



SISTERS in CRIME
CROAK & DAGGER
 ALBUQUERQUE CHAPTER



THE NOOSELETTER

Volume VI, Number 5—September 2010

†Expert Testimony†

Our focus on Los Alamos last month seems to have gone over very well. Our speaker, Alan Carr, the Los Alamos Labs historian, was interesting. In fact, the meeting went well beyond our usual time since there was so much interest and so many questions. It was one of our larger meetings and there were a number of new faces. On September 11, there were 13 of us at the National Museum of Nuclear Science and History (the Atomic Museum). They even rescheduled the movie (*Secrets, Lies, and Atomic Spies*), so we all got to see the movie and then had the docent-guided tour.

Given this success, we may want to do more theme-based meetings and events. We can pick a theme and focus some of the book reviews in the Nooseletter and the meeting presentation on that theme. And in some cases we might even have an additional event based on that theme.

A theme could be almost anything that would interest our members. For example, forensic anthropology is a focus of many mysteries. Patricia Cornwell, Kathy Reichs, Aaron Elkins, and others have a forensic anthropologist as their protagonist. We could review some of their books and compare and contrast their approaches in the *Nooseletter* and then have a forensic anthropologist as our speaker or perhaps an official talking about a case where forensic anthropology provided a key to solving it and getting a conviction. We might also be able to arrange a related tour.

Similarly other protagonists' professions or forensic technologies could provide a theme.

As an alternative, we could target a theme of historical mysteries, either in general or for a specific period. Obviously, there are many other possible themes. If this approach sounds interesting, please let me or any of your board members know—both whether to try more themes and what themes you would be interested in.

On a different topic, at the last two meetings we have talked about various offices and board positions. We are coming up on our elections, so think about the positions and becoming more active (*Ed. Note: See page 12*). We definitely need someone for Vice President, Treasurer, and Membership Chair. If you are interested in any of these positions or working with some of the other positions we mentioned, please let me or any of your board members know. Thanks.♦

– Olin Bray, President

Don't Miss It!

Tuesday, September 28, at 7 p.m.

Our next speaker is Ann Rose, Ph.D., a forensic psychologist. Forensic psychology is defined as the intersection of psychology and the law, but forensic psychologists can perform many roles. The field has witnessed dramatic growth in recent years, as more and more students become interested in this applied branch of psychology. Movies, TV programs and books have help popularize the field, often depicting brilliant heroes who solve vicious crimes or track down killers using psychology.



Sisters in Crime was founded in 1986. *The mission of Sisters in Crime shall be "to promote the professional development and advancement of women crime writers to achieve equality in the industry."*

Our vision is: "Raising professionalism and achieving equity among crime writers."

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.

Change in Registration Procedure for C&D

Members will shortly receive a message about a new procedure for joining Albuquerque's C&D chapter as a dues-paying member. Annual dues will remain at \$20.

In the past, we have taken in new members all during the year and kept track of their renewal dates. The C&D Board approved moving to a single annual date for renewal, making the dues year for everyone run from October 1 to September 30.

Accordingly, members will soon receive a note indicating how this change will affect their next renewal payment in the transitional year. Most current members will be assessed a cost of \$5, \$10, or \$15 to cover their renewal for the year ending September 30, 2011, depending on when they renewed during 2010. New members joining after January 1 will pay a prorated amount depending on which quarter they register in. Everyone will then receive renewal reminders in September, beginning in 2011.

Members receiving their new renewal messages should direct questions to the membership chair, Rob Kresge, either at rkresge777@comcast.net or to contact@croak-and-dagger.com.

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

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

The Line Up

President/Treasurer – Olin Bray – ohbray@nmia.com

Secretary – Fred Aiken – FAAiken@aol.com

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Nooseletter Editor – Linda Triegel – newsette@earthlink.net

All members are invited: to join the Croak & Dagger Yahoo group, an online gathering place for mystery writers. Join in! Log on to C&D's web page (www.croak-and-dagger.com) and click on the link to moderator Nancy Varian for instructions. Exchange news and information about mystery books, movies, and TV shows, as well as online courses.



Noose News

Although summer is usually slow for the publishing industry, we saw a lot of action in August. The most interesting news for SinC members may be the Sisters in Crime Summit Report, a comprehensive look at what's happening in the digital realm. Also, bookstores seem to be lining up on a battlefield. Who will survive? Jodi Piccoult starts a discussion of reviews—and Jennifer Weiner joins in—but some call it “Franzenfreude.”

From Nancy Martin:

The [2010 SinC Summit Report](#) is now available online at www.sistersincrime.org (requires login).

[Barnes & Noble's slow slide](#) means a bump for indies?

Laura Lippman's newest crime [novel sells well in e-book form](#). Why? Publisher has a theory.

Dorchester, traditionally a romance house, cites a 25% reduction in mass market sales and [decides to forgo paper publishing](#) in favor of digital.

Considering self-publishing? Pause and think of [publishers as “filters.”](#)

[Jodi Piccoult](#) lights a match by saying women's books aren't reviewed as often as men's books because they're “commercial,” not “literary.”

[Publishers Weekly's decision to list self-pubbed books](#) . . . for \$149 each. And [Joe Konrath weighs in](#).

Coming out of their corners, ready for the B&N fight--[Burkle & Riggio characterized](#).

And, although it has nothing to do with mysteries, [Her Majesty the Queen is “not amused”](#) by Tony Blair's book.

From Sarah Wisseman:

Barnes and Noble may go private as ebooks surge, and [some indie stores are doing better than large chains](#).

From Mary Jane Sheffet:

The Attorney General of Connecticut is interested in the recent [price agreements](#) among 5 of the largest book publishers and Apple and Amazon.com. The Federal Trade Commission and the Justice Department also take a look.

A study done by Marketing and Research Resources Inc. finds that [40% of respondents read more books on their e-readers](#) than they did when books were available only in printed form.

Bestselling author [Seth Godin](#) decides to sell his own books by digital format. And maybe he's the guy to do it right.

Customers in some bookstores can have an [out-of-stock book printed just for them](#).

From Ellen Hart:

[The bookstore massacre is coming](#). You can't deny this author makes some good points.

From Leslie Budewitz:

A story in the Sunday Missoulian (originally from the Seattle Times, by Mary Ann McGwinn) on [spy novels actually written by spies](#), with recommendations from other spies.

NPR feature on [Sara Paretsky](#).

NPR on “[Franzenfreude](#),” the debate over whether books by men get more reviews and publicity than books by women.

From Ramona Long:

[Philadelphia is trying to tax bloggers](#), requiring a business license if bloggers make any income from blogging. The interpretation is hazy now, but will it apply to writers promoting their books via writing blogs?

From Annette Dashofy:

A fascinating [roundtable discussion](#) by several top agents lead by Jane Friedman about the future of publishing and the need for literary agents.

Sherlock Says: Save the Date



Croak and Dagger is organizing another trip to the Albuquerque Little Theater (ALT) to see the play *Sherlock Holmes: The Final Adventure* on Saturday, January 29, 2011, at 8 p.m. This is a romantic comedy based on two Holmes short stories, “A Scandal in Bohemia” and “The Final Problem.” Last January, 22 of us went to see *Dial ‘M’ for Murder*.

We also plan to organize a supper at 6 p.m. before the performance at La Placita restaurant, 208 San Felipe NW, at the southeast corner of Old Town Plaza and only a few blocks from the theater, which is located off Central, one block south on San Pasquale.

Regular price tickets are \$22, senior \$20. If we get a minimum of 10 interested persons, our cost will be \$18 a ticket. Rob will need enough commitments to buy at least 10 tickets at once. Those interested in attending can get more information by emailing Rob Kresge at rkresge777@comcast.net or see Rob at a meeting.

SouthWest Writers 2010 Annual Contest Winners Announced

New Mexican writers captured 20 of the 42 winning places in this year’s SWW contest but were almost skunked in the 5 novel categories where only 3 in-state writers landed in the winning circle.

Paul Kippert of Santa Fe won for *Savior* in the Science Fiction/Fantasy/Horror category, and Charles Greaves of Santa Fe was a winner, for *Hush Money* in the Mystery/Suspense/Thriller/Adventure category and *Hard Twisted* in the Historical Fiction category. Also in the Historical Fiction category, Elizabeth Rose of Galisteo won for *Hugh’s Footprint*.

Jim Duggins of Rancho Mirage, California, was the other winner in the Historical Fiction category, in addition to Charles Greaves and Elizabeth Rose.

In the Mystery/Suspense/Thriller/Adventure category, A. P. Greenwood of Houston, Texas, won for *Navfac* and John Taylor of Rio Vista, California, for *Land of a Thousand Dances*. New Mexicans, however, dominated the Poetry and Nonfiction Essay/Article categories and won two of the three winning places in Memoir Book, Personal Essay/Column, Historical Fiction, Nonfiction Book, and Screenplay categories.

Awards were presented at the SouthWest Writers Annual Awards Banquet September 10 at the National Hispanic Cultural Center in Albuquerque.

Reviews

Stealing Thunder by Peter Millar. Bloomsbury Publishing 1999, 308 pp (HC).

A parallel tale of 1945 and 1995: of Klaus Fuchs, German-born scientist on the Manhattan Project at Los Alamos, and Eamonn Burke, Irish-American journalist in London, investigating whether Klaus Fuchs, who gave the technical details of the atomic bomb to the Soviets, did not die a natural death as officially reported behind the Iron Curtain.

In 1945, with the belief that scientific knowledge should be shared, Klaus Fuchs passes the critical atomic bomb details to Soviet spy “Raymond” (Harry Gold), per telephone instructions from Soviet master spy “John.” Klaus Fuchs and Harry Gold meet at first on the eastern seaboard, then later in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Klaus’s life on “The Hill” is described, including the suspicion held by Robert Oppenheimer and Niels Bohr that Klaus Fuchs might be a spy, and the “gadget” test at Trinity.

Harry Gold delivered a letter to Air Force B-29 pilot Joshua Finch at Kirtland Air Force Base in Albuquerque and acted as go-between to receive and pass on a “toolkit” using the pretense of roadside aid to stranded motorists.

In 1995, magazine journalist Sabine Kotzke hires Eamonn Burke to find out who murdered Klaus Fuchs and why. Eamonn and Sabine travel to Harwell in the English countryside to interview a woman known as “Nuclear Winter” who worked with Klaus Fuchs. They fly to Albuquerque to check the 1945 guest book at Conrad Hilton’s original hotel, and drive up to Los Alamos to interview Hiram Carter, a scientist who worked with Klaus Fuchs on the Manhattan Project. As they travel to Moscow, then Iceland, to solve the mystery of Fuchs’s murder, they uncover a deeper secret beyond the publicized treason. Attempts on their lives alert them that someone is trying to protect the secrets of 1945. Eamonn’s Russian contact

Valery leads Eamonn to discover the truth at a monastery in Germany.

Peter Millar weaves fact with fiction, suggesting explanations for gaps in known history, such as the unknown “Perseus” listed in the Appendix. To fully appreciate all the plot threads and conspiracy theories, the reader needs to be familiar with WWII military campaigns and generals, political treaties and national leaders of the time, the Manhattan Project, the US, British, Russian and German intelligence organizations, etc. Not having that extensive specialized knowledge, I can only presume the story was well researched, and I found the last third of the book tiresome with its repetitive theme of betrayal and counter-betrayal. Millar apparently intended to suggest WWII was not won by “the good guys,” nor did it end for the right reasons. ♦

—Susan Zates (smzates@yahoo.com)

Stealing Trinity by Ward Larsen. Oceanview Publishing 2008, 316 pp (HC).

A common novel plot in the post-WWII years was that key Nazi leaders escaped to South America at the end of the war and were going to try again. This book revisits that idea, but with a very different spin. What would they need? What about the Los Alamos files from their agent buried deep in the Manhattan project?

With Germany collapsing, Alexander Braun, an American-born, Harvard-educated German with no connection to any of their intelligence organizations, is selected to reestablish contact with their mole and get the data. He arrives in New Mexico in time to see the Trinity test from miles away. Very impressive. He knows he must have the data no matter what it takes.

Michael Thatcher, a British POW interrogator, stumbles on enough to know that something major is happening. However, the Americans won’t tell him anything about their secret project and don’t believe it is now at risk. While they actively try to stop Thatcher’s

investigation, Thatcher takes off and the chase is on. From Germany to Rhode Island, to New Mexico, and across the Pacific to where the first bombs are being assembled.

Bouncing between Braun (the German spy) and Thatcher (the British spychaser), *Stealing Trinity* is a fast-paced, interesting book. It is more of a thriller than a classic mystery story, but there are more than enough puzzles and red herrings to keep you interested and guessing. It also has a very strong Los Alamos and Manhattan project focus, whereas some of the books that have been reviewed just touch on Los Alamos and quickly move on to other things. I would definitely recommend this book, even if you are not strongly interested in the Los Alamos connection.

This is Larsen's second book and a winner of the 2008 National Best Books Award. His first book, *The Perfect Assassin*, was a finalist for the 2006 award.♦

—Olin Bray (ohbray@nmia.com)

Rob's Random Shots

September Case File Number 1-3

A little explanation: Normally, I review one book by a female author and another by a male author in each issue. However, I've been reading so many good ones lately that I just had to review three books by male authors. So following these reviews, there will be three more terrific novels by female authors. Hope these reviews make you want to read all six. RK

The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo by Stieg Larsson, Vintage Crime, 2009, 600 pp (HC)

Astute readers will recall that our editor, Linda Triegel, reviewed the movie in the last issue. I so enjoyed the book that I thought I'd play catch up and encourage you to read the book, if not before you saw the Swedish movie this summer, then before the American one comes out next year.

To begin with, this is a much longer book than the movie could be. I read it on my Kindle, which doesn't count pages, just screens. There

is no way the Hollywood version will be able to cram everything that's in the book into the movie either. Suffice it to say that there's more in here about the travails of *Millenium* magazine and its disgraced writer Mikael Blomkvist than you'll need. Also more about the other woman in his life, the married editor of the magazine. And you get more atmosphere about Lisbeth Salander, the multi-pierced and tattooed girl of the title.

Unlike the movie, they don't meet until halfway through the book and then only because Blomkvist realizes his computer has been hacked. They team up to work a cold case so long buried that it might as well be frozen. Octogenarian executive Henrik Vanger wants them to solve the 40-year-old disappearance of his beloved niece Harriet in what turns out to be a variant on a locked room case—a locked island affair.

I read Michael Connelly for police procedurals and Sue Grafton for PI procedurals. The third kind of sleuth is amateur. Readers of *Dragon Tattoo* get to discover an amateur procedural as journalist Blomkvist and researcher Salander bounce from clue to clue, reaching for tenuous links to get them past stale dead ends and ultimately solve the case, but not before Blomkvist is nearly killed. Then we're treated to his career rehabilitation, thanks to Salander's hacking skills, and we see her benefit herself financially in ways that her brutal guardian couldn't imagine.

Yes, it's a long read, but an engaging one. Start now and you can finish the whole *Millenium* trilogy before the first American movie.♦



Junkyard Dogs by Craig Johnson, Viking, 2010 (HC)

No surprise that I chose this one. I review every Walt Longmire mystery by Craig Johnson and every Wind River mystery (see below) by Margaret Coel as soon as they come out. *Dogs* is Craig's sixth novel featuring the long-suffering sheriff of Absaroka County, Wyoming, and both author and sleuth seem to get better with each outing. In this one, Durant,

the county seat, is in the grip of such a brutal winter that Walt is wishing he could move to warmer New Mexico. And he has an election coming up.

In the middle of this cold snap and in the middle of the night, Walt is called out to find an old man tied to the back of his granddaughter's car. Geo Stewart runs the local junkyard of the title and Walt runs afoul of the old man's two ferocious guard dogs. Not long after settling this family dispute, Walt finds a severed thumb in a cooler on the property and uncovers a lucrative marijuana crop growing in heated tunnels beneath the junked cars. Two deaths follow and Walt and his potty-mouthed deputy Victoria Moretti (worth her own series) have to fight close-mouthed family members of the victims and battle the potentially fatal weather to solve the crimes. All at the risk of their own lives, of course.

Fans of this series, known for Walt's humorous take on absolutely outrageous situations, will love this novel. As a small town police procedural, Craig hits all the high notes and will make you want to visit Wyoming, if not in the dead (pun intended) of winter. Craig gets out of tough Wyoming weather by going to France, four times in 12 months, usually at the expense of a French publisher. His series is well-received even by the notoriously hard-to-impress French. Read him and find out why. ♦

The Pot Thief Who Studied Pythagoras by J. Michael Orenduff, Oak Tree Press, 2009 (TP)

Now this one *will* be a surprise. To you, certainly, as it was to me. I was sent this book by the author and had no great expectations for the publisher, but was intrigued by the premise. Hubert (Hubie) Schuze runs an Indian pottery gallery on the Plaza in Old Town Albuquerque. Since the author is a former president of NMSU and his sole cover blurb was an enthusiastic *kudo* from Governor Bill Richardson, I figured this guy at least had the credentials to write a mystery set in New Mexico.

More than credentials, Mike has ability, style, and wit. This series (the third is soon to appear) is an easily identifiable homage to Lawrence Sanders' very funny *The Burglar Who*

... series, featuring nefarious NYC bookstore owner Bernie Rhodenbarr. The parallels are too numerous to be anything but intentional—the small shop that doesn't make its owner a decent living, a female buddy that Hubie meets for drinks each evening, and the sense that the protagonist's larcenous streak would never be fully engaged if only temptation didn't come his way so often.

As Hubie points out, he used to be able to stock his gallery with legitimately dug up pots from around New Mexico until the Federal Antiquities Act made such treasure hunting a crime. In this novel, Hubie is asked to steal a thousand-year-old pot from a UNM Museum. He's intrigued enough to case the joint, but finds the defenses impregnable and turns down the offer. But when he returns to his shop, he finds a BLM agent who accuses him of stealing that very pot in the first place.

In his efforts to clear his reputation as a legitimate dealer, Hubie encounters two murders, fabricates a fake antique pot, cons the museum into trading him the real one for the copy, and generally gets deeper into trouble before he can dig himself out.

This was a satisfying debut novel from an assured writer who seems much more experienced in the field of crime and art forgery than his credentials would suggest. I've bought his second book and look forward to getting his third during the upcoming December Holiday Stroll in Old Town. But in the interest of exposing more of you to this writer, I've placed *Pythagoras* into the chapter's book exchange box. If you enjoy it as much as I did, be sure to pass it on to other readers. ♦

—Rob Kresge (rkresge777@comcast.net)

September Case File Number 4-6

The Spider's Web by Margaret Coel, Berkley Prime Crime, 2010, 291 pp (HC)

In this, the 15th novel in the *New York Times* bestselling Wind River series, Margaret Coel has broken new ground and placed obstacles between her protagonists that set them

on opposite sides in a murder investigation. Young Arapaho Ned Windsong returns to Wyoming's Wind River Reservation after working as an electrician for a while in the wealthy resort community of Jackson, just south of Grand Teton National Park.

Much to the chagrin of his former girlfriend, Roseanne Birdwoman, he's brought back Marcy Morrison, a beautiful young white woman who says she's his fiancée. Ned intends to "get right" with Arapaho traditional beliefs by participating in the Sun Dance in a few weeks, a ceremony that young men normally spend six months training for.

But before Ned can start his training, he's shot to death in what looks like a home invasion that leaves Marcy beaten but alive. FBI investigators need a safe but nearby place to stash Marcy, their star witness. She comes to stay at the guest house of the St. Francis Mission under the watchful eye of Father John O'Malley. At the same time, Marcy's father, a wealthy TV evangelist from Oklahoma, hires Arapaho attorney Vicky Holden to represent his daughter's interests, since the two prime suspects haven't been caught and she remains under suspicion.

Normally, Father John and Vicky would join forces at this point to protect the girl and ferret out the killers. But as the case unfolds and more suspects come to the fore and Marcy acts irrationally and against her own best interests, Father John does not become her champion. Vicky is forced to travel from the reservation to Jackson, interviewing Ned's most recent employers and learns he may have been involved in a string of residential burglaries in both locales.

As further new ground, the author encourages us to follow several flawed assumptions as suspects turn up dead. And even after the apparent denouement, readers will be left wondering: Who really did it? Is the case really over? We're unlikely to get closure in the next novel, so Margaret's fans will have lots to debate over what is a more open-ended mystery than we're used to. A great read, novel in every sense of the word. ♦

"G" Is for Grafton, The World of Kinsey Millhone by Natalie Hevener Kaufman and Carol McGinnis Kay, Owl Books, revised & updated 2000, 466 pp (TP)

Watch for this excellent and exhaustive study of one of fiction's favorite private eyes in the book boxes. Not because it isn't good, but because I wanted to make it available to more readers. Updated through "*O" Is for Outlaw*, this volume studies, with Sue Grafton's cooperation, the childhood, professional background, and personality of Kinsey Millhone, a perennial favorite of mystery readers since the avalanche of awards for these novels began with "*A" Is for Alibi* more than 20 years ago.

For someone like me, whose devoted reading about Kinsey ended with volume N, it was like catching up with an old friend, remembering cases, victims, murderers, cops, and reveling in the Santa Teresa locale (used as homage to mystery author Ross MacDonald). We re-learn everything from the origins of Kinsey's comfort foods, her love affairs, her moral compass, her fitness routines, even the guns she favors. And I was surprised to learn that she'd killed far fewer killers in those 15 books than I recalled.

This volume inspired me to get back and finish the series thus far ("*U" Is for Undertow*). And I hope it will do that for other readers as well. And we can learn new things as we read this. An excellent 30-page essay puts Sue in her proper place in the development of the PI novel, especially her role in popularizing the female detective novel. In fact, the essay notes that besides a pantheon of women writers—three of whom, Sara Paretsky, Marcia Muller, and Sharon McCone, founded Sisters in Crime more than 22 years ago—attention is paid to Albuquerque's own Judith Van Gieson and her lawyer sleuth Neil Hamel in the spread of stories about female investigators.

So wait for this book to show up in the book boxes, brush up your Grafton, and expose yourself (in the best sense of the term) to the female detectives that form the core of Sisters in Crime. ♦

North of the Border by Judith Van Gieson,
UNM Press, 2002, 170 pp (TP)

This is one of the author's earliest mysteries and the second one I've reviewed featuring lawyer Neil Hamel, cited by the writers of "*G Is for Grafton*" as an example of a female sleuth concerned with the environment. This book doesn't start out that way.

Neil takes a case from Carl Roberts, a former colleague who adopted a Mexican child years ago. Someone is sending him threatening notes concerning the child. Who's responsible? The child's mother? The American woman who runs a home for expectant mothers in San Miguel, Mexico? The Mexican attorney in Juarez who arranged the adoption? Looks like an easy slam dunk for Neil—go to Juarez, interview the Mexican lawyer, dig around, and report back to her client.

But when Neil goes to see the lawyer a second time, she finds him in his office with his throat cut. Soon, an important file on the case goes missing. Neil makes a second trip, this time to the infant center in San Miguel, but doesn't come up with a likely suspect there. Upon returning to the States, she finds that Carl Roberts' recently announced Congressional candidacy is being aided by the sale of his father-in-law's gold mine to be used for a nuclear waste storage site.

Environmental issues have entered the case. But what does the well-known WIPP storage site have to do with threats about a child's adoption? What could a Mexican lawyer know that would cost him his life?

Judith's evocation of the New Mexico landscape has won her deserved praise in both her series of mysteries. In this book, she excels at painting portraits of both Juarez and San Miguel that are equally colorful and lovingly rendered. It's a treat for the reader and almost enough to make us forget that there's one murder at the heart of all this beauty, and perhaps another if Neil can't get to the bottom of this case. For both the mystery and the travel writing, this is a trip worth taking. ♦

—Rob Kresge (rkresge777@comcast.net)

The Girl Who Played with Fire, by Stieg Larsson. Vintage Crime, 2009. 724 pages (PB)

The second novel in Stieg Larsson's Millennium trilogy opens where the first one left off, with The Girl, Lisbeth Salander, on what might be called a working vacation in the Caribbean (she worked to get the money to enjoy it in the first novel), where she can't leave well enough alone and helps bring another bad guy to justice.

But that's just by way of prologue. Then things really heat up, as Lisbeth returns to Stockholm and learns—somewhat belatedly, as she's always flying under the official radar—that she's wanted for the murder of a journalist and his researcher lover. In fact, there's a nation-wide manhunt going on, which she learns only when she sees herself in a newspaper headline.

Meanwhile, Our Boy reporter, Mikael Blomkvist, who found the bodies of his friends, doesn't think Lisbeth did it, but can't dig her up to ask. He's persuaded that the murder had to do with an exposé *Millennium* is about to publish about a widespread sex-trafficking operation, for which the victims had done most of the research and writing. Lisbeth's former boss (when she had to work for a living) also comes to her defense, as does the psychiatrist involved in her case when she was confined to a mental home after a murderous incident in her youth.

The police, of course, are much involved, and the chief investigator is stymied by how vehement Lisbeth's defenders are as well as by a couple of less than ethical investigators in his own department. They're not exactly bumlbers, but they're fighting each other as much as trying to solve the murder.

Lisbeth, who admittedly has inside knowledge, does find out who did the murder and is framing her, leading to a violent conclusion that leaves the reader primed for book #3, *The Girl Who Kicked the Hornet's Nest* (not yet out in paperback, alas).

This story is what Arthur Miller once called the chickens-coming-home-to-roost sort of plot. Lisbeth's past catches up with her, nastily

entwined with the current crime, and only she can understand what's happened and resolve it, bringing all her courage and determination to bear.

The translation of all of Larsson's books, by Reg Keeland, is terrific. I don't know how hard it is to translate Swedish to English, but it must take real talent to make it seamless, with none of the awkwardness we remember from those stolid Constance Garnet translations of Russian classics. These read the way they should, like thrillers, and if this one seems not quite so thrilling as *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*, it's only because the first shock has worn off, but that makes the second (and no doubt the third) pure fun to read. ♦

—Linda Triegel (*ljt23@earthlink.net*)

The Devil's Hearth by Phillip DePoy, St. Martin's Minotaur, 2003, 244 pp (HC)

You have to love a book that is dedicated thus: "This book is dedicated to Lee Nelson Nowell, a girl named for a Confederate General, a Navy Admiral, and French Christmas, after which a name like Fever Devlin (*sic*) doesn't seem too far-fetched. (Thanks for keeping me from dedicating the book to Weezie Nodblocker, a person I don't know but whose name makes me laugh.)"

That is followed by the opening sentence: "I was home, and the mouth of the corpse was open wide." Is that a great hook, or what?

Devilin's old friend and Deputy Sheriff is Skidmore Needle (husband of Girlinda Needle). You have to admire someone who comes up with names like that. (My wife, who is from Tennessee, says "Girlinda" is a right proper name for a girl whose Momma is named Linda.)

The Devil's Hearth is the first volume in DePoy's series featuring his hero, Fever Devilin, ex-professor of cultural anthropology and folklorist. Devilin returns to his roots in Appalachian Georgia after teaching in the Big City. Greenwood County, Georgia, hasn't changed much, but Fever has. He is haunted by memories of his mother, who served as an "exotic dancer" at his father's side shows, and

who never seemed to have time for her only acknowledged son. However, it soon becomes evident to Fever that he may be the target of someone who doesn't want him to discover the deeply buried secrets of his past.

DePoy excels at showing, not telling, both by dialogue that drips with mountain patois and descriptions that bring scenes to light in the reader's imagination; *e.g.*:

"The house tilted, and the wood had long since gone to gray, but dressed in sunlight and framed by purple at the base and blue at the roof, it seemed more a romantic explanation of the word *home* than an actual house. Heat from the still-warm stove in the fireplace inside made white steam rise from the chimney like smoke, but that steam rose upward and mixed with the clouds to give the illusion that the house itself had created the entire sky."

Blue Mountain is where the Reverend Hezekiah Cotage and his dwindling flock still handle snakes and "You're a mess!" is the highest form of approbation. The men gather every morning at Gil's Garage and old secrets are closely held. If you've never been, why then this book will take you there. If you have, you'll find it comfortably familiar. The resolution may seem a tad hokey, but then you never could tell about those Deveroe brothers. ♦

—Ira Rimson (*irimson02@comcast.net*)

A Minister's Ghost, by Phillip DePoy. St. Martin's Minotaur, 2006. 277 pp (HC)

DePoy is a master not only of place, but of The Hook as well.

"A November ghost is always an omen," but Fever Devilin fails to recognize the wraith that appears to him out of the fog at the railroad crossing. When he reaches home and learns of the deaths of two teenage sisters at that same railroad crossing, he is wrested into another convolution of events, characters and mores amongst the inhabitants of Appalachian Georgia.

The dead girls were nieces of his lady friend, Lucinda, once a high school sweetheart, now a not-so-merry widow patiently awaiting

Fever's glacial progress toward overcoming flashbacks to his anguished childhood. Fever continually is forced to confront his own neglectfully solitary childhood while his parents plied their trade as itinerant side show artists, his father the magician and con artist, his mother the beautiful assistant and, apparently, adulteress to a substantial percentage of the population. The formerly loutish Deveroe clan have polished up their act and found new roles as Blue Mountain undertakers.

DePoy employs diametric character twists to challenge readers of his prior tales. The stratagem is effective for moving us out of the comfort zone of familiarity that we might have brought along with us. Character changes have also occurred to Fever's old pal Skidmore Needle. He has advanced from good-old-boy Deputy to serious Sheriff. The demands his new office instill discomfit the reader's expectation.

DePoy's new characters are even more strikingly bizarre: the ex-babysitter and friend of the dead girls from their childhood, who is also a "little person;" and her similarly-sized fiancé, scion of the family formerly most prominent on the mountain. Judy Dare's insistence that the girls were murdered motivates Devlin to investigate more deeply into the circumstances of their death, angering his old friend the Sheriff. It also provides an opening for DePoy to interject a McGuffin, or maybe two! (No, I won't tell you what they are; you'll have to read it for yourself!)

The plot's *denouement* is a surprise, but seemed to me a bit of a letdown. The beauty of DePoy's writing is that it transports the imagination and evokes images and sounds of the Georgia places and people, only to veer off into the unexpected. Sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't, but on balance his "showing" is a class act.

I'll just leave with this example: "There was no sign of life in the house. I parked on the street and got out of my truck. Instantly the blinds in the front room fell, as if the house were squeezing its eyes shut." ♦

That's good.

—Ira Rimson (irimson02@comcast.net)

Croak & Dagger Needs YOU!

Chapter elections are held each November, when all positions are available to any member who wants to serve. Below are brief descriptions of elected and appointed offices. If you're interested in any position, contact president Olin Bray at ohbray@nmia.com.

Elective Positions

The **President** presides at all membership meetings and executive committee meetings; sets goals and assigns responsibilities, polls members on major decisions, keeps members informed, and serves as group spokesperson.

The **Vice President** conducts meetings in the President's absence and fills or assists in when needed for any other executive tasks.

The **Secretary** takes minutes at monthly board meetings, sends out notices of board meetings when needed, and keeps members on track as to what matters have been decided.

The **Treasurer** maintains the chapter's checking account and, with the membership chairman, tracks income and outgo.

Appointive Positions:

The **Programs/Publicity Chair** uses chapter resources to come up with speaker ideas and lines up programs for two or three months at a time; also coordinates purchase of gift bookmarks and sends press releases.

The **Nooseletter Editor** collects material from members and the media, edits for length, lays out the bimonthly *Nooseletter*, and delivers it to the membership chair for email distribution.

The **Membership** chairman works with the treasurer to maintain a data base of members, sends out meeting announcements and the *Nooseletter* to members.

The **Webmaster/Webmistress** maintains the chapter's website, renewing contracts with the site host, uploading announcements and other information when directed by the board.

The **Library Liaison** offers branches of the Bernalillo public library system information about C&D programs and helps set up displays relating to chapter events and writers.

2010-2011 Conferences

Below are some of the writers' conference coming up in the next six months. For more information, click on the link or check them out individually online or e-mail the contacts noted. (Listings from <http://www.blackravenpress.com/calendar.htm>.)

October 14-18

2010 Bouchercon by the Bay: San Francisco, CA. Toast Master: Eddie Muller; US Guest of honor: Laurie R. King; International Guest of Honor: Denise Mina; Distinguished Contribution to the Genre: Lee Child. Contact: www.bcon2010.com

NOTE: Bouchercon 2011 will be in St. Louis, MO, September 15-18



October 29-31

Magna cum Murder 2010, sponsored by Ball State University, at the Muncie (Indiana) Convention Center. Guests of honor: Historical mystery writing team Charles & Caroline Todd. Contact: www.magnacummurder.com

November 4-7

NoirCon 2010, Philadelphia, PA. Keynote Speaker: Charles Benoit; Awardees: Johnny Temple of Akashic Press; George Pelecanos. Contact: www.noircon.com

November 13-15

New England Crime Bake, Dedham, MA. Eighth annual mystery conference for writers and readers, co-sponsored by Scarlet Letters (New England Sisters in Crime) and the Mystery Writers of America New England Chapter. Guest of Honor: Sue Grafton. Information: www.crimebake.org.

November 12-13

Tony Hillerman Writing Conference, Inn and Spa at Loretto, Santa Fe, NM. Speakers/leaders include Margaret Coel, Valerie Plame Wilson, Bill O'Hanlon, and Judith van Gieson. Manuscript critique available. Sign up by September 25 for the best rate. Contact www.wordharvest.com.

March 24-27, 2011

Left Coast Crime—The Big Chile, La Fonda Hotel, Santa Fe, NM. Left Coast Crime comes to the City Different! Guests of Honor: Margaret Coel, Steve Havill; Toastmaster: Steve Brewer. Information: www.leftcoastercrime.org/2011 or coordinator Pari Noskin Taichert's blog, www.murderati.com. Sign up by December 31, 2010, for only \$210—and watch this space!

February 4-6, 2011

Love is Murder, Intercontinental Hotel O'Hare, Chicago, IL. Featured authors: Rhys Bowen, Joseph Finder, Carolyn Haines, Joan Johnston, Jon Land, F. Paul Wilson. Panels, Ms. Critiques, Expert Demonstrations, Booksellers, Master Writing Class. Contact: www.loveismurder.net

March 3-6, 2011

Sleuthfest, "Heat up Your Writing," Deerfield Beach, FL. Presented by the Florida Chapter of MWA. Guests of Honor: Meg Gardiner, Dennis Lehane. Information: www.sleuthfest.com

2010 MEETING DATES

Tuesday, September 28, 7:00 p.m.
Tuesday, October 26, 7:00 p.m.
Tuesday, November 23, 7:00 p.m.
December – *No meeting*

Meetings are free to the public.

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

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

Check our Web site, www.croak-and-dagger.com, for schedule changes.

Summary of Findings

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

†*Nooseletter* Submissions†

Croak & Dagger friends are encouraged to contribute articles, reviews, and essays on aspects of mystery writing *and* reading for publication consideration. Information on relevant conferences or events is also welcome. Especially let us know if you have published a new book or story, or have an upcoming local author event. (Unbridled enthusiasm for your own mystery book is encouraged here.)

Length: Articles should average 500 words, but short items are also welcome.

Deadlines: Publication is every other month, starting in January. Submission deadlines are the 15th of the month prior to publication: Feb 15, April 15, June 15, Aug 15, Oct 15, and Dec 15.

The Living and the Dead: As a general policy, articles and information should focus on living authors rather than dead ones, but that's not set in concrete shoes. Articles about specific historical development of the crime-mystery writing genre, for example, would be welcome.

Submissions: Please submit via e-mail to newsette@earthlink.net, with "Nooseletter" in the subject line.

The *Nooseletter* is distributed to all members electronically. ♦ —Linda Triegel

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Still not a member of Sisters in Crime?

\$20/year brings mystery to your life! The Albuquerque *Croak & Dagger* chapter welcomes mystery fans who want to enjoy felonious fun, absolutely criminal companionship, and sensational speakers.

Benefits of membership in the *Croak & Dagger* chapter include a subscription to our *Nooseletter*, close contact with local mystery writers, and fun events with other mystery fans.

You do *not* have to be a member of the national organization to join us. Come hear our next program speaker and meet the gang. We promise to bring mayhem and murder into your life.

Contact our membership chair, at contact@croak-and-dagger.com