



SISTERS in CRIME
CROAK & DAGGER
ALBUQUERQUE CHAPTER



THE NOOSE LETTER

Volume VIII, Number 2 — March 2012

†Expert Testimony†

Your board has been trying to bring you a number of events above and beyond our regular monthly meetings. Examples include mystery plays at the Albuquerque Little Theater and the Adobe and a lunch and tour of the Atomic Museum. Upcoming events include a tour of the Office of the Medical Investigator and a wine tasting and lunch at the St. Clair Winery. These events seem to draw almost as many attendees as our regular meetings, so we hope you are enjoying them.

The board has recently been considering an even larger event, a Croak and Dagger Mystery Conference, and we need your input to see if there is enough interest and to help focus the conference. Talk to us at the next meeting or email us (our emails are on page 2). We are looking at May of 2013, which doesn't seem to compete with other mystery conferences.

We are considering a one-day conference on a Saturday, probably with a reception or dinner the night before. The price would probably be in the \$90 to \$130 range. The program would appeal to both readers and writers. Possible topics include forensics, forensic reconstruction for identification, new forensic technologies, OMI, computer crime, thrillers, cross-genre issues such as science in mysteries and mysteries in science fiction, romantic mysteries/suspense, and historical mysteries. A possible dinner topic might be "The Mystery Classics: Could They Get Published Today?"

Does this sound like something you would be interested in? If you can suggest other topics

that might be on the program, please let us know. A conference will take a lot more work than our previous events, so we want to make sure there is enough interest and support.

Give us your ideas and let us know if you are willing to help organize the conference. Help could include planning, arranging speakers, PR, writing and printing the program, and registration. Thanks.

— Olin Bray, President

Don't Miss It!

Tuesday, March 27, at 7 p.m.

We'll have a special program at our March meeting—a panel of four historical mystery writers will discuss aspects of that genre.

Paula Paul (moderator) is the author of the Dr. Alexandra Gladstone mystery series, as well as an historical novel about Catherine the Great that will be released later this year, *and* her first YA fantasy novel, *Wizard*, which will be out in April.

Susan McDuffie's first historical mystery novel, *A Mass for the Dead*, introduced her quirky character, Muirteach MacPhee, the bastard son of a murdered medieval prior. His next adventure, in *The Faerie Hills*, was awarded Best Historical Novel 2011 at the New Mexico Book Awards.

Hana Samek Norton has a PhD in history and teaches at CNM, a background that brings to life her novel, *Sixth Surrender*, set in 13th-century France and a winner of the 2010 New Mexico Book Award.

Rob Kresge, a past C&D president, is the author of the Warbonnet series of historical mystery novels set in 1870s Wyoming. His first book, *Murder for Greenhorns*, was followed by *Painted Women*, released late last year.


The Albuquerque Croak & Dagger chapter of Sisters in Crime welcomes mystery fans, readers, and writers who want to enjoy felonious fun, absolutely criminal companionship and sensational speakers.

The speaker at the April Croak & Dagger meeting will be Police Officer Judy Bazan, Instructor in Basic Training at the Police Academy. Officer Bazan has been with APS for over 15 years and has worked 7 years “on the beat,” 2 years in sex crimes, and 3 in homicide.

Judy’s husband Abel is a reserve officer with APD. She has three daughters and four “awesome” grandchildren.

Her topic at the April 24 meeting will be “Safety Tips for Women,” culled from her experience as a female police officer.

C&D meetings are held in the police briefing room of the James Joseph Dwyer Memorial Substation, 12700 Montgomery NE (1 block east of Tramway). Unless otherwise noted, programs are free and open to the public.



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

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

And our motto is: “SinC into a good mystery!”

Check Out the Croak & Dagger Website for all your Croak & Dagger information needs.

www.croak-and-dagger.com

- Upcoming Programs
- 2011 Meeting Schedule
- Membership Form
- Speakers Bureau
- Links to Mystery Websites & Websites for Your Favorite Croak & Dagger Authors
- *The Nooseletter* Archive

AND: All members are invited to join the Croak & Dagger Yahoo group, an online gathering place for mystery writers. Join in! Log on to C&D’s web page (www.croak-and-dagger.com) and click on the link to moderator Nancy Varian for instructions. Exchange news and information about mystery books, movies, and TV shows, as well as online courses.

The Line Up

President/Treasurer – Olin Bray –
ohbray@nmia.com
Secretary – Fred Aiken –
FAAiken@aol.com
Vice President – Joan Sabershagen –
joan@joanspicci.com
Membership – Pat Wood
pwood73@comcast.net
Programs/Publicity – Rita Herther –
RMHerther@aol.com
Website Technical Support Manager –
Susan Zates – *smzates@yahoo.com*
Nooseletter Editor – Linda Triegel
newsette@earthlink.net



Sisters in Crime Guppies

Guppies is an online writer’s support group. 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.

SinC guppies come from across the United States and Canada. They have different occupations and avocations, but they share a passion for writing mysteries and a common goal of getting published.

Interested in joining this online writer’s support group? Check them out at www.sinc-guppies.org.

Noose News

Book signings

All Croak & Dagger members are invited to notify the membership chairman, Pat Wood, pwood73@comcast.net, if they wish to promote an upcoming book signing and have members notified in advance.

Pat will need at least three days' notice prior to the date of the signing in order to initiate an email to the list of Croak and Dagger members. Include author's name, name of book being promoted, date, time, and place of the signing. Please be sure to send these notices to Pat at her personal email, rather than the Yahoo member list email.

Novelists, Inc is an organization for published authors of genre fiction. Check out their downloadable [Comprehensive Guide to the New World of Publishing](#), which is free to the public and perhaps the best advertising any writers' organization could devise. The article about transmedia storytelling is an eye-opener, but how to write a sales-effective guest blog and the pieces about crowd sourcing and "street teams" are not to be missed. For self-pubbers, check out the information on "the viral dream." It doesn't happen by magic. And if you're selling your own books? Read the article about collecting sales tax and avoiding prosecution. If this is the kind of info NinC gives away, what are they doing for their paying members?

The **Dilys Award** has been given annually since 1992 by the Independent Mystery Booksellers Association (IMBA) to the mystery titles of the year which the member booksellers have most enjoyed selling. The award is named in honor of Dilys Winn, the founder of Murder Ink, the first (now, alas, late) specialty bookseller of mystery books in the United States. This year's winners will be announced March 31 at the Left Coast Crime conference in Sacramento.

Ed Note: See page 12 for other awards nominees that represent great reading for mystery fans!

The Six Rules for Being a Real Writer (Or the major things I've learned on my journey)

1. Before anything else, you must decide you **ARE** a writer, and own that designation. To **BE** a writer, you have to **ACT** like a writer! So start writing!
2. Align yourself with writing groups such as Croak and Dagger, Sisters in Crime, and SouthWest Writers, where you can meet other writers and learn from them.
3. Find yourself a compatible critique group and become a full-functioning member. That means you give careful critiques to other members and in turn listen carefully to their suggestions for you. In the end, you must be the one to decide if you can implement those changes. But at least listen with an open mind and try them on for size.
4. Keep on writing, no matter what, no matter how hopeless it may seem. Only by continuing to do it can you learn and grow in the craft.
5. Avail yourself of every top-quality seminar and writing class you can manage. Even if you only pick up one good idea, it might be the very thing you need to move yourself to the next level.
6. This last rule is one you may not have heard before. When you find a writer whose work you admire and respect, go to their book signings. If you have the funds, buy their books. Even if you can't buy a book, show up when they make an appearance. Think about how much it will mean to you someday when you get published. It's what writers do...support and encourage other writers.

—Patricia Smith Wood
(pwood73@comcast.net)

2012 Mystery Conferences – Still Time to Sign Up!

Below are some of the writers' conferences coming up between now and the end of 2012. For more information, click on the link to check them out online or e-mail the contacts noted.

June 1-3

Bloody Words, the Canadian Mystery Conference, Toronto, ON. Guest of Honor: Lynwood Barclay; International Guest of Honor: Gayle Linds. Introducing the "Bony Blithe" light mystery award. Manuscript evaluations; short story contest. For more, go to: www.bloodywrods.com.

June 22-24

Crested Butte Writers Conference, held at the Elevation Hotel, Crested Butte, Colorado. "A small conference designed to be friendly and cozy with the caliber of a large conference." Book signings, contest. Speakers include authors, agents, and editors. Go to www.crestedbuttewriters.org/conf.php.

July 11-14

Thrillerfest VI, New York, NY. Thrillmasters Jack Higgins & R.L. Stine; Spotlight guests Lee Child, John Sanford, and Catherine Coulter; true thriller award recipient Ann Rule. Featured authors are Silver Bullet awardees Richard North Patterson & Karen Slaughter. For details: www.thrillerfest.com.

August 24-26

Killer Nashville. "A conference for thriller, suspense, and mystery writers—and fans." C.J. Box & Peter Straub will headline as guests of honor. For more info, go to: www.killernashville.com.

September 7-9

Rocky Mountain Fiction Writers' **Colorado Gold Conference**, Denver. Keynote speakers: Jodi Thomas & Debra Dixon. For information: www.rmfw.org.

October 4-7

2012 Bouchercon – Crime Fiction Rocks: Cleveland, OH. Opening ceremonies take place at the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame. Guests of honor: Elizabeth George, Robin Cook (for distinguished contribution to the genre), Mary Higgins Clark (lifetime achievement award). Contact: www.bouchercon2012.com



October 26-28

18th annual **Magna cum Murder 2011** Crime Writing Festival, sponsored by Ball State University, in Muncie, Indiana. Guest of honor: SJ Rozen. Banquet Speaker: Eric G. Wilson. Contact: www.magnacummurder.com.

November 9-11

New England Crime Bake, Dedham, MA. Eleventh annual mystery conference for writers and readers, co-sponsored by Scarlet Letters (New England Sisters in Crime) and the Mystery Writers of America New England Chapter. Guest of Honor: Joseph Finder. Al Blanchard short mystery story contest is now open; deadline April 30. Registration opens in May at www.crimebake.org.

And Don't Forget:

Left Coast Crime is coming back to the Rockies! The 2013 conference will be held in Colorado Springs, March 21-24, 2013, where "Murder is the Last Resort." Featured guests: Craig Johnson & Laura Lipmann. To register and check for updates: www.leftcoastcrime.org/2013.

Wordharvest One-Day Workshops 2012

Wordharvest's one-day writing workshop series for 2012 include fiction, non-fiction, poetry and a day on marketing your work. You can take one class or every class. As always, the programs will be hands-on, interactive and intense. We welcome writers of all abilities who want to learn.

Workshop Times: 9 a.m.–Noon and 1–4 p.m.

Location: The Performance Space at La Tienda, 7 Caliente Road, in Eldorado (outside Santa Fe).

For more information, log on to www.wordharvest.com.

April 14—Using Fiction to Create a More Engaging Work of Nonfiction, with James McGrath Morris

For today's readers, nonfiction must be told in a compelling fashion. One of the best ways to achieve this is to make use of writing techniques that are used successfully in fiction. This workshop focuses on five specific fiction techniques and also how certain kinds of research can provide material suitable for this approach.

April 21—Discover Your Natural Voice as a Writer, with Sean Murphy

Learn how to get going and keep going as a writer using free-writing and other techniques to stimulate creativity and encourage fresh ideas for your fiction, non-fiction, poetry, or journaling. Learn tricks to beat writers block, and experiment with structure, style, and the observation skills that bring writing alive.

May 5—Your Work in Progress: Make Your Manuscript Better, with Sandi Ault

Writers will bring works in progress for critique, and incorporate the suggestions to improve, polish, and perfect the piece. Over-writing, under-writing, word choice, active voice, pacing, character development, and plotting will be discussed.

May 19—Travel Writing and Blogging for Fun and Profit, with Lesley King

Whether your travels take you around the globe or on short day trips, combining travel writing and blogging can be both fun and profitable. Blogging is much like being a magazine columnist with the freedom to be your own publisher. Discover how blogging can help you find or refine your subject, build a following, and create a book.

July 7—ABCs of Market Analysis and Promotion, with Shirley Raye Redmond

Writing a book can be tough. Convincing a New York editor to buy it is tougher. Selling 100,000 copies is tougher still. The workshop introduces students to the intricacies of market analysis and dispels well-circulated myths about successful book promotion. Using hands-on exercises and discussion topics,

July 14—Writing Your Life through the Lens of Food, with Deborah Madison

Learn the simple rules of writing recipes, from fundamentals to head notes, the best part of a recipe. This workshop delves into the details of food writing to encourage students to compile a cookbook for family and friends and include a memoir of their personal experiences that they would like to share.

July 21—Poetry Launch, with Joan Logghe, Santa Fe Poet Laureate

Learn how the language of poetry can naturally lead writers of all genres into language that is precise, imagistic, and vivid. The workshop will give participants an opportunity to play with poetics, building unique and compelling images, condensing for greater effect, and more.

July 28—The Writer's Sacred Journey: Find and Write a Compelling Story, with Kate Horsley

Explore inner and outer sources of inspiration and material for writing by combining brief meditation and guided imagery. The emphasis will be on going beyond the ego's agenda to a deeper place where writing is a powerful gift to others.

August 4—Create Compelling Characters, with Julie Shigekuni

Learn how to develop complex characters. For this intensive students should bring a sample of their work-in-progress and we'll examine it alongside published stories by authors who have created memorable characters.

August 11—Publishing Your Book: And Doing It Yourself, with Cindy Bellinger

Students will learn the necessary steps required in the publishing process: copyediting, getting forewords and blurbs, buying ISBNs and barcodes, and designing the interior and cover of a book. In this hands-on workshop, students will create a personalized production schedule with defined marketing strategies.

Reviews

Rob's Random Shots

March Case File Number 1

The Narrows by Michael Connelly, Warner Books, 2004, 427 pp (TP)

Many of you know that Michael Connelly is my favorite mystery author and may wonder why I'm so far behind in reading his books. I savor them like fine wine and read one per year. The rest of the year I read other mysteries. My favorite LAPD Detective Harry Bosch novel used to be *The Concrete Blonde*, then it was *The Last Coyote*. Then I was certain nothing could ever top *A Darkness More Than Night*.

Well, I was wrong. And I'm making amends by doing something I haven't done before. Here are the first two paragraphs of my new favorite, in Bosch's own words/thoughts:

"I think maybe I only know one thing in this world. One thing for sure. And that is that the truth does not set you free. Not like I have heard it said and not like I have said it myself the countless times I sat in small rooms and urged ragged men to confess their sins to me. I lied to them, tricked them. The truth does not salvage you or make you whole again. It does not allow you to rise above the burden of lies and secrets and wounds to the heart. The truths I have learned hold me down like chains in a dark room that slither around me like snakes. It is a place where truth is not something to look at or behold. It is the place where evil waits. Where it blows its breath, every breath, into your mouth and nose until you cannot escape from it. This is what I know. The only thing.

"I knew this going in on the day I took the case that would lead me into the narrows. I knew that my life's mission would always take me to the places where evil waits, to the places where the truth I might find would be an ugly and horrible thing. And still I went without pause. And still I went, not being ready for the moment when evil would come from its waiting

place. When it would grab me like an animal and take me down into the black water."

There's no spoiler in that. Connelly does two things masterfully. From the very first Bosch novel, *The Black Echo*, he brings up his protagonist's backstory from a wonderful character arc he uses (the novel arc is only one book long, but a character arc runs for an entire series). Connelly frequently steps aside to write stand-alone novels, then finds ways to bring the main characters from those (usually the protagonists) into Bosch's world, where they play supporting roles. No one else does that. And few have as believable (even agonizing) a character arc as Connelly gives Bosch. Compare him to Kinsey Millhone, whose past has caught up with her on a handful of occasions in Sue Grafton's 22 novels.

Read this author's works—in order. My mantra remains: Michael Connelly *never* disappoints. ♦

—Rob Kresge (www.robertkresge.com)

March Case File Number 2

Now Write! Mysteries edited by Sherry Ellis and Laurie Lamson, Tarcher/Penguin, 2011, 365pp (TP).

Another out-of-the-ordinary review for this issue. *Now Write! Mysteries* is one of a series of books for aspiring authors. It's chock-full of good ideas and practical exercises and well worth the time of writers in our chapter. Because of its layout (84 mystery authors offering exercise ideas in 3-4 pages each), I can only highlight a few nuggets most of us would find useful. The whole book contains many more.

Reece Hirsch offers common mistakes in plotting thrillers: starting with a whimper, having a passive protagonist, having an unlikeable protagonist, writing only what you know, front-loading the backstory, and writing plot points, not scenes.

Will Lavender asks writers to concoct an opening hook that is unexpected, i.e., neither trite nor hackneyed.

Sophie Hannah advises writers to concentrate on perfecting a first line and an opening scene by imagining blurbs and reviews you'd like your finished product to live up to.

Graham Brown tells writers to give their characters flaws that make them more human, more fallible, citing Daniel Craig's novice James Bond in *Casino Royale* and Jason Bourne, whom he says is "all flaws."

Rebecca Cantrell wants us to write a murder scene from three perspectives—the killer's, the victim's, and the detective's—in order to select the optimal point of view.

William Kent Krueger emphasizes setting and a sense of place. He advises writing a paragraph of telling description of ten locations as different as a busy diner, an empty stretch of highway, and the midway of a county fair.

Reed Farrell Coleman proposes writing a line or two that appeals to one or more senses, or to a sense of place, the sense of fear, or a character's major flaw in what would be the first few lines of a story.

David Fulmer uses examples of authors who don't belabor a point or try to overwhelm with language or verbiage, but give readers just enough to get the point and then get on with the story.

Gerard Bianco says to reread a favorite mystery looking to see where the author cleverly put in subtle language that kept you wondering what would happen next, then write ten different chapter endings that would make readers reluctant to put the book down.

Twist Phelan talks about plot triggers and gives 12 ways to start a story, each of which writers can use to get their stories off to a fast start.

Thomas Cavanaugh calls on writers to identify and underline the purpose of a scene they've written. If you can't, then see if you can call attention to that purpose with a rewrite.

Kate Flora differentiates between story arc in a series (the plots of each book) and character arc (what happens to the major characters during and between each book) and provides a handy chart listing all the details you should know about a series protagonist.♦

—Rob Kresge (www.robertkresge.com)

Other Helpful Books on Mystery Writing

The following is a list I've found helpful over the past 10 years. Look for them at your library, your favorite bookstore, or as e-books.

How To Write a Mystery by Larry Beinhart
Telling Lies for Fun and Profit by Lawrence Block

How To Write Killer Historical Mysteries by Kathy Lyn Emerson

Writing and Selling Your Mystery by Hallie Ephron

Speaking of Murder (2 volumes) edited by Ed Gorman and Martin Greenberg

Writing Mysteries edited by Sue Grafton

Writing the Mystery by G. Miki Hayden

Writing Mysteries by Margaret Lucke

The Weekend Novelist Writes a Mystery by Robert J. Ray and Jack Remick

Don't Murder Your Mystery by Chris Reardon

How To Write Killer Fiction: The Funhouse of Mystery and the Roller Coaster of Suspense by Carolyn Wheat

You Can Write a Mystery by Gillian Roberts

Lessons from a Lifetime of Writing by David Morrell

Sixkill, by Robert B. Parker. G.P. Putnam's Sons, 2011, 293 pp (HC)

Reportedly Parker's last completed mystery and #39 in the Spenserian saga, *Sixkill* follows The Master's pattern in giving Spenser a problem to bumble through and somehow come up with a solution at the end.

The problem is Jumbo Nelson, a famous but unruly and thoroughly unpleasant action movie star who's in Boston to shoot his latest flick. A young woman is raped and murdered in Jumbo's hotel room, Spenser's old pal Rita Fiore's law firm is hired to defend him, and Rita hires Spencer to investigate. Surprisingly, Rita believes that Jumbo may actually be innocent—or at least not guilty of any crime except bad manners and an unpleasant penchant for booze and groupies.

Zebulon Sixkill (“Z”) is Jumbo’s bodyguard, and the story is really about how he separates himself from his paycheck, and his past, by taking Spenser rather than Jumbo as a role model. Sixkill, a Cree Indian, is a Hawk in the making—big, quick, a man of few words, strong but undisciplined. Spenser, by not asking questions and recognizing Z’s underlying decency, trains him to defend and accept himself as worthy of a better life.

Spenser also reaches out to some old pals in California when it becomes clear that coastal Mafiosi may be involved in the murder. Hawk, alas, takes no part in this story, being incommunicado somewhere on the steppes of Central Asia, but pretty much everyone else shows up for the farewell party: Quirk, Susan, and Pearl included.

I’m going to miss this gang. ♦

—Linda Triegel (ljt23@earthlink.net)

Key:

PB = Paperback
TP = Trade paperback
HC = Hardcover

Rip Tide (Bloomsbury, 2011, 369 pp, HC) and ***Illegal Action*** (Alfred A. Knopf, 2007, 289 pp, HC) by Stella Rimington.

We always hear the advice, “Write about what you know.” Stella Rimington definitely followed this advice with her highly successful Liz Carlyle series. Rimington joined MI5 (the British security service, which has no direct US equivalent) in 1968 and eventually headed each of its three main areas – counter-subversion, counter-espionage, and counter-terrorism – before becoming MI5 director general in 1992. She retired in 1996 and started writing.

There are six books in the series so far in addition to the above—*At Risk*, *Secret Asset*, *Dead Line*, and *Present Danger*. Although she retired in 1996, the books seem to come from today’s headlines—Somali pirates, Islamic terrorists recruited and indoctrinated in militant British mosques, and conflicts between exiled Russian oligarchs in London and Putin’s Russia.

The books are similar to police procedurals, except they are intelligence procedurals. Where do you find the data and how do you interpret it to put the pieces of the puzzle together to understand what is really happening? As in the U.S., your friends sometimes seem to be your worst enemies. Given her portrayal of MI6 (the British foreign intelligence service, their equivalent of the CIA), you would suspect she was MI5 even if you didn’t know.

Rip Tide starts with a pirate attack on a container ship off the Somali coast. It then bounces among London, Paris, Athens, Birmingham, and Somalia, picking up additional characters and bits of information at each place. How did a British citizen get involved with Somali pirates? Or is he really a British citizen? What is the link to a militant mosque?

While there are some action scenes (after all, you do want the book to sell), it is definitely not a James Bond type of intelligence thriller. The focus is much more on intelligence analysis, tradecraft, and the subtle and not-so-subtle interactions among people and agencies in the intelligence community.

Illegal Action is much more focused geographically, taking place almost entirely in London with a little bit in Ireland. MI5 learns of a suspected Russian (Putin) plot to assassinate one of the Russian oligarchs living in London as a reminder of Russia’s reach and vengeance on its critics.

Is the plot real or just more Russian gossip? Who is the target? How can you protect him without letting the Russians know that you know about their plot and exposing a source? How do you get your person into the oligarch’s entourage and provide a believable cover story without raising suspicion? Again analysis, tradecraft, and personal and organizational relationships make this another interesting book with insights into an area most of us never see and can only imagine.

I have read most of the Rimington books and liked them all. Try one and you may find yourself looking for the others. ♦

—Olin Bray (ohbray@nmia.com)

Murder Among Us by Ann Granger. St. Martin's Press, 1992, 250 pp (HC)

The various branches of the Bernalillo County library system often feature a single author's books as this week's good read, which is how I found a new-to-me British writer, Ann Granger, of whose "Mitchell and Markby" village mysteries this is the fourth (the first is *Say It with Poison*, which the Hillerman library didn't happen to have within easy reach).

Chief Inspector Alan Markby loves his job as head cop in the village of Bamford, in the Cotswolds, and resists getting kicked upstairs to a desk job that his superiors keep urging on him. He is therefore not unhappy to be distracted by the murder of a member of the local historical preservation society in the wine cellar of a nearby state-and-greatly (as an English friend of mine called them) that's been renovated into a posh restaurant/hotel.

Meredith Mitchell, Markby's apparently on-and-off significant other, is invited to the opening of the new hotel and finds the body (of course), or at least finds the horrified young woman who first stumbled on it and who doesn't have Meredith's presence of mind and instant access to the local constabulary.

The suspects include pretty much everyone on the preservation society, from its self-appointed leader and unashamed stalker (she aims to disrupt the restaurant's opening celebrations in order to publicize her cause) to poor (literally) Zoë Foster and a bevy of food and wine critics well known to each other as well as to either Markby or Mitchell or both (this series takes its "cosy" tone very seriously). Not given much odds as a suspect is the Swiss owner of the hotel, who unexpectedly takes a shine to our Zoë, even though the home for broken-down nags that she's so devoted to is at the top of the list of debris that Eric wants to clear off his estate.

Except for a donkey named Maud, Zoë's young helper Emma, and her parents, minor characters all (though Emma does raise a flap that has nothing to do with the murder but ratchets up the action), none of the characters is particularly interesting, ranging from

improbable to only mildly sympathetic. Meredith and Alan's relationship is vague at best, though I'm willing to read the first novel in the series in hopes of getting a bit closer to the more appealing Wimsy/Vane or Alleyn/Troy pairings by two of my favorite Brit authors. The story did hold my interest, though that may be faint praise.♦

—Linda Triegel (ljt23@earthlink.net)

The Daughter of Time by Josephine Tey. Dell, 1970, 193 pp (PB)

A classic. Every decade or so I reread all of Tey's mysteries, although my favorite tends to change (it's currently *The Singing Sands*). A rereading of *The Daughter of Time* was occasioned by channel-hopping one weekend and coming upon Ian McKellan's film of Shakespeare's *Richard III*, which, transplanted to an atmosphere of 20th century fascism, I didn't expect to like, but sort of did.

Every re-encounter with Richard III leads me back to Tey's Inspector Alan Grant, who in this book is laid up with a broken leg, the result of an embarrassing fall while chasing a crook, and bored out of his skull. His ever-faithful actress friend, Marta Hallard, raids a print shop and brings him a collection of portraits of historical figures with some mystery attached to them, and out of this lot, Grant is most fascinated by Richard Plantagenet—supposedly a wicked king who murdered everyone in his path to the throne, including his two young nephews, the Princes in the Tower.

By now it seems to be pretty much accepted that Shakespeare's Richard was not only a fiction—if a bloody fantastic literary character—but that Shakespeare, who stole a lot of plots, got this one from the Chronicler Holinshed, who got it from the biography by Thomas More, who was 8 years old Richard died on Bosworth Field. Hearsay, says Grant, ever the policeman. It'd never stand up in court.

Grant concludes not only that Richard was a good king, a kind man, and the victim of a Tudor smear campaign, but that the young princes were still alive at the time of his death.

What really happened to them, according to Grant, is the denouement of the book, and the theme of how special interests of all kinds distort the facts is certainly alive today.

Despite its static setting, *The Daughter of Time* is full of Tey's wonderful characters, from the nurses attending to Grant's crochets to the young American who does his leg work for him. The title comes from Francis Bacon: "Truth is the daughter of time, not authority." ♦

—Linda Triegel (ljt23@earthlink.net)

Short Takes

Half a Mind To Murder by Paula Paul.

The popular Dr. Alexandra Gladstone series is set in the late 19th-century British seaside resort of Newton-Upon-Sea. Like Dr. Quinn on television, Dr. Gladstone is a rarity for her era and owes her status to having had a physician father, whose practice she "inherited" upon his death. In this outing, she must deal with a mysterious malady that claims three lives in the town, but she is able save a fourth patient. However, the fourth patient is murdered before she can determine the nature of the illness or identify a cure. Worse—the victim has had his heart cut out.

The Sixth Surrender by Hana Samek Norton.

More than 400 pages about a willful woman wooed by a man who appears to be a cad and may be after her property inheritance. Sound like *Gone With the Wind*? But this book takes place in 1200 A.D. coastal France and woman in question, Juliana de Charnais, makes this work more like *Gone With the Tide*.

Pressed into an arranged marriage by legendary queen Eleanor of Aquitaine to a weather-beaten warrior of uncertain heritage, Guerin de Lasalle, Juliana has been raised in a convent and is repelled by her new husband, but becomes involved in Plantagenet plots to secure the thrones of England and Normandy. A mystery of identity which is not resolved until the last few exciting pages. A witty, well-researched romance with much skullduggery

and swordplay by a professor of history who knows how to write engaging fiction.

The Faerie Hills by Susan McDuffie

This author also masters medieval history and features a female healer co-protagonist. This is the second Muirtach McPhee mystery to be set in the Hebrides, off the west coast of Ireland in the 1370s. In this volume, McPhee is tasked by the Lord of the Isles with finding a missing boy, but more mysteries arise with the discovery of the bones of a baby, strange happenings at a convent, a local witch, and an assault upon a rider.

As in the previous tale, McPhee calls in healer Muriota Beaton, daughter of a physician, to help in the investigation. They both get more than they bargained for. Readers will delight in the lilting Irish speech of the characters and after a few dozen pages will find themselves thinking and speaking in the same cadences.

Painted Women by Robert Kresge

Set in 1871 Wyoming, this second volume in the Warbonnet series also features the daughter of a doctor, Kate Shaw, returning with fellow sleuth Marshal Monday Malone. Monday's last remaining family member, his brother Tom, has been framed for the murder of a "painted woman" in Laramie.

After he becomes convinced of Tom's innocence, Monday enlists Kate's help, but she is considering leaving Wyoming for home back East and makes one last effort to experience the glories of the West by scheming her way onto the Hayden expedition to Yellowstone. Investigating while separated, they must survive threats to their own lives and reunite in Laramie just before Tom is scheduled to hang.

Written a Novel?

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At the Flicks

The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo—Two Valid Views

I don't mean contrasting views. They're complementary, my dear Watson.

Unless you've been living under a rock (GEICO commercials aside) since the turn of the century, you know that the most popular books of recent years, aside from the *Twilight* saga, have been Sweden's Millennium Trilogy—*The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo*, *The Girl Who Played With Fire*, and *The Girl Who Kicked the Hornets' Nest*.

You may also know that the author, Steig Larsson, never received a penny from the millions of dollars his books earned, since he died within days of turning the manuscripts in to his publisher and his estate is being fought over by his parents and his girlfriend. You probably know that his books have been in the front windows of nearly every bookstore in the world for the past five years.

But not many people know that the English translations that gave access to millions more readers were accomplished by Albuquerque's own Steven Murray (pen name Reg Keeland), a previous speaker to our C&D Chapter.

The books are available in hardback, trade paperback, mass market paperback, and audio books. Now we come to the two latest views—the inevitable movie treatments. Sweden was deservedly first out of the gate, with Noomi Rapace as protagonist Lisbeth Salander. She has appeared in all three movies. This fall, the first English language version (i.e., without subtitles) was released, starring Daniel Craig as Blomkvist and newcomer/complete unknown Rooney Mara in the title role.

Having watched the original trilogy with English dubbing and now the Craig-Mara version, I can tell you that they're both worth seeing, with the newer version having a slight edge. They do not duplicate film locations, but the palpable feel of a Swedish winter permeates the English version. Sex scenes in the English version are slightly more restrained.

The English version takes two liberties with the ending, but they are relatively trivial (no spoilers here). In the final chase, Lisbeth is prepared to kill the murderer, but does not have to. And the denouement, the fate of the missing heiress Harriet Vanger, is placed much closer to Sweden, obviating the round-the-world trip the protagonists had to take in the Swedish film.

All in all, the English language film is a worthy and accessible adaptation of the work that captures the atmosphere of the original and created Best Actress buzz for first-timer Rooney Mara. Familiar name? It should be. Not many people know that NFL football team owners Art Rooney and Wellington Mara were her grandfathers. I think we'll see more of Rooney even before the next two films appear. ♦

—Rob Kresge (rkresge777@comcast.net)

A View from Movies 8

I missed the English-language version of *Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* on its first go-around, but caught it at my local dollar theater (OK, it's \$1.50 now but still a bargain) just before Rob sent me his view, above.

He's right. I'd give the Swedish version the edge, but probably only because I saw it first, before even reading the books, and it blew me away (see my review in the July 2010 *Nooseletter*). This version is outstanding for its adaption (by *Schindler's List* screenwriter Steven Zaillian) and particularly Jeff Cronenweth's cinematography. If you've spent winters in Europe at an impressionable age, as I did, the feeling sticks with you, and it's in this movie.

Daniel Craig is perfectly cast as Blomkvist and Rooney Mara is terrific as Lisbeth. (By the way, Rob—we've seen a little of Rooney already, in the first scene of the same director's *The Social Network*.) The rest of the cast, despite being only one part Swedish (Stellan Skarsgård), are just as good, and I was amused to see Goran Visnjic in a role almost as far removed from his *ER* heartthrob as his part as Christopher Plummer's lover in *Beginners*.

The Girl is still at Movies 8 this week—go catch her. ♦

—Linda Triegel (ljt23@earthlink.net)

Chill out with a Good Mystery this Summer

All the nominees for the 2012 Edgar and Agatha awards are good reading for mystery fans at any time of year. Below are partial lists of the nominees; the winners of the Agatha will be announced at Malice Domestic on April 28, and the Edgars on April 26 at the MWA conference in New York City.

2012 Agatha Award Nominees, presented by Malice Domestic

Best Novel

The Real Macaw by Donna Andrews (Minotaur)
The Diva Haunts the House by Krista Davis (Berkley)
Wicked Autumn by G.M. Malliet (Minotaur)
Three-Day Town by Margaret Maron (Grand Central Publishing)
A Trick of the Light by Louise Penny (Minotaur)



Best First Novel

Dire Threads by Janet Bolin (Berkley)
Choke by Kaye George (Mainly Murder Press)
Learning to Swim by Sara J. Henry (Crown)
Who Do, Voodoo? by Rochelle Staab (Berkley)
Tempest in the Tea Leaves by Kari Lee Townsend (Berkley)

Best Nonfiction

Books, Crooks and Counselors: How to Write Accurately About Criminal Law and Courtroom Procedure by Leslie Budewitz (Linden)
Agatha Christie: Murder in the Making by John Curran (Harper)
On Conan Doyle: Or, The Whole Art of Storytelling by Michael Dirda (Princeton University Press)
Wilkie Collins, Vera Caspary and the Evolution of the Casebook Novel by A. B. Emrys (McFarland)
The Sookie Stackhouse Companion by Charlaine Harris (Ace)

Best Historical Novel

Naughty in Nice by Rhys Bowen (Berkley)
Murder Your Darlings by J.J. Murphy (Signet)
Mercury's Rise by Ann Parker (Poisoned Pen Press)
Troubled Bones by Jeri Westerson (Minotaur)
A Lesson in Secrets by Jacqueline Winspear (Harper)

Best Children's/Young Adult

Shelter by Harlan Coben (Putnam)
The Black Heart Crypt by Chris Grabenstein (Random House)
Icefall by Matthew J. Kirby (Scholastic Press)
The Wizard of Dark Street by Shawn Thomas Odyssey (EgmontUSA)
The Code Busters Club, Case #1: The Secret of the Skeleton Key by Penny Warner (EgmontUSA)

Best Short Story

"Disarming" (PDF) by Dana Cameron, *Ellery Queen Mystery Magazine*, June 2011
"Dead Eye Gravy" by Krista Davis, *Fish Tales: The Guppy Anthology* (Wildside Press)
"Palace by the Lake" by Daryl Wood Gerber, *Fish Tales: The Guppy Anthology* (Wildside Press)
"Truth and Consequences" by Barb Goffman, *Mystery Times Ten* (Buddhapuss Ink)
"The Itinerary" by Roberta Isleib, *MWA Presents the Rich and the Dead* (Grand Central Publishing)

2012 Edgar® Award Nominees, presented by Mystery Writers of America:

Best Novel

The Ranger by Ace Atkins (Putnam)
Gone by Mo Hayder (Atlantic Monthly Press)
The Devotion of Suspect X by Keigo Higashino (Minotaur Books)
1222 by Anne Holt (Scribner)
Field Gray by Philip Kerr (Putnam)



Best First Novel

Red on Red by Edward Conlon (Spiegel & Grau)
Last to Fold by David Duffy (St. Martin's Press)
All Cry Chaos by Leonard Rosen (The Permanent Press)
Bent Road by Lori Roy (Dutton)
Purgatory Chasm by Steve Ulfelder (Minotaur Books)

Best Paperback Original

The Company Man by Robert Jackson Bennett (Orbit Books)
The Faces of Angels by Lucretia Grindle (Felony & Mayhem)
The Dog Sox by Russell Hill (Caravel Mystery Books)
Death of the Mantis by Michael Stanley (Harper)
Vienna Twilight by Frank Tallis (Random House)

Best Fact Crime

The Murder of the Century by Paul Collins (Crown)
The Savage City by T. J. English (William Morrow)
Destiny of the Republic by Candice Millard (Doubleday)
Girl, Wanted by Steve Miller (Berkley)
The Man in the Rockefeller Suit by Mark Seal (Viking)

Best Critical/Biographical

Agatha Christie: Murder in the Making by John Curran (HarperCollins)
On Conan Doyle by Michael Dirda (Princeton University Press)
Detective Women by Philippa Gates (SUNY Press)
The Tattooed Girl by Dan Burstein, Arne de Keijzer & John-Henri Holmberg (St. Martin's Griffin)
Scripting Hitchcock by Walter Raubicheck & Walter Srebnick (University of Illinois Press)

The Simon & Schuster Mary Higgins Clark Award

Now You See Me by S. J. Bolton (Minotaur Books)
Come and Find Me by Hallie Ephron (William Morrow)
Death on Tour by Janice Hamrick (Minotaur Books)
Learning to Swim by Sara J. Henry (Crown)
Murder Most Persuasive by Tracy Kiely (Minotaur Books)

Best Television Episode Screenplay

"The Life Inside" (*Justified*) by Benjamin Cavell
"Part 1" (*Whitechapel*) by Ben Court and Caroline Ip
"Innocence" (*Blue Bloods*) by Siobhan Byrne O'Connor
"Pilot" (*Homeland*) by Alex Gansa, Howard Gordon, and Gideon Raff
"Mask" (*Law & Order: SVU*) by Speed Weed

2011 MEETING DATES

Tuesday, March 27, 7:00 p.m.
Tuesday, April 24, 7:00 p.m.
Tuesday, May 22, 7:00 p.m.
Tuesday, June 26, 7:00 p.m.
Tuesday, July 24, 7:00 p.m.

Meetings are free to the public.

Unless otherwise noted, meetings are held every fourth Tuesday of the month, at 7:00 p.m., at the James Joseph Dwyer Memorial Police Substation, 12700 Montgomery Blvd. NE, one block east of Tramway.

(If the substation lot is full, there is more parking available just below the substation, accessed via a driveway below the substation on the right.)

Check our Web site, www.croak-and-dagger.com, for schedule changes and upcoming programs.

Summary of Findings

The *Nooseletter* is the internal organ of the Croak & Dagger chapter, Albuquerque, of Sisters in Crime (SinC). Opinions expressed herein are those of the authors and editors. ♦

†*Nooseletter* Submissions†

Croak & Dagger friends are encouraged to contribute articles, reviews, and essays on aspects of mystery writing *and* reading for publication consideration. Information on relevant conferences or events is also welcome. Especially let us know if you have published a new book or story, or have an upcoming local author event. (Unbridled enthusiasm for your own mystery book is encouraged here.)

Length: Articles should average 500 words, but short items are also welcome.

Deadlines: Publication is every other month, starting in January. Submission deadlines are the 15th of the month prior to publication: Feb 15, April 15, June 15, Aug 15, Oct 15, and Dec 15.

The Living and the Dead: As a general policy, articles and information should focus on living authors rather than dead ones, but that's not set in concrete shoes. Articles about specific historical development of the crime-mystery writing genre, for example, would be welcome.

Submissions: Please submit via e-mail to newsette@earthlink.net, with "Nooseletter" in the subject line.

The *Nooseletter* is distributed to all members electronically. ♦ —Linda Triegel

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