

Sisters
in
Crime †

SISTERS in CRIME
CROAK & DAGGER
ALBUQUERQUE CHAPTER



THE NOOSE LETTER

Volume X, Number 5 — September 2014

†Expert Testimony†

This month's column is a collection of tidbits from national Sisters in Crime. For those of you holding your breath for the next installment of the Hillerman saga, according to SinC, Anne Hillerman has signed a three book contract in a "major deal," which SinC defines as over \$500,000. The Hillerman stories will continue, as if there had been any doubt.

A piece that SinC reprinted from the *New York Times* warns writers (and many others) of excessive, blatant marketing on Facebook. It can annoy and turn off the very people you are trying to attract. There is a clear distinction between effective marketing and an ego trip. Some suggested guidelines include: (1) Is it something people want and need to know (do people really care what you had for breakfast or every minute detail of each of your signings?); (2) The familial test (would your relatives want to hear it from you rather than a third party?); (3) Disclose some setbacks or problems (everybody has them and they make you seem more real); (4) Publicize the work of others; (5) Add in nonprofessional but engaging content; and (6) Provoke a conversation (sometimes your readers also have interesting things to say).

One thing most writers want, and need if they want to sell books, is media coverage. Unfortunately, it seems like the only writers who get a lot of media coverage are those who already have it. However, there are exceptions. For example, Andrew Crofts, a writer few people have ever heard of, has a new book — *Confessions of a Ghostwriter*. This "unknown"

author has written 80 books which have sold more than 10 million copies. They just have somebody else's name on them. Surprisingly, this successful ghostwriter finds many things about ghostwriting boring, including many of the people he has written for. In fact, he says he no longer does ghostwriting.

The battle between Amazon and Hachette with each side creating their own proxies — Readers United and Authors United, respectively. The fight has produced a good example of the problems with using quotes out of context, especially if your opponent can find and provide the correct context.

Amazon used a quote from George Orwell about the introduction of paperbacks in the 1930s, comparing that to the objections about ebooks today. They quote Orwell as saying, "if publishers had any sense, they would combine against them (paperbacks) and suppress them." However, the actual quote apparently is, "the Penguin Books (paperbacks) are splendid value for sixpence, so splendid that if the other publishers had any sense, they would combine against them and suppress them." A more complete quote can sometimes drastically change the meaning.

--Jan Bray

Don't Miss It!

Tuesday, September 23rd, at 7 p.m.

Our September speaker will be Albuquerque author Pari Noskin Taichert, founding member of Croak and Dagger and its first president. Pari is the author of the Sasha Solomon mystery series, in which the protagonist, a public relations freelancer, investigates promotional opportunities for lesser known (to the outside world) New Mexico towns, including Clovis, Belen, and Socorro. Her first two novels were Agatha Award finalists.

Looking Forward to Our October and November Speakers:

On October 28th:

In the spirit of Halloween, we welcome members of Los Muertos Spirit Seekers who

explore paranormal phenomena. With a combined 20+ years of experience, both personal and professional, Cat Kaspar and Peggy Schofield focus their investigations on private homes and small businesses. Also complimenting the team is Margo Richardson, an independent investigator and clairsentient.

And on November 25th:

Former Croak and Dagger President and Albuquerque author Margaret Tessler will speak to us on winter-themed mysteries. Her novels feature attorney Sharon Salazar and her husband Ryan encountering crime in various New Mexico and Texas towns. Her winter-themed mystery, *Cold Comfort*, is set in Cloudcroft.

What To Expect if You Get Familiarization From Police Officers

(The following is excerpted from a blog entry by author Terry Odell of the Rocky Mountain Chapter of Mystery Writers of America—used by permission)

(Useful information to ensure authenticity in what you write—Ed.)

A police officer who asked not to be identified in publications showed us two variations of handcuffs, hinged and chained. Department policy states that almost every time you have a suspect, he or she will be in the back seat of the car, and almost always cuffed. Their procedure is to cuff, secure, then search. Any time one officer turns a suspect over to another, it's expected that the second officer will do another search. He told us of a time when an officer had been handed off a suspect by a much higher ranking officer, so he was reluctant to search the suspect again. Turns out, the guy had a gun hidden in his shorts. Not a good outcome.

He demonstrated his technique on a brave volunteer. One thing he pointed out—he no longer says, "Spread your legs," especially to a female suspect. It's "Spread your feet."

At this point, our K9 officer and his partner arrived, so the handcuffing demo was cut short. We went down to the classroom where we met Joy, a Belgian Malinois and her handler. The presentation was limited given the lack of time, but I'd seen Joy working the last time I was at the police academy. Although the Belgian Malinois looks like a German shepherd, the biggest difference is in their energy levels. Shepherds are slower, more laid back.

The police department gets these dogs from European trainers, where they go through preliminary training. Joy's handler speaks to her in Dutch, which is the language they began her training in. Also, it's unlikely anyone she's trying to apprehend speaks Dutch, so the bad guy won't be trying to give her commands (not that she'd obey), and they also don't know what the handler is telling the dog to do.

Most dogs are about 2 years old when they begin their specialized training. Joy and her partner have been working together for about 7 years, and the dog is about ready to retire. When she does, she'll live with her handler and become part of the family. Her handler did say he's not likely to remain with the K9 unit, since he and Joy have been a team, and if Joy is living with him, it would be difficult to bring another dog into the mix.

These dogs require 16 hours per month of training in order to maintain their "credibility" in the court system, and are re-certified yearly. Joy is a multi-purpose dog; she can track people, sniff out drugs, and find objects. It was interesting to learn that when she's sent to search for something, perhaps a cell phone someone threw into a field, she's zeroing in on anything that doesn't smell like vegetation, and that has a human scent. We watched her do this the last time I was here, and she had no trouble finding a phone or keys. She lies down to let her handler know she's found something, and is rewarded with a ball, or Kong toy. To the dogs, it's all a game. Do what you're told, and you'll get to play with your favorite toy.

When asked what Joy seemed to enjoy most about her work, her handler said, "she loves to be told to bite." She's great at apprehending the bad guys.

Reviews

Key: PB=Paperback TP=Trade Paperback HC=Hardcover
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Rob's Random Shots

(Reviewer's note: Four short ones this issue instead of my usual two. Besides my own novel *Saving Lincoln*, these are the other books nominated for the 2014 Sue Feder Memorial Award for Best Historical Mystery, in alphabetical order by authors' last names)

September Case File Number One

A Murder at Rosamund's Gate by Susanna Calkins, Minotaur Books, NY, 2013, HB, 340 pp

This is the only one of this year's finalists by a debut author, an American. Since the novel is so painstakingly true to its era, I expected a Brit. The setting is 17th century London, an era not overrun with other mysteries. This is a book steeped in history—everything from food to smells, dress to customs, the abysmal legal system in place at the time to architecture and London geography.

Throw in the plague, and at the end, the beginning of another great fire.

Lucy Champion is second maid in the household of the Hargraves. The master is a magistrate, which we learn was at this time a sort of judge and prosecuting attorney. After one murder of a young woman, Bessie, the first maid is found similarly slain. Lucy is promoted and struggles to become a ladies' maid. Household members include son Adam, whom Lucy has an obvious crush on, but she knows her station. We are treated to everything from holiday customs, to food preparations, to food shopping. This book has been described as *Upstairs, Downstairs* meets Samuel Johnson.

The level of historical detail overwhelmed the story at times. No period detail is overlooked. By the end of the book, the household, along with everyone in London, has been nailed into their house during a plague outbreak (sanitary conditions are abysmal) and we almost lose track of Lucy's attempt to find the killer of the two women. Her freedom to do so is realistically limited by her station as a servant.

A good story by a promising author whose subsequent novels I hope will be more lively.

September Case File Number Two

Dandy Gilver and a Bothersome Number of Corpses by Catriona McPherson, Minotaur Books, 2012, HB, 304 pp

What a contrast from Susanna, the first-time author. Catriona's (I met her at Left Coast Crime in Colorado Springs) first Dandy Gilver (short for Dandelion) book won the Sue Feder Award in 2012 and her second won an Agatha for best historical mystery and the Bruce Alexander Award for the same category, both in 2013. Dandy, a private detective whose partner is not her husband Hugh (who only appears in this novel near the end—this is not Nick and Nora Charles), goes undercover as a schoolmistress at the behest of an old family friend. The woman is concerned about her youngest daughter's welfare as a teacher in what seems to be in many ways an unconventional girl's school in northern coastal Scotland in an unnamed year in the 1920s. When Dandy finds the young woman, Fleur, she blurts out, "I've killed five people."

In short order, the body of a drowned woman is pulled from the sea and teachers continue to disappear from the school. Is Fleur serious? Is the dead woman a departed teacher? It doesn't seem to be the missing wife of the small town's leading restaurateur.

The prologue in this book is worth singling out for praise. I use a prologue in each of my novels and I've run across a great many good ones as a reader. *But the prologue in this mystery is without a doubt the best I've ever read.* No one would be able to put the book down after being emotionally drained in the first two and a half pages.

September Case File Number Three (yes, three! See note above)

Murder as a Fine Art by David Morrell, Little, Brown and Company, 2013, Kindle version

David Morrell of Santa Fe, a speaker to Croak & Dagger, should need no introduction. A consistent *NY Times* bestselling author (Rambo, Brotherhood of the Rose, Scavengers), this is his first foray into historical mysteries.

He has written a book with many of the stylistic touches of an actual 19th century novel, including changing points of view, purported diary and memoir recounting, etc. The story begins with the discovery of a gruesome murders of an entire family, an uncanny repeat of a similar crime a generation earlier. After we meet the constable and the detective whom we might think would be the protagonists, the point of view shifts to a most unlikely investigator, Thomas De Quincey, infamous for his memoir *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater*, is the major suspect in a series of ferocious mass murders identical to ones that terrorized London forty-three years earlier.

The blueprint for the killings seems to be De Quincey's essay "On Murder Considered as One of the Fine Arts." Desperate to clear his name but crippled by opium addiction, De Quincey is aided by his devoted daughter Emily and a pair of determined Scotland Yard detectives. We only meet the actual killer (unnamed for a while) in a mid-novel digression in the style of a 19th century novelist's omniscient point of view. While it might seem impossible to figure out who and why the copycat crime occurred, David convincingly supplies the necessary links and De Quincey is able to solve this bloody repetition of one of London's most infamous crimes.

September Case File Number Four

Ratlines by Stuart Neville, Soho Press, 2013, HB, 352 pp

While definitions of timeframes of historical fiction differ, you can't skate closer to the edge than this thrilling tale does, set in 1963 just months before US President John F. Kennedy is due to pay the first visit by a head of state to Ireland (and 50 years before this book's publication date, so it's barely historical, especially to those of us who lived through that time). Brutal murders of friends of exiled German WWII legendary commando Otto Skorzeny lead Justice Minister Charles Haughey to appoint intelligence agent Albert Ryan to make sure the killings stop and don't cause the

U.S. Secret Service to cancel the presidential visit.

Skorzeny doesn't exactly live in seclusion, but enjoys the high life with funds from the war and from his times with dictators in Spain and Argentina. Ryan questions the commando's friends, sycophants, and acquaintances and runs afoul of the Mossad and British agents at great peril to himself (the torture scenes are over the top—be warned). Threats to Ryan, including the torture, also involve his parents and a young woman foisted on him by Haughey and who is also supposed to report on Ryan's progress to Skorzeny.

A high stakes financial transfer sets the stage for the climax and it's interesting to note that while real historical personages pepper the pages of this thriller, none of them were harmed during the writing of this novel.

--Rob Kresge, rkresge777@comcast.net,
www.robertkresge.com

The following reviews were all written by Susan Zates, smzates@qwest.net

Bruno, Chief of Police by Martin Walker,
Vintage Books, 2010, 273pp PB

This is the first book of a mystery series set in contemporary France.

Benoit Courrèges, known as "Bruno," is the chief of police in the small commune of St. Denis in the Périgord region. He doesn't carry weapons in his peaceful town. He fully supports the local cottage industries, farmers and cheese makers for generations, to the extent of alerting them to hide their wares when EU inspectors come "to enforce rules made in Brussels." He coaches young children in sports, earning their trust and respect early and making it unlikely they will turn to crime as teenagers.

The brutal murder of an elderly resident comes as a complete surprise in quiet St. Denis. Bruno has the considerable irritation of national law enforcement taking over the case, but it's tempered by his attraction to detective Isabella.

Bruno befriends an Englishwoman who has settled in St. Denis, and her scholarly friend eventually unearths the clues to solving the

murder, whose roots go back to significant political events generations ago.

The landscape of St. Denis is lovingly described, as are Bruno's modest self-built home and Pamela's restored estate. I would really like to see a screen adaptation. The gourmet cooking by both Bruno and Pamela is mouth-watering.

The community spirit and loyalty of St. Denis residents permeates the story – they're "one for all, and all for one" – as well as fierce patriots. The detailed French history which motivated the crime was quite interesting and educational for me. I was completely unaware of the wave of Algerian immigration or the Force Mobile.

The somewhat unorthodox non-resolution of the murder is thought-provoking. I definitely plan to continue reading the series. The next book is *The Dark Vineyard*.

Death at Daisy's Folly by Robin Paige,
(Berkeley Prime Crime, 1997, 272pp PB)

This is the third book of the Victorian Mystery series set in England.

Kate Ardleigh is an American woman who moved to England to work as her aunt's secretary, then later inherited her aunt's English estate. Her American ways set her apart from the English high society in which she now finds herself, but she has found a close friend in Sir Charles Sheridan, an English gentleman interested in photography and forensic science. They have worked together twice before in the series to solve murders, and each respects the other's abilities. They are romantically attracted as well.

So when Kate goes to the countess of Warwick's country house for a weekend event, she is delighted to learn that Charles will be there as well. He is riding up with his friend Marsden in a motorcar. The countess of Warwick ("Daisy") will also be hosting the prince of Wales ("Bertie"), with whom she was having an affair (historically accurate). Marsden is excited at the chance to take "Bertie" for a ride in a motorcar. The destination for their outing comes as a surprise

to most of the guests. Chelmsford Workhouse is a grim last-resort for the desperately poor. Daisy champions many reforms, and would like the publicity of a royal visit, with Charles as her photographer, to push her campaign. Daisy's taking a political risk, on top of the huge expense of a royal weekend.

When a stable boy is found dead in the stables, it is assumed to be an accident. When the next death occurs, obvious clues point suspiciously to Daisy. The Prince wants the investigation handled quietly, with no police, so he asks Charles, who agrees and asks Kate to assist. The clues are so obvious they suggest a frame-up. In the course of investigating, many dirty secrets come out. Not all are relevant to the deaths, but necessary to understanding the motives of all guests. Kate and Charles pool their knowledge gained from questioning the other guests, and together solve the murders and foil a political plot.

It's entertaining to read about Victorian country house parties, the social mores, intrigues, and politics. Initially, Kate and Charles each feel that personal reasons prevent their relationship from progressing, but happily, they decide otherwise.

Robin Paige is the joint pseudonym used by Susan Wittig Albert and her husband Bill Albert. Next book in the Victorian Mystery series is *Death at Devil's Bridge*.

The Importance of Being Ernestine, by Dorothy Cannell, Viking Penguin, 2002, 248pp PB.

This is book 10 of the Ellie Haskell cozy mystery series set in contemporary England.

Ellie and her housekeeper Mrs. Malloy have been solving mysteries all through the series, so it's no surprise they're teamed up to solve another; this time, however, they actually act as private detectives.

Because her elderly relatives around the world are dying, Lady Krumley of Moulty Towers feels that "dark forces" are carrying out a former housemaid's deathbed curse. The most recent death at the Krumley mansion does seem suspicious. Ellie's housekeeper Mrs. Malloy

recently began working for a private investigator, "Milk" Jugg, who's on vacation, so Ellie and Mrs. Malloy take Lady Krumley's case. Their objective: Find Ernestine, the housemaid's illegitimate offspring.

This is a very gentle cozy, no violence or suspense. The weather provides atmosphere: "The moon huddled behind a threadbare blanket of cloud. It was no longer raining, but the wind shook the trees as if intent on rattling some sense into their leafless heads." The plot takes a back seat to the comical banter between Ellie and Mrs. Malloy.

The Importance of Being Ernestine is mild entertainment for a longtime fan of the Ellie Haskell series. If you're not familiar with the series, definitely start with the first book, *The Thin Woman*, where the primary characters and relationships are introduced.

The Shadow of the Wind by Carlos Ruiz Zafón, Planeta, 2001, 565pp

This is Book 1 of the Cemetery of Forgotten Books series.

A melodramatic gothic tale set in 1930s-1950s Barcelona, *The Shadow of the Wind* spans decades of Daniel Sampere's life, from the time his bookseller father introduces him to The Cemetery of Forgotten Books, a secret book repository. In that first visit, Daniel chooses to read *The Shadow of the Wind* by Julián Carax, a choice that shapes the course of his life.

Daniel is enchanted and mesmerized by the book; he loves it so much he wants to find all the other works by the author. Daniel quickly learns there is a mystery surrounding Julián Carax, and a sinister figure going by the same name as a character from *The Shadow of the Wind* has been buying up all the Carax books—to burn them.

The more people Daniel turns to for information about Julián Carax, the more secrets he must uncover. Not everyone tells him all they know, just enough to spur him on his quest—or perhaps to deter him? A complex web of personalities and subplots reveal the story of Julián Carax's life. The novel goes back

in time to Julián's childhood, where he formed both a lifelong friend and a powerful enemy.

In a coming-of-age chapter, young Daniel becomes infatuated with a woman much older than he, and is absolutely crushed when he accidentally discovers she is sexually attracted to a man of her own age. Daniel wallows in despair, yet shows tremendous generosity and kindness as he befriends a homeless man. Fermín Romero de Torres becomes a lifelong friend and partner in Daniel's quest for Julián Carax. Together they confront many dangers, but each also finds the love of his life.

If you love gothic melodrama, mystery, intrigue, and romance in a sweeping historical saga—this is your book! I recommend listening to the audio version, to enjoy the pronunciation of the Spanish and French names.

A short story, "The Rose of Fire," available as a free download from Amazon, describes how The Cemetery of Forgotten Books came to be. I plan to read it next, before continuing the series with Book 2, *The Angel's Game*.

Night Soldiers by Alan Furst, Random House, 2002, 454 pp (PB).

This is the first book of the Night Soldiers historical espionage series set during WWII.

Night Soldiers is set in Eastern Europe, Spain and France, spanning 1934-1945. Each named section of the book (Levitsky's Geese, Blue Lantern, Paris 1937, Plaque Tournant, Bessarabia) has its own setting, plot and cast of supporting characters. Protagonist Khristo Stoianev ties all sections together; a few key players appear in multiple sections. It seems like the sweeping historical coverage of this book alone would likely be expanded into a series by another author.

Not an easy or fast book to read, the prose is eloquent and compelling, a great pleasure to read, even when the complex layers of treachery or counterintelligence are baffling. This is not a story of famous battles, but rather a gritty, realistic portrayal of ordinary people struggling to survive in occupied countries, harsh times, and clandestine operations, with fleeting

moments of courage and kindness.

Khristo Stoianev grew up in Vidin, a small village in Bulgaria. When his brother is murdered for showing disrespect to fascists, Khristo flees with a mysterious Russian, Antipin. They travel the Danube River to Moscow via the Black Sea, where Antipin delivers Khristo into an NKVD (Soviet secret intelligence service) boot camp. Khristo's training is as grim and harsh as the Moscow winter is severe. He learns clandestine skills of deception and betrayal, forging bonds with fellow trainees (also recruited from Eastern Europe) to stay alive. When "Brotherhood Front" training is deemed complete, the survivors are sent to Spain, to infiltrate the revolutionary groups and find fifth columnists.

And that's only part one. The next book of the Night Soldiers series is *Dark Star*, set in 1937 Paris, Moscow, Berlin, and Prague. Learn more at the author's website, www.alanfurst.net.

City of Dragons by Kelli Stanley, Minotaur 2010, 352 pp (HC).

This is the first book of the Miranda Corbie series, set in 1940 Chinatown, San Francisco.

The most fascinating and compelling character in the book is the city of San Francisco. The story is packed with historical details of the sights, sounds, and even the smells that Miranda Corbie experiences as she walks along the streets. Names and locations of restaurants and nightclubs, White Front cars, popular cocktails, food and songs, and even the newest lipstick shades and perfumes are described. To any history buff who "lost your heart in San Francisco," this book is for you.

Miranda Corbie is 33 years old, attractive and shapely. She's been a nurse in the Spanish Civil War, an escort, and is now a private eye. She has a huge chip on her shoulder. She's addicted to dwelling on sad memories, calling it "opening the Memory Box." She's bitter about losing Johnny, her former lover, during the Spanish Civil War. Never mind that many other people have lost loved ones, she's out to pick a fight with the world.

Her newspaperman friend Rick Sanders would like her to open up to feel romance and happiness again, but that's not happening. She's determined to remain miserable; she can't accept friendship and respect from homicide detective Gonzales.

After shipping magnate Lester Winters is murdered, Miranda is hired by his snobbish widow to find her missing stepdaughter, Phyllis. Miranda is the only one who believes that a hit-and-run incident, Phyllis' disappearance, and three murders are all related. Miranda cares that a former co-worker's murder matters little to police because the woman was Chinese. Miranda is sure the police are all racists; she does encounter (and is attacked by) one racist cop.

Dialogue is aggressively hard-boiled, choppy and makes the plot hard to follow. Descriptions are lavishly imaginative: instead of simply "the band played Cole Porter," we read "The band warbled and wailed, trying its best to ride a Cole Porter number before getting bucked off." The mystery is rather flat until 75% through the book, at which point both the writing and plot improve slightly. Perhaps the author obtained serious critique help at this point?

To fully understand the references to historical and political events, plan to consult Google or Wikipedia while reading this book. Many of the buildings, restaurants and businesses mentioned still exist, at the addresses in the story. A diehard SF fan might like to trace Miranda's city wanderings on a map. Wink, wink.

Ghost Ship by P.J. Alderman, Bantam 2011, 368 pp PB

This the second book of the Port Chatham mystery series set on the Pacific Northwest coast.

Jordan Marsh is a psychologist relocated from Los Angeles. She fell in love with her Queen Anne Victorian at first sight, and now is struggling to restore it. Her biggest surprise on moving to Port Chatham was meeting ghosts inherited with Longren House: Hattie Longren

and her sister Charlotte. The dog Malachi appeared at the house and adopted Jordan readily; now they go almost everywhere together. Jordan made close friends with the police chief Darcy, and was instantly attracted to her neighbor Jase Cunningham. Jordan eats dinner in Jase's pub most evenings, but she has a "Four Point Plan" for recovering emotionally from her traumatic life before Port Chatham.

In the first book of the series, *Haunting Jordan*, she solved the century-old mystery of Hattie's murder, and helped Darcy to solve a present-day murder. In the sequel, more ghosts appear:

- Michael Seavey, who wanted to marry Hattie
- Frank Lewis, who also wanted to marry Hattie
- Sam Garrett, Michael's former business associate
- the *Henrietta Dale*, Michael's clipper ship that shipwrecked on its maiden voyage

Hattie implores Jordan to solve the 1893 mystery of Michael's murder. Out for a walk with Darcy, Jordan discovers the murdered body of a local man, Holt Stilwell. Jordan is convinced the present-day murder is linked to the past unsolved murder, so she investigates both.

The story alternates chapters between past and present, switching point of view from Jordan in the present to Michael in 1893. Port Chatham's historical society conveniently has all the records Jordan needs to dig up long-ago facts. Someone in the present clearly does not want her to discover the truth.

Learn about the author and her books on www.pjalderman.com. For example, the fictitious Port Chatham's vintage homes and "wild" history are based on the actual community of Port Townsend.

The Bat by Jo Nesbø, Vintage Crime, 386 pp, 2013, TPB

This is the first book of the Harry Hole mystery series, set in present-day Sydney, Australia. Harry is a police detective from Oslo, Norway, sent to Australia to assist with the murder investigation of a Norwegian minor celebrity. He is immediately told by Sydney police that he must sit on the sidelines and just provide politically correct positive status to the media as well as to his superiors.

Harry's assigned detective partner Andrew Kensington is an aborigine. The first half of the book doesn't reveal much about Harry; it's like a bright and sunny travelogue. Andrew takes Harry to fine restaurants, beaches and parks, and explains aboriginal legends and customs. For example, *The Bat* represents Death or the Devil in aboriginal culture.

Together, Andrew and Harry investigate the victim's life for clues to her death. Andrew and Harry link other unsolved murders by their similarities, and begin tracking a serial killer. Andrew introduces Harry to his contacts in Sydney's "underclass": bartenders and barmaids, strippers, whores, drug dealers, homeless drifters, circus performers.

Harry starts a romantic relationship and confides a dark secret from his past. Andrew's sudden death sends Harry into a major nosedive. The story turns dark, violent and complex. On his own, Harry challenges the easy obvious solution to the serial murders. His out-of-control behavior alienates everyone he encounters as he digs deeper to find out what Andrew was hiding. Harry takes a huge risk to confront the killer, with tragic consequences.

This is the first book I've read by Jo Nesbø. I like to read a series in order, so I waited to start the Harry Hole series until the first book was translated. I listened to the audio version, and really enjoyed the Australian accents. I found it odd that the beginning of an Oslo, Norway detective series is set in Sydney, Australia; also that Andrew (not Harry) was the focus of the first half of the book. There were too many characters for me to keep track near the end, even though their voices were

distinctive, especially the killer's. I'm disappointed that Harry Hole fits the all-too-familiar stereotype of a detective tormented by his past, but I'll probably read the second book in the series, *The Cockroaches*.

Standing in Another Man's Grave by Ian Rankin, Hachette, 2013, 363 pp, HB

This is the 18th novel in the Inspector John Rebus series set in contemporary Edinburgh. And a welcome return it is for readers fond of John Rebus, who retired in the previous book *Exit Music*. This time John is no longer an official member of the police force; he's a civilian working for the Serious Crime Review Unit, a special unit that was formed to investigate "cold cases" (long-unsolved crimes).

Nina Hazlitt, whose daughter went missing over a decade ago, comes to the cold cases unit looking for its leader, Gregor Magrath (long-retired). Nina is sure that a girl recently reported missing has met the same fate as her daughter. Nina has been contacting police for years every time a girl goes missing, whenever there is a connection to the A9 highway. The only officer that didn't brush her off was Gregor Magrath. John Rebus listens to her story, and promises to check if there is a connection between the active missing person case and her daughter's disappearance.

As always, Rebus flaunts the rules. He delves into the details of all disappearances along the A9. He finds quite a number of young women have in fact gone missing. Rebus connects with Siobhan Clarke and persuades her to give him background records of all the cases he believes may be related. She's quite successful in the police these days, chafing a bit under a pompous bureaucrat. Rebus makes several drives far up the A9, to and through Pitlochry and on up to Inverness; quite enjoyable listening as he "salutes" each turnoff to a distillery along the way. Rebus contacts many of the police detectives that have investigated old cases, including retired Gregor Magrath. He also meets and befriends fellow travelers at comfort stops along the highway.

On one of his journeys, he stops at his daughter's house. Of course he didn't warn her he was coming, and she isn't home. That was probably what he intended.

Gangster Gerald Cafferty has stayed in contact ever since Rebus saved his life. Rebus' former nemesis periodically invites him to meet for a drink. This contact raises a red flag for Malcolm Fox of the Complaints Department, who has a serious hatred of John Rebus. Fox obsesses on assembling a case against Rebus, and warns Siobhan Clarke to stay away from Rebus, or ruin her career. Malcolm Fox is the protagonist of the Complaints mystery series, also by Ian Rankin.

A long-standing rival to Cafferty, gangster Frank Hammell, may be involved with or responsible for the latest girl's disappearance. Frank's young right-hand man Darryl Christie, brother of a missing woman, slowly amasses his forces then makes a huge power play.

Rebus is certain there is a connection between the disappearances, and his dogged persistence leads to the eventual discovery of many victims. He cannot persuade police departments to act upon his hunch the killer is local while evidence is still available. He struggles to convince police, but tips off the killer and alienates police officers. Finally, Siobhan Clarke and Rebus set a dangerous trap, and barely escape with their lives.

I love the Rebus series, and am delighted there is a new book continuing the series: *The Saints of the Shadow Bible*.

†**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 Rob Kresge at rkresge777@comcast.net, with "Nooseletter" in the subject line.

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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. □

Upcoming Meetings

Tuesday, September 23, 7 p.m.

Tuesday, October 28, 7 p.m.

Tuesday, November 25, 7 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 and upcoming programs.

The 2014 C&D Chapter Line Up

President – Jan Bray –
ohbray@nmia.com
Vice President – Joan Saberhagen –
joan@joanspicci.com
Secretary – Olin Bray –
www.robertkresge.com
Treasurer/Membership – Fred Aiken –
FAAiken@aol.com
Communications – Pat Wood
pwood73@comcast.net
Programs/Publicity – Rita Herther –
RMHerther@aol.com
Website Coordinator – Susan Zates –
smzates@yahoo.com
Nooseletter Editor – Rob Kresge --
rkresge777@comcast.net

- Upcoming Programs
- 2014 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" in "Sisters" is large and prominent, and the "in" is smaller and positioned between "Sisters" and "Crime".

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

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

And our motto is: "SinC into a good mystery!"

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

Summary of the Board Meeting Minutes of Sisters in Crime Croak and Dagger Chapter, ABQ, NM, September 15, 2014

Board members present: Vice President Joan Saberhagen, Secretary Olin Bray, Treasurer Fred Aiken, Program Chair Rita Herther, Membership Chair Pat Wood.

Olin Bray called the meeting to order at 7:15. Minutes from the July 21 meeting were approved.

The Treasurer reported that as of September 12 our checking account balance was \$2,784.48 and \$5.00 in the savings account. Following the treasurer's recommendation, the board approved moving \$1,000 from checking to savings. Rita was reimbursed for two gift certificates for previous speakers and the board authorized her to order some more of the bookmarks we give to first time speakers.

Membership report: We now have 50 paid up members and 4 have already paid for 2015.

Program report: The next three programs (September, October, and November) will be Pari Noskin Taichert (a founding member and past president of Croak and Dagger), a panel by Los Muertos Spirit Speakers, and a winter theme "Winter can be Murder" discussion by former C&D President Margaret Tessler.

Motion: The board discussed the problem of trying to constantly send out announcements of forthcoming book signings and approved the following motion:

Given the problem with sending out a lot of announcements about forthcoming author signings and to avoid flooding our members with too many emails, the following motion was proposed at the September 15, 2014 board meeting.

Book signing announcements for Croak and Dagger members or other mystery writers can be included in the Nooseletter, if we know about them far enough in advance to include them. Other signing announcements will be sent out only with the meeting announcement, which is sent out the third week of each month. We will no longer try to send out such announcements at any time whenever we hear about events. Individual members can still let other members know about such events when they learn of them, but Croak and Dagger can no longer be responsible for such announcements.

Announcements: None

Old business: We discussed candidates for our November election. The four elected positions are President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer. Those four officials need to be members of national Sisters in Crime. We encourage people to get involved and let us know if you are interested in being a candidate. Pat Wood will run for president. Fred Aiken will run again for Treasurer. Joan Saberhagen does not want to serve another term, so we need a candidate for vice-president. Although Olin Bray could serve another term as secretary, he would prefer not to, so we are also looking for a candidate for secretary.

The board selects people for four appointed board positions--Program Chair, Membership Chair, Nooseletter Editor, and Webmaster. People interested in these appointed positions do not have to be members of Sisters in Crime. The people in three of our four appointed positions will continue--Rita as Program Chair, Rob as *Nooseletter* editor, and Susan running our Website. However, they would appreciate help if people want to work with them to learn those positions. Since Pat is running for president, we will need someone for Membership Chair. We also talked about adding another appointed position, Publicity Chair, if we can find someone interested in it.

The next board meeting will be at 7:00 at Joan Saberhagen's home on November 17, 2014. The meeting adjourned at about 8:30.

--Olin Bray, Secretary



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.