



THE NOOSELETTER

CROAK & DAGGER

NEW MEXICO CHAPTER – SISTERS in CRIME

Volume XVI, Number 2 — March/April 2020

†The President's Corner†

Hello, Fellow Crimesters,

Normally we'd now all be getting out our suntan lotion and hats to welcome spring. Unfortunately, hand sanitizers and toilet-paper have become the sought-after items du jour instead.

A long, long time ago, as a six-year old, I remember my mother taking me to visit a friend who lived upstairs in an apartment house. The week before our visit a young girl my age had died in the apartment below this friend's. Mother held the wooden and glass door open for me, and I entered the hallway. To my right stood the closed apartment door—the door behind where the little girl had died. In front of me rose the steep-dark stairway, climbing up to the second floor.

My mother stopped me, saying, "Wait, Charlene, don't touch anything, not even the stair railing." In other words, *touch and you die*.

Now, how much sense does that make to a six-year old? None. Nevertheless it scared the daylights out of me. Back then, doctors knew little about bacterial spinal meningitis, or how long it might live on surfaces, or how it spread. They only knew that a person who contracted it died within hours.

Today we battle a tenacious virus with a propensity for living not just hours, but up to three days on surfaces. You touch—you catch—if you don't keep your contaminated hands off your face. Most of us have no idea how many times we actually touch our face, a difficult habit to break.

Like the scary disease the little girl died from long ago, we still don't know much about COVID-19. The most vulnerable, who suffer dire consequences from the virus are the elderly (sorry friends, but elderly starts at 60) and those with underlying health issues. Our governor has declared a state of emergency as more cases appear in NM.

More and more NM events are being canceled, especially large gatherings. Public schools are closed for classes for three weeks, as are libraries until April 15.

Very likely the multi-generational centers will also be closed to activities like our C&D meetings. Since we don't know where all this is going, nor what havoc it will cause on individuals, it's in our best interest to not gather in groups in confined spaces.

Many of you know how much this grieves me, but I'm postponing the April 4 Rhys Bowen conference and canceling the March 24 general meeting of C&D. "Voices in Your Head" *will* take place, most likely on the third (or fourth) Saturday of August. We'll keep you posted—but meanwhile, I need you all to be safe!

Use this as a gift of time for some quality writing or reading. Then let's see what happens with this virus during the next 30 days. Maybe we'll gather in our new meeting place (see page 10) at the end of April. Fingers crossed.

By the way: the coronavirus does not cause diarrhea. There's no need to hoard toilet paper!

Be well,

Charlene Dietz, President

**Mark your calendars (tentatively):
Tuesday, April 28, at 7 p.m.**

Our April speaker will be Kris Neri, author of the Tracy Eaton mystery series. In Kris's latest book, *Hopscotch Life*, quirky Plum Tardy skips from day to day trying to stay ahead of her own missteps.

Although a native of New Jersey, Kris now lives in Silver City, having decided she was "born with a love of the West and Southwest." She will speak on "Creating a Vivid Sense of Place."

NOTE: The April meeting will be held at Sandia Presbyterian Church (see page 10).



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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How Do You Write a Mystery When Every Plot Is Taken?

How to mix things up, do justice to tradition, and still keep your crime writing fresh.

by Tessa Wegert

Ed Note: The following two articles are excerpted from www.crimereads.com. Subscribe to their newsletter for dozens of articles on current and classic crime fiction.

If you had asked the late Christopher Booker, the English journalist and author would have told you there are a limited number of story plots to go around. He had such conviction in his theory that he even wrote a book about it. According to Booker, every novel falls into one of seven plot categories: overcoming the monster, rags to riches, the quest, voyage and return, comedy, tragedy, or rebirth.

While stories are rarely this monochrome, there may be some truth to Booker's claim—especially when it comes to mysteries. Mystery novels already tend to follow a formula; you've got your inciting incident, call to action, trail of evidence, and so on. There's almost always a sleuth, whether amateur or professional, pitted against some cagey suspects in a quest to find a killer.

Mystery writers pull from the same stack of literary devices, including flashbacks, foreshadowing, and metaphor as any author. The same goes for narrative techniques like cliffhangers and ticking clocks. In other words, no matter how you shuffle the deck, there are a finite number of cards to choose from.

For authors, this notion can be disheartening. How do you thicken a plot when the options are so thin? Is every new mystery doomed to be derivative?

Fortunately, the answer is no.

That's because plots can be interpreted and presented in a multitude of ways. Take Stieg Larsson's *The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo*. This mystery is about overcoming the monster, but it's also a story of rebirth. Carl Hiaasen's *Basket Case*, meanwhile, is a quest and a comedy at once.

Pairing two plots is just one of the ways authors can craft something entirely new. Every writer brings their personal style and experience to their work. They apply their own blend of atmosphere, pacing, and prose, and treat conventional plot devices and crime tropes in unique ways. Even operating with the same limited set of tools as others, their predilections are likely to guide them down an alternate path. Consider Dennis Lehane's *Shutter Island*, *The Girl on the Train* by Paula Hawkins, and Wendy Walker's *The Night Before*. All feature an unreliable narrator. Each is a psychological thrill ride. And yet, these three stories feel nothing alike.

News headlines, pop culture events, and true crime investigations all inspire writers, so there's bound to be some overlap in subject matter. But there's no need to fret. When two authors draw the same cards and harness their signature style, cultural background, even gender and age, they can play the game in an entirely different way.

Even the most recognizable plots can look ultramodern and uncommon when seen through a new lens. The rags to riches/overcoming the monster story in Catherine Steadman's *Something in the Water* isn't much like Marcus Sakey's *Good People*, though they both concern a couple discovering something that tempts them to make an immoral and potentially dangerous decision. Still, Steadman's book ignited a spark of recognition, and in the pursuit of readers, that can be a good thing.

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Authors are known for drawing inspiration from their peers. They're readers too, after all, and many of them turn to fan fiction both as a strategy for generating ideas and as a way to honor the stories they love. We all have our favorite writers, and aren't immune to hero-worship. Some authors even borrow existing ideas. In fact, putting a contemporary spin on a masterwork is another way to construct a distinctive story.

Ruth Ware's *The Turn of the Key* finds protagonist Rowan Caine accepting a job as a nanny at a high-tech "smart" home in the Scottish Highlands. *The Turn of the Screw*, the 1898 Henry James novella, is about a governess left in charge of two children in a remote home in Essex. There are similarities between the books, as Ware no doubt intended. Both allude to the presence of ghosts, and both involve the death of a child. But Ware's updated setting, choice of narrator, writing style, and unexpected twists make *The Turn of the Key* feel entirely fresh, and as a result the parallels are mere echoes calling mystery devotees to their coffee mugs and wingback chairs.

Maybe the best way to look at plot – and the way that's most likely to please mystery fans – is to see it as a human bone. This bone provides the structure for a limb; let's say it's a leg. The muscle and skin on that femur, which is unique to every individual, can transform its external appearance completely. It's the meat that makes it characteristic of the person to whom it belongs, not the bone itself.

Writing a mystery that keeps readers engaged isn't about following a rulebook, but reinventing timeless tales, observing the stories that unfold around us, applying our own experience, and infusing our writing with our own perspective. There are plenty of mysteries already on the shelves that have employed traditional plots to shock and delight readers.

But there's room for plenty more.



The Best Historical Mysteries of 2020 (so far)

From murder at Plymouth Rock to intrigue in mid-century Florida, 10 standout historical crime novels to devour this spring.

by Molly Odintz

Historical fiction fulfills many needs in our lives. It educates us and entertains us, soothes us and challenges us. It can help us forget the present, or find new ways to understand our world today. This spring features a stellar line-up of historical whodunnits, from murder the Massachusetts Bay Colony to intrigue in Indochina. Whether you're looking for a work of historical fiction that highlights the resonances between the past and the present, or pure escapism into the past so that you don't have to think about the present at all, we've got a recommendation for you!

Beheld by TaraShea Nesbit

Setting: 1630 Plymouth, Massachusetts

Beheld begins with a murder on American soil ten years after the arrival of the Mayflower. It's the first murder to occur in the fledgling colony, and the crime has its roots in the rivalry between an Anglican family and their Puritan neighbors, made deadly by the arrival of an interloper.

Who Speaks for the Damned by C.S. Harris

Setting: 1814 Europe

Harris' 15th installment of her popular and well-research Sebastian St. Cyr novels, the detective and his trusty valet encounter a mind-boggling murder when a royal who's been presumed dead for decades turns up very recently murdered. St. Cyr's investigation will take him across Europe and through several courts, each more decadent than the last.

The Abstainer by Ian McGuire

Setting: 1867 Manchester

In 1867 Manchester, revolution and murder will tear an Irish family apart, as one member sides with the Fenians and the other works to take down the budding rebellion from the inside. Featuring rich detail and vividly drawn characters that perfectly embody their milieu, *The Abstainer* is essential reading for all fascinated by the intersection of crime and history.

The Illness Lesson by Clare Beams

Setting: 1870s New England

In this elegantly crafted tale of utopian woe, a new girls' school set up in a former utopian colony becomes the site of a mysterious illness—and a very dubious cure. Beams' protagonist, the daughter of the commune's golden couple, is trapped between the patriarchal concern of the men running the school, the teenage rebellion of its students, and her own complicated desires; her thoughts are relatable but also grounded in 19th century ideals.

A Hundred Suns by Karin Tanabe

Setting: 1933 Indochina

In this lush and glamorous tale of intrigue and romance in 1930s Indochina, Karin Tanabe sends an American interloper with money to burn and secrets to learn into a decadent expat community, where she makes new friends, embarks on new affairs, and in general stirs stuff up. Message to Hollywood: can this be a movie, please?

Things in Jars by Jess Kidd

Setting: Late Victorian London

Jess Kidd's truly weird supernatural thriller really delivers on the title—there are so, so many things in jars. Big things, little things, very creepy things, and more. There's historical fiction that's chock full of the realistic details of the time, and then there are historicals that capture the essence, the mindset, and the atmosphere of the time. This is one of the latter. Bridie Devine, a resurrectionist-turned-detective, who knows how to read bodies and find missing people, is on the case to track down a stolen little girl with strange powers—if the circus impresarios and bottling surgeons don't find her first.

Matthew Henson and the Ice Temple of Doom by Gary Phillips

Setting: 1920s Harlem

In what we're hoping is the start to a new, long-running series, Gary Phillips takes real-life arctic explorer Matthew Henson, plunks him down in the midst of the Harlem Renaissance, and has him solve a mystery in the twilight of his life. Henson's achievements were dismissed in his own generation, and he spent decades living in relative obscurity after the news-making exploits of his youth, so Phillips' latest isn't just a great crime novel—it's an opportunity to give the figures of the past the credit that they are due.

The Secret Guests by Benjamin Black

Setting: WWII Ireland

Benjamin Black is the pen name of renowned Irish writer John Banville, who uses the pseudonym for his carefully wrought detective fiction. His latest mystery is a departure from his usual elegantly noir style, taking place during WWII, when the British royal children were sent away from the Blitz and stashed on a remote estate in neutral Ireland. Espionage fiction, manor house gothic, and locked room mysteries collide for what's bound to be one of the best historicals of the year.

The Animals of Lockwood Manor by Jane Healey

Setting: WWII English Countryside

In this lush historical novel, a museum curator heads to a country manor with a collection of rare fossils and specimens, ready to do whatever it takes to protect her beloved curiosities from the Blitz. What she doesn't anticipate is difficulty with the boorish overlord of the manse, who'd like to treat the museum's collection as it were his own assemblage of hunting trophies, or the possible presence of a ghost, who may or may not have killed the previous lady of the manor, or the beautiful daughter of the manor who takes such an interest in the fossils—and their curator.

The Committee by Sterling Watson

Setting: 1950s Florida

This academic mystery takes us into the depths of the Cold War, Florida edition, as a bunch of professors find themselves targeted by the mysterious Committee, dedicated to using law to control morality. As *The Committee* begins, a professor commits suicide, and a curious onlooker gets more than he bargained for when he opens his own investigation.

Reviews

Takes One to Know One by Susan Isaacs.
Atlantic Monthly Press, 2019, 359 pp (HC)

Corie Geller is a Long Island matron, happily married to Josh, a distinguished judge, with a young stepdaughter she loves. However, she is also an ex-FBI agent, who apart from her current gig reading mystery novels published in Arabic (who knew there was such an animal) for a literary agency, belongs to a group of similar freelancers/workers-from-home who meet for lunch and to exchange networking ideas.

Corie is intrigued, then suspicious, of another member of the group, Pete Delaney, who seems too bland to be real. Pete, she's convinced, is hiding something. She notices behavior in him that she's seen, and even used herself in her former career (hence the book's title) and starts asking around, discretely of course, of her friends, former co-workers, and her dad, a retired NYPD detective. She even travels to locations where crimes have been committed at the same times when Pete was out of town, trying to nail down what he's up to.

I won't tell you what she finds out, except that her instincts were right on—not that the story could have ended with her shrugging and thinking, *Oh, well, it was an idea*. Isaacs, who wrote *Compromising Positions* and a number of other stand-alone suspense novels, has a low-key but often very funny outlook on suburban New York life. Her characters are lively, the dialogue realistic, if not exactly every-day. *Takes One to Know One* has landed on plenty of “best-of” lists of mysteries in 2019. Try it. ♦

The Widows by Jess Montgomery. Minotaur Books, 2019, 324 pp (HC)

Based on the true story of the first female sheriff in Ohio, this story is set when Coal was King, and the Pinkertons were strike-breakers.

Two women, Lily and Marvena, unknown to each other, both loved the same man, the former sheriff, who is killed at the start of the story. Both are determined to find out who killed him, and despite their obvious

differences, the two bond in an awkward, but believable way.

Set in 1924 Appalachia, the historical setting is beautifully done, without depending on facts and descriptions, but rather infusing the writing with what seems an authentic voice of the period. ♦

There was an Old Woman by Hallie Ephron.
William Morrow, 2013, 309 pp (PB).

When Evie Ferrante's mother is hospitalized, her sister Ginger guilt-trips Evie (who'd been avoiding their difficult mom) into moving to Brooklyn to look after her house there. She finds the place in chaos, and attempting to sort out the mess, finds objects that don't belong there and starts asking questions.

The real heroine of the story, and most compelling character, is mom's elderly neighbor, Mina Yetner, who might know what brought her friend to such a pass, but she has her own problems. Her nephew Brian is trying to persuade her to move to a senior care community, but Mina resists. Until Brian, and the behind-the-scenes manipulators he works for, get desperate to make Mina—and Evie—move out for their own reasons.

The setting is a place in New York City called Higgs Point, where the East River and Bronx River meet. I have no idea if this is a real place, but it sure sounds likely. Evie works for the Five-Boroughs Historical Society and is busy setting up an exhibit about an airplane that crashed into the Empire State Building in 1945 (this really happened), a story that Mina knows all too well, making for an intriguing subplot. ♦

—Linda Triegel (ljt23@earthlink.net)

Key:

PB = Mass Market Paperback

TP = Trade paperback

HC = Hardcover

Note: Editions likely to be available at the library or your local used-book emporium are given. Most titles also available as e-books.

Series mysteries:

All reviews by Susan Zates

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

Lord John and the Private Matter by Diana Gabaldon. Delacorte, 2003, 400 pp (HC)

(Book One of the Lord John Grey historical mystery series, set in 1757 London.)

Major Lord John Grey is a nobleman anxious to preserve his cousin Olivia's reputation, although he has just discovered evidence that she must not marry her wealthy merchant fiancé. While he attempts to resolve the private matter without a scandal, he is called upon to serve the Crown: a soldier suspected of espionage is missing, perhaps with key information the French army needs to defeat the English.

To investigate recent activities of both the soldier and the businessman, Lord John must frequent pubs, slums, brothels, wealthy mansions, men's clubs, and shipping docks. He seeks the identity of a woman dressed in green velvet, who routinely meets a lover at a club for gay men. As Lord John uncovers evidence, he unravels a complicated network of relationships, and his inquiries converge. He finally must make a desperate and dangerous move, to confront a killer on the high seas.

The complex plot lacks the passion of Jamie and Claire in the *Outlander* series, yet provides fascinating historical and political details, and an intriguing new character in John's young valet. ♦

Ex-Libris by Ross King. Penguin, 2002, 400 pp (TP)
Set in England in 1660, with a parallel plot line in 1620.

Bookseller Isaac Inchbold owns Nonsuch Books on London Bridge. He lives above the shop; it's been his whole life: from apprentice in 1635 to owner. Inchbold prefers a quiet life, out of the noise, smell and bustle of crowds. But he is sufficiently intrigued by a cryptic letter from a potential client to travel to Dorsetshire. He assumes he will inventory, then sell an estate library.

It's an arduous 3-day trip by coach with a taciturn driver; countryside, weather, physical discomfort minutely described. Pontifex Hall is in utter ruin, the extensive library a shambles, many books completely destroyed by rot. Widow Alethea provides a lengthy description of family history against a backdrop of the world's religious and

political events, before getting to the task: recover a specific rare book that had belonged to her father, Sir Ambrose Plessington. She hints at conspiracies, rivalries and danger; Inchbold must reveal the details of his quest to no one.

As he checks the usual rare-book sources in London, Inchbold begins experiencing odd incidents and uncovers clues sufficient to convince him of a conspiracy. He moves to alternate dwellings to throw off pursuit as he researches historical records. Inchbold almost but doesn't quite see the three horsemen in gold and black livery who follow his movements.

In 1620, a conquering army overtakes Prague Castle in the depth of winter. Sir Ambrose Plessington packs up King Frederick's extensive world-famous library, to avoid its capture and destruction by fanatics in Rome. With Plessington on the grueling evacuation trek are castle librarian Vilem Jirasek and Emilia, handmaiden to Queen Elizabeth. They suffer tremendous difficulties and setbacks, including shipwreck. Always in pursuit are three horsemen in gold and black livery.

Treachery, deception, Plessington, the three horsemen, and overwhelming details of religious and political history are common to both plot lines. Slow going for a reader, yet with delightful prose gems. It's unclear to a non-historian reader where fact yields to fiction in this religious and political history lesson. A creepy description of the most treasured 'paper' is fact, according to Wikipedia: "Vellum, made from the skins of unborn calves, as many as 50 per volume. Calves were skinned and carefully bled, then flayed of their delicate hides." ♦

Sweet Revenge by Andrea Penrose. Berkley, 2011, 336 pp (TP)

(Book One of the Lady Arianna cozy mystery series set in Regency England.)

To hunt for her father's murderer, Lady Arianna Hadley leaves her Caribbean home, disguises herself as a young French chef and works for an English aristocrat. When the Prince Regent is poisoned, presumably by the chef's chocolate dessert, the Earl of Saybrook is sent to investigate. He sees through her disguise, but agrees to join with her to find the true villains.

They have different objectives: Arianna wants to murder her father's killer; Saybrook has a political intelligence goal. Arianna insinuates herself into the Ton, posing as the Earl's country cousin. She identifies her target villain, then takes huge risks to infiltrate the inner sanctum of the Hellfire club.

Each chapter begins with a chocolate recipe and an entry from Saybrook's Spanish grandmother's diary. Arianna's and Saybrook's partnership hunting villains predictably leads to romance. However, they still don't quite trust each other entirely, which adds interesting plot twists and tricks. ♦

Radio Girls by Sarah-Jane Stratford. Allison & Busby, 2016, 437 pp (TP)

An absorbing tale of hard work, dedication and integrity, set in 1926-1932 London.

Poverty-stricken young Maisie (originally from Canada) loves the traditions of England. She comes from a dysfunctional family short on affection. She's making her way alone in London, barely able to afford lodging at a boarding house. She lines the worn-through soles of her shoes with newspaper and goes without eating as she desperately job-hunts.

She's ecstatic to get a job as a secretary assistant (typist) to strict, critical secretary Miss Shields at the BBC. Maisie perseveres in spite of harsh criticism, and consistently delivers quality work. She finally can afford food to eat. A few paychecks later she can buy a pair of shoes, eventually a new dress.

At first, Maisie's work hours are shared between harsh, condescending Miss Shields and open, engaging and inspiring Hilda Matheson, the Director of the Talks department. Maisie quickly bonds with Hilda, who perceives Maisie's talent and mentors her progress.

Maisie develops her creativity and begins to reach her potential, eventually working full-time for the Talks department.

Maisie absolutely loves her work at the fledgling BBC, where she has a role in shaping its direction. She overcomes surprises and setbacks in romantic relationships by dedication to work, which provides total fulfillment.

However, Maisie identifies with her adopted country and her profession so much, she's self-driven into harm's way to investigate a potential political threat.

The book opens with a 1933 quote from Hilda Matheson [real-life Director of Talks at BBC]: "If we have the sense to give [broadcasting] freedom and intelligent direction, if we save it from exploitation by vested interests of money or power, its influence may even redress the balance in favour of the individual." ♦

C&D Members!

Your *Nooseletter* wants to hear all about that terrific mystery you just read. Email reviews to Ye Editor at the address on page 2.

HOW TO WRITE A BOOK REVIEW:

For example:

Hole and Corner by Patricia Wentworth. Dean Street Press (reissue 2016), 197 pp (TP).

1 – short introduction about the book:

Patricia Wentworth is one of a number of "golden age" women mystery writers. While most famous for her Maud Silver series, she wrote a number of stand-alones, including *Hole and Corner*, first published in 1936.

2 – Brief plot description (1-2 paragraphs):

Hole and Corner is very much of its time, but it's charming just the same. Our heroine, Shirley Dobbs, lives hand-to-mouth in a London boarding house, getting by well enough until suddenly she begins finding other people's belongings on her person. She promptly returns them, but when valuable jewelry belonging to her employer—a crotchety old lady for whom she serves as a kind of secretary/companion—appears secreted in her coat lining, Shirley panics and runs away.

Indeed, much of the plot involves Shirley running away when she thinks the Long Arm of the Law is about to snatch her. Fortunately, at one point she runs right into the arms of her employer's handsome nephew, Anthony, who lends tea and sympathy, as well as help solving the mystery.

2 – Sum up: Did you like it? Why?

There's a lot of gentle humor in the story, and a reader can't help sympathizing with Shirley, no matter how ill-advised her actions might be. The ending has a nice satisfying twist, and of course, Shirley and Anthony were made for each other.

2020 MEETING DATES

Tuesday, March 24 - **CANCELLED**

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

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

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

Meetings are free to the public.

NOTE Change of Venue:

Meetings in 2020 from April to November will be held every fourth Tuesday of the month, at 7:00 p.m., at Sandia Presbyterian Church, 10704 Paseo del Norte. Park in back of the building and enter by the back door.

Check our Web site, *www.croak-and-dagger.com*, for any new 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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Still not a member of Sisters in Crime?

\$20/year brings mystery to your life! The New Mexico *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. Come hear our next program speaker and meet the gang. We promise to bring mayhem and murder into your life!

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