



SISTERS in CRIME
CROAK & DAGGER
 ALBUQUERQUE CHAPTER



THE NOOSE LETTER

Volume V, Number 1—January 2009

†Expert Testimony†

From the Prez

Greetings to all from your new president. I'm starting this year fresh, after the death of our youngest son on Thanksgiving, but also the birth of our fifth grandchild, Nolan Stow, on January 5, 2009.

I welcome all of our new and returning board members! They are: Rita Herther, Susan Zates, Fred Aiken, Olin Bray, Jonathan Sacks, Linda Triegel, and Pari Noskin Taichert. I sincerely thank the 2008 board members for their hard work, especially our president, Rob Kresge. It's been fun for me serving as treasurer, and now I look forward to being your president.

The Croak & Dagger chapter of Sisters in Crime has been a blessing to me these past three years, giving me inspiration to keep writing, though I've yet to publish anything—with the exceptions of my first poem coming out this spring, and a limited, self-published edition of a fantasy novel years ago. If your curiosity about your new president's background is piqued, I'll add that I am slowly pursuing a Creative Writing Degree from UNM; I have an Associated Arts degree from Green River Community College of Washington, and a certificate from the Institute of Children's Literature. I've judged two YA essay contests for a middle school competition in Washington State. I've taken a three-month course in the Albuquerque Citizen's Police Academy. I've attended many writers' conferences, workshops, and seminars, and I've written novels, short stories, and poetry.

At Croak & Dagger, we've begun the new practice of listening to the accomplishments of our sisters and brothers at the general meetings. I believe this will be an uplifting and inspirational time for us to get to know one another more, and to give back

encouragement and praise. Writing is hard work, fun, and driving. So though it's been mentioned recently, you don't have to be published yet, but if you are a local author/writer of mysteries, thrillers, true crime novels, or short stories who wishes to talk about your work at the general meeting, contact me at Cheri3j@yahoo.com. We'd like to hear from you. After all, Sisters in Crime's mission is "... to promote professional development ...". Email me and I'll put your name on a list to speak for a minute at the next general meeting. Also, don't forget, if you are already a published author in the mystery genre, send me the following info to be forwarded on for the library liaison program: Title of published book; Date of publication; Publisher; Status of print.

We have a nice list of speakers already lined up for this year, and I'm looking forward to getting 2009 rolling. ♦

—Cheri B. Stow

Don't Miss It!

Tuesday, January 27, at 5 p.m.

January's speaker will be Kate Horsley, author, screenwriter, poet and teacher. She enjoys writing novels about ordinary people living in extraordinary times. *A Killing in New Town*, set in 19th century New Mexico, is about a mother and a dance hall girl who go after the mother's kidnapped children, has won several awards. Her other novels are *Crazy Woman*, *Careless Love*, *Confessions of a Pagan Nun*, *The Changeling*, and *Black Elk in Paris*. Kate has been teaching college English in New Mexico for over 20 years.

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.

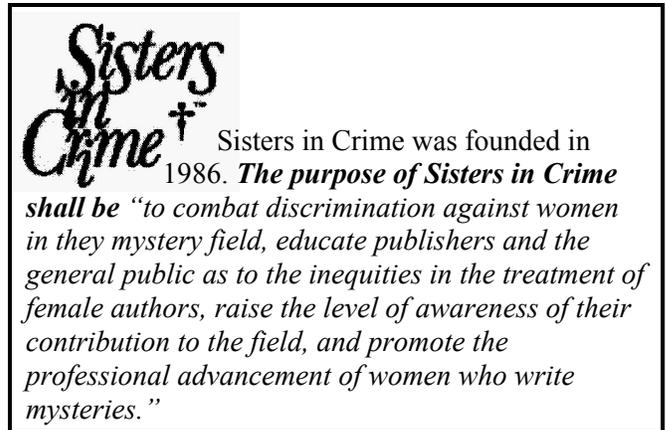
February's speaker will be Christine Barber, an award-winning journalist as well as a certified emergency medical technician and firefighter. She lives in Albuquerque, where she is currently pursuing a career in medicine. She previously worked as an editor at the Santa Fe New Mexican and as a journalist for the Albuquerque Journal and Gallup Independent. *The Replacement Child*, which won the Hillerman Mystery Prize, is her first novel.

The remaining lineup of speakers into the spring consists of Larry Trujillo & Dr. Bob Gassoway, PIs (March 24), Melody Groves, author (April 28), and U'liana E. Sisombeth (de Shannon), handwriting analyst (May 26).

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

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

- Upcoming Programs
- 2008 Meeting Schedule
- Membership Form
- Speakers Bureau
- Links to Mystery Websites & Websites for Your Favorite Croak & Dagger Authors
- *The Nooseletter* Archive



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Minnesota Crime Wave: A Website Worth Visiting

Nine years ago three Minnesota mystery writers (William Kent Krueger, Ellen Hart, and Carl Brookins) formed the Minnesota Crime Wave. It started as a marketing tool; they would promote each other's books at any of their appearances. However, it has evolved into much more, given the capabilities of the Internet. They now have a newsletter, a series of TV shows on their local cable access station, and several collections of short stories by Minnesota mystery writers. The newsletters and the TV programs are on their website—minnesotacrimewave.org.

Their newsletter, which started in 2002, comes out three times a year. *MCW Presents*, the web TV program, has 17 episodes, each consisting of three 10-minute segments. Segments include interviews with authors (including themselves), book reviews including some of the classics, conferences, research sources, and some topics on the craft of writing mysteries, such as plot, character, setting, and title. The first of the short story collections was *Silence of the Loons*. The second was *Resort to Murder*, in which each story was set at a Minnesota resort. The third collection, *Murder on a Stick*, involves stories set at the Minnesota State Fair, where you can buy anything eatable on a stick.

What makes these collections unique (and frustrating for the writers) is that they provide a list of 10 clues, at least five of which have to be included in each story. For example, for *Murder on a Stick*, the list of clues included a pile of manure, a ticket stub with writing on it, a headless stuffed animal, a blue ribbon, a church dining hall, a blood-stained plastic sword, a polka band, a prize-winning pie, the sound of a barker, and mini-donuts. It is fascinating to see which clues authors pick and how they deal with them in completely different ways.

Take a look at their website and enjoy. ♦

---Olin Bray (ohbray@nmia.com)

And the Condemned Ate a Hearty Meal...

There's a lot of eating going on in Agatha Christie mysteries, often of typically English dishes that may puzzle an American reader (syllabub? bubble & squeak??) Here's a recipe for one of the most popular British dishes:

Steak & Kidney Pie

1½ lbs round steak, sliced	2 cups meat stock
¾ lb. lamb or veal kidneys	1 cup red wine
3 tbs. butter or fat	pie dough
flour, seasoned	

(If you use beef kidneys in this dish, blanch them first to make them as tender as possible. You should have enough pie dough to cover the top of the oven-proof baking dish you use.)

Preheat oven to 350°.

Cut the round steak into small slices about ½ inch thick. Wash, skin, and slice the kidneys.

Melt the butter in a skillet and sauté the kidneys for about 2 minutes, shaking the pan all the time.

Take the kidneys out and shake them inside a paper bag with seasoned flour until they are coated.

Put the steak slices in a greased baking dish, then add the kidneys, the stock, and the wine.

Bake, covered, for 90 minutes to 2 hours. Remove and cool slightly, then raise oven heat to 400°, cover the dish with pie dough, and bake 15 minutes more, or until brown.

Billy Boyle: A World War II Mystery by James R Benn, Soho Press, 2006, 294 pp. (HC)

Billy Boyle is an Irish cop in Boston, promoted to detective shortly before World War II started. To “protect” him from the war, his family got him assigned to a distant cousin’s staff. After his training and with his new commission, he flies to London and reports to his cousin, General Eisenhower – the commander of the US Forces in Europe.

Billy and the others assume it is just another case of nepotism until Ike explains that he wants his own investigator to handle sensitive, complicated cases that may never be known publicly. To get started, Billy is sent to Beardsley Hall with four other officers to present the plans for Operation Jupiter (the Allied invasion of Norway) to the Norwegian government in exile. “Oh by the way, we think there is a German spy up there. Could you do something about that?”

Life gets more complicated with the suicide (or was it?) of a Norwegian official about to be promoted to Senior Advisor to the Norwegian King, the head of the government in exile. Boyle’s normal Boston police procedures are to clash with both the military hierarchy and protocols and the international jurisdictions – the location is the Norwegian government in exile, but the estate is owned by the British government, and Boyle and his investigators are Americans.

Billy and his two amateur assistants, whom he is training, wander through clues, red herrings, and hidden information – that’s secret, we can’t tell you, stop asking. Most good mysteries have a surprising twist at the end; this one has two.

Although the book could have been done as thriller, it is really a classic mystery, a combination puzzle and police procedure. It is the start of a series. There are now three books, one a year so far. Benn lives in Connecticut and works for a local school district. So far he appears to have kept his day job, but with a successful series that might change. ♦

—Olin Bray (ohbray@nmia.com)

ROB’S RANDOM SHOTS

January Case File Number One

The Replacement Child by Christine Barber, Thomas Dunne Books, 2008, 271 pp (HC)

It’s a great pleasure to review Christine’s first novel. She won the 2007 Tony Hillerman-St. Martin’s Press Best First Mystery Novel set in the West contest. And it’s easy to see why. She’s a journalist, trained paramedic, and firefighter. Although this is her first novel, she handles a complex plot featuring multiple points of view that I’ve only seen more seasoned authors do well. I hope many of you will have read this novel by the time she talks to the Croak & Dagger chapter in February.

In a nutshell, her protagonist(s) are Santa Fe newspaper editor Lucy Newroe and Santa Fe police detective Gil Montoya. Do not expect romantic involvement between the two lead characters. Lucy is new to the Southwest, coming off a failed relationship, and is the most self-destructive heroine I’ve read in a mystery since Samantha Mack in Theresa Schwegel’s Edgar-winning debut novel *Officer Down* a couple of years ago (see my review in the archived *Nooseletters*). Gil is a married cop with two daughters. They become separately embroiled in a murder, often working at, if not cross purposes, then at least not parallel goals.

And what a murder it is. A young woman’s body is found below the Taos Gorge Bridge. She was the sister of one cop and the daughter of a deceased police sergeant. Strangled before she fell. In short order, Lucy (and gringos like me) are introduced to the complex interrelations of Hispanic families whose roots in New Mexico go back 400 years and whose current affairs and family destinies seem interlocked as well.

During the course of the two investigations, readers follow the lives of other cops, their mothers and wives, and eventually the story of a recently abused schoolgirl. Fear not, sensitive readers, nothing untoward happens “on stage” in this novel, and the title has nothing to do with a

child being endangered. But figuring out what and who that refers to and how it has bearing on the case will take you, as it did me, by surprise in the final handful of pages.

I found this novel professional but not slick, fascinating but not pedantic, and by turns grimly humorous and heartbreaking. I hope you will, too. Turn out for Christine's talk. She's just beginning a great career in mystery writing and we all get to be in on the ground floor. ♦

—Rob Kresge (rkresge777@comcast.net)

Key:

PB = Paperback
TP = Trade paperback
HC = Hardcover

November Case File Number Two

Swing Low, Sweet Chariot by Jackie Lynn, St. Martin's Minotaur, 2008, 260 pp (HC).

Jackie Lynn (real name Lynn Hinton) was our November speaker, a bitterly cold night that saw a small turnout for our annual election. Her first and second Shady Grove mysteries, *Down by the Riverside* and *Jacob's Ladder*, were reviewed in the *Nooseletter* last year (see the archived *Nooseletters* on the Croak and Dagger website).

She is an accomplished author with four other works to her credit before she turned to mysteries. And mystery readers are grateful that she made that turn.

The Shady Grove series features amateur sleuth Rose Franklin, who has settled into the Shady Grove Campground in West Memphis, Arkansas, close by the Mississippi River. She works in the campground office and is assisted by an eccentric supporting cast—her lover Tom Sawyer (yes, he hears that a lot), the husband and wife who are bikers and born-again Christians and who own the campground, Ms Lou Ellen, the mother of one of the owners, and Sheriff Montgomery, who is skeptical of Rose's motives, but does not disparage her help.

Jackie has nicely finessed the issue of how an amateur sleuth in a non-legal profession can have mysteries habitually arrive at her doorstep (the well-known “Cabot Cove syndrome” experienced by TV sleuth Jessica Fletcher). Rose doesn't have to go looking for trouble. Some of those on the run to escape problems end up as transients at Shady Grove, and this installment's victim in need is no exception. Chariot Stevens (yes, her mama named her after the hymn) is on the run from witnessing a murder in South Dakota. After checking her in to Shady Grove, Rose takes her under her wing, but the young woman's past begins to catch up with her and ominous characters begin to surface. Which ones want Chariot? And what for? Did they have anything to do with the murder in South Dakota?

We like to think, as inveterate readers of mysteries, that we're better than the average reader at identifying the who, what, and why of these novels well before the end. Not it this case. Jackie plays fair with her readers, but she provides an apparent ending (which I smugly expected) and the real ending (which blindsided me). Check this one out for a gentle, relatively nonviolent “cozy” read and see if you can do better than I did. I'm so embarrassed, I'll have to save face by just leaving the country until my failure blows over. Adios, folks. ♦

—Rob Kresge (rkresge777@comcast.net)

The Shadow of Venus by Judith van Gieson, Signet, 2004, 262 pp (TP)

The author's most recent Claire Reynier mystery finds the UNM researcher caught up in the opposing worlds of high art and homelessness after the body of an unknown woman is found in the basement of the building where Claire works, along with a razored-out illustration from a rare book in the library upstairs.

Claire feels she knows the woman, then remembers encountering her on campus and engaging in a conversation about this stars.

Curiosity as to why the woman known only as Maia was killed—Claire instinctively dismisses the idea of suicide, or an accidental overdose of a particularly lethal batch of heroin—and how her body got into the basement keeps Claire on the trail of answers in a believable way. Classic cozies with amateur detectives are often unbelievable because the characters have no stake in the answers but are just nosy. Van Gieson's characters have always been fully developed with plausible reasons for doing what they do, whether it's their jobs or chasing down the why's and who's of a question they sense has real meaning to her life and community..

Her search leads Claire from the back alleys off Central in Albuquerque to the historic site shown in the purloined illustration, to the Rio Grande gorge bridge and the art colony of Taos. Along the way she meets the people who could well have contributed to Maia's descent to living on the streets and, of course, she eventually discovers what really happened. .

In *The Shadow of Venus*, van Gieson reveals her talent for blending meticulous research into the story so seamlessly that you don't know it's research you're reading. I know it's research only because van Gieson described, in a talk at the Main Branch of the library in conjunction with the last Hillerman Conference, how she met and grew to empathize with the homeless women of the city within a stone's throw of the library—the “Ladies of the Annex” to whom she dedicates the book—as well as the university milieu she is well accustomed to. (Having met a few members of a UNM clique over the recent holidays, I also began to see a gentle fun-poking going on in the Reynier series that I hadn't noticed before!).

This series continues to grow—and like Claire, grow on you—and I hope there will be more in the series because a new book is overdue! ♦

—Linda Triegel (ljt23@earthlink.net)



Resolution by Robert B. Parker, Putnam Publishing Group, 2008, 304 pp (HC)

When Everett Hitch rode off into the sunset at the end of *Appaloosa*—without his friend, mentor, and co-erstwhile lawman, Virgil Cole—you just knew there would be a sequel.

That sequel turned out to be *Resolution*, not coincidentally the name of the town Everett subsequently drifts into. He gets a job there as the Old West version of a bouncer, in a bar owned by the Big Cheese in town, one Amos Wolfson, and to show everyone, including Amos, who's boss, it's not three days into the job before Hitch shoots and kills the hired gun sent in by Amos's archenemy, mine owner Eamon O'Malley.

Amos is impressed, and when, sure enough, Virgil turns up to find out what Hitch has got himself into, he hires both men—though Virgil insists he's only there to visit Hitch—to do some more sinister work for him, namely leading an improvised army intended to oust O'Malley and take over the town—though why anyone would want this dusty bump in the road is a question Hitch and Virgil ponder over endless cups of coffee.

The local ranchers are caught in the middle of all this and vow to unite to fight for their own rights, but when O'Malley's hired guns, having more in common with their opposite numbers, decide to join Virgil's and Everett's plan to do away with both sides of the conflict, the “resolution” is a foregone solution.

Like *Appaloosa*, and for that matter the Spenser novels, the greatest pleasure in *Resolution* is the characters and the humor, aided by the believably end-of-the-known-universe setting. I suspect that Parker came West years ago to research *Rhapsody for a Gunman* (my favorite version of the OK Corral story) and as a sideline produced *Potshot* (in which Spenser and Hawk goes West). Then, being a sharp businessman and thus one of the few mystery authors to make a good living from his writing, Parker may have started *Resolution* the minute the movie option to *Appaloosa* got

sold (no doubt making his agent giddy with delight). We should all have such smarts—and such talent.

It seems there's a third book planned in this series, which is fine by me—they're such fast, fun reads that I've already been through *Appaloosa* twice and saw the movie. Next up, apparently, Hitch and Virgil head to Texas to track down Allie, Virgil's woman (played by Renee Zellweger in the movie), even though Hitch (and everyone else but Virgil) knows that Allie has the morals of the cat she's named after, cares only for herself, and just wants to belong to the biggest tomcat in town, who'll protect her, buy her pretty things, and put up with her awful piano playing.

Should be more fun. ♦

—Linda Triegel (ljt23@earthlink.net)

Read more books, meet more writers and readers...

Attend a meeting of SouthWest Writers!

SouthWest Writers is a nonprofit organization that is devoted to helping both published and unpublished writers improve their craft and further their careers. Located in Albuquerque, SWW serves writers of all ages across the nation in every fiction and non-fiction genre.

SWW offers workshops, professional critique services, several genre conferences, writing contests, and a monthly newsletter packed full of information on publishers, editors and agents. We also have specialized publishing and marketing information available for members only.

Using outreach, education and networking, SWW encourages, supports and inspires all people to express themselves creatively through the written word.

SWW meets on the first Saturday and third Tuesday of every month at New Life Presbyterian Church at 5540 Eubank NE.

For more information on program and directions, go to SWW's website at www.southwestwriters.com. ♦

Noose News

Michael McGarrity, who was our speaker last June, is currently on a book tour promoting his latest Kevin Kerney thriller, *Dead or Alive*. This editor heard him speak at Barnes & Noble in Albuquerque January 21, where he warned his fans that *Dead or Alive* is more violent than his previous books (which aren't exactly a walk in the bosque). He also bragged a little (and justifiably) that The New York Times reviewer, Marilyn Stasio, had given the book a great write-up. Here's an excerpt from that review:

“In the iconography of thrillers, a serial killer can be psychologically complex as well as gruesomely entertaining. But you can't beat a spree for raw action, and in *Dead or Alive* (Dutton, \$25.95), Michael McGarrity has produced a true monster in Craig Larson.

After Larson slaughters some half-dozen people in the sparsely populated rangelands of northern New Mexico, including a youth minister from a Bible camp, it finally dawns on him that ‘he just flat-out enjoyed killing people.’ But when he shoots a cowboy who worked at a ranch owned by Kevin Kerney, retired chief of the Santa Fe police department, the manic Larson sets off a major manhunt.

The procedures for trapping a spree killer are less analytical and more picturesque than those for catching a serial killer, and McGarrity, a former deputy sheriff, knows the drill. He also knows the territory, which he portrays in a blunt, invigorating style that, even after a dozen books, still feels fresh.”

We also learned that *Dead or Alive* will be the last Kerney thriller for a while. For the next couple of years, McGarrity will be working on a historical Western, tracing Kerney's roots back over more than a century. McGarrity's got a contract for the book—which in these economic times really is something to brag about—and sounds eager to get to it, as soon as this blessed book tour is over (and if he doesn't lose his voice in the course of it!).

Do You Have a Reading Budget?

Sisters, I must ask you a very personal question: “Do you have a reading budget for this year?”

Like writers, readers are an integral part of the publishing business. Without you, the publishing business would not exist. You are the sole *raison d'être* for its creation, growth and future. Readers are at the top of the food chain, the queens of their domains. Feasting on the epicurean delights from the bookseller's smorgasbord, readers dine on succulent hardbacks, trade and mass market paperback and magazine stories, all of which have been tastefully prepared for mouthwatering consumption.

Having a leisurely meal in a five-star restaurant requires time and money. So does reading. How often do you dine out?

I heard your answer and I agree with it. Dining out is a luxury and requires careful attention to purse and calendar. The schedule is too full and the pocketbook too empty. To dine out requires careful planning to set aside the required time and money. Thus, the reader must set aside this money and time.

Reading a book takes time. One must obtain the book by purchase or other means, the easy part. The hard part is finding time to sit down for sufficient duration and have a good read, savoring every joyous word. Since the Creator has given each person equal time, 24 hours in a day, it is up to the person to make best use of it.

Like writing, reading is a solitary act. The epitome of enjoyment comes with sharing what was read with a friend over a cup of hot tea. This is one reason that you had joined the Croak & Dagger Chapter of Sisters in Crime. The social aspect of reading drives the reader to greater heights as one transcends the ordinary, mundane world into such places as Santa Teresa, Lake Eden, or Chicago, where Kinsey, Hannah, or V. I. solves her latest caper.

It is your decision on where to spend your money. Set aside some dollars each month to the pursuit of reading. How much depends on what you would like to do. Acquiring books to read? There is the modest cost of belonging to Croak & Dagger and its parent organization, Sisters in Crime. Don't forget the various mystery conferences and special events, such as the annual mystery dinner. Add the costs, divide by 52, and see how little you must set aside each week.

Acquiring books need not be an expensive endeavor. Borrowing a book from a friend, the library or Croak & Dagger's book exchange doesn't cost a penny. Used bookstores offer a cheap alternative, but you may have to wait several months before the current best sellers become available. The brick-and-mortar stores, like Page One, Bookworks, and Hastings, offer the latest selections as well as book signings by the authors. They also provide the ambience of social setting where like-minded readers can get together to discuss favorite characters over a hot cup of tea.

Budget to read, my friend, and I will see you at the next Croak & Dagger meeting. ♦

—Fred Aiken (*FAAiken@aol.com*)

The Internet Public Library (www.ipl.org) is a free web-based library resource that was founded in 1995 by a class at the University of Michigan School of Information and is now staffed by graduate students from Drexel University College of Information Science and Technology in Philadelphia. The IPL has access to many reference works in all fields, and you can use it to access to reference material that you may not know exists, or use the “Ask a Question” feature: Submit your request via e-mail and receive an email response in 3-7 days.

2009 MEETING DATES

Tuesday, January 27, 7:00 p.m.
Tuesday, February 24, 7:00 p.m.
Tuesday, March 24, 7:00 p.m.
Tuesday, April 28, 7:00 p.m.
Tuesday, May 26, 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.

†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

Summary of Findings

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

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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, December 2008

The meeting was called to order at 7 PM at the home of Rob Kresge.

Board members present: 2008 President Rob Kresge, incoming vice president Olin Bray, Membership Jonathan Sacks, incoming secretary Fred Aiken, incoming Program Chair Rita Herther, 2008 Program Chair Ruth Jimenez, and Nooseletter Editor Linda Triegel

Rob Kresge called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. The board thanked Rob for graciously hosting the meeting.

Speakers have been arranged for the first three months of 2009. Rob will introduce Rita to places where the bookmarks (speaker thank-you gift) and engraving service are done. The chapter normally orders 12 bookmarks @ \$15 each. Two bookmarks remain from 2008.

Membership now stands at 65-66 members. In 2008, 12 members were dropped and 28 members were added, ten of which were from the conference.

The *Nooseletter* editor reports that she is continuing to receive new material. More book reviews are needed. It was suggested that the websites of other writing organizations be listed in the *Nooseletter*. Fred will obtain those addresses for the Society of Children Book Writers, Illustrators and Editors, Southwest Writers, Land of Enchantment Romance Authors, and Albuquerque Science Fiction and Fiction.

The four tickets provided by Wecks to compensate Croak and Dagger for the botched dessert at the Mystery Dinner were given to the four board members who participated in the Mystery Dinner and who were present at the board meeting.

The Tellers Committee reported that a unanimous ballot was cast for the incoming 2009 officers. Thirteen members voted at the December meeting and three members voted by absentee ballot.

Rita agreed to pick up the key for the substation's community room. Linda will be the back-up person. Fred Aiken will bring the cooler to the meetings.

It was moved and seconded that four plastic boxes be purchased to transport the book exchange books. Cost was \$34. This would make it easier to transport the books by dividing the books into smaller containers and each container be given to a separate individual. Olin, Cheri, Jonathan, and Fred will each receive a container at the next chapter meeting.

The board discussed the chat room and the Yahoo group. Jonathan has a list of all members in the group. An article should be written for the *Nooseletter* calling attention to this activity of Croak & Dagger and giving the guidelines for normal usage. Send any announcements to be posted on the website to Jonathan.

Fred suggested that the chapter could gain positive publicity by having its members volunteer to be KNME phone friend participants during a future KNME fundraising drive. He will obtain further information from KNME and offered to coordinate this activity.

The next board meeting was tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, February 10, at Rita's home.

Meeting adjourned at 8:13 PM.

Submitted by: Fred A. Aiken, Secretary