



NEW MEXICO CHAPTER — SISTERS IN CRIME

THE NOOSELETTER

Volume XV, Number 3 — May/June 2019

†The President's Corner†

Happy Spring, everyone!

Everything moves a bit slower here in the mountains, but today I'm celebrating. My lilacs are bursting into bloom. Back in the city, Croak & Dagger Chapter zips full speed ahead, giving members plenty of opportunities to explore the craft of writing, to advertise their books, and even to promote our chapter.

Janet Greger snooped around and discovered a most mysterious event. Croak & Dagger members who attended the Vortex Theater March 31 sat spellbound through the dramatic production of *Sleuth*. After the show, the director, producer, and cast held a question-and-answer session with us. Kudos to Janet for a search well done.

Barbe Awalt of New Mexico Book Co-op, an avid supporter of what we do, asked to go with Ann Zeigler and me to meet with the owners of Bookworks to discuss who we are and what our chapter does. Danielle Foster took our posters to display, and she asked if maybe this fall we could do an event at their bookstore. We told Bookworks, Treasure House Books and Gifts, and Organic Books about Sisters in Crime's *We Love Bookstores* initiative. Submitted bookstore names go into a monthly drawing, giving bookstores a chance to win \$500. Croak & Dagger Chapter loves our independent bookstores too.

At our last chapter meeting I mentioned we had two nominations for the Albuquerque Creative Bravos Award. "The City of Albuquerque's Creative Bravos Awards are dedicated to recognizing and honoring work that makes a significant impact on the lives of residents, neighborhoods, and/or communities. The awards are given annually to individuals, youths, teams, events, programs, organizations and businesses that celebrate the

breadth of creative work that exists in the city." We now have three nominations, and a possibility of four. The deadline is May 31, so any of you fans, please go online and fill out a simple form. If you have questions, just ask.

On April 26 and 27, New Mexico Press Women held their 2019 conference at The Canyon Club at Four Hills. Members Anne Hillerman received an award, and Judith Van Gieson mesmerized the audience at the awards dinner as their Keynote speaker. Judith told everyone how film producers discovered three of her 13 books and optioned them for films. Croak & Dagger Chapter was well represented.

Our being out in the community has captured attention. Be sure to read Ann Zeigler's article in this issue for surprising news with hot opportunities for further promoting our works. Hop on board and hang on tight. We're moving fast.

But for now, I'm going to stop and smell my lilacs.

Suspiciously yours,
Charlene Dietz, President

Don't Miss It:

Tuesday, May 28, at 7 p.m.

Our May speaker will be screenwriter Art Eisenson, talking about book-to-screen adaptations.

Art is a member of Writers Guild of America West and has written episodes of various TV shows, including *Kojak* and *The Gangster Chronicles*.

Art received his BA in English and Comparative Literature from Columbia and his MAs in English and Communication, both from Stanford. He was a Screenwriting Fellow at the American Film Institute Center for Advanced Film Studies.

**And coming up...
Tuesday, June 25, at 7 p.m.**

Our June speaker will be Jeanne Shannon, telling us about "synesthesia" or "colored hearing" (associating colors with sounds).

"I associate colors with every sound, every word, every letter," Jeanne says. "The sound of an old-fashioned landline phone ringing is yellow. The word 'yellow' is yellow. A cat's meow is yellow."

Jeanne is also a poet, published in numerous venues, and a novelist.



Sisters in Crime was founded in 1986.

The mission of Sisters in Crime shall be "to promote the ongoing advancement, recognition, and professional development of women crime writers."

And our motto is: "SinC up with great crime writing!"



Sisters in Crime **Guppies**

SinC Guppies is an online writer's support group. Guppies come from across the United States and Canada. They have different occupations and avocations, but they share a passion for writing mysteries and a common goal of getting published.

Subgroups represent cozies, noir, psychological and romantic suspense, and thrillers. The Mystery Analysis Group is a book discussion group aimed at discussing the craft, and the AgentQuest group can help with writing queries and synopses. For more information, check them out at www.sinc-guppies.org.

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

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

REMEMBER: All the above provide opportunities for free publicity for members. Contact our website maven, Susan Zates (address below) for more information or with an idea for a blog article. Get your name out there wherever you can!

AND: 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, etc., as well as online courses.

The Line Up

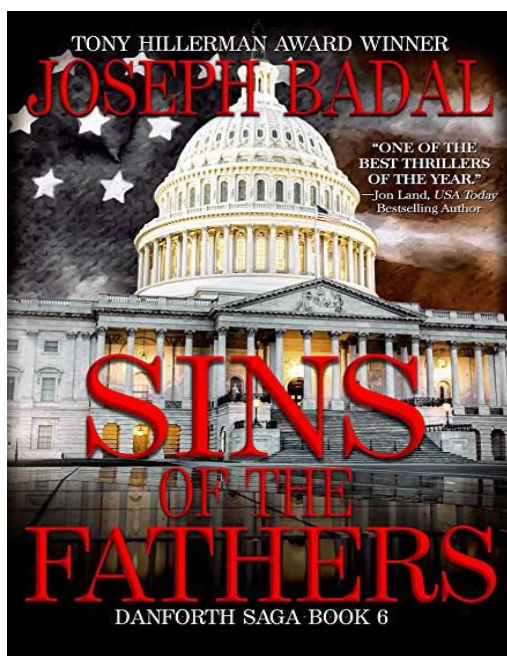
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Noose News

Joe Badal Wins Eric Hoffer honor!

Joseph Badal's *Sins of the Fathers*, the sixth in his Danforth Saga series of novels, has been named First Runner Up for the Eric Hoffer prize.

The Hoffer Award honors the memory of the great American philosopher [Eric Hoffer](#) by highlighting salient writing, as well as the independent spirit of small publishers. Since its inception, the Hoffer has become one of the largest international book awards for small, academic, and independent presses.



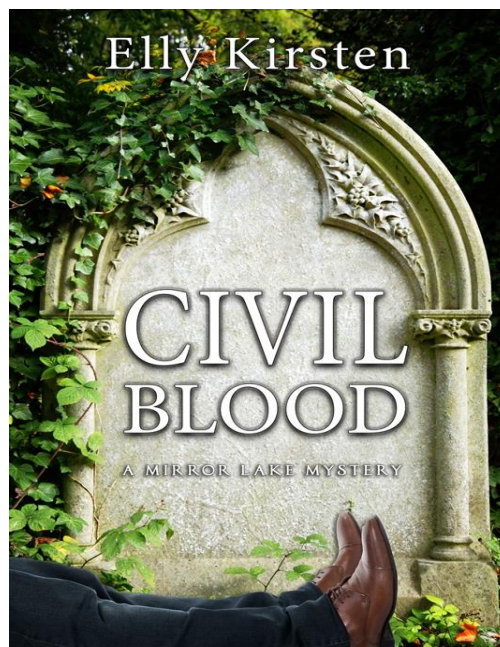
Rhys is Back, and C&D's Got Her*

The Croak and Dagger board has just learned that our featured guest at next year's version of last year's All-Day Writers Workshop, when Jan Burke was our keynote speaker, will be Rhys Bowen

Rhys is a *New York Times* bestselling author of two mystery series, the atmospheric Molly Murphy novels, about a feisty Irish immigrant in 1900s New York City, and the funny and sexy Royal Spyness mysteries, about a penniless minor royal in 1930s Britain. She has won the Agatha Best Novel Award and has been nominated for the Edgar Best Novel. Her first big stand-alone thriller, *In Farleigh Field*, set in World War II at an English stately home, was released in 2017.

Rhys was born in England and married into a family with historic royal connections. She now

divides her time between California and Arizona. Some of us were delighted to meet Rhys when she attending the 2011 West Coast Crime convention in Santa Fe. (*And anyone who recognizes the source of this quote is probably older than Ye Editor!).



Signing at Treasure House

Linda Triegel will be signing copies of her first cozy mystery novel, *Civil Blood*, written under her pen name, Elly Kirsten, and published by Cozy Cat Press, on June 15 from 1-3 p.m. at Treasure House Books in Old Town.

Linda also writes historical romance under her Elisabeth Kidd pen name. She will also have a limited number of those books on hand. Both mystery and romances are currently also available in print and e-book form from Amazon.

More Kudos for Anne Hillerman

Anne Hillerman has won this year's Frank Waters Award from Friends of the Pikes Peak Library District, an honor given to a writer who exemplifies the spirit and literary excellence of the late local author. Waters wrote the "Pike's Peak" trilogy and several books about Native Americans and was nominated multiple times for the Nobel Prize for literature.

Anne Hillerman's writing "embodies the spirit of Frank Waters, his respect for the native peoples of the West and his love of storytelling," said Linda DuVal, a member of the Friends' board of directors. "It's notable that her dad also won the Frank Waters award in the 1990s."

Anne accepted the award and gave a presentation about writing on April 20 during PPLD's Literary Awards Luncheon at The Antlers hotel.

Her fifth novel, *The Tale Teller*, was released this month. Leaphorn returns to front and center as he takes on a case related to the Navajos' Long Walk. Bernie and Chee travel to the Canyon de Chelly to investigate a murder and theft.

Great Library Adventure Rollicks into Spring

Of course we're up to mischief. Here's the bulletin on the Great Library Adventure: It's expanding in all directions.

The "regular" Great Library Adventure will touch down in maximum fashion in Moriarty in June, for our third annual "Detective's Front Room." As in previous years, every book by every Adventurer will be displayed, along with the 2'x4' posters of all the newest covers, plus some furniture and the usual odds-n-ends.

Reminder for ebook authors: be sure I have your cover(s) so we can "wrap" another book with yours for the display.

The Adventure has also touched down lightly in several communities that don't have a secure display case for our books. Those locations include the San Pedro branch of the ABQ library system, Mountainair, Los Lunas, Bosque Farms, and Crestone CO (we're pretending to be geographically illiterate, because they invited us). Those libraries each got the C&D tote, containing a packet of bookmarks and a pair of 8.5x11 cover posters.

We're also negotiating for other "new" display venues, and possible events. Watch for more news on that front, including The Belen Event in early August and a possible event at ENMU in Portales.

As we looked around for other ways to expand the Adventure, the New Mexico Legislature did us a giant favor. A bill was filed (and passed in a slightly different form) to create a dedicated fund for libraries in small/rural communities. The original bill actually listed 50 small community libraries that were the intended beneficiaries of the fund. The final bill, as passed by both houses and signed by Gov. Lujan-Grisham, omits the list of specific community libraries, and creates a mechanism for giving about \$4500/year to public libraries in communities of under 3,000 population.

Well, give the Adventurers a list of 50 libraries, and you know what will happen next: sleuthing. We

are on the hunt for contact information for each of those libraries. Interested in a little online adventure? Contact Joan Saberhagen, the member-at-large on C&D's Board. Her email is in the list of the usual suspects in this issue of the Nooseletter. When we have contact info, members can choose libraries to contact with offers of the Tote, including packets of bookmarks plus 8.5x11 and 1'x2' pairs of new-covers posters. And, of course, offers to bring author events if they would like to host one or more of us. Road trip, anyone? Stay tuned.

That's the fold-out on the bottom of the Great Library Adventure. Here's the fold-out on the side: The April Book Co-op speaker was poet Hakim Bellamy, who is also in charge of the City's Creative Bravos competition (see the President's Message). He wanted to talk to the writers and publishers of Co-op about expanding opportunities for us. He pointed out that there is a display case in front of the Mayor's office, usually filled with pottery and sculpture. Then someone asked about the display cases at the Sunport, which in fact belongs to the City. Yes, he said our favorite phrase, "display case." Of course we talked with him afterward! Bulletins follow.

And we're doing all this why?? Because libraries full of patrons hate to think they are out on the edge of nowhere and being ignored. And because when we confirm that they are just as valuable as the Big Guys, they remember us when book-buying comes around. And because librarians love to hand-sell the first in an author's series, reassuring patrons that there are more out there even if the library doesn't (yet) have them. Yes, Sisters and Mistery, when we're not writing, we need to be marketing. And collective marketing is a member benefit for C&D authors.

And here's the usual reminder: 300 dpi .jpeg, please. My new nonfiction book from Rio Grande Books, *Tips Lawyers Wish You Knew: Going It Alone at the Courthouse*, will be on the new-covers posters, because it will be available on pre-order beginning in May. Be sure your newest is on there too.

P.S. The second article in my series about the Great Library Adventure appears in the upcoming issue of InSinC, our national magazine. With photos of your books on display, of course.

Ann Zeigler
Library Liaison Chair
(Alias Chief Perpetrator)
The Great Library Adventure

How to Write a Book in Ten Days

Philip K. Dick Award-Winner Meg Elison On Getting It Done
by [Meg Elison](#)

Excerpted from: <https://lithub.com/how-to-write-a-book-in-ten-days/>

Henry David Thoreau did not consider his time on Walden Pond a writing retreat, per se. He was retreating from all of life, and he wrote about how brilliant that was. Despite his assured and unremarked privilege to externalize the labor of keeping himself alive (meals cooked and laundry washed by his mother or other women), he was aware that he was lucky in life: “Sometimes, when I compare myself with other men, it seems as if I were more favored by the gods than they, beyond any deserts that I am conscious of...”

With the favor of the gods and the labor of his mother, Thoreau took ten years to produce *Walden; or, Life in the Woods*, a work of less than 50,000 words.

Last fall, with the hospitality of my own mother and the freedom of ten days, I wrote a novel of 90,000 words.

Both Thoreau and I cheated. There’s no way to do this kind of work without help and doing it as quickly as I did requires the conditions of retreat. If you want to try to attempt the same, I’m giving you my cheat sheet. This is the story of what it takes to write a novel in ten days.

First, you must be a writer already. This is not a purity test or a badge check: a writer is a person who writes. If you have a habit of writing and you know your own worth and ways, that is enough. Writing a novel is grueling and surprising work. If you haven’t done it before, you may not understand the flummoxing frustration that lies ahead. Do not attempt to write your first book in ten days.

You must also, to the best of your ability, **escape your everyday life.** Doing something extraordinary requires leaving behind ordinary circumstances. This is not to discount the work of writers who get their word count in while babies sleep and the washing machine thumps in another room. However, I am advising you on a spectacular timeline. Escape is the groundwork for that.

Leave home, if you have the option. Go see family. Stay with friends. Beg a guest room, or the use of a cabin in the mountains. It doesn’t have to cost money. Mine didn’t. My mother owns a house in a scrub-desert suburb in Southern California. I lived there as a teenager, and she has a bed for me whenever I’m in town. I called her and asked if I could come to stay for ten days, but not spend most of that time with her. This last is crucial; if you go visiting in order to write a book, make sure people understand that the visit is not with them.

Set boundaries. This is true even at a retreat, if there are other people there. Create a calendar of times when you are available for brunch or dinner, set aside one day to see the beach or the ruins. Do not let the days or the company dictate your schedule. Life will always win if you let it contend with writing a book. Mark out at least eight hours every day in which you will do nothing but write. That time is sacrosanct and requires a great deal of discipline.

Do not plan to write in a public place, if you can help it. Cafes and libraries are full of noise and distractions. The chairs will likely pain you after a day spent unmoving and crabbed over a laptop. Work in a home or an office. Set yourself up at the start with water, maybe a snack, and any tools you know you need to work. Set a quitting signal. Do not let up from your task until that moment arrives.

When it does, quit. Quit fully and completely, and get the book out of your head. For me, this means doing something physical. I'd walk away from a day's work wrung-out and very tired, without much left in the way of sparkling conversation. I'd change into a swimsuit and dive into the deep end of my mother's pool. I swam for at least an hour, talking to no one and listening to music. Afterwards, I was suitable for dinner with family and far less stiff. If you aren't as lucky as I was to have access to a pool, do what works for you to get yourself out of your book and back into your body. This job is hard. Don't neglect yourself to do it, not even for ten days.

Get off the internet. I do not say this lightly; I am a power user of Twitter and Snapchat and I believe it makes me a better writer when I use them both correctly. Using them while concentrating on producing a draft will absolutely wreck your progress. Every notification breaks your focus. Every returned text is wasted words. If you have a child or a sick parent, someone to whom you cannot fail to respond, leave your phone on. Otherwise, turn it off. Let your friends and your adoring public know what your hours are like, and then get off the grid. No exceptions, not even on your lunch break.

Write an outline. A full outline, with the major beats, chapter starts and ends, and notes on characters and their relationships made it possible for me to keep a pace of 10,000 to 15,000 words per day. Your outline must also include any research you need to write, because you have no internet. Do not turn your wifi back on to look something up, just for a second, just to be sure. We all know what will happen once that genie is out of the bottle. You must go in ready. I did; with a ten-page outline and a stack of research. I came out with a whole first draft.

We must return to Thoreau now, so I can tell you about my own mother. I have a hard time feeling compassion for the generations of writers whose mothers and sisters and wives led lives of quiet desperation so that the men in their houses could make art. Writing at this pace requires some externalization of the labor of your life. Even if you can live on microwave burritos for ten days (please don't), the ongoing disruption of planning and obtaining your meals can really take a piece of your workday. In my case, my mother loves to cook for anyone who's in her house and was gracious enough to make me breakfast on most days.

I comfort myself with being better than Thoreau in a few easy steps, the first of which is acknowledgement. I told everyone that this was how I kept my breakneck pace, and that my mother's kindness and labor made my whirlwind progress possible. Taking her out and spending time with her is a pleasure no matter what, but was important to me in response to work like this. Finally, I indict Thoreau on the worst of all charges: that no woman in his life ever published her own screed on the price of bread and the drudgery of her own life, because that drudgery left her no time or energy to write.

This combination of experience, kindness, discipline, space, and quiet helped me to produce a novel faster than I've ever done it. My practice is to separate myself from my work upon completion and let enough time pass that I may see it with fresh eyes. I am revisiting this draft now, since months have passed, and beginning the process of shining it up. It's not bad—my haste is more evident in the roughness of the prose than in the shape of the story itself. My ten days of hard work and the work of others were worth it, it seems.

Writing at Ninety-Six

Excerpted from a memoir by [Eugenia Lovett West](#).
For more, go to: <http://booksbywomen.org/writing-at-ninety-six/>.

It's never too late to create and publish. At age 96, I wake up every morning and look forward to sitting down at the computer and producing.

I grew up in Boston and New Haven. Studied at Sarah Lawrence College, worked briefly at Harper's Bazaar, then married a dashing fighter pilot in the 8th Air Force. We had four children, four grandchildren, and stayed married for sixty years.

People often ask writers if they always wanted to write. I was a reader who liked playing with words, but the serious urge took hold when my youngest child was in school all day and I became a freelance reporter for local newspapers. Feeling important, I rushed around with a Nikon camera covering everything from sewage disposal meetings to national politics.

The first novel was sheer trash. The second try was historical/suspense set in a sugar plantation in Jamaica in 1870's. Big excitement when Mom's little hobby was picked up and published by Doubleday and Ballantine. At last it was legitimate to write "Author" in those blanks that ask for your occupation.

With hindsight, I probably should have stuck to one genre, but I loved mysteries, especially PD James and the Golden Age writers like Dorothy L. Sayers. My first mystery was self-published for family and friends. They liked it, so I entered a contest sponsored by St. Martin's Press. Months passed, but one fine morning I opened my computer and nearly levitated out of my chair. The renowned Ruth Cavin, at 90 the grande dame of mystery editors, was offering me a contract for two books. Believe me, it doesn't get better than this.

Without Warning was published in 2007 and *Overkill* in 2009. But for years another historical novel was sitting on the back burner, triggered by the winter of 1777 in the American Revolution when George Washington and his sick, starving, militia struggled to survive at Valley Forge. At the same time, high-living British officer were enjoying winter quarters in Philadelphia, with balls, musicales, and theatricals.

I ended up making drastic cuts to the final version of *Sarah's War*. The plot now revolves around this young beauty and her year of spying and heartbreak. The aim is to give the reader a strong sense of what it was like to live in that dangerous time when Loyalists outnumbered patriots and the streets were filled with informers. Frankly, I had no idea how close we came to losing the war, and how much we owe to those who sacrificed to form a democracy that must be preserved.

Writers are often asked about the process of creating a book. I say it's 10% talent and 90% applying the seat of the pants to the seat of the chair. In a way, it's like making a big stew. You put in the ingredients, stir, hope for a good result, but it takes time and a lot of trial and error to find one's voice and one's style. I tend to end up with strong women working their way through disasters in interesting settings.



For historical novels, it can be a challenge to balance facts with imagination. For Jamaica, it was enough to read a few journals mostly written by English governor's wives. For American history, beware any mistakes—they're sure to be found. On the other hand, the mystery genre requires sly red herrings, judiciously scattered clues, a surprise ending, and justice must always triumph.

As for process, I bypass domestic violence. My subplots must have a global theme like advanced weapons, lethal viruses, cybercrime. I start with a general idea and let pictures run through my mind, like watching a movie. In the end it all comes down to telling a story that entertains or informs or both. One might say that being a writer is like living in two worlds—one is where you eat, sleep, and talk. The other is where you exist with a different set of people—and I get to know them better than my own children. They are on a journey and must be guided to their destination.

As a woman writer, I believe deeply in the value of escape reading. For me, it started when I had little children clinging to my ankles. Nap time was a chance to read and regain sanity, and these days the need for immersion into other worlds may be more compelling than ever.

What is it like to be 96? My answer is that every day is a gift—and my wish for younger women is to find the strength to live their lives with kindness and with courage.

Three easy things one librarian wishes authors would do to promote their books:

Librarians obviously love authors, and there is nothing most of us enjoy more than putting the right book in a reader's hands at the right time. Will that be your book? There are three things you could do to make our job in readers advisory (that's what libraries call the very personalized service of matching a book with a reader) a bit easier. In addition to talking with readers one on one, we're building displays, writing blog posts, curating book lists, and creating posters, flyers, and all other sorts of promotional materials to help readers discover books. Yet it turns out that only a teensy percent of the authors I encounter have done the things listed below (and nearly no one has done the last one):

1. **Book cover image:** Make sure that there is a high-res cover image readily available on your website. Ideally, make it more than 1mb. We can use these in blog posts, book lists, shelf talkers and other print materials. I've wanted to include any number of books, but then had to delete them when a good image wasn't available. I'm not talking critically of book cover design – but the mere fact that I can't find a watermark-free, high-resolution image to promote your book.
2. **Author photo image:** Here's another one that should be on your website. A nice headshot that's, again, high resolution. Perhaps you're entering your book in an awards competition. Perhaps it becomes a finalist. Or perhaps you are speaking at a library event. We'll want to share the good news, which will be less powerful without a decent author photo. It should be on your website and easy for me to grab. Your phone can yield a 2mb or higher image, so no more of this 33kb grainy photo business, please.
3. **30-word book annotation easily available on your website.** Please don't rely on the publisher's summary or book jacket copy, which is much too long for promotional purposes. A short, tight, and snappy description is something we can use in book lists and blog posts, perhaps even on shelf talkers. I would say that less than 10 percent of the books I want to feature actually have a short annotation ready to go. My colleagues and I used to write our own, but library work has changed so much in the past decade and there simply is no time to do that when, say, you're putting together a list of 30 books. If it's too cumbersome to find something pithy to write quickly about your book, you're getting cut from my book lists.

Take a half-hour to update your website as above. You'll make this librarian happy (or, at least, happier), and help all of us to connect readers to your books.

Reviews

If the Dead Rise Not by Philip Kerr. G.P. Putnam's Sons Reprint edition 2011, 464 pp (TP).

This mystery comes in the middle of Kerr's Bernie Gunther series, set in Berlin in the 1930s as the Nazi era is beginning to flex its muscle. I very much enjoyed this one, so I'll definitely go back to the start of the series to see what Bernie was up to earlier.

Gunther is a kind of German Philip Marlowe. Once a policeman, he is now the house detective in a luxury hotel, probably due to his mouthing off about the Nazis and longing for the bygone Weimar Republic.

Now Berlin is gearing up to host the Olympic Games two years hence (it's 1934) and Bernie is confronted with two dead bodies—those of a businessman and a Jewish boxer. Before he knows it, he's caught up in a plot linking American gangsters, corrupt Nazis and Hitler's big plans for the Olympics. Kerr, incidentally, reminds us that the U.S. team only attended the Berlin Olympics because U.S. Olympic Committee Chairman Avery Brundage visited Germany and claimed to find no discrimination against Jews.

Being a private eye, Bernie inevitably gets involved with a woman too beautiful and classy for him, hard-drinking Noreen Charalambides, a Jewish-American journalist in Berlin to expose Nazi anti-Semitism.

The dialogue crackles while not sounding at all like any of the better-known detectives, including Marlowe, of the American era (I didn't notice any anachronisms), and the sense of place is outstanding. Some of Kerr's descriptions are priceless: "He had a face as square as a doormat but not nearly as welcoming" and "He had more chins than the Shanghai telephone directory."

The sense of place is just as good when the story shifts suddenly, about two-thirds of the way through, to 1954 Havana. The dictator Batista, aided by the CIA, has just seized power; Castro and his revolutionaries are in jail, and Noreen turns up living temporarily in Ernest Hemingway's Finca Vejia while Papa is off game-hunting to fishing or whatever. Bernie somehow gets himself on the bad side—where else—of the American Mafia, which is infiltrating the gaming and prostitution industries in the country.

I later discovered that like John Lawton's novels set in the 1930s and 1940s, the Bernie Gunther books weren't published in chronological order, so it takes some detective work to read them in order. I did subsequently read what's referred to as the Berlin Trilogy, only to discover little relationship to *If the Dead Rise Not*. But never mind. Kerr died this past year, so let's enjoy what he's left us. ♦ —Linda Triegel (ljt23@earthlink.net)

The Fierce Kingdom by Gin Phillips. Viking 2017, 275 pp (HC).

This short-ish thriller starts from a neat premise and keeps the reader's interest. Young mom Joan is in the habit of taking her toddler son Lincoln to the zoo, but this afternoon, they're not the only visitors. While pushing her stroller, Joan hears gunshots and soon realizes there are Bad Guys on the premises, for what reason she has no idea. Her instinct is to hide and keep Lincoln safe, so she moves from one hidey-hole to another, hoping Lincoln won't betray their presence by crying, and works her way to the exit.

The story takes place over a mere 3-hour time span, and we never see the Bad Guys at all. Joan occasionally gets texts from her husband, who has hurried to the zoo entrance when he hears the news reports about gunmen on the grounds, but she finally turns off her phone so as not to give away their presence. She meets an older woman and a younger girl, but doesn't trust them either to not reveal where they are. Indeed, her maternal instincts begin to overshadow her normal willingness to help other people, so that she's rescued in the nick of time. One wonders if she realizes later what really happened to her.

This is a compelling read by Southern writer Phillips, although the story could take place anywhere. I'll certainly read other stories by this author. ♦ —Linda Triegel (ljt23@earthlink.net)

London Rules by Mick Herron. SoHo Crime 2018, 326 pp (HC).

This is the most recent of Herron's Slough House series about the denizens of one office of Britain's intelligence services. If there is a hierarchy among them (and apparently there is), MI5 Regents Park is the Northeast Heights, and Slough House, where demoted spies go to wait until their pensions kick in, is the South Valley.

The story starts with a bang, with a terrorist attack on a small village, with no apparent motive except to strike fear in the general populace and set everyone at Slough House dashing about to no clear purpose. Okay, this is meant to be funny-satirical, and one London reviewer was spot on comparing Herron to Carl Hiaasen, but after a couple of hundred pages, the tone can get tiresome. The Gang That Can't Shoot straight eventually closes in on the Bad Guys, mostly by blind luck, and there's plenty of action at the end.

I did read *London Rules* all the way through and laughed out loud a couple of times, usually at dialogue, but I couldn't like any of the characters, however colorful, and none of them rose to the level of protagonist, which confused the plot. As a result, I had trouble keeping track of what was happening, both in terms of the crime and the relationships among the characters. However, I'll probably go back to the first book in the series, *Slow Horses*, and give the series another chance. ♦

—Linda Triegel (ljt23@earthlink.net)

Series mysteries:

All reviews by Susan Zates

NOTE: Print publisher noted; most also available (and/or read by the reviewer) in e-format.

Y Is for Yesterday by Sue Grafton. Putnam 2017, 496 pp (HC)

(Final book of the Kinsey Millhone mystery series set in late-20th-century "Santa Teresa," CA).

For Sue Grafton fans, the alphabet ends at Y.

The story takes place in 1979 and 1989. In 1979, teenagers at a private school in a wealthy enclave go overboard with their vicious teenage behavior: they cheat, shun a student due to gossip, smoke, drink, take drugs, have sex, film a gang rape, and, finally, commit murder. Two of the four teens involved in the film go to prison; one disappears.

In 1989, a convicted teenage murderer is released from prison. His parents receive the rape film with a blackmail demand. They don't want damage to their reputation if the film is made public. They hire Kinsey to find the blackmailer. Kinsey has to (repeatedly) interview all those involved with the film, their friends and their families, and try to figure out who's telling the truth (or not).

Meanwhile:

- the reader knows who the blackmailer is all along; Kinsey only finds out in the end.
- Kinsey is always aware and fearful that Ned

Lowe (super-villain from previous book) could come back and attack her again at any time (and he does).

- homeless people camp in a pup tent in Henry's yard, in front of Kinsey's apartment, with their dog "Killer."

Most of the characters in the story are very unlikable, making it hard to care what really happened with the teens in 1979. Details are implausible for 1989, such as X-ray airport security and sexual tolerance. The animal cruelty as described would kill its victim.

Kinsey sorts it all out in the end, of course. We'll miss her "Respectfully submitted" reports. ♦

Mourning Tide by Christine Kling. Tell-Tale Press, 2017, 304 pp (PB)

(Book 5 of the Seychelle Sullivan mystery series, set in contemporary Fort Lauderdale, Florida.)

Together with her partner B.J., Seychelle is dedicated to raising their adopted son Nestor. Nestor's father was murdered; his mother Catalina died giving birth. Seychelle's top priority is keeping Nestor safe, so she turns down salvage assignments that seem potentially dangerous.

Raising an old wreck that has drifted into the mainstream of a river, a hazard to other boats, seems straightforward enough. She sets out on her salvage boat Gorda to tow in the wreck, with "co-captain" Nestor and her trusty dog Abaco. As the wreck rises, she discovers human bones aboard. Suddenly she's in the middle of a crime scene again.

Seychelle wants to leave crime detection up to law enforcement, but when her friends are endangered, she must act. The victim from the wreck is Grace, a friend's daughter. Seychelle is consumed by guilt that she didn't save the girl years ago. She leaves Nestor in B.J.'s capable care, and investigates the events back when Grace went missing. She learns disturbing facts about a cult evangelist and his employees, many of whom die "accidentally."

When Seychelle, B.J. and Nestor are kidnapped, Seychelle must outwit a desperate and clever killer to save her family. ♦

Shakespeare's Trollop by Charlaire Harris. Minotaur 2000, 222 pp (HC)

(Book 4 of the Lily Bard mystery series set in contemporary Arkansas)

Lily Bard leads a quiet life in the small Southern town of Shakespeare. She works out in the gym and cleans houses for income. She shuns publicity because decades past, she was the victim of violent crime. She's dedicated to self-protection,

honing her karate and weight-lifting skills. She is very slow to trust, but has a budding romance with Jack, her remote significant other. She cherishes the limited time they can spend together.

On her way to cleaning appointments, Lily discovers a murder victim in the woods. Deedra was well known in town for promiscuity. At the crime scene, it looks like her behavior led to her death. Lily is concerned the scene may have been staged. Her natural curiosity and desire to know the truth lead her to ask questions of many people she encounters around town.

One unpleasant elderly client is nearly killed when his house is the target of arson. Lily happens to be out walking late that night to ease her restlessness; she risks her life to rescue him from the fire. She learns of many conflicts among the many descendants hoping to inherit from his estate. The resolution is a surprise, but wraps up many loose plot threads in a satisfying way. Even more satisfying is the progress of Lily's and Jack's relationship. ♦

Vow of Evil by Veronica Black. Robert Hale Ltd, 2004, 224 pp (HC)
(Book 11 of the Sister Joan series set in Cornwall)

Sister Joan belongs to the religious order The Daughters of Compassion. They live on an estate that used to belong to a wealthy family, in an historic mansion the order has converted to spartan quarters. The order is in financial straits. The nuns don't have any prospects of new postulants to join the order (and provide dower money). Mother Dorothy decides to rent out the separate dwelling used to house novitiates for their first year, before they profess their religious choice, then join the nuns in the main house.

The Daughters of Compassion are gentle and tolerant as a rule, but the new renters are difficult and unpleasant tenants. They don't respect the boundaries of the rental property vs. the convent. They are noisy, nosy, careless, messy, amoral. They bring many more people to live in the house, than their rental contract stipulates.

Meanwhile in the nearby town and surrounding countryside, disturbing events occur. Acts of vandalism to property are vicious and obscene. Animals are cruelly tortured and killed. A young woman from the gypsy camp goes missing. An elderly widow in the town becomes obsessed with sightings of the devil, and she dies not long after.

Sister Joan is unsettled by the clear presence of evil. She investigates as best she can, when allowed

to leave the convent after fulfilling her assigned tasks. When a policewoman is killed, Detective Mills requests Sister Joan's help. Together they uncover past secrets linking the unwelcome tenants to the recent crime spree. The tenants are apprehended by the police on the eve of Samhain (Halloween), just in time to prevent their planned celebration of Satan worship. ♦

In Like Flynn by Rhys Bowen. Minotaur 2005, 336 pp (HC)

(Book 4 of the Molly Murphy historical mystery series set in turn-of-the-20th-century New York)

Summer of 1902: Residents of New York City suffer in high heat with high humidity, and a typhoid epidemic. NYPD detective Daniel Sullivan asks Molly if she is willing to work for him upstate, as a paid investigator on a case. Molly is absolutely thrilled. Money is very scarce since Seamus lost his job, her PI business is floundering, her romantic interest Jacob Singer has seriously disappointed her, and she may be a target for revenge by the Hudson Duster gang, for catching a member stealing and reporting him to the police.

Senator Barry Flynn has a lavish estate on the Hudson River at Peekskill. His wife Theresa is a believer in spiritualism. The Sorenson Sisters promise she can speak to her infant son in a seance. The boy was kidnapped 5 years ago, the kidnapper killed before revealing where the baby was hidden. Daniel explains that the Sorenson Sisters are likely frauds, but he needs hard evidence to arrest them. Molly is to be his "eyes and ears" undercover to collect any evidence she can.

Molly must impersonate Barry's cousin from Ireland. Before going upstate, she learns as much as she can about the Irish cousin and her Limerick home (Molly is from County Cork). "Cousin" Barry warmly welcomes Molly to his home—too warmly (his hands too grabby). The Flynn estate is luxurious, a serene retreat light-years from the teeming streets of NYC. Theresa is frail and lacks motivation to regain her health and strength. Molly feels sorry for her and resolves to help.

Molly gradually learns the tricks used in seances. Meanwhile, intensely curious about the past crime, she asks many questions. When a young woman Molly meets in a nearby town dies on the Flynn estate, it seems accidental, but Molly knows it isn't. Then Molly herself falls ill, which is no accident either. She must be close to unmasking a killer...♦

2019 MEETING DATES

Tuesday, May 28, 7:00 p.m.
Tuesday, June 25, 7:00 p.m.
Tuesday, July 23, 7:00 p.m.
Tuesday, August 27, 7:00 p.m.
Tuesday, September 24, 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 North Domingo Baca Multigenerational Center at 7521 Carmel Avenue NE, just north of Paseo del Norte and west of Wyoming. Check our Web site, www.croak-and-dagger.com, for schedule changes and upcoming programs.

Summary of Findings

The *Nooseletter* is the internal organ of the Croak & Dagger (New Mexico) chapter 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. 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 and ideas for sources are also welcome.

Deadlines: Publication is every other month, starting in January. Submission deadlines are the last day of the month *prior* to publication: Feb 28, April 30, June 30, Aug 31, Oct 31, and Dec 31.

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.

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Croak & Dagger members must also be members of the national organization of Sisters in Crime. For information on joining SinC, go to <http://www.sistersincrime.org>. For information about your local chapter, contact our membership chair at pwood73@comcast.net