



THE NOOSELETTER

CROAK & DAGGER

NEW MEXICO CHAPTER – SISTERS in CRIME

Volume XVI, Number 6 — November / December 2020

†The President's Corner†

Hi, Siblings in Crime,

Have you ever wanted control so desperately you finally gave up and took a nap? Yep, I can be a control freak. I have denied it, but my kids insist otherwise. Transitions often incite this tendency of mine, and right now the universe has smacked us all with one transition after another.

Seasonally, transitions of spring into summer, then into fall, and eventually hinting at the cold of winter never have bothered me much until now. Last spring I built a bee hive but never set it up because Covid restrictions canceled seminars on “how to. . .” Dang it. I can’t be responsible for killing thousands of little lives because I lack bee-care knowledge.

Yet, my bee hive situation is insignificant because we’ve transitioned to living in a Covid-infected world, which has created miserable conditions for many. Remember back to when it would take six weeks to flatten the curve? This slowly evolved into eight months of living in an up-side-down “What’s next?” society. I can’t seem to control any of this.

Zoom Meetings to the rescue. They evolved from a novelty into a staple for organizations and businesses. I suspect this transitioning into Zoom interactions will continue long after we’ve forgotten the disappointments of 2020.

Croak & Dagger has not embraced this Zoom trend for several reasons, which I won’t go into now. However, as members of C&D you

will find many opportunities in the Zoom communities to polish your skills, hear about authors and their accomplishments, and promote your writing. For example:

The Southwest Writers Website:

<https://www.southwestwriters.com/> uses Zoom meetings for their members and also has classes for the public.

Visit the Sisters in Crime’s website (<https://www.sistersincrime.org/>). Our parent organization uses Zoom to enrich members’ writing toolboxes and offers members some excellent opportunities.

For fun, check out Treasure House Books and Gifts and enjoy some terrific interviews with your fellow Croak & Dagger members and other New Mexico authors:

https://www.facebook.com/treasurehousebooks/events/?ref=page_internal.

You can explore a myriad of other free Zoom opportunities out there. Just Google and check out other writers’ organizations.

Thank you to the nominating committee. I’m honored to be included on the slate of officers for 2021 along with three other dynamic members, Joan Golden, Art Eisenson, and Donna Thomas. I miss you all and really, really want to have actually meetings again. Sigh. I think I’ll take a nap.

Letting go of all thing frustrating, and wishing each if you health and happiness,

—Charlene Dietz, President

C&D 2021 Officers for Your Consideration

On or about the week of November 16, dues-paying C&D members will receive an email ballot listing proposed chapter officers for next year. They are:

President: Charlene Dietz
Vice President: Joan Golden
Secretary: Donna Thomas
Treasurer: Art Eisenson

Please fill out your ballot and return it to Donna Thomas at ttoad30@gmail.com before Tuesday, November 24. Donna will count the votes. Any questions, contact Donna or Charlene (also our current president, who said she'd serve only one year, but hey, let's not count this year, okay?). Committee members remain the same...so far (see the Line Up on this page).

Thank you!



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!



The Line Up

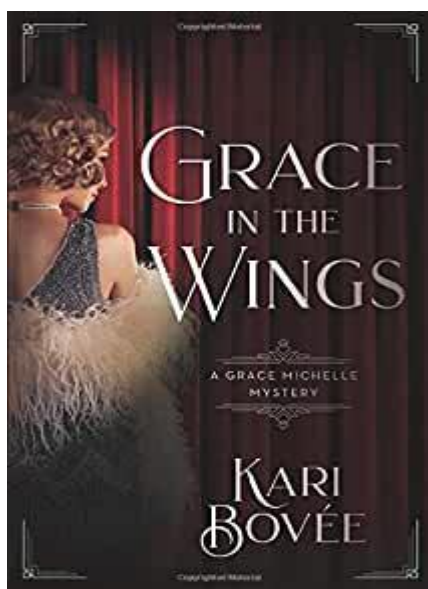
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Noose News

We have more prize winners!

Kari Bovée's *Girl with a Gun* won first prize from the Chanticleer International Murder & Mayhem Mystery Awards, and her *Peccadillo at the Palace* (also an Annie Oakley mystery) won Grand Prize AND First Prize in Category in the Chanticleer International Goethe Awards for Historical Fiction Post 1750. *Grace in the Wings* won first prize in the NM/AZ Historical Fiction Other category AND first prize in the Chanticleer International Chatelaine Awards for Romantic Suspense. Congrats, Kari!

Not that Kari is resting on her many laurels—she has a new book just out this week titled *Bones of the Redeemed*. Check it out!



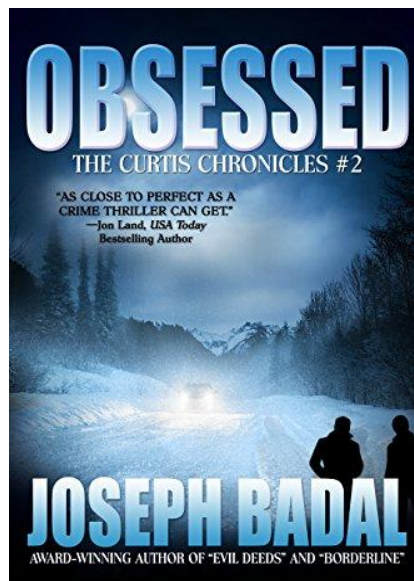
Joe Badal writes, “Despite the negative atmosphere created by COVID, good news came my way this month. Thanks to the Military Writers Society of America and the NM/AZ Book Awards, four of my books were recognized for awards:

Dark Angel (#2 in the Lassiter/Martinez Case Files) won a silver medal from the NM/AZ Book Awards. And *Justice* (#3 in the Curtis Chronicles) won the Adventure/Mystery class from NM/AZ.

Natural Causes (#3 in the Lassiter/Martinez Case Files) won finalist honors from the Military Writers Society of America (MWSA).

Obsessed (#2 in the Curtis Chronicles) won a silver medal from the MWSA.

AND: Joe was named Writer of the Year by the MWSA! Congratulations!



Keeping Your Mind in Gear...

Marcia Rosen (one of C&D's new members) is doing a Zoom presentation through Southwest Writers on November 17. Marcia is the author of the Senior Sleuths mystery series and the Gourmet Gangster mysteries. She has also hosted MysteryLoversPodcast.com since January of this year.

Rose Kern, president of SWW, has invited Croak & Dagger to this podcast. Go to her address (president@swwriters.com) for more information, or click [here](#) to join the meeting, or contact Marcia (marciagrosen@gmail.com).

Speaking of Screenwriters:

Art Eisenson writes, “Oddly enough I was doing research for adapting an old screenplay to a ‘light thriller’ as a novel, and a search for ‘Chink Sherman’ brought a link to this up on the first Google page: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BPdiGhmNE8c>. It was familiar

because I wrote that episode, as well as the 13th episode.” The entire series is here:

https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=the+gangster+chronicles+an+american+story.

(NOTE: After Art checked with the Writers Guild to determine which formula for residuals apply, the Guild contacted Universal Studios, which stated that the series was not authorized, but put up by “pirates.” So Universal will send You Tube a cease-and-desist letter and take the series down. It may or may not be there by the time you read this.)

Art also recommends checking out “Impact x Netflix,” a competition open to applications for writers of “female-led thrillers” (presumably scripts). For more information:

https://impactcreativesystems.com/netflix-faq?utm_term=0_4f4bd65aa6-d44658c9cc-211076690.



News from Colorado

Croak & Dagger hears tell that co-founder and long-time active member Rob Kresge is happily ensconced at home in Fort Collins with wife Julie, “riding herd on a pair of high-energy 3-

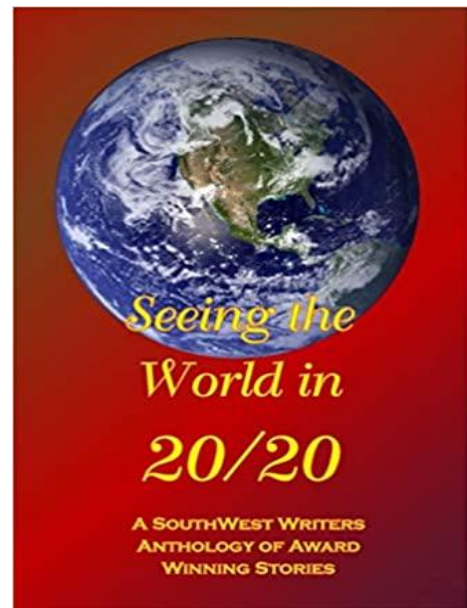
year-old twin grandkids and their almost-a-year-old little brother.” Rob is recovering from a knee replacement and even taking long walks, though not, we guess, chasing the grands.

Last but not (well, maybe) least...

Brenda Cole, Chairwoman of the Seeing the World competition, writes, “As you all know this book has a lot of interesting and diverse styles of writing and perspectives. With the pandemic, SWW is facing its own financial challenges, but is determined to see through on our commitments and continue to find new ways to help our members succeed.

Thank you for bringing your talents to the SWW writing contest.” If you would like to order a book (which does name the winners and what they won) here is the Amazon link:

https://www.amazon.com/dp/B08HV8HPTD/ref=sr_1_1?dchild=1&keywords=Seeing+the+world+in+20%2F20+SouthWest+Writers&qid=1599955907&s=books&sr=1-1



Linda Triegel’s 3 winning stories (one first and two third place) appear in this anthology (support SWW by buying it on Amazon, but what the heck, email me and I’ll send you one!).

Great Library Adventure – Locked-down version:

Even though Croak & Dagger can't hold in-person meetings, your board members have created an organization of high promotional value for you. Soon 52 rural New Mexico community libraries will be able to display your book covers with your names for all their patrons to see. How great is this?

Here's the backstory:



Ann Zeigler, our Great Library Adventure (GLA) head wrangler, for years has organized and displayed our actual books with accompanying posters in major New Mexico libraries. Many of those librarians, in turn, invited us to do events for their patrons, expanding our promotional opportunities. When this 2020 craziness happened, we no longer could engage in onsite displays or events in these libraries.

Covid-19 not only caused the GLA shut down, but also our April-rescheduled-to-August-2020-rescheduled-to-August-2021 *Voices in Your Head* workshop with Rhys Bowen. Full of denial and expectations, we had collected numerous (close to 200) books to stuff swag bags for the workshop (along with hand sanitizer and various other trinkets). These boxes and boxes of books now take up real estate in Ann's garage.

Part one:

Ann, brain overflowing with who-knows-what, asked the C&D board to approve one of her newest ideas. We did—with enthusiasm. Croak & Dagger, as the local host for the 2021-now-2022 Left Coast Crime Convention, designated the 52 rural New Mexico community libraries as our beneficiary of the LCC literacy project. C&D will connect with these libraries, sending them our handout-sized posters and a small collection of hard and soft cover books from the stash in Ann's garage. She'll also include C&D bookmarks. (We'll replenish our book stash when we get closer to the rescheduled *Voices* conference next year.) Social distancing will be respected because we can send the books by USPS using the library-mailing rate.

Board member Joan Saberhagen has offered to donate many of Fred Saberhagen's books, along with mailing boxes and packing materials. The cost to C&D will be approximately \$300. Our treasurer Robert Kidera finds no issue with this.

Here's part two:

In addition, an all-member Investigations project will be launched shortly. Here's your opportunity to use C&D as a marketing tool. The Investigation will offer each member a Great Little Library of their own. Each member will be given detailed instructions to find online information about the library and the community, using a questionnaire. No road trips, but much potential for future promotion with more information to follow.



Sadly we can't hold our C&D meetings, but I find comfort in knowing we do have other ways to connect. With C&D Great Little Library Adventure being the literacy project beneficiary of LCC, with the *Voices* book donations to GLLA, and with our upcoming Investigations, we can create strong community and promotional relationships with New Mexico rural libraries.

Last words:

Perhaps you're ready to venture out and do something other than what you've been doing over and over again for the last seven months. If so, contact Ann. Bet she would welcome extra helping hands.

Crime in the Time of Corona: How Genre Fiction Leads Us Through the Darkness.

by Lyndsay Faye

(Excerpted from *Crime Reads* (<https://crimereads.com/crime-in-the-time-of-corona/>))

Yet the detective story has kept its hold; had even, in the two decades between the great wars, become more popular than ever before; and there is, I believe, a deep reason for this. The world during those years was ridden by an all-pervasive feeling of guilt and by a fear of impending disaster which it seemed hopeless to try to avert...

—Edmund Wilson, *New Yorker*, October 14th 1944

You're going through a divorce. Your loved one is ill. Your house suffered flood damage. Your dog ate your dress loafer. You are upset, overwhelmed, possibly even in the depths of despair. And what do you do to make yourself feel better? You pick up a crime novel.

Why? an acquaintance with different tastes might wonder. You might even ask yourself the same question. *Why if I'm suffering would I want to read about more suffering? Why if I'm anxious would I read something tense? And if I'm frightened, why would I delve into the minds of terrified people for comfort? Is it insane of me to pick up a crime novel right now?*

I'll answer the last question first: *of course* you're picking up a crime novel right now. Not only are you not alone, you're a member of a vast community composed of every gender, color, and creed, gobbling up nefarious goings-on as if they're part of a nutritionally balanced breakfast. The motives for this are powerful and based in multiple human urges, none of which need be shameful or even mystifying.

The most self-evident is that it's comforting to fall into someone else's story when trapped inside your own. If the wheel of your brain is still spinning, but the hamster has passed out cold and can't get off because his leg is stuck in the spokes, it's natural to seek escape from a lousy narrative. And crime fiction is singularly able to hold our attention. High quality mysteries don't merely guarantee a plot that clickety-clacks right along rather than a navel-gazing arc, but plot isn't all.

Often, the setting lives and breathes. The dialogue crackles. The characters are vivid. Not only are they vivid, they're at a crossroads, they're *fighting* for something, and nothing draws us in like mingled passion and plot. Some folks might find it soothing to read laundry detergent ingredients, and there's nothing wrong with that. But I'd rather go back to Louis Bayard's first novel *Mr. Timothy* and read about how Timothy Cratchitt of *A Christmas Carol* scratched and clawed and succeeded.

Directly connected and equally self-evident: when at our most vulnerable, isn't it marvelous to know that others have bled and survived, even if they're imaginary? Alma Rosales, the brawling, cross-dressing, pansexual Pinkerton heroine of Katrina Carrasco's *The Best Bad Things* gets the living daylights beat out of her often enough to suggest she likes it (she likes it at least a wee bit). But she thrives nevertheless, and we get to thrive with her as we navigate her pages.

One of the wisest things ever said to me was that if there is such a thing as vicarious suffering—and there absolutely is, for everyone except your friendly neighborhood sociopath—then vicarious resilience exists too. Vicarious resilience is a grand and a glorious thing; for the price of a hardcover, e-book, used paperback, audio book, whatever your fancy, you can follow the career of a detective or police officer or lawyer or grandmotherly cottage dweller as they follow scarlet skeins to inevitable conclusions.

Speaking of conclusions, however dark those big reveals might be, they have a definite stopping point. When navigating crises, we can't identify when or how they will end until they do. Not so with crime fiction. You're 235 pages from the end. Now you're 67 pages from the end. The last page is the last page, and matters will resolve whether you like the resolutions or not. When Malla Nunn lands you at the end of her gripping South African historical mystery *A Beautiful Place to Die*, the curtain is rung down. Is Detective Emmanuel Cooper's imaginary life over? Of course not, because there are three more books in the series, no more than your life is over once you've paid off your car loan or healed up from that unfortunate incident trying to make French onion soup from scratch. How wonderful it would be if we knew how many pages we were from the end of whatever's ailing us.

But there's seldom a steady arc to life and never a road map. It's full of doldrums and coincidences, repetition and shock. Good crime fiction not only doesn't wander, it isn't *allowed*. A clue is a clue even if it's a red herring, because a red herring is inserted with deliberate craftiness by a moustache-twirling mystery author cackling madly over an unfinished adventure. Every scene is meant to build upon its predecessor and launch us into the next. They're all necessary pieces of the puzzle.

And isn't that what we want, at the end of the day? To make a difference for the better, both in our own lives and in others'? Crime fiction accomplishes this more pointedly than any other genre. It's unabashed in saying *you're here for a story about a wrong righted*, or maybe *a wrong avenged*, or sometimes *what looked like a wrong actually being justice*, or at the very least *a conundrum unraveled*. When Sherlock Holmes flits through his mysteries like a giant sable-clad stork, Dr. Watson at his heels, we don't count on him to win all the time, nor do we expect every ending to be a happy one. But balance is inevitably restored to some degree. You learn exactly why things happened the way they did, bathing blissfully in the scented bubbles of direct cause and effect.

Finally, we read crime fiction to survive. I'm deadly serious: storytelling itself is an evolutionary tactic developed alongside language as a warning system. *Don't touch colorful snakes, don't pet the mammoth, don't trust your fellow humans implicitly*. There are many moments of horror in Elizabeth Macneal's debut historical thriller sensation *The Doll Factory*, in which a dollmaker turned artistic muse is stalked relentlessly by a sinister taxidermist. But experiencing terrors from a distance enables you to try them on for size, see how they fit, wonder what you would have done yourself in that situation. Fictional trials are practice. They are training wheels. And if storytelling evolved to help us navigate a harsh world, then when we're afraid—of the dark, of poverty, of spiders, of ourselves—we need more than ever to go back to the instruction manual.

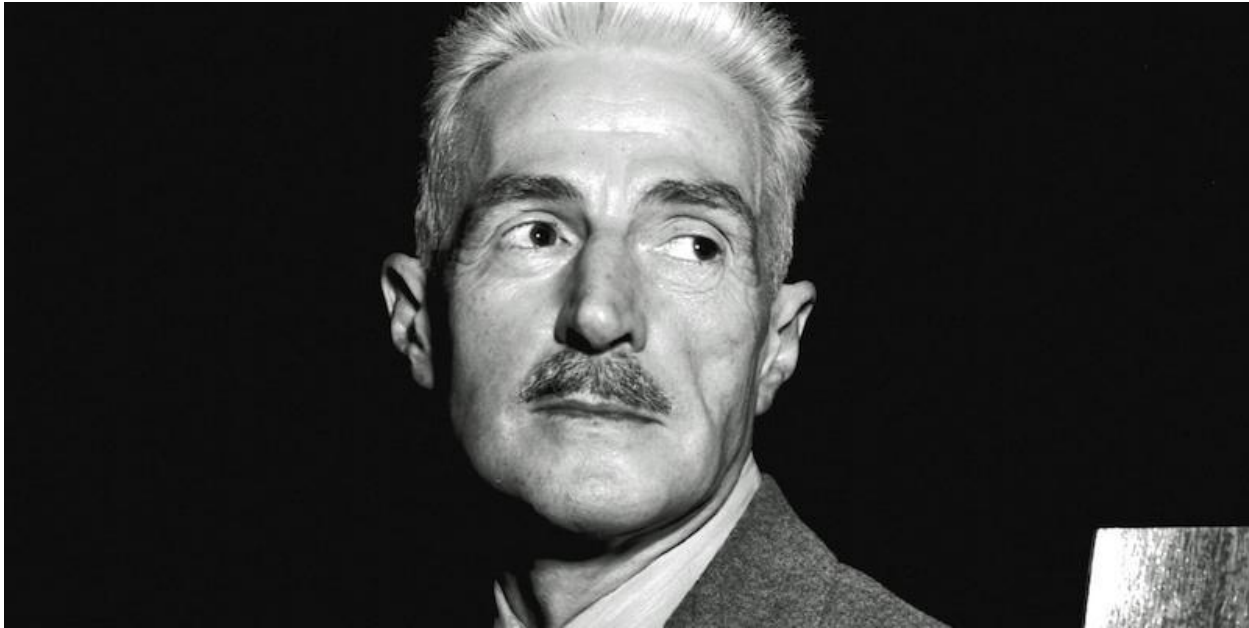
Crime fiction is not the 24-hour news cycle blasting *ad nauseum* from the television; it's *fiction* and as such, might seem unimportant to some. But if you find yourself reaching for more than your usual allotment of Christie or Chandler or French or Flynn right now, then remember you have superlative reasons for doing so. And that in doing so, you are far from alone.

How Dashiell Hammett's Continental Op Became a Depression-Era Icon

by Susanna Lee

Excerpted from the Crime Reads website. For more, go to:

<https://crimereads.com/how-dashiell-hammetts-contintental-op-became-a-depression-era-icon/>



The stock market crash of 1929 produced the most dramatic change in economic circumstance during the interwar period in the United States. The Great Depression pushed millions of Americans into unemployment and to (or over) the brink of starvation. Given these changes, it seemed natural for the tide of popularity to turn toward a new kind of hero, and it's no coincidence that the Depression era saw the rise of the Shadow and Dick Tracy (1931), Doc Savage (1932), Flash Gordon (1934), and the Green Hornet (1936). The end of the decade produced Superman (1938) and Batman (1939).

Although the hard-boiled detective and comic strip hero shared many traits—both playing the part of the social savior—the American public did not want to see a real person glide above the worries of the world. They had that in Herbert Hoover and in an oblivious upper class whose speculations had caused the market to crash. The public needed someone consistently grounded in human reality, and Dashiell Hammett's Continental Op brought the character to a new, Depression-appropriate level.

Born in 1894 in southern Maryland, Dashiell Hammett left school at the age of 14 and took up a series of jobs. At 21, he joined the Pinkerton Detective Agency, where he worked for 7 years, becoming the only hard-boiled writer who had worked as a detective himself. Hammett learned the vocabulary of the trade and wrote in the language of people with whom he had come in contact. He offered the audience two main characters, the Continental Op and Sam Spade. Sam Spade is the principal detective in Hammett's third and best-known novel, *The Maltese Falcon*. The Continental Op is his most frequently recurring character, appearing in 36 stories between 1923 and 1930.

In many ways, Sam Spade is the most iconic of Hammett's characters. Hammett himself felt that *Falcon* was "by far the best thing [he had] done so far," and a 1941 film version featuring Humphrey Bogart as Sam Spade made the novel's fortunes. Hammett himself has been described as tall and elegantly dressed, and Sam Spade as looking "rather pleasantly like a blond Satan." The Continental Op is much less camera-ready. Overweight and weary, he is an overworked, middle-aged detective living on hard liquor and no sleep. Spade's story is narrated in the third person; the Op narrates his own. If Sam Spade is the star of the show, the nameless Op is the camera itself, the steady, disillusioned, but nonetheless reliable narrator of numerous unpleasant walks of life.

In November of 1927, when the first installment of *Red Harvest* was published in *Black Mask*, the stock market crash was still two years away, and the United States was on an economic and technological rise. Charles Lindbergh had made the first nonstop transatlantic flight. Talking pictures emerged with the debut of *The Jazz Singer*. Far from riding the ascendant wave, the Op acted as a sort of sardonic tour guide, pointing out people and places you would probably never get to meet or see and wouldn't like very much if you did.

Red Harvest opens with a searing and disheartening account of the detective's assignment to clean up a corrupt city. "I first heard Personville called Poisonville by a red-haired mucker named Hickey Dewey in the Big Ship in Butte. He also called his shirt a shoit. I didn't think anything of what he had done to the city's name. . . . A few years later I went to Personville and learned better."

Americans were certainly aware of government corruption, but the idea of an entire city of schemers in murderous survival mode was a stretch even by Prohibition-era standards. Hammett had spent time in Butte, Montana, on which Poisonville was based, and had run into some of the unsavory sorts who populated his novel. He even claimed to have been himself hired to murder a union organizer in Butte, and although this account is probably untrue, he did encounter many shady people and circumstances. When he mentions the Big Ship—what Butte miners called the city's largest boardinghouse—he is talking about a place he had seen as a Pinkerton operative.

Still, before 1929, cynicism and despair were the province of marginal characters, not the normal American condition. In the wake of the stock market crash, economic desperation and disillusionment became the broader American experience. During the last week of October 1929, the stock market lost 40 percent of its value. Individuals and businesses lost their investments, including account holders not even aware that banks had been investing their money.

By 1933, one-quarter of Americans were unemployed. What shell shock had been to soldiers returning from World War I, unemployment and economic insecurity were to the Depression-era middle and working classes. In a time of widespread poverty and unemployment, hardship and improvisation became a way of life.

In his 1944 article "The Simple Art of Murder," Raymond Chandler praises Hammett for creating the realistic detective: "Hammett gave murder back to the kind of people that commit it for reasons, not just to provide a corpse. . . . He put these people down on paper as they are, and he made them talk and think in the language they customarily used for these purposes. He had style, but his audience didn't know it, because it was in a language not supposed to be capable of such refinements."

Hammett described himself as one of the few “moderately literate” people who took the detective story seriously and hoped that someone would make literature of it. This was a new phenomenon in detective fiction: making rough and improvisational existence seem privileged by perceiving and experiencing things other people couldn’t.

The fact that Hammett had left school at 14 and moved around the country, and that his Op rode around the country solving cases with varying degrees of success, resonated with the itinerant existence that was commonplace during the Depression. The Op was no rail-riding hobo, but he did wander from one case to another, as weary and cynical as any of his real-life contemporaries. What the Continental Op provided the public was a model of cool survivalism. He meets people and society on their own terms, solves the crime, collects his check, and shows up again the next day.

The Depression brought with it a physical hardship, and the Op novels illustrated it. This went over well in the worst economic downturn in American history. The Op’s salient quality is not in living the dream or in doing what every reader would love to do but rather in the opposite—retaining his perspective while he does what the public doesn’t want to do but is forced to do.

A middle-aged hero who did society’s dirty work on very little sleep, who showed up whether he wanted to or not, who was seemingly indifferent to solitude and the absence of support yet willing to pursue the rich and hold their feet to the fire—this wasn’t a person whose daily life Americans envied but someone they wanted on their side. And, as it turned out, it was the sort of person more and more Americans were forced to be.

Hammett’s writing career was brilliant but short: the author more or less stopped writing in 1934, derailed by alcoholism and depression. The fact that his publications spanned the criminal 1920s and the post-crash years connected him in the American mind with that historical period and thus with American toughness. Straddling the Depression, the Op stories chronicled someone who made his own rules, drank a lot, and established networks around the country, facing enemies with no-nonsense resilience. Eminently practical, he was wittier than those ten times as rich as he.



Elizabeth Ann Gallighan, Ph.D, loving mother, grandmother, and friend of Sisters in Crime, passed away peacefully in Los Angeles on August 29, 2020, with her family at her side.

Elizabeth was born in Shawnee, Oklahoma, in 1939, but was raised in New Mexico and considered New Mexico her home. Throughout her life she worked on many campaigns for human and civil rights. She held degrees in anthropology and Latin American Studies and was Coordinator of the Writing Lab at New Mexico Highlands University.

Liz had a lifelong passion for writing and the written word. At the age of 73, she completed her first novel, *Secrets of the Plumed Saint* (ABQ Press, 2012) and later co-authored the early childhood book, *Count on African Animals* (2014), with her dear friend Florence Kubota. Some of Elizabeth’s later poems and essays have appeared in *Voices of New Mexico, Too* (2013), and *More Voices of New Mexico*, (2015).

Reviews

The Endless Knot by Gail Bowen. McClelland & Stewart, 2006, 413 pp.

I'd had this on my shelf for a while – no idea where I got it – but when I picked it up, I was immediately engrossed. The writing is excellent and the characters relatable (even the ones you're not supposed to like).

Joanne Kilbourn, the protagonist of the series, is a widow with three children, as well as a teacher with a side gig as a reporter for NationTV. This is Canada, by the way, and the first book I've read set in Saskatchewan's capital, Regina, which would be new to most of us Yanks (due north from Albuquerque, though, so I may visit one day).

When another journalist, Kathryn Morrissey, writes a tell-all book about the troubled children of prominent Canadians, one of the parents is angry enough to take a pot shot at her. As his trial looms, hardly anyone sympathizes with the author, who's viewed as unethical at best, but when she's murdered on the day of the verdict, everyone has second and third thoughts. Joanne is sufficiently appalled to investigate the whole mess.

The theme of the betrayal of children by their parents runs through the story and affects many of the characters. Maybe not Joanne, who strikes me as a terrific parent whose kids (and dogs) seem to genuinely love her. She also gets a new boyfriend in this story, although the term hardly applies to 50-something Joanne and paraplegic Zach Shreve (also the angry father's defense attorney).

This is the tenth in the series of Joanne Kilbourn mysteries. You don't have to have read the earlier stories to follow this one, but I was intrigued enough to invest in:

The Early Investigations by Gail Bowen. McClelland & Stewart, 2006, 413 pp.

This three-decker contains the first three mysteries in the Joanne Kilbourn series: *Deadly Appearances* (from 1990), *Murder at the Mendel* (1991), and *The Wandering Soul Murders* (1992).

Seeing these books all in one place, the first thing I noticed was that Bowen is a genius at opening sentences (something all us writers are told to master). Observe:

From *Deadly Appearances*: "For the first seconds after Andy's body slumped onto the searing metal of the truck bed, it seemed as if we were all

encircled by a spell that froze us in the terrible moment of his fall."

Andy Boycuk, a politician making a campaign appearance, sips some water and falls over dead. In this, her first case, Joanne Kilbourn leaps onto the stage to stop the next man from drinking from the same bottle. She then goes on to solve her friend Andy's murder.

From *Murder at the Mendel*: "If I hadn't gone back to change my shoes, it would have been me instead of Izaak Levin who found them dying."

The dead are the parents of Joanne's childhood best friend, Sally Love. Both girls are teenagers at the time, but the event has long-lasting repercussions, even when both women go on to successful adult careers, Sally as a renowned artist with a show at the Mendel. And Izaak, on whom Jo had a childhood crush, turns out to have a far more complicated past than Joanne realizes, until she starts to investigate.

From *The Wandering Soul Murders*: "When my daughter, Mieka, found the woman's body in the garbage can behind Old City Hall, she called the police and then she called me. I got there first."

Mieka is just starting out on her own independent catering career—and engaged to be married—but she still calls on mum for comfort. Joanne soon realizes that there have been other murders of street kids, similar to Bernice Morin's. There are more to come as Joanne is drawn into strange goings-on at a center for street kids, and takes action to figure out what's going on. ♦

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.

Foreign Deceit and ***The Silversmith*** by Jeff Carson. Cross Atlantic Publishing, 2013. 314 & 220 pp (PB).

Foreign Deceit is the first in the David Wolf series, although this one was apparently published after *The Silversmith*. Dave is a deputy in the fictional Sluice County, Colorado, sheriff's department, hoping to become sheriff eventually, but at the start of this book, he hears that his brother has died halfway across the world, an apparent suicide.

Dave is sure his sibling did not kill himself, but has to travel to Italy to figure out what really

happened. He works with a beautiful Carabinieri agent and between them, they dodge danger to themselves and figure out what really happened.

All this is entertaining enough, but I had the nagging suspicion that it was all just a random idea the author had and wanted to follow up on, possibly for a different mystery series. I kept wondering what the heck was going on back in Colorado, where hints had been planted to another murder and more action.

Turns out that *The Silversmith* is really a continuation of the Italian story, where Our Hero gets back to his real business—proving he wasn't responsible for the dead body discovered at the bottom of a mountain path. Turns out some people just didn't want him to get the sheriff's job (remember that?).

I felt sort of dragged into the second book to find the answers to questions posed in the first, but didn't really mind as both stories are entertaining, fast-paced, and well plotted. The Colorado setting is nicely described, and there are plenty of interesting characters to follow up with later in the series (13 books so far). ♦

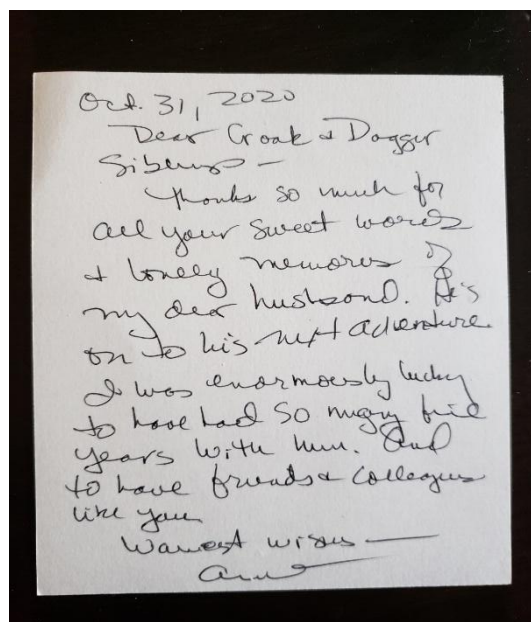
The Good Shepherd by C.S. Forester. Penguin reissue, 2018. 272 pp (PB)

This isn't a mystery, but it's compelling reading and has just been made into a film, *Greyhound*, which I haven't seen yet (available only with streaming). Tom Hanks stars, and I imagine he's perfect as Commander George Krause of the United States Navy.

World War II rages. Krause is on escort duty, protecting a convoy of merchant ships making their way across the icy North Atlantic to England to deliver desperately needed supplies. The hardest part of his job is avoiding the wolf packs of German submarines on the way, with Krause playing a cat-and-mouse game with the submarines to protect the precious cargo, as well as the lives of thousands of men on board the ships.

Originally published in 1955, *The Good Shepherd* (they should have kept the title for the movie) is full of repetitive nautical jargon, which I gather the film reproduces faithfully, but somehow that doesn't make the story any less thrilling. Krause is a taciturn type, no heroics on his watch, but he's believable and likeable. A classic. ♦

—Linda Triegel (ljt23@earthlink.net)



Don Strel, 86, died Oct. 13, 2020. Don was the husband of writer Anne Hillerman.

Don was born in San Francisco, California, and moved to Santa Fe to be close to his young children following a divorce. He became director of the Museum of Fine Art. He met and married Anne Hillerman, who was an arts reporter at The New Mexican at the time. Don left the museum and worked in public relations and photography for Eight Northern Pueblos, Ski Santa Fe, and many other clients.

Don used his skill as a photographer and designer to work with Anne on books including *Gardens of Santa Fe* and *Tony Hillerman's Landscape*. Don had several exhibits, and his photos were featured in many newspapers and magazines. In addition to photography, Don loved classic cars, nice shirts, vanilla milk shakes, and lively conversation with his friends.

Don's extensive family will celebrate his passion for life, his wonderful sense of humor, and his love of good food and good company when it is safe for us all to be together. Meanwhile, if you would like to honor Don, in lieu of flowers please consider a donation to the Adaptive Sports Program:

www.adaptivesports.org

2020-21 MEETING DATES

NOTE: Due to the current pandemic, all meetings are cancelled until further notice.

Member Coordinator Pat Wood will continue to update you by email, and your Nooseletter will be sent every two months as usual.

Future meetings are tentatively scheduled for 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