



NEW MEXICO CHAPTER — SISTERS IN CRIME

THE NOOSELETTER

Volume XV, Number 5 — September/October 2019

†The President's Corner†

With a huge sigh, I send all you super sleuths end-of-summer greetings because July and August sent me running into September saying, "I can't handle one more thing!"

We all have these moments (or months) when the normal routine of our lives surges to extremes.

In our novels we call this conflict, maybe even deep emotional conflict. However, in our reality, we breathe deeply, knowing this turmoil will pass. You've experienced these moments, I'm sure. These are the times when you may have a new book about to be released, or work assignments piling up, or maybe pressing community obligations and family commitments.

No matter what ensues, Croak & Dagger worker bees buzz on. Vice President Gloria Casale strode forth to conduct the August meeting while your president ran off to Colorado. Rita Herther flushed out terrific speakers for our August and September meetings, while your president sped off on a four-day road trip to Maryland with two toddlers.

Ann Zeigler magically moved our books from one library to the next so the GLA continues to showcase your work. Now she's cooking up ideas for the Rhys Bowen spring conference. Thankfully, Editor Linda Triegel most graciously extended her deadline for this article.

Even though conflict fuels our novels, like our protagonists we'll always find a way to handle just one more thing. However, having a little hive of worker bees helps makes life more pleasant.

A reminder: Check out NM articles and photos in the SinC Quarterly.

Sneaking off to some quite corner,

Charlene Dietz, President



Charlene Dietz, Margaret Tessler, Pat Wood, Janet Greger, Gloria Casale, and Joe Badal at the Belen library in August.

Don't Miss It: Tuesday, September 24, at 7 p.m.

Our September speaker will be Kit Crumpton, author of two historical novels, *The Fading of Lloyd* and *The Fading of Kimberly*, that portray the dawning of psychology and psychiatry in the early 20th century.

Kit has always loved history, particularly WWII history, and historical novels in general. She believes a good historical novel provides perspective as to why the world is the way it is today.

Kit has an associate's degree in Police Science and a master's in Computer Science, among other degrees.

**And coming up...
Tuesday, October 22 at 7 p.m.**

Kay Lewis ("Happy") Shaw, aka Joanna Blalock, is an award-winning writer, artist, and teacher. Born and raised in South Carolina, Happy has spent most of her adult life in Albuquerque. She is a founding member of Southwest Writers Workshop and LERA (Land of Enchantment Romance Writers) and a member of Sisters in Crime.

The first three books in her Cookie Baker Mystery Series are available on Amazon.com as eBooks and are titled *One Smart Cookie*, *Two Animal Cookies* and *A Halloween Cookie*.



Sisters in Crime **Guppies**

SinC Guppies is an online writer's support group. Guppies come from across the United States and Canada but 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.



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!"

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

- Upcoming Programs & Events
- Meeting Schedule
- Our Authors & links to member authors' websites
- How to Join C&D / SinC
- Link to the C&D blog

REMEMBER: Our Croak& Dagger blog provides 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!



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Noose News

How short can you go?

Writers who can boil down a mystery into a half-dozen words are encouraged to enter the third annual **Six-Word Mystery Contest** sponsored by the Rocky Mountain Chapter of Mystery Writers of America (RMMWA).

The contest is now open with instructions posted at www.rmmwa.org. Entries must be received by midnight, Oct. 31, 2019. Six-word novels can be entered in one or all five of the following categories: Hard Boiled or Noir; Cozy Mystery; Thriller Mystery; Police Procedural Mystery; and/or a mystery with Romance or Lust. The Six-Word Mystery Contest is open to all adults 18 and over. No residency requirements.

RMMWA Chapter President Chris Goff said, "Last year, writers from across the nation entered the contest and we're excited to see what kind of creative stories we get this year."

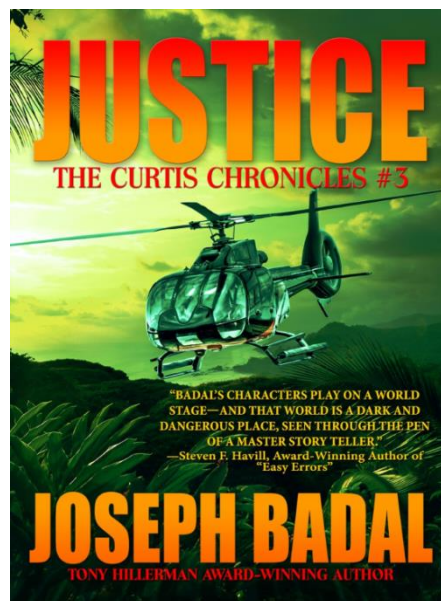
Judges for this year's contest include *Alfred Hitchcock's Mystery Magazine* Editor Linda Landrigan; New York Times best-selling author Anne Hillerman; award-winning author, lawyer and activist Manuel Ramos; Tattered Cover Book Store owner and author Len Vlahos; and literary agent Terrie Wolf.

Cost to enter the contest is \$6 for one entry (just \$1 per word); or \$10 to enter six-word mysteries in all five categories. The grand prize winner will receive \$100 in cash. Winners in all other categories will receive valuable gift cards to the Tattered Cover Book Store and will have their stories featured on the RMMWA website and published in both *Deadlines*, RMMWA's newsletter, and *Alfred Hitchcock Mystery Magazine*.

Finalists will be invited to the chapter's annual Mystery & Mistletoe Holiday Party, December 12, 2019 in Denver. Winners will be voted on by those attending the party and announced that evening.

According to legend, the first six-word novel was born in the 1920s when Ernest Hemingway at New York's Algonquin Hotel or Luchow's restaurant (depending on whom you ask) won a \$10 bet by writing a six-word story. His dark and dramatic submission was: "For sale: Baby shoes. Never worn." Urban legend or no, memorable, heart-breaking and sublime six-word stories have been penned ever since.

Last year's winning entry by Matthew Porter was "She took his name. For starters."



You can now order the eBook version of the 3rd book in Joe Badal's Curtis Chronicles series. *Justice* will be delivered to your eBook reader on November 12. Go to the following link to order today: https://www.amazon.com/dp/B07WDQ5DZ7/ref=sr_1_6?keywords=justice+by+joseph+badal&qid=1565886192&s=gateway&sr=8-6

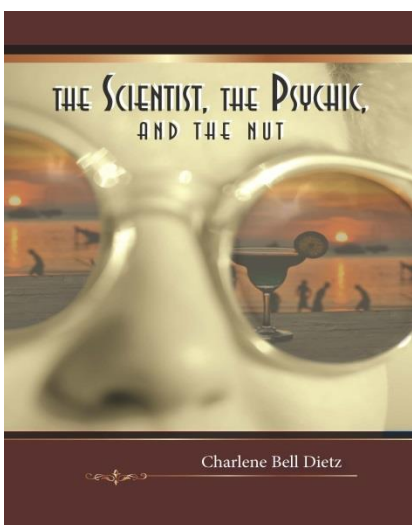
Joe also announces that the audio version of *Dark Angel*, the second in the Lassiter/Martinez Case Files series, is now available on Audible and Amazon, narrated by Pamela Almand. This series (*Borderline*, *Dark Angel*, and *Natural Causes*) has been rated as featuring the best female detective duo since Cagney & Lacey.

Be my Guest

Croak & Dagger Las Cruces member Donnell Ann Bell, informs that she is "entertaining guests" on her blog (<https://donnellannbell/blog/>). Particularly if you have new release or a craft subject or topic on writing that might be interesting to her other readers.

She runs a blog on Fridays called "Help From My Friends Friday." Let her know if you want to be her guest and promote your new release.

Donnell finaled or won numerous Romance Writers of America® chapter contests as well as other multi-genre writing competitions and is extremely proud to be listed as a two-time Golden Heart® finalist for RWA's® highest competition. These particular accolades led to the publication of her *The Past Came Hunting* and *Deadly Recall*.



In Charlene Bell Dietz's latest thriller (available later in September), bio-medical research scientist Beth Armstrong takes her husband on the vacations of his dreams, hoping to recapture the romance in her marriage. However, her obsession to discover the identity of her biological father stirs up an angry nest of islanders, turning their adventure into a lethal nightmare.

GLA Marches On

Library Liaison Ann Zeigler reports that The Great Library Adventure, northern edition, moved from its August location at Santa Fe's main library to spend September at El Dorado, a nearby G(L)LA* community. Fingers crossed for it to land in Springer, also a G(L)LA community, for October.

GLA, southern edition, expects to move from its current G(L)LA location at Estancia down to Las Cruces for October. GLA, ABQ edition, will be at the Tijeras/East Mountain branch for October, and the Erna Ferguson branch for December.

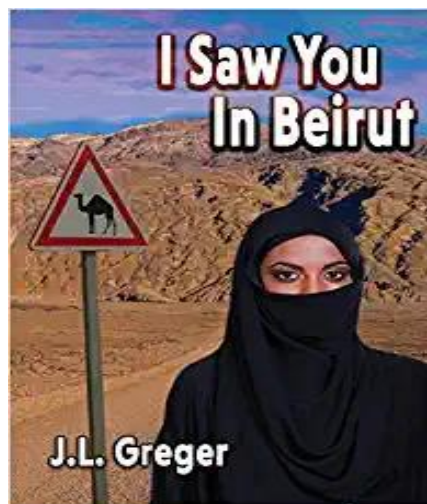
Negotiations are under way for a perhaps-combined display at the public and university libraries in Portales. We have been invited by the Los Lunas Friends of the Library to organize an event. Details are in negotiation.

Speaking of events, our fans at Rio Rancho had such a good time at our last appearance that

they have declared us to be an annual event, beginning next February. And of course we are a permanent guest every June at Moriarty.

The final article in *InSinC*'s four-part series about GLA will appear in the winter issue.

(*Aka "Great Little Library Adventure.")



A mysterious source of data on the Iranian nuclear industry sends an email from Tabriz draws Sara Almquist into a plan to identify and rescue the agent known only as F in Janet Greger's latest thriller, *I Saw You in Beirut*. Sara is forced to remember and re-evaluate characters from her student days at the University of Wisconsin and from her career as a globe-trotting scientist.

Expo(sure) at the Journal

Our favorite newspaper (those of us who toured the building back in May really enjoyed it!), the Albuquerque Journal, is sponsoring a "Senior Source Expo" on September 26. Businesses providing resources to seniors will show off their services, but there will also be Artists' Booths.

We writers are artists, right? Janet Greger, Gloria Casale, and Linda Triegel will be manning a booth at the Expo. Any other C&D members who would like to show off their artistic wares are welcome to join in. Contact Janet or Linda for information (email addresses on page 2).

What Authors and Editors Wish They Could Say to One Another

Excerpted from an article by Leila Sales in the 7/20/18 Publishers Weekly. For more:

<https://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/print/20180723/77564-what-authors-and-editors-wish-they-could-say-to-one-another.html>.

I've been a children's book editor and author for roughly a decade. This means that I'm sometimes trying to defend an author's behavior to my publishing friends, or trying to explain an editor's moves to my writer friends. Often, authors and their editors operate as a team, but sometimes it feels like we're playing on opposite sides, and I think that happens when one side doesn't really understand the other's perspective.

To try to bridge that gap, I asked a number of authors, "What do you wish your editors knew?" And I asked a number of editors, "What do you wish your authors knew?" And, of course, I thought long and hard about my own answers to both of those questions.

The responses that I got showed an extraordinary amount of respect and collaboration between authors and editors. They showed commonalities between the two groups that one doesn't always expect of the other—for example, *everyone* is truly and personally devastated when the published book underperforms, and *everyone* wants positive reinforcement.

I also saw some real divisions, where it's hard to give both the author and the editor everything that they want. The clearest example of this is in terms of communication: authors always want more, while editors constantly feel that they're giving as much as they can.

In this piece, I'll share 10 things that editors wish their authors knew, followed by 10 things that authors wish their editors knew—because I believe that if we understand what pushes each other's buttons, we can create a better working environment for all of us.

Ten Things That Editors Wish Authors Knew

■ **We want your book to succeed.** We love your book. That's why we signed it up in the first place: because we loved reading it, and we believed that other people would love it. We are as invested in the success of your book as you are. Furthermore, remember this: if we sign up books that don't perform well, that reflects poorly on us as editors. We are never trying to sabotage your book, because we are emotionally and financially invested in how well it does.

■ **We are not one-man bands.** It may seem like your editors are making all the decisions on their own, since we are the ones you hear news from. But often, what we're telling you is a decision that's been made by our publishers, marketing directors, bookstore buyers, et al. If we tell you that we're moving the pub date or changing the cover, it's not because we felt like messing with you, but because we are meeting a need that's been given to us for strategic reasons.

■ **We have many books on our lists.** When we talk to you, it's almost exclusively about your book and your career, so it can be easy to forget that we have other authors too, all of whom are priorities to us. When it takes us a long time to get back to you on what seems like a simple question, or when we say no to something that seems like an easy yes, bear in mind that this is often because we are trying to take good care of many authors at once.

■ **Do not rewrite after first-pass pages.** Ideally, you should do any significant rewriting before a manuscript even goes into copyediting. It is acceptable to rewrite when the copyedited manuscript comes to you, and again when the first-pass pages come to you. But after that stage, the only changes we should be making are small proofreading corrections that were missed in the earlier stages.

■ **Be realistic with your dates.** Remember that we are always juggling a number of editorial projects at the same time. We carefully space out our workloads. We know you want to hit the deadlines we set for you and you don't want to disappoint us, but if you're going to be two months late, it's far better for you to tell us the truth up front rather than continually promising that you need "just one more weekend."

■ **Be smart about how you use social media.** Don't get embroiled in Twitter battles. Don't become obsessed with your Goodreads reviews. (Ideally, just ignore them.) Do use social media to promote your work. Our marketing department is working as hard as it can, but this is a group effort; you cannot just sit back and rely on them to do all the work of promoting you.

■ **Follow manuscript formatting instructions.** Publishing houses have processes in place that every book must go through. If you deliver your manuscript unprepared for those processes, we can't just skip them—instead, your editor (or your editor's assistant) will have to take over the preparation him/herself. For example, if you send us your manuscript in multiple files, we are responsible for combining it into one. These instructions may seem arbitrary, but when you don't follow them, it just means more work for us.

■ **Use your agent.** Every minute that we spend replying to your emails is a minute that we can't spend editing your book. So before you email us, always take a second to think, "Would my agent be better equipped to respond to this?" A good rule of thumb is that if it's a creative matter, it goes to your editor; if it's business or personal, your agent is probably a better place to start.

■ **Pick your battles.** We want you to be happy. We want you to be proud of how your book turns out; we want you to feel well cared for with your marketing and publicity plans. At the same time, we are usually not able to give you everything that you want. Fight for the things that are truly important to you (e.g., if you absolutely can't stand that cover, you can keep pushing back), but also acknowledge which things are merely preferences or instances where you can compromise and still be happy.

■ **We are human beings, too.** Like you, our feelings can get hurt. We thrive when we hear that our work is valued. We are mollified by a heartfelt apology. We appreciate hearing "please" and "thank you." We do not appreciate being treated like servants, or like therapists. We have only so many hours in a day.

Ten Things That Authors Wish Editors Knew

■ **We are professionals.** You don't have to hide information from us, or sugarcoat everything, or slather your correspondence to us in smiley faces and exclamation points. Be real with us. Tell us the truth kindly but firmly, as you would any other adult colleague. We chose this career, and we understand that every career has its ups and downs.

■ **We want to be edited.** We know that the first drafts we hand in aren't perfect. We like getting compliments on them, because who doesn't like compliments? But more than that, we want to get substantive, helpful notes.

■ **We notice details.** We have spent a long time with our books, and we know them intimately. So if you rewrite a section of our manuscript, or change a page break in our picture books, we're going to notice. We may be just fine with your change—we may even prefer it to our original version—but we don't appreciate feeling like you're trying to pull the wool over our eyes. The more you can bring us into the process, the calmer we will be.

■ **Be clear about what we do and do not have a say in.** When you send us a cover with the comment “Everyone in-house loves it!” and what you mean is, “We’ve already invested a lot of time and money in this and it’s too late for us to change directions,” it would save us a lot of unnecessary fighting of unwinnable battles if you could just tell us, “This is how it has to be.” We’re disappointed when we don’t get a say in things, sure, but it feels far worse when we mistakenly believed that we *would* have a say.

■ **Our time is precious.** Please don’t ask us to fill out a three-page publicity questionnaire if nobody’s going to read it. Don’t ask us to write bonus content that we won’t get paid for, that doesn’t get placed, and that doesn’t result in any additional book sales. Don’t tell us you need our next revision in two weeks, causing us to hire babysitters and cancel plans and pull all-nighters, only to tell us at the end of it all that you won’t actually be able to read the revision for another two months.

■ **We want to promote our books.** We just need direction. We know that we need to self-promote in order to make our books into sales successes, but we don’t always know where to start. We come to you with promotional asks (“Can you set up an appearance at my hometown bookstore? Can you get me more school visits? Can you pitch my book to this podcast?”) not because we are unwilling to do these things ourselves, but because we don’t know how, and we don’t know what we are allowed to do without stepping on the publisher’s toes.

■ **Be realistic in your expectations for our self-promotion.** We are trying our best, but the truth is that unless we are already *New York Times* bestsellers or celebrities, our social media presence probably isn’t going to have a massive impact on sales. There are limits to how much we can actually achieve via Twitter. It’s so frustrating when we write a good book, and then we get blamed for the lack of sales.

■ **If you don’t tell us what you’re doing, we assume that you’re not doing anything.** If you’re running an ad for our book, or sending it out for blurbs, please tell us! Those actions prove to us that you care. We’d rather hear that you pitched us for a panel at ALA and we weren’t accepted than not hear anything about it. A periodic update does wonders for making us feel like we’re not just writing into a black hole.

■ **We are in this for the long haul.** Though there are some people who want to publish a single book just to say that they’ve done it and then move on, most of us want to be career writers. We want you to help us achieve that. We want you to have honest conversations with us about our career tracks, just as a boss would have with an employee: where do we see our career going, is that realistic, what are the steps to get us there?

■ **Be honest and communicative with us about positioning and expectations.** It’s heartbreaking to put all of our effort into a book and then feel like sales and marketing are dropping the baton once it’s passed to them. It’s devastating when a book we’ve been slaving over for three years comes out to no more fanfare than some tweets from our friends, or discovering that B&N didn’t take our book when we walk in there and can’t find it on the shelf. We know that sometimes this can’t be helped—the market changes, there’s too much in-house competition, etc. A book that we thought was going to be major turns out not to be, and we all understand that is no one’s fault. We will still be disappointed, but we guarantee we’ll be less disappointed if you’re realistic with us along the way so the result doesn’t come to us as a shock. Help us manage our expectations.

At the end of the day, editors and authors share the same goal. We want to publish books that we’re proud of: books that will sell well, be meaningful to readers, and advance our careers. And the more we can see through each other’s eyes, the more likely we are to get there.

*Leila Sales is an author, editor, and freelance book developer;
her most recent novel is If You Don’t Have Anything Nice to Say (FSG).*

3 easy things this librarian wishes authors would do to promote their books ...

From Librarian Linda Johns

<https://lindajohns.net/2018/08/10/3-easy-things-this-librarian-wishes-authors-would-do-to-promote-their-books/>



There are a few basic things you authors 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. Oddly, only a teensy percent of the authors I encounter have done the 3 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. You would not believe the number of books I've wanted to include in book lists and blog posts, but then had to delete when a good image wasn't available.
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. 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 really use. 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.

Take a half-hour to update your website with downloadable book covers and author image, and get your books' summaries down to 30 words. You'll make this librarian happy (or, at least, happier), and help all of us with connecting readers to your books.

TODAY'S CYBERSECURITY TIP – from Ann Zeigler

URGENT! DO NOT (meaning, ever) click on an ad on Facebook.

Cybersecurity experts have confirmed that FB ads are increasingly being used only as a vehicle to deliver viruses, malware, and other extremely bad stuff to your e-devices. While not every ad is from the Black Hats, we don't want you to think that FB ads are safe anymore. FB is taking the position that it is not obliged to police the content of ad postings, which from a very legalistic point of view is correct. FB is not a guarantor of the truth of anything in an ad, including its digital safety.

CYBER-SAFE PRACTICE: If you see something you like in an ad on FB, DON'T CLICK. Bail out of FB and go to the advertiser's (confirmed for-real safe) website and look at their online ad. If you can't find a confirmed-safe site? That, my friends, is a clue. STAY SAFE.

Ann Zeigler is the author of Tips Lawyers Wish You Knew. She has just finished teaching an online course on "Criminal Fun with E-Devices" (so she oughta know!).

Reviews

A Shot in the Dark by Lynne Truss.
Bloomsbury Publishing 2018, 287 pp (HC).

And now for something completely different... Lynne Truss, famous (even infamous) for her popular punctuation guide, *Eats, Shoots and Leaves*, has turned her poisonously witty pen to mystery writing.

The story takes place in Brighton, a resort on the South Coast of England, in 1957 (ill-tempered references to Graham Greene's *Brighton Rock* abound). A famous theater critic, A.S. Crystal, has condescended to review a local production of a play called *A Shilling in the Meter*. Sitting near him in the theater is local constable Twitten, to whom Crystal has promised a revelation about an unsolved stick-up in London ten years earlier.

Needless to say, Crystal is shot dead just before revealing his secret, and now Twitten has a murder case on his hands as well as the unsolved heist. Assisted by his colleague, a Sergeant Brunswick (and bollixed at every turn by his incompetent captain), Twitten ventures into criminal underworld beneath Brighton's gaudy holiday façade.

The plot of *Shot in the Dark* gets a little convoluted as it gets deeper into the mystery with few clues to orient the reader, but it's still fun reading. ♦

—Linda Triegel (ljt23@earthlink.net)

Marbeck and the King in Waiting by John
Piklington. Severn House 2013. 201 pp (HC)

Marbeck, who seems to have no first name but goes by several aliases, is an "intelligencer," currently at outs with his boss, Sir Robert Cecil, Queen Elizabeth's spymaster.

It's 1603. Elizabeth dies near the start of the story; her cousin James—the "king in waiting"—is traveling south from Scotland to take the throne. Nefarious plots are afoot to make sure he does not get to London.

Marbeck goes undercover (which he does a lot) with a rebel group financed by an unknown wealthy lord, who plan to put a Spanish infanta

on the throne. Marbeck foils the plot, but that's not the only one brewing.

Meanwhile, his lover's son has left his Oxford studies to follow a puritan fanatic, Isaac Gow, and Celia asks Marbeck to find the boy and convince him to come home. Gow, no surprise, turns out to be plotting his own attack on James, whom he assumes is still loyal to Rome.

There's plenty of action in the story, but it's easy to follow, despite the multitude of names assumed by both Marbeck and his confederates. The history is clear too, even to a reader who, like me, is not well versed in the Tudor era, and it doesn't overwhelm the story. Descriptions of the constantly shifting settings give the sense that you're really there. ♦

—Linda Triegel (ljt23@earthlink.net)

Crimson Lake by Candice Fox. Forge Books
2018, 352 pp (HC).

Former Sydney cop Ted Conkaffey has a knack for being in the wrong place at the wrong time. Accused, but not convicted, of a brutal kidnapping, Ted finds himself fired, disgraced, and still public enemy number one in the public's eye, and flees to remote Crimson Lake, a swampy, croc-infested area of northern Australia, hoping no one will know who he is there. No such luck.

Ted's lawyer, who still believes in him, introduces him to eccentric private investigator Amanda Pharrell, herself a convicted murderer. With nothing to lose, Ted agrees to help with her investigation into the disappearance of a young woman, and not incidentally the murder she was accused of years earlier, with no help from a pair of corrupt local cops who have it in for both of them.

Both the principals are intriguing characters, and the setting is vividly pictured. I couldn't help wondering, however, why Ted never tried to put his detecting skills toward solving his own case. I hear that's in an upcoming book, but I'm not sure I'll still be interested enough to read it. ♦

—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.

Find Me by Carol O'Connell. Putnam 2006, 352 pp (HC)

(Ninth book of the Kathleen Mallory mystery series set in the late 20th century)

This story takes us all along Route 66, America's legendary "Mother Road." We gradually learn of three parallel journeys along the road: Mallory on a very personal quest, the FBI and police searching for buried bodies, and a caravan of parents searching for lost children.

Kathleen Mallory is an NYPD homicide detective, a genius computer whiz/hacker, antisocial, fiercely driven. Few people know her, by her own choice. Detective Sergeant Riker, her partner, has been clocking her in and out for the past few weeks, wondering why she's been AWOL from duty. His anxiety peaks when Savannah Sirus, an apparent suicide, is found in Mallory's apartment.

Mallory is driving a custom-made speedster (Porsche engine, Volkswagen body). A sheaf of decades-old, well-read letters dictate the landmarks she must find on her route. She starts at the Chicago end of Route 66, sees it's a grisly crime scene, notices a key detail, alerts law enforcement, and goes on her way.

That evening, Mallory helps a lost driver avoid a stalker. The woman is trying to join up with a group of people traveling along Route 66 showing photographs of their missing children in desperate hope of finding them. Next day, Mallory notices a suspicious vehicle at a roadside diner, insists that local police investigate. When the feds arrive and make a mess of the crime scene, she tips off her Chicago law enforcement contact.

When Riker learns Mallory is reporting crimes to police and FBI, it relieves his deepest fear; a murderer fleeing a crime wouldn't call attention to herself. He and Charles Butler (wealthy genius) pursue Mallory along Route 66 in Charles' Mercedes.

The FBI continues to find long-buried bodies; a serial killer adds new victims (from the caravan); Mallory presses on, locating the landmarks lovingly described in the letters; Riker and Butler in pursuit. Although Mallory is intensely focused on her own primary mission of discovery, she cannot help but observe a serial killer is systematically attacking the caravan. She often thwarts the killer and assists law enforcement, but always on her own terms, always continuing on her way.

It's essential to read the previous books in the series before this one, to fully appreciate Mallory and her road trip. A hundred and one missing children, feds vs. state/local PD squabbles, and the serial killer are side distractions; Mallory is traveling Route 66 in her father's footsteps. ♦

First Light by Philip R. Craig. Scribner 2002, 352 pp (HC)

(First book of the Brady Coyne & J.W. Jackson mystery series)

Brady Coyne is a lawyer in Boston, a good fishing buddy of Jeff's. Brady comes to Martha's Vineyard to finalize a will for an elderly client. Sarah Fairchild, close to death, needs to decide between two prospective buyers for her extensive property: one candidate is a non-profit organization that will create a wildlife preserve, the other is a golf resort developer. Brady must meet both and evaluate which buyer best serves Sarah's wishes.

J.W. ("Jeff") lives year-round on the island with his wife Zee and children. He's in the process of building a treehouse with their "help," a task they all enjoy. He's an ex-cop from Boston, wounded in the line of duty, now working at odd jobs around the island. He loves his simpler lifestyle with his family. He's been asked to investigate a "cold" case of a woman who went missing from the island.

Brady, Jeff and Zee are passionate about fishing, and it's the week of the annual fishing derby. Jeff knows the many places fish come and go with the tides around the island. His favorite time to fish is "First Light", just before full dawn. Jeff and Zee take turns going fishing

with Brady; chapters alternate between Brady's and Jeff's point of view.

When Sarah's nurse goes missing, clues point to the same circumstances as for previous cases of missing women. Brady's and Jeff's investigations converge; danger threatens.

As in all mysteries of the Martha's Vineyard series (featuring Jeff as sole protagonist), reading the story feels like taking a mini-vacation. Craig's love for Martha's Vineyard is evident in his descriptions of island landmarks, and his characters' great joy when fishing on its many beaches. A recurring theme is the dramatic difference between tourist-packed summers and the calmer off-season.

Jeff's laid-back humor is a treat: "Like a lot of people who were raised with not much money, I keep a supply of stuff that I don't really need right now but might need some day." He makes good use of odds and ends building the treehouse. ♦

Lost by Michael Robotham. Mulholland Books 2014, 370 pp (PB)

(Second book of the Joseph O'Loughlin mystery series set in contemporary London)

The series debut was all about O'Loughlin, his patients and their connections to a serial killer; Detective Ruiz was the homicide detective who investigated the crimes, at first suspecting O'Loughlin, eventually trusting him and working together to catch the killer.

The sequel is all about Ruiz, starting with his amnesia after a violent crime scene, that landed him in the hospital. He's never stopped thinking about a missing-girl case, and the possibility the convicted culprit might not be guilty, which subconsciously ties into long-suppressed guilt over his younger brother's death. We learn Ruiz's mother is a gypsy who found it more expedient to identify herself as Jewish. As Ruiz's memories gradually return, he re-investigates the circumstances of the missing-girl case, against his superior's orders.

Eventually O'Loughlin is the only one who believes in Ruiz's credibility. To help Ruiz track down clues, O'Loughlin rounds up a ragtag bunch of helpers from his clients. They find new evidence that leads Ruiz to take dangerous risks,

believing he might be able to find and save the missing girl.

Lots of details about relationships and whatnot. Slower pacing than modern mystery novels. ♦

What Gold Buys by Ann Parker. Poisoned Pen Press 2016, 408 pp (PB)
(Fifth book of the Silver Rush mystery series set in 1880 Leadville, Colorado)

Inez Stannert returns to her Silver Queen saloon after an extended visit with her son and sister in Colorado Springs. Mark Stannert returns with her, for the moment determined to remain married (by using a variety of dirty tricks). As Inez investigates the death of a fortune-teller in Stillborn Alley (the most poverty-stricken and crime-riddled part of town), she befriends young Antonia, who has survived by her wits disguised as Tony, a "newsie."

Dr. G is hunting for Tony, who has unusual eyes. Newspaperman Jed Elliston is tracking a rumor of anatomists who dissect corpses, and possibly also create fresh ones for their dissection efforts. Dr. G may be in cahoots with the undertaker Mr. Alexander. Tony accepts a menial night job for Mr. Alexander, hoping to find her "Maman," whose corpse disappeared after her murder. ♦

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2019 MEETING DATES

Tuesday, September 24, 7:00 p.m.

Tuesday, October 22, 7:00 p.m.

Tuesday, November 26, 7:00 p.m.

December: No Meeting

Dues are Due!

Tuesday, January 28, 7:00 p.m.

Tuesday, February 25, 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