had the World War II series, *Foyle's War*, but true to the period, the fascinating female lead, played by Honeysuckle Weeks, was only a driver, although she was instrumental in solving crimes in a "cozy" kind of way. It's that old story: males get virtually all of the credit.

That's why I've turned to reading European mysteries where women lead the way. An example is Sweden's Kjell Eriksson's series, in which Inspector Ann Lindell uses intellect and intuition to earn respect of her male officers. Detective Aimee Leduc produces results in Paris. Asa Larsson, another premier Swedish mystery writer, presents a dogged female policewoman as well. I'd like to say that *The Closer* gets my attention, but she is too weird, scattered and addictive to be believed. (Candy, anyone?) And *Saving Grace*? She wouldn't last on the Portsmouth PD for an hour. ♦

—Carolyn Page ([www.pageerwin.com](http://www.pageerwin.com))



EFFICIENCY OF FEMALE POLICE IN WHAT IS VULGARLY CALLED A "JOLLY ROW."

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

***The Iron Tongue of Midnight; The Fourth Baroque Mystery*** by Beverlee Graves Myers. Poisoned Pen Press, 2008. 299 pp. (HC)

*The iron tongue of midnight hath told twelve. / Lovers, to bed; 'tis almost fairy time.*

— *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, V, 1.

*The Iron Tongue of Midnight* is Myers's fourth in a series set in mid-18th-century Italy. As before, operatic castrato Tito Amato brings his reputation "for solving several impossible puzzles" to bear on a series of murders.

Villa Dolfini is the summer retreat of the Venetian Dolfinis, of which middle-aged Octavia is social-climbing matriarch. She has offered a noted German composer the opportunity to debut his newest opera at the villa, principally as a ploy to inflate her esteem amongst the aristocracy who retreat to the Venetian hills to escape the sweltering and fragrant Venetian summers.

Operatic murder mysteries are unusual enough in their own right. Those series featuring a castrato as protagonist can likely be counted on one finger. Bizarre as the concept might appear at first blush, Myers has done her homework thoroughly. The 18th-century Venetian operatic and social environment is well depicted, with characters who might serve as prototypical examples of their genres: Octavia and her bored, *nuòvo-ricco* husband; the neurotic composer struggling to get his score finished in time for rehearsal before the premiere; the singers and their petty jealousies; the household retainers with their pecking order.

In the midst of the frantic preparation, Amato and company find a stranger dead at the feet of a grandfather clock in the bedroom hallway, its pendulum the apparent murder weapon, jerked free at two minutes before midnight. It is sufficiently vexatious to find a corpse in the passage; it is more insulting to discover than no one knows who he was.

Myers is a retired psychiatrist with a lifelong interest in opera. That may (or not) be the foundation for casting the interplay of the characters, who are an engaging lot. The book

begins unusually, with *Dramatis Personae* of some 30-odd major and minor players. The story construction itself seems patterned after a staged performance: Myers controls the action tightly, and the setting rarely extends beyond the Villa. One can easily visualize the action taking place on a stage set rather than spreading out through an environment that would be alien to most readers' frames of reference. Likewise, the author's medical background equips her to delve into the characteristics of castrati; all I'll say is don't believe all that you might have heard.

Having read this, the fourth in Beverlee Graves Myers's series of Baroque operatic mysteries, I'm off to the library to find the first three. (Yes, Virginia, all four are available at the library.) If they match this one, they are a refreshing and unusual approach to the murder mystery genre. ♦

—Ira Rimson ([irimson02@comcast.net](mailto:irimson02@comcast.net))

#### **Addendum:**

I have just finished the first and second books in Beverlee Graves Myers's series featuring Tito Amato, *Interrupted Aria* and *Painted Veil*, respectively 2004 and 2005. There's no question that I erred by choosing the most recent of four volumes to review, thereby losing the historical perspective that contributes mightily to knowledge of the protagonist's POV. and context. The stories in order form Amato's chronological biography. My suggestion: start at the beginning. —IR

***We Need to Talk About Kevin: A Novel*** by Lionel Shriver. Harper Perennial, 2006. 400 pp (HC)

Eva, the mother of a teenage murderer of seven of his high school classmates, a teacher, and a cafeteria worker, writes letters to her husband, Franklin, from whom she is separated. In her fearlessly candid letters, Eva revisits her discussions with Franklin about whether or not to have children. She writes about her reactions to pregnancy, childbirth, and parenting of a child she didn't love.

All this recitation could be lethally boring, but it's gripping: Lionel Shriver is a master writer. She knows how to let the reader into a character's most intimate thoughts, and she knows how to build suspense. Is Kevin a victim of bad nurturing or was he evil at birth?

Lionel Shriver's novel *We Need to Talk About Kevin* hasn't won any prizes for crime fiction that I know of. It did, however, win the 2005 Orange Prize, a prestigious literary award for "the best" full-length novel by a female author of any nationality, written in English and published in the UK in 2004.

I wouldn't have known about *We Need to Talk About Kevin* if a friend hadn't implored me to try it. And I couldn't be happier I obliged! *We Need to Talk About Kevin* is a literary novel, but it also fits squarely in the psychological suspense genre. If you are a fan of authors like Barbara Vine (Ruth Rendell's pen name) and Patricia Highsmith, you cannot miss this one! ♦

—Sarah Schwartz ([schwartzse@comcast.net](mailto:schwartzse@comcast.net))

***The Mayor of Lexington Avenue*** by James Sheehan. St. Martin's, 2005. 401 pp (PB)

If there were such a category as epic mystery, *The Mayor of Lexington Avenue* would be it. It's a long story, covering years in the lives of the characters, yet it's a fast, exciting read too. As for the mystery, it's a story, as Arthur Miller once described drama, of the chickens coming home to roost.

In Part One, two stories run parallel, one in a small town in Florida in 1986, the other in New York 26 years earlier. In Florida, a young, cheerfully promiscuous woman is murdered in her trailer; a younger, mildly retarded man is accused, despite being a kind of neighborhood pet and thought to be incapable of such an act. Local law enforcement claims the evidence puts him on the scene; the accused, too naïve to defend himself, agrees to everything they say.

In New York, two young Irish-Catholic boys, best friends, have an idyllic childhood—until one bit of mischief goes too far, and they are separated.

Part Two jumps ahead to 1998, and the two stories begin to mesh, but the author's storytelling skill keeps you wondering where all the connections are and what they mean, and why Jack Tobin not only resigns from a lucrative partnership in a Miami law practice but instead opens a storefront practice on the remote edge of Lake Okeechobee.

By Part Three, you're so involved with the lives of all the characters that you don't much care what happens—although the suspense is maintained to the end, even as the plot twists and turns and takes off in new directions—because you really like all these people.

The author was a trial lawyer in Florida for 28 years before writing *The Mayor of Lexington Avenue*, and all the passion for justice bred of years of knowing all the dirty tricks of his profession come out in this first novel—as well as some no-holds-barred opinions on the death penalty and how the legal system works, and when it doesn't, why.

But read *The Mayor of Lexington Avenue* for a darn good story. ♦

—Linda Triegel ([ljt23@earthlink.net](mailto:ljt23@earthlink.net))



***Mistress of the Art of Death*** by Ariana Franklin. Berkley Books, 2007. 420 pp (TP)

Franklin, who has done a number of biographies and historical novels, has written an excellent historical mystery. This mystery side is CSI in 12th-century England. The tools and knowledge are very different, but the processes, methodologies, and analyses are clearly recognizable.

The historical side required not one but two sets of world building. First, in England in 1171 where the crimes are committed and the mystery is solved. Second, in Salerno in the same period where Adelia Aguilar went through medical school and learned how to interpret clues from the dead. Part of the interest is in how Franklin explores and contrasts the two very different

cultures in terms of their attitudes towards science, superstition, religion, and women.

The mystery involves the murder of four children in Cambridge. The Jewish community is being blamed and is being held and protected in the castle. This means they can't carry on their regular business, thus depriving Henry II of substantial tax revenue. He appeals to the King of Sicily and southern Italy to send an expert who can help solve the crimes and return things (i.e., his tax revenue) to normal. A team of three, including Adelia – the Mistress of the Art of Death, is sent incognito.

Solving the mystery is only one of their problems. Since their identity and purpose are unknown, how do they develop the contacts within the superstitious, hostile community and get the information they need, particularly since the other members of the team are a Jewish investigator and a Muslim? How does Adelia get to examine the evidence she needs to see given that her type of medical expertise from Salerno is almost unknown in 1171 England, some of the examinations would be considered a sacrilege, and women simply are not doctors and cannot do what she needs to do.

Eventually, Adelia does solve the mystery, but only after a number of surprising twists and turns. Fortunately, this is the first of a new series, so Adelia will continue her early CSI and forensic work. The second book, *The Serpent's Tale*, was published in 2008.

Ariana Franklin is actually British writer Diana Norman, a former reporter with at least 15 books to her credit since 1980. ♦

—Olin Bray ([ohbray@nmia.com](mailto:ohbray@nmia.com))

## **ROB'S RANDOM SHOTS**

### **September Case File Number One**

*How To Writer Killer Historical Mysteries* by Kathy Lynn Emerson, Perseverance Press, 2008, 220 pp. (TP)

This is a book you need to read, whether you're writing or enjoy reading historical mysteries. This is not only a "how to" but also a

guide to this subgenre. Some of the most common advice to fiction writers is to "write what you know." That's usually taken to mean if you're a real estate agent and you want to write mysteries, your sleuth should be a real estate agent. But the corollary of that statement is to write what you read the most of, the genre or subgenre you know best—all the conventions, the great novels, and the time period you want to write about. I'm eminently qualified to write spy novels, but I don't want to. When I started to conceptualize, I found that half of my reading involved mysteries featuring Marcus Didius Falco, Brother Cadfael, and Amelia Peabody.

I didn't have this book to help me then, but I've met Kathy at two separate conventions and I find that I was following most her guidance without knowing it. She puts forward how close to "now" can be historical, defines the subgenre, notes variations like historical romantic suspense, paranormal historicals, and alternate histories, and how writers can narrow down to the time period they want to write about. She lists occupations for amateur sleuths appropriate to the time period and explores positions female amateur sleuths could hold. Kathy devotes two chapters to researching your time period, making sure that you're generally accurate but don't bore readers with the tons of minutiae we uncover.

After that, the key is to create a believable historical detective, and if you're writing about a period before 1840, you're probably going to have an amateur sleuth. Police departments were few, and most of the best known historical detectives, like the three I mentioned above, tend to be amateurs. Kathy then guides us through creating believable secondary characters and handling plot, subplot, and building suspense.

A big part of credible historical fiction involves using language appropriate to the period, but not so slavishly as to lose or confuse your readers. Elizabethan detectives should speak like characters in *Shakespeare in Love*, not like those in Shakespeare's plays. But you have to avoid going too far in that direction and not let anachronisms creep into your story. I

recently read an Anne Perry novel that had characters go to the bathroom when indoor plumbing hadn't yet been invented. Outhouses, "necessaries," and other terms were more appropriate.

Besides advice on how to sell your novel when you've written it, Kathy includes fifteen pages of historical mysteries readers should check out and writers can learn from. This is the best kind of writing guide—one that makes you glad you chose to write in this field. ♦

—Rob Kresge ([rkresge777@comcast.net](mailto:rkresge777@comcast.net))

### Key:

PB = Paperback

TP = Trade paperback

HC = Hardcover

## September Case File Number Two

*Another Man's Moccasins* by Craig Johnson, Viking, 2008. 290 pp. (HC)

This is the fourth Sheriff Walt Longmire novel I've reviewed. Besides winning prizes and being nominated for others, *Moccasins* just received a long review in the LA Times book section. Craig continues to write at a level that most of us aspiring authors can only dream of.

After Walt returns from Philadelphia, the site of his third adventure, *Kindness Goes Unpunished*, he finds his past catching up to him. Up for re-election, the sheriff discovers the body of a young Vietnamese woman along the interstate in his Absaroka County, Wyoming. His efforts to discover first her identity, then her killer cause him to recall, not at all fondly, his first murder case as a young Marine investigator in Vietnam 40 years before. The dates and places he uses build apprehension in those of us who were in Vietnam and a creeping sense of inevitability as young Walt is ensnared first in the siege of Khe Sanh, then the countrywide Tet offensive of 1968.

Walt has no lack of suspects in this woman's murder—a gigantic Crow Indian, Virgil White Buffalo (also a Vietnam vet) is found living in a nearby culvert and in

possession of the victim's purs; a bartender in a nearby town where the woman stopped has secrets in his past; and a Vietnamese refugee and former officer may have family ties to her.

The sheriff's attempts to work the crime are complicated by his feelings for his female chief deputy, the rehabilitation of his lawyer daughter, badly injured in Philadelphia in the last novel, and staffing levels in a department whose personnel are spread too thin. The backdrop for the current case is a sparsely inhabited county full of wide-open space that Craig describes with a poet's eye for telling details and a Wyoming cowboy's love for the people and small towns reminiscent of the best novels of Tony Hillerman and the songs of Chris LeDoux.

Without giving too much away, readers follow Walt on two cases widely spaced in time but tied together by blood. No matter how many mysteries I read, I usually can't solve the case before the detective character, and this novel was no exception. Readers will love the way Wyoming often does in the criminals in these novels, much as Carl Hiaasen's Florida in the comeuppance of his killers and thugs. This is a book and a series to savor. Craig even manages neatly the often heavy-handed trick of closing the novel with the first line he opened with. As a mystery, *Another Man's Moccasins* stands with the best in modern American regional literature. ♦

—Rob Kresge ([rkresge777@comcast.net](mailto:rkresge777@comcast.net))

### Sharing the Web...

On Mysterynet ([www.mysterynet.com](http://www.mysterynet.com)), you can burn minutes or hours indulging in your favorite addiction—mysteries! Billed as everything mystery, the site has an extensive array of material, from mystery-related online games chat, to a special section for kids. Find information on TV and movie mysteries from the 1950s to the present, profiles of the great mystery writers, and resources that include awards listing, how to teach mystery writing to children, and of course a section on books and authors. There's also a one-minute game called "Get a Clue" and a monthly mystery to solve. Have fun procrastinating.

## Bloody Words—Crime Writing Canadian Style

(The following was written by Deanna Dunn and excerpted with permission from the newsletter of the Toronto chapter of SinC.)

### ***CSI: Toronto?***

A man is found dead behind the wheel of his car. The back of his skull is caved in, showing the marks of several impacts. A bloody hammer lies on the floor in the back of the car.

In another case, a photo lab calls the cops after developing a disturbing picture of a young girl lying naked in a bath with her eyes closed. Her face and body appear to be covered with brown bruises and red marks.

Clear-cut cases of murder and child abuse? Not necessarily, said Det. Sgt. Wade Knapp, who presented a fascinating panel called “CSI: Toronto” at this year’s Bloody Words.

In fact, investigators eventually determined that the dead man was a pharmacist who had injected a numbing drug into the back of his head and killed himself, faking the signs of murder for the insurance money.

The little girl in the photo had just been at a birthday party, where a lot of the chocolate and red icing ended up all over her. The parents popped her into the bathtub and then thought it would make a cute picture.

The CSI panel was only one of the highlights from Bloody Words VIII, held June 6-8 at the Marriott Downtown Eaton Centre Hotel in Toronto. Bloody Words always seems to bring on a heat wave in Toronto, and this year was no exception. But the hotel was lovely and cool, the Guests of Honour (Rosemary Aubert and Carolyn Hart) were fabulous. I could probably write a small paperback novel with my notes from all the sessions I attended, but I’ll restrict myself to a few highlights.

### **Romancing the Agent:**

Agents Hellen Heller, Carolyn Swayze, Joshua Bilmes, and Dominick Abel’s message was that publishers receive so many submissions that the slush pile has effectively moved from the publisher’s desk to the agent’s. So it’s a very good thing to have an agent on your side.

They outlined some of the ways *not* to get an agent to represent you. For example, Swayze told of receiving a letter from an older writer saying, “At 72 years of age, time is not on my side, so you’d better read my manuscript.” She offered another surefire turnoff in a query letter: “I’ve tried all the New York agents, and they don’t want me.”

When trying to find an agent, Heller suggested that you run from anyone who requests a reading fee or submission fee. Find out whom the agent represents and what bodies he or she is a member of. In the U.S., Heller said, they should belong to AAR (Associations of Authors’ Representatives).

Saturday night was capped off with the banquet, emceed by debonair Anthony Bidulka from Saskatoon, author of the Russell Quant mystery series. Rosemary Aubert and Carolyn Hart both gave inspirational speeches. Hart told of writing seven books in seven years that didn’t attract any interest from publishers. She decided to try once more before giving up, writing the type of book that she would want to read, with characters that she liked. That book, *Death on Demand*, in 1987, proved to be her breakthrough.

## Conferences for 2009 – Plan Ahead!

It's never too soon to start planning your writers' conference attendance for the New Year! Below are some of the outstanding offers for 2009. And don't forget—there's still time to sign up for our very own Hillerman conference (listed first) here in Albuquerque, For more information on these and other upcoming conferences, check them out individually online or e-mail the contacts noted. (Listings from [www.blackravenpress.com/calendar](http://www.blackravenpress.com/calendar).)

### Nov 5-9

**Tony Hillerman Writers Conference: Focus on Mystery**, Albuquerque, NM. Featured authors include Michael McGarrity, Craig Johnson, Pari Noskin Taichert, Sandi Ault, Paula Paul, Judith Van Gieson, Steve Havill, and Joe Badal. Check the website for information on the Tony Hillerman Mystery Short Story Contest (\$1,500 prize and publication in *Cowboys & Indians* magazine) and prize for best first mystery novel (\$10,000 advance and publication by the Thomas Dunne imprint of St. Martin's Press). Contact: [wordharvest@wordharvest.com](mailto:wordharvest@wordharvest.com)

### Feb 6-9, 2009

The MWA Midwest Chapter co-sponsors **Love Is Murder on Dark and Stormy Nights XI** at the Westin Chicago North Shore, Wheeling, Illinois. A weekend of master classes, panels, and presentations, with guest writers including Jeffrey Deaver, Alex Kava, Steve Berry, Sharan Newman, and Raymond Benson. Contact: [www.loveismurder.net](http://www.loveismurder.net)

### Feb 27-Mar 1

**Sleuthfest 2009** at the Hilton in Deerfield Beach, Florida. Sponsored by Florida MWA. "Third Degree Thursday" on Feb 26. Contact: [www.mwa-florida.org/sleuthfest.htm](http://www.mwa-florida.org/sleuthfest.htm).

### Mar 7-12

**Left Coast Crime: Say Aloha to Murder**, Marriott Waikoloa Beach Resort, The Big Island, Hawaii. Toastmaster: Lee Goldberg. Guests of Honor: Rhys Bowen and Barry Eisler. Registration is \$175 until September 30 and can be made online. Contact: [www.leftcoastcrime.org/2009](http://www.leftcoastcrime.org/2009).

### MAY 1-3

**Malice Domestic XXI**, Crystal Gateway Marriott, Arlington, Virginia. Convention dedicated to celebrating the traditional mystery in the tradition of Agatha Christie. Contact: [www.malicedomestic.org](http://www.malicedomestic.org).

### May 14-17

**Crimefest**, Bristol, England. Toastmistress: Meg Gardiner; featured guest: Simon Brett. Contact: [www.crimefest.com](http://www.crimefest.com).

### October 15-18

**40<sup>th</sup> Annual Bouchercon: Elementary, My Dear Indy!** Hyatt Regency, Indianapolis, Indiana. Guest of honor: Michael Connelly; toastmaster: S.J. Rozan. Contact: [www.boudhercon2009.com](http://www.boudhercon2009.com).

**B'con**  
Bouchercon  
World Mystery  
Convention

## *I Love a Mystery—Don't You?*

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

This issue's quiz features some "sisters" you should know.

1. Dana Stabenow's PI Kate Shugak lives and works in what state?

- A. Florida
- B. Alaska
- C. Hawaii



2. Which one of these titles is *not* a Hamish Macbeth mystery to M.C. Beaton?

- A. *Death of a Traveling Man*
- B. *Death of a Nag*
- C. *Death of a Titled Lady*
- D. *Death of a Charming Man*

3. Margaret Maron's character, now living in North Carolina, is a judge named: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Fill in the blanks in these titles of Sue Grafton's "alphabet" novels:

- A. "K" is for \_\_\_\_\_
- B. "O" is for \_\_\_\_\_
- C. "G" is for \_\_\_\_\_

5. The missing word in Tess Gerritsen's novel, *The \_\_\_\_\_ Garden*, is:

- A. Secret
- B. Azalea
- C. Bone
- D. Sleeping



6. For more than 30 years, Dr. Marcella Fierro was the chief medical examiner for the State of Virginia. She inspired what famous fictional ME? \_\_\_\_\_

7. The book that put Philadelphia writer Lisa Scottoline on the mystery map was:

- A. *Final Appeal*
- B. *Everywhere that Mary Went*
- C. *Running from the Law*

Sorry—no prizes! (Answers on page 13)

## HELP WANTED

*The Croak & Dagger chapter works because of the efforts of dedicated volunteers. The four primary board members are elected to one-year terms by the members of C&D at the November meeting or by e-mail before election night. The whole board—elected officers and appointed volunteers—takes office at the December meeting. Per our by-laws, the four elected officers—President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer—also have to be or become members of the National Sisters in Crime, although they do not have to be members of either the chapter or National SinC in order to run for office. None of the officers have to be published or aspiring authors. The officers and committee chairs serve on the executive board, which meets every other month.*

The following positions are still open for 2009. Contact Rob Kresge or any current board member if you're interested in helping your chapter as any of the following:

### **President:**

The President has two major functions—to preside over the monthly general meetings, at which he or she makes announcements, introduces the speaker, and leads the question-and-answer session. The president also sets the agenda and chairs the meetings of the chapter board, now held every two months at homes of the board members, by rotation. The president also interacts with National SinC through online messages and blogs and writes a column for each issue of the *Nooseletter*. And the President represents the chapter in meetings with National twice a year if he or she can and other functions in New Mexico or elsewhere.

### **Vice President:**

Since the President may not be able to attend every monthly general meeting or the six board meetings, the Vice President's main responsibility is to fill in for the President as needed. Beyond that, the Vice President may be asked to work on some special

projects as they arise or represent our chapter at functions in New Mexico or elsewhere.

### **Secretary:**

The Secretary maintains a mailing list of all current board members. The Secretary also takes notes at monthly board meetings, distributes the minutes to board members for approval within a reasonable time (before the next board meeting), then types them up for publication in the *Nooseletter*. The Secretary sends out notices of board meetings when needed and directions, prepares and distributes a board meeting agenda when directed by the president, and keeps members on track as to what matters have been decided.



### **Programs/Publicity Chair:**

Purchases engraved bookmarks to be used as gifts for speakers; turns in receipts to the treasurer for reimbursement. Uses chapter resources (member ideas, volunteers, and so on) to come up with speaker ideas. Contacts potential speakers to ask if they'd be willing to speak on specific dates; generally lines up speakers for 2-3 months at a time. After acceptances, informs members and the larger community of mystery readers in Albuquerque via press release to mailing list at least 3 weeks prior to an event. Is prepared to introduce the speaker at the meeting if requested by the President. Follows up with a written thank-you note to the speaker. Maintains a mailing list of publications, reporters, and editors.

### **Answers to quiz on page 12:**

- 1-B
- 2-C
- 3-Deborah Knott
- 4-Killer, Outlaw, Gumshoe
- 5-C
- 6-Dr. Kay Scarpetta
- 7-B.

## 2008 MEETING DATES

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Tuesday, September 23, 7:00 p.m.  
Tuesday, October 28, 7:00 p.m.  
Tuesday, November 25, 7:00 p.m.  
December TBA

### Meetings are free to the public.

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

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

Check our Web site, [www.croak-and-dagger.com](http://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](mailto: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](mailto:contact@croak-and-dagger.com).

## **Summary of The Board Meeting Minutes of Sisters in Crime Croak & Dagger Chapter, ABQ, NM, 12 August 2008**

The meeting was called to order at 7 p.m. at the home of Ruth Jimenez.

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

### ***Old News:***

We are still looking for recruits for remaining positions on next year's board, but some officers will continue or have found replacements, such as for Web Mistress. Cheri volunteers to stay as treasurer, but would like someone else to fill the position of secretary. Linda volunteers to continue as *Nooseletter* editor. Ruth will stay as program chair—if there are no other bites. (Rob says the person for the position will need to be able to network a lot). Jonathan is willing to continue as membership chair.

### ***New News:***

Sarah researched costs, specifications, and consumer reviews for a new projector to assist speakers who may have audio-visual presentations. The price range was \$500 & up with replacements lamp bulbs ranging from \$250-\$600. We will need to get something compatible with most laptops. A motion to spend a maximum of \$700 on a new projector was made by Rob. Cheri seconded and the ayes had it. Then there was a second motion to have it in place for the meeting after next when we will need it. The motion was seconded and carried. Rob offered to do the purchasing and deliver it to Cheri's home. We will use her laptop, and she volunteered her husband Mike to make sure it is compatible.

**Sec/Treasurer Report:** Cheri announced that our bank account now has a balance of \$2,296.17. This helps reduce the costs of events such as the Ghost Tour and our first conference.

**Membership:** Jonathan announced that we have 76 members. We average 1-2 new members at each general meeting.

**Editor:** Linda expressed her gratitude for all the great material she gets for each *Nooseletter*. Keep sending reviews! She is in contact with a couple of other SinC chapters and hopes to include some of their material, particularly a mystery fiction quiz, in every issue. She particularly would like to see some letters supporting or rebutting articles, or just giving an opinion or information of use to *Nooseletter* readers.

**Programs:** Ruth says we have 28 people signed up for the mystery dinner in September. (Jen will collect the money in the August meeting.) The detective will still be on for the August general meeting. We do not have anyone scheduled yet for October, but Rob suggested Paula Paul, who will be speaking at the Tony Hillerman conference and may come and talk to our group about persistence. In November, Jackie Lynn, author of the Shady Grove mysteries will be speaking. If anyone wants to check out Ruth's blog, go to *Cleodare.com*.

### ***Future News:***

Bookmarks will be ordered for 2009. Dates for next year's meetings are: Jan 27, Feb 24, Mar 24, Apr 28, May 26, Jun 23, July 28, Aug 25, Sept 22, Oct 27, Nov 24, and Dec 22

The 2008 general meeting will be changed to Dec 16. The next board meeting will be at Jonathan's house on Oct 7. This meeting was adjourned at 8:50.

—Submitted by: Cheri Stow, Secretary/Treasurer