



SISTERS in CRIME
CROAK & DAGGER
ALBUQUERQUE CHAPTER



THE NOOSELETTER

Volume XI, Number 1 — January 2015

†Expert Testimony†

Happy New Year (a little late, but heartfelt.) We are in the dreary month of January—at least I consider it so. I'm not a winter person by nature. Cold and snow do not appeal to me, and I daydream about the warmth of spring and summer. Perhaps people react to the seasons based upon the time of year they were born. It's a theory that I've never tested, but it seems reasonable. I was born in early June—that magical time between the full bloom of spring and the infancy of the summer season. It's not that I look forward to my birthday anymore, it's just the most comfortable season for my soul.

But there's always a bright side to just about anything, and to me, winter has always been the time to catch up on the reading I haven't had time for. There's nothing better than cuddling up in a comfy chair, preferably in front of a warm fireplace, and giving yourself over to the adventures a book offers. In my case, I prefer mysteries to all other genres. Wintertime, especially on a dreary day like the one I'm experiencing as I write this, lends itself especially well to the enjoyment of a mystery story.

As it happens, this issue of *The Nooseletter* contains a plethora of reviews of mysteries suitable for winter reading. You should find the perfect story to engage you in this season of shorter days and longer, colder nights.

But guess what? If you don't renew your membership to the Croak & Dagger chapter of Sisters in Crime, you won't be receiving this issue in the month it was created. You see, one

of the many advantages of a yearly-paid membership is timely delivery of *The Nooseletter* into your email six times a year. Oh sure, you can see them later on our website, but by then they aren't current.

So don't be left behind. If you haven't already done so, please write out that check to Croak & Dagger for \$20. Then either bring it with you to the next meeting, or drop it in the mail to Croak & Dagger, PO Box 16597, Albuquerque, NM 87191-6597.

Here's one more reminder for you:
We've changed our meeting place! Starting with our January 27, 2015 meeting, you can find us at the **North Domingo Baca Multigenerational Center**, second floor, room 7. The address is 7521 Carmel Avenue NE, Albuquerque, NM 87113, just two blocks north on Wyoming past the Paseo del Norte intersection.

Happy reading!

Pat Wood

Croak & Dagger President 2015

Don't Miss It!
Tuesday, January 27, at 7 p.m.

Our January 2015 meeting will feature a return by a former C&D speaker, author Lynne Hinton, who will speak about her new series, the Divine Private Detective Agency, the first novel of which is entitled *Sister Eve, Private Eye*.

Noted New Mexico Authors To Participate in UNM Course

According to the January 25th *Albuquerque Journal*, Award-winning authors will visit the University of New Mexico Honors College this spring to participate in a course called "Meet the Authors: Exploring the Creative Process," and the public is invited to hear them answer questions about creativity and the writing life. The public portion of the classes will be from 10-11:15 a.m. Wednesdays. The location is the Honors Forum, which is downstairs from the Student Health Center, directly across from the Student Union Building.

The discussions will be hosted by mystery, thriller, and humor author **Steve Brewer**, author of 26 books. The public portion of each presentation is free. Besides Steve, other mystery and thriller authors who have addressed Croak & Dagger are listed in **boldface**: Demetria Martinez, Jan 28; poet Hakim Bellamy, Feb 4; NM historian Don Bullis; Western author Johnny Boggs, Feb 25; Suzy McKee Charnas, Mar 4; historian/mystery novelist **Virginia Scharff** Mar 18; comic novelist Bill Fitzhugh Mar 25; poet Bruce Noll April 8; Alisa Valdez Rodriguez Apr 15; and thriller author **David Morrell**, Apr 22.

Detectives to Hard-Boiled Dames

"This article was written by Colleen Collins, www.colleencollinsbooks.com, was originally published as part of a continuing series on genres in literature and film by Festivale Online Magazine. www.festivale.info." Reprinted by permission of the author.

"I thought it was time for a tough, smart, likeable female private investigator, and that's how V.I. came to life." ~ Author Sara Paretsky about her PI character V.I. Warshawski

Ask people to name one of the first fictional female private eyes, and they might mention [Sue Grafton's Kinsey Millhone](#) or [Sara Paretsky's V.I. Warshawski](#), both of whom hit the fiction scene in the early 1980s. Actually, the first female private detective appeared in a story over a hundred years earlier.

Before we step back in time, let's first define a private eye, AKA private investigator (PI) or private detective.

Private Versus Public Detectives

The private eye genre features a private investigator, or PI, protagonist who is a citizen paid to investigate a crime (however, there are times in stories where private eyes work a case for free--for example, the PI feels compelled to solve a good friend's murder). Private investigators are not government employees who work in the public sector, such as police detectives, coroner's office investigators and federal special agents. However, it is not uncommon, in both real life and stories, that retired government investigators start second careers as PIs.

A few examples of private investigators: those who work in solo practices or as employees for a PI agency, reporters, insurance company investigators, and even lawyers in private practice.

Amateur sleuths, however, are not classified as private eye genre as they are not paid for their professional investigative services.

This article categorizes female private detectives into different stylistic eras: Victorian, the Golden Age of Detectives, Hard-Boiled and Contemporary.

Victorian Era Lady Detectives

The Victorians loved crime fiction, which typically reflected their world of dynamic men in society and passive women who stayed at home. However, a few authors challenged those roles in detective fiction.

Many view **Mrs. Paschal** as the first female private detective in literature. In 1864, Paschal appeared in *The Revelations of a Lady Detective*, written by W. S. Hayward, a British male writer. Although Mrs. Paschal occasionally worked with the police force, she also conducted private investigations for payment.

In 1894, private detective **Miss Loveday Brooke** appeared in a collection of stories by Catherine Louisa Pirkis, *The Experiences of Loveday Brooke, Lady Detective*. The thirtyish Brooke worked for Ebenezer Dyer, head of a private detective agency in London, after being "thrown upon the world penniless and all but friendless." Cut off from the world she once knew, she is a competent investigator who conducts convincing impersonations, traits that are reminiscent of the first real-life woman PI in the US, **Kate Warne**, who talked her way into being hired as a private detective by the Pinkerton National Detective Agency in 1856.

Golden Age of Detectives: Snobbery with Violence

The Golden Age of Detectives is generally acknowledged as spanning the years 1920 to 1939, although some contain it to the 1920s only. Stories from this era emphasized plot, English settings, and detectives who displayed ingenuity in solving the crimes.

During the early 1920s, Hulbert Footner wrote a series of detective stories featuring **Madame Rosika Storey**, Private Investigator, whose tales were published in the US, United Kingdom and other countries.

In 1928, writer Patricia Wentworth introduced **Miss Maud Silver** as a minor character in *Grey Mask*. In 1937, Silver starred as a professional private detective, although she preferred to be called a private enquiry agent, in *The Case Is Closed*. Mystery novelist D. L. Browne, AKA Diana Killian, calls Miss Silver "a professional investigator and a stand-up woman, a true forerunner of all future female private eyes."

Private detective **Miss Felicity Lemon** made her entrance in 1934 as the efficient secretary for Mr. Parker Pyne in *Parker Pyne Investigates*, a set of short stories by Agatha Christie. Later, Agatha Christie's iconic private detective Hercule Poirot hires Miss Lemon to be his secretary.

Trixie Meehan, created by Thomas Theodore Flynn, worked at the Blaine Private Detective Agency with her partner Mike Harris in stories published in *Detective Fiction Weekly: The Deadly Orchid* (1933) and *The Letters and the Law* (1936).

If crime fiction were compared to eggs, this golden era of detectives would be soft-boiled, differentiating it from the hard-boiled private eyes that were starting to emerge in American literature.

Hard-Boiled Lady Dicks

The hard-boiled genre and its detective--AKA shamus, private dick, snoop, gumshoe--took its first steps in the 1920s and hit its stride in the 1930s up through the 1950s. These hard-drinking, wisecracking private eyes walked the mean streets in an urban jungle filled with violence and bloodshed.

Alongside iconic hardboiled private eyes like Sam Spade and Philip Marlowe were their female counterparts in pulp fiction (named for the cheap "pulp" paper on which these stories were printed). A subset of these female private eyes appeared in the "screwball comedy" genre, which included elements of farce, romance and humor. Below is a sampling of these detective dames, their authors and example works:

Grace "Redsie" Culver (created by Roswell Brown, pen name of Jean Francis Webb). Culver appeared in 20 stories in *The Shadow Magazine* from 1934-1937. As an operative for the Noonan Detective Agency, Culver was one of the first female private eyes to work solo.

In 1934, **Nora Charles**, who falls into the screwball comedy category, made her debut in *The Thin Man*, written by Dashiell Hammett in the wake of his hard-boiled classic *The Maltese Falcon*.

The November 1937 issue of *Crime Busters* introduced readers to private eye **Carrie Cashin**, owner of the Cash and Carry Detective Agency in Manhattan. Cashin starred in 38 stories, written by Theodore A. Tinsley, and was the most popular lady dick in the pulps.

Probably the first hardboiled female private eye featured in a novel is **Dol Bonner** in *The Hand in the Glove*, written by Rex Stout in 1937. Although this is a standalone book with no sequels, Bonner later returned as a supporting character in several novels featuring Stout's detective Nero Wolfe.

Now let's jump forward in time to the 1970s.

Contemporary Female Private Eyes

Many credit P.D. James for creating the modern female private eye character, **Cordelia Gray**, in *An Unsuitable Job for a Woman* (1972). James wrote only one more Cordelia Gray novel before abandoning the character.

Over the next decade, three women writers kicked off popular, multi-book series starring hard-edged female private eyes: *Edwin of the Iron Shoes*, featuring PI **Sharon McCone** (1977) by Marcia Muller; *"A" Is for Alibi*, with PI Kinsey Millhone (1982) by Sue Grafton; and *Indemnity Only*, introducing lawyer-turned-PI V.I. Warshawski (1982) by Sara Paretsky.

Since then, many more female private eyes have taken center stage in novels. Below I list a few of these gutsy, flawed and entertaining gumshoes:

PI **Carlotta Carlyle**, created by Linda Barnes, made her debut in the short story *Lucky Penny* (1985), followed by the novel *A Trouble of Fools* (1987).

Scottish author Val McDermid introduced [PI Kate Brannigan](#) in *Dead Beat* (1992).

In 1994, PI **Lydia Chin** (partners with PI Bill Smith) came on board in *China Trade* by S. J. Rozan.

PI **Hanne Wilhelmsen**, created by Norwegian author Anne Holt, first appeared as a policewoman in *Blind Gudinne* (originally published in Norway, 1993; published in the US as *Blind Goddess*, 2012). In Wilhelmsen's recent crime adventure, *I222*, she has retired from the police force and works as a private investigator.

This article merely grazes the landscape of female "eyes" in literature. To read more on this topic, check out the resources under Recommended Reading.

Recommended Reading

Dangerous Dames: A Timeline of Some of the Significant Female Eyes, and the Date of Their First Appearance, The Thrilling Detective website: <http://www.thrillingdetective.com/trivia/triv138.html>

Hard-Boiled Dames: Stories Featuring Women Detectives, Reporters, Adventurers, and Criminals from the Pulp Fiction Magazines of the 1930s. Bernard Drew, ed., preface by Marcia Muller, St. Martin's Press, 1986. <http://www.amazon.com/Hard-boiled-dames-featuring-detectives-adventurers/dp/0312361882>

Investigating the Female Detective in Victorian and Edwardian Literature, a review of Sherlock's Sisters: The British Female Detective 1864-1913. Dagni Bredesen, Eastern Illinois University, 2007. <http://www.ncgsjournal.com/issue31/bredesen.htm>

Women Detectives - Fictional Women PIs Time Chart by Bob Schneider: <http://womendetectors.weebly.com/>

Free Ebooks: Early Female Private Eyes

The Kidnapping of Madame Storey by Hulbert Footner 1936 (free ebook, Gutenberg Press): <http://www.gutenberg.ca/ebooks/footner-kidnapping/footner-kidnapping-00-h.html>

The Experiences of Loveday Brooke, Lady Detective by C.L. Pirkis, 1894 (free ebook, Celebration of Women Writers): <http://digital.library.upenn.edu/women/pirkis/brooke/brooke.html>

MWA 2015 Edgar Award Finalists Announced

Mystery Writers of America is proud to announce, as we celebrate the 206th anniversary of the birth of Edgar Allan Poe, the Nominees for the 2015 Edgar Allan Poe Awards, honoring the best in mystery fiction, non-fiction and television published or produced in 2014. The Edgar® Awards will be presented to the winners at our 69th Gala Banquet, Wednesday, April 29, 2015 at the Grand Hyatt Hotel, New York City.

BEST NOVEL

This Dark Road to Mercy by Wiley Cash (HarperCollins Publishers – William Morrow)

Wolf by Mo Hayder (Grove/Atlantic – Atlantic Monthly Press)

Mr. Mercedes by Stephen King (Simon & Schuster – Scribner)

The Final Silence by Stuart Neville (Soho Press)
Saints of the Shadow Bible by Ian Rankin (Hachette Book Group – Little, Brown)
Coptown by Karin Slaughter (Penguin Random House – Ballantine Books)

BEST FIRST NOVEL BY AN AMERICAN AUTHOR

Dry Bones in the Valley by Tom Bouman (W.W. Norton)
Invisible City by Julia Dahl (Minotaur Books)
The Life We Bury by Allen Eskens (Prometheus Books – Seventh Street Books)
Bad Country by C.B. McKenzie (Minotaur Books – A Thomas Dunne Book)
Shovel Ready by Adam Sternbergh (Crown Publishers)
Murder at the Brightwell by Ashley Weaver (Minotaur Books – A Thomas Dunne Book)

BEST PAPERBACK ORIGINAL

The Secret History of Las Vegas by Chris Albani (Penguin Random House – Penguin Books)
Stay With Me by Alison Gaylin (HarperCollins Publishers – William Morrow)
The Barkeep by William Lashner (Amazon Publishing – Thomas and Mercer)
The Day She Died by Catriona McPherson (Llewellyn Worldwide – Midnight Ink)
The Gone Dead Train by Lisa Turner (HarperCollins Publishers – William Morrow)
World of Trouble by Ben H. Winters (Quirk Books)

BEST FACT CRIME

Kitty Genovese: The Murder, the Bystanders, the Crime that Changed America by Kevin Cook (W.W. Norton)
The Savage Harvest: A Tale of Cannibals, Colonialism, and Michael Rockefeller's Tragic Quest for Primitive Art by Carl Hoffman (HarperCollins Publishers – William Morrow)
The Other Side: A Memoir by Lacy M. Johnson (Tin House Books)
Tinseltown: Murder, Morphine, and Madness at the Dawn of Hollywood by William Mann (HarperCollins Publishers – Harper)
The Mad Sculptor: The Maniac, the Model, and the Murder that Shook the Nation by Harold Schechter (Amazon Publishing – New Harvest)

BEST CRITICAL/BIOGRAPHICAL

The Figure of the Detective: A Literary History and Analysis by Charles Brownson (McFarland & Company)
James Ellroy: A Companion to the Mystery Fiction by Jim Mancall (Oxford University Press)
Kiss the Blood Off My Hands: Classic Film Noir by Robert Miklitsch (University of Illinois Press)
Judges & Justice & Lawyers & Law: Exploring the Legal Dimensions of Fiction and Film by Francis M. Nevins (Perfect Crime Books)
Poe-Land: The Hallowed Haunts of Edgar Allan Poe by J.W. Ocker (W.W. Norton – Countryman Press)

BEST SHORT STORY

"The Snow Angel" – *Ellery Queen Mystery Magazine* by Doug Allyn (Dell Magazines)
"200 Feet" – *Strand Magazine* by John Floyd (The Strand)

"What Do You Do?" – *Rogues* by Gillian Flynn (Penguin Random House Publishing – Ballantine Books)

"Red Eye" – *Faceoff* by Dennis Lehane vs. Michael Connelly (Simon & Schuster)

"Teddy" – *Ellery Queen Mystery Magazine* by Brian Tobin (Dell Magazines)

BEST JUVENILE

Absolutely Truly by Heather Vogel Frederick (Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers)

Space Case by Stuart Gibbs (Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers)

Greenglass House by Kate Milford (Clarion Books – Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Books for Young Readers)

Nick and Tesla's Super-Cyborg Gadget Glove by "Science Bob" Pflugfelder and Steve Hockensmith (Quirk Books)

Saving Kabul Corner by N.H. Senzai (Simon & Schuster – Paula Wiseman Books)

Eddie Red, Undercover: Mystery on Museum Mile by Marcia Wells (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Books for Young Readers)

BEST YOUNG ADULT

The Doubt Factory by Paolo Bacigalupi (Little, Brown Books for Young Readers)

Nearly Gone by Elle Cosimano (Penguin Young Readers Group – Kathy Dawson Books)

Fake ID by Lamar Giles (HarperCollins Children's Books - Amistad)

The Art of Secrets by James Klise (Algonquin Young Readers)

The Prince of Venice Beach by Blake Nelson (Little, Brown Books for Young Readers)

BEST TELEVISION EPISODE TELEPLAY

"The Empty Hearse" – *Sherlock*, Teleplay by Mark Gatiss (Hartwood Films/Masterpiece)

"Unfinished Business" – *Blue Bloods*, Teleplay by Siobhan Byrne O'Connor (CBS)

"Episode 1" – *Happy Valley*, Teleplay by Sally Wainwright (Netflix)

"Dream Baby Dream" – *The Killing*, Teleplay by Sean Whitesell (Netflix)

"Episode 6" – *The Game*, Teleplay by Toby Whithouse (BBC America)

ROBERT L. FISH MEMORIAL AWARD

"Getaway Girl" – *Ellery Queen Mystery Magazine* By Zoë Z. Dean (Dell Magazines)

GRAND MASTER

Lois Duncan

James Ellroy

RAVEN AWARDS

Ruth & Jon Jordan, *Crimespree Magazine*

Kathryn Kennison, *Magna Cum Murder*

ELLERY QUEEN AWARD

Charles Ardai, Editor & Founder, Hard Case Crime

THE SIMON & SCHUSTER - MARY HIGGINS CLARK AWARD

(Presented at MWA's Agents & Editors Party on Tuesday, April 28, 2015)

A Dark and Twisted Tide by Sharon Bolton (Minotaur Books)

The Stranger You Know by Jane Casey (Minotaur Books)

Invisible City by Julia Dahl (Minotaur Books)

Summer of the Dead by Julia Keller (Minotaur Books)

The Black Hour by Lori Rader-Day (Prometheus Books – Seventh Street Books)

Spokesman for the Prosecution

Prosecutor Morley Swingle shares his experience

By Mike McClanahan, copyright 2014, used by permission of the author

On an icy mid-November eve, several hardy writers braved the elements and slid downtown to the Denver Press Club to hear attorney and author Morley Swingle tell them how to accurately portray DAs and other prosecutors when writing courtroom dramas. Swingle brought 30 years' experience as a Missouri district attorney and federal prosecutor into play as he guided the audience through the inner workings of a prosecutor's office.

The first decision a prosecutor has to make is whether to proceed with a case or not, and according to Swingle, this decision varies greatly from one jurisdiction to another. Sometimes it's the result of careful analysis of the evidence and can even take into account how justice will best be served. Other prosecutors may only decide if the case is winnable and move ahead on that basis alone, and some simply like taking as many cases as possible to trial. Once a decision to try a case is made, Swingle says that prosecutors operate under many more constraints and restrictions than does defense counsel, not the least of which is a duty to disclose information that may be helpful to the defense. The defense is under no such obligation.

When asked what writers get wrong about prosecutors, he ticked off a list of gaffes he's observed in books and movies including prosecutors asking for a change of venue (they can't), lawyers asking questions and saying things that are clearly inadmissible, and melodramatic courtroom scenes, especially in closing arguments. Rather than showboating, Swingle says a good prosecutor is more like a top athlete who has the skills to win and uses them convincingly. He, for one, doesn't like to rely on too many high-tech gadgets in the courtroom, preferring to not be seen as talking down to or over the heads of a jury.

As a published author himself, Swingle offered to make himself available to any RMMWA members who might want advice on whether their courtroom scene will stand up to scrutiny. He welcomes members to contact him at morleyswinglejr@gmail.com with questions. Additionally, he said the National District Attorneys Association has several free publications that are helpful in understanding how prosecutors work. The Colorado District Attorney Council lists all DA offices along with maps of the districts. Other states have similar resources that writers may find helpful if their story is set outside Colorado. The American Bar Association also publishes information about criminal prosecution standards on its website.

Swingle suggests the following books to persons wanting to know more about being a prosecutor:

**Outrage: The Five Reasons Why O.J. Simpson Got Away With Murder* by Vincent Bugliosi

**Small-Town DA* by Robert Traver

**Scoundrels to the Hoosegow* by Morley Swingle, a humorous yet insightful look at what goes right and wrong in prosecutions.

If it's your prosecutor who's the scoundrel, he recommends *Prosecutorial Misconduct*, 2d ed. (2014-2015) by Bennett L. Gershman as your go-to resource.

As an aside, Swingle told the story of a recent job hunt. When he moved to Colorado, Swingle sought to continue his career as a prosecutor. He applied to the Denver District Attorney's Office where, in spite of prosecuting nearly 140 criminal cases, 79 of them homicides that put four defendants on Death Row, he was unable to get a job. It turns out that Denver wants its lawyers fresh out of law school in order to teach "their way" of conducting prosecutions, a process Swingle describes as "reckless." Unable to get hired as a prosecutor, Swingle made the decision to join "the other side" and become a defense attorney, a job he currently holds while working on another mystery novel involving a prosecutor with skeletons in his closet who turns up dead. Besides *Scoundrels to the Hoosegow*, Swingle's earlier novels include *The Gold of Cape Girardeau*, a courtroom drama about a dispute over a trunk of gold found buried with a skeleton that takes the reader back to the days of Mississippi riverboats, and *Bootheel Man*, a murder mystery that also explores the controversy over native cultural rights vs. archaeological studies.

Reviews

Key: PB=Paperback TP=Trade Paperback HC=Hardcover
--

Rob's Random Shots

(Reviewer's Note: While travelling over Christmas and New Year's, I read so many books that each of the following reviews will be shorter than usual.)

January Case File Number One

Murder in the First-Class Carriage—The First Victorian Railway Killing by Kate Colquhoun, Overlook Press, New York, 2011, 339 pp incl index, HC

This book was a gift, in every sense. I don't usually review the nonfiction books I read for research, but the friend who gave it to me knew of my interest in railroad mysteries, in which I put a locked-compartment murder (*Death's Icy Hand*--2012).

Trains have been around in both America and England since the early 1800s, but the first murder on a train didn't occur until 1864, on a commuter rail line near London. A bank executive returning home was bludgeoned to death in a dark compartment and his personal effects were stolen. This meticulously researched book recounts the investigation in

London that leads in about a week to a suspect, Franz Muller, who has just boarded a ship for America. Scotland Yard sends officers to New York aboard a speedier vessel and they arrive first.

America is still in the dark days of the Civil War, but the detectives set up an extradition and take the suspect back to London. After a trial, fully detailed in the book, the suspect is found guilty and sentenced to hang. Muller maintains his innocence even to the gallows and the press knocks the issue of capital punishment around for years. England finally does away with the death penalty 100 years later. Ironically, it was another 20 years before another murder took place aboard a train.

This book was well written, exhaustively researched, and would be valuable to anyone writing historical mysteries set in Britain.

January Case File Number Two

The Black Lizard Book of Locked Room Mysteries, edited by Otto Penzler, Vintage Books, New York, 2014, **950 pp**, Kindle edition

Hot on the heels of receiving the previous book, I found this one on Kindle and downloaded it immediately. Since I'd written a locked compartment murder in *Death's Icy Hand*, I'd wondered whether anyone else had written the spin such a crime that I had used. This is the greatest available compendium of

such cases, from prominent writers like Agatha Christie, Conan Doyle, Ellery Queen, down to many I've never heard of.

I have to say that some were quite long for short stories. Many were too contrived for my taste, including a preposterous long one in which a duplicate house in the woods nearby was used to confuse the issue. That reduced my respect for Ellery Queen. Others included a bullet made of ice and murder on a beach in which the killer must have been an acrobat who walked on his hands so as to leave no human footprints leaving the scene.

Overall, the book was worth the small cost (\$2.95) and I was relieved to find that no one in this exhaustive compendium had used my ploy of having the train compartment door act like it was locked from the inside by a killer using candlewax in the lock lubrication hole on the outside after he left the compartment.

January Case File Number Three

Champagne for One by Rex Stout, Bantam Crime, New York, 1958, 206 pp, PB

I received this book as a table gift for attending the annual Rex Stout banquet held at Bouchercon in Long Beach last October. I never look a gift book in the mouth, and since I'd never read a Nero Wolfe/Archie Goodwin mystery, I was glad to have it. I can't tell where it would fall in terms of quality in the Rex Stout canon (his fans are probably as devoted as the Baker Street Irregulars who hold regular meetings and annual Holmes banquets), but I found this one intriguing. A woman who carries cyanide in her purse dies of cyanide poisoning at a crowded cocktail party in front of a dinner party of about 20. However, her own bottle of cyanide is untouched.

What follows could best be described as a PI procedural. We see not only Archie doing Wolfe's legwork, but also that of a couple of additional PIs. The conclusion was satisfying, well laid out, and I didn't figure out the killer or how it was done. I guess that's the essence of a good mystery—if other mystery writers can't figure it out before the average reader could.

January Case File Number Four

The Study of Murder by Susan McDuffie, Gale/Five Star, New York, 262 pp, HC

Susan is one of my favorite historical mystery writers and I've enjoyed her first two books, set in the Scots Isles in the 14th century. This is a change of scene for her. To be sure, her sleuthing couple, Muirtach McPhee and his wife Mariota are back in fine form, but this time they're fish out of water. They've escorted Donald, son of the Lord of the Isles, to Oxford, the English university town.

In short order, an innkeeper's daughter disappears and a few chapters later, Mariota vanishes as well. Several young students provide Muirtach varying degrees of help as he attempts to unravel the disappearances. Then a master (professor) at one of the colleges is murdered and the stakes go up. Are the disappearances related to the murder? Are Mariota and the young girl already dead?

A palpable sense of dread envelopes readers even as we're treated to the best rendering of a medieval town since Brother Cadfael's adventures two centuries earlier. Susan's latest work is inventive, detailed, and fun to read. I'm already looking forward to her next mystery.

January Case File Number Five

The Merchant's House by Kate Ellis, Hachette Digital, 1998, Kindle edition

I found this novel as a BookBub free promotion. It is billed as "the first Wesley Paterson Murder Mystery." It falls into the category of "would be worth it even as a hardback at list price." That translates into "excellent."

This is the first in a series of 10 novels. This one and from the titles, many others, feature archeology as a key element in each modern-day tale. An action-packed prologue opens with the kidnapping of a toddler in the British seaside town of Tradmouth and a dog walker finds the body of a woman at another location. Then an archeological research team excavating a 17th century merchant's house finds a 400-year-old body buried under the cellar.

Enter on the same day black Detective Sergeant Wesley Peterson, a transfer to Tradmouth from London. Turns out he has an undergraduate degree in archeology and this tie-in and the discovery of the long dead merchant's journal play critical roles in the eventual solution of the kidnapping and the murder.

It's an excellent small-town police procedural that uses multiple points of view besides Wesley, who's a Caribbean native with a white wife, the female sergeant at the station, their boss, Wesley's old college chum Neil, who's excavating the merchant's house and who is Neil's wife's former boyfriend, and other persons, including suspects in both crimes.

This is a very assured first novel from this author and I plan to buy on Kindle or get from our library system as many more of Kate Ellis' works as I can. You should, too.

January Case File Number Six

You Know Who I Am by Diane Patterson, 2013, 283 pp, Kindle edition

Another freebie, this one much more of a mixed bag. I want to temper the rest of this review by saying that the opening chapter is perhaps the best opener I have ever read. If I had a chance, I'd quote it in full. The heroine, Drusilla Thorne, is working in a magic act at a Vegas casino and she's whirling on a wheel while her upset husband is throwing knives at her spinning figure.

I wish I could be as complementary about the rest of the book, which takes place in LA. We are introduced to a huge list of suspects in a murder in the LA entertainment industry and you would have as much difficulty as I did keeping their roles straight. Coupled with this are multiple hints that Drusilla Thorne is not the protagonist's true name. She has a mysterious super-rich stepfather who hires her defense lawyer because she's suspected of the murder of her husband who went missing in Vegas. We get hints of previous events in her life and multiple name changes, so some characters know her by different names. Thus, the title is a bit of a failed promise, since we actually don't learn who Drusilla really is. Meeting her mother doesn't help make anything clearer and I didn't

think the denouement/solution was at all compelling.

Worth at least a look if you can read the prologue in a library copy.

January Case File Number Seven

Ice Cold; A Rizzoli & Isles Novel by Tess Gerritsen, 2010, Ballantine Books, Kindle edition

This was another BookBub freebie. My next-door neighbors gush over the TV version of this book series, so I really wanted to like it so I could discuss it with them. No such luck. I don't know how much the recent books in the series are written with the TV series in mind, but it would take an entire season with a massive number of guest stars and multiple location filming to encompass this book.

The prologue involves a ceremony in a religious cult in which the leader "marries" a 14-year-old girl. The reason for providing this becomes clearer as the novel progresses, but the final connection comes quite late in the book.

Dr. Maura Isles is off to a pathology conference in Jackson Hole, Wyoming (another reason why I was intrigued enough to get this book) and in short order (but nearly 100 pp), she goes off with an old college friend and his carload of needy hangers-on for a day of skiing. Wrong turns and snow drifts strand them in a deserted snow-covered commune of identical houses. Just when you think this could turn into *Ten Little Indians*, accidents and missing persons happen and Maura tries to hike out for help.

Cut to Boston and finally chapters from PD Detective Jane Rizzoli's POV. Maura is unaccounted for and then comes news that the stranded party's vehicle has gone off the road and everyone on board was burned to death. Funeral plans are made and after Maura's supposed body is returned, new information comes to light and a BPD delegation heads for Wyoming. It includes a mysterious Godfather-like man who must be familiar to readers of previous books. His clout and ruthlessness lead them to find Maura is still alive but in the hands of a 16-year-old wood-wise boy who ran away from the sect.

Then heaps (literally) of other bodies turn up, besides those of all of Maura's travelling companions, including children beneath snow and dirt in the abandoned village. After a tense resolution finding Maura and her protector, multiple agencies raid the headquarters compound of the sect in Idaho and all is resolved.

Sorry I can't recommend this except to fans of the books or TV series. I am a fan of Tess Gerritsen's medical thrillers and she was an instructor in a class at the Smithsonian 15 years ago and taught us how encapsulate our own plots and those of classic bestsellers in three sentences. I bought a copy of her *Gravity* novel that day and I understand her lawsuit against the filmmakers is still pending.

January Case File Number Eight

Friend of the Devil by Peter Robinson;
An Inspector Banks novel (number 17!), Harper Collins e-books, 2009, 431 pp

As you might guess from a series 17 books along, there is a lot of backstory for the main character and his protégé and erstwhile lover Detective Annie Cabbot. We get what appear to be glimpses not only of their relationship (and relationships with others), but a couple of previous cases which may or may not have been portrayed in earlier books. I'm not sure how I can research that.

Banks in one jurisdiction has to work on the murder of young woman in a part of his seaside town, while Annie tries to identify a paraplegic woman found in her wheelchair with her throat slashed in another town. So we get alternating chapters (or small bunches of chapters) in which each works their case, but also interact with each other. "Banks" and "Annie;s" names are used throughout by the author—male POVs are referred to by last names; women by their first names. I don't know if British readers would find this sexist, but Robinson's books are big sellers both here and across the pond.

This is a long book (second only to that locked room compendium above). It had a satisfying well-plotted ending. I wouldn't want to have to go through another novel as long as

this one, but it is well-written, suspenseful (there's even a murder of a detective at about the 2/3 mark), and offers many insights into the two main characters' personal lives, past and present. I'm enjoyed it and recommend the series (without knowing the lengths of other books).

--Rob Kresge, www.robertkresge.com,
rkresge777@comcast.net

Christmas Justice by Robin Perini, Harlequin Intrigue, Ontario, Canada, 2014, 219 pages HC

The prologue is excellent, providing the foundational information upon which the story is built; it sets the theme for the entire book, describing the car bombing of Laurel McCallister's sister, Ivy, and Ivy's husband and two of her children, leaving Lauren to care for her five-year-old niece Molly. Ivy's dying words instruct Laurel to seek out Sheriff Garrett Galloway of Trouble, Texas, located west of the Pecos.

Laurel, a smart and beautiful CIA analyst, locates Sheriff Galloway, who has a secret of his own that puts Laurel and Molly in deadly danger. This fast-paced action-packed suspense story is filled with twists and turns. The sparks fly in the sheriff's remote cabin in the Guadalupe Mountains. This is a Harlequin romantic suspense story, but the romantic elements do not overpower the action and suspense. It is a page turner and well worth a reader's time. I would give this story.--Fred Aiken, FAAiken@aol.com

Seventh Grave and No Body by Darynda Jones, St Martin's Press, 2014, 322 pp, HC

This is the seventh installment in the saga of Charley Davison, the Grim Reaper. At the end of book six, we left Charley pregnant and engaged to Reyes Farrow, the son of Satan. In that book's cliff hanger, Charley and her high school friend Jessica were being held captive on top of a very tall storage tank by the villains. In the ensuing scuffle, Jessica was thrown to her death and Charley exterminated the bad guys

while falling through the air and managed to survive.

This book opens with FBI agent Carson bringing Charley to an abandoned children's camp where a mass murder had taken place to locate the body of a missing victim. Our heroine had just been notified that twelve indestructible hell-hounds have crossed over to this plane of existence to kill her and the baby she carries. While at the camp, she identifies the site as also the dumping ground for a pedophile killer. That crime is quickly solved. The title crime of the disappearance of a body did not play a major role in the book.

In book six, Charley's death was foretold by one of her ghostly accomplices, Rocket. The foretelling continues in this installment and is resolved in an extremely interesting manner. Charley learns more about her unique powers, including the ability to prevent Reyes from following her, the ability to escape bonds, and the ability to heal the dying. The principal thread is the disappearance and death of several unconnected people who left behind suicide notes and simply vanished. I can only tell you that this concerned the Reyes Farrow trial in an earlier book; anything else would be a spoiler. One thread of the book is Cookie, Charley's secretary, and Jemma, her sister, planning the eventual wedding for the supernatural couple.

This book also has Charley doing an exorcism at the behest of a Catholic priest who gave Charley a file that the Vatican has on her. She also discovers that someone has been stalking her since grade school and taking pictures of her life events. This thread ends in the death of someone near and dear to Charley and another life changing event for her.

I really liked this book. It is fast paced like the other Charley Davison books. I thought that two of the threads were solved without as active participation from Charlie as I would have liked. Towards the end of the book, there is a highly erotic graphic sex scene that changes the book from a PG rating to an R. I am debating with myself if that scene had to be so explicit. I'd like to warn anyone who lets their children read the Charley Davison books to read these books

first. I can't wait for book eight in this series.
—Fred Aiken, FAAiken@aol.com

One Good Turn by Kate Atkinson, Bond Street Books, 2006, 396 pp, HC

My ever-reliable sister recommended Kate Atkinson's books to me, and as a result I also found the author's Jackson Brodie character in the *Masterpiece Mystery* TV version (available from our library system) and wallowed happily in it.

The story I read in book form occurs (I discovered only later—you don't have to have read the previous books to follow it) was *One Good Turn*, in which our antihero, a former soldier and cop turned private eye (he riled the Powers That Be on the Force, as he continues to do) is witness to a road rage incident that has unexpected consequences.

Also witness to the incident was Martin Canning, a mild-mannered writer whose cozy mystery series is much derided by professional and amateur critics but has made him rich—not that it's gone to his head; he's the most likeable of several nicely drawn characters in the book. Martin is host to an unwelcome guest, an unsavory comedian performing at the well-known Fringe of the Edinburgh Festival. Martin is also the inadvertent looker-after of the man who was beaten in the road rage incident, following his release from hospital, and who turns out to be.... Where was I?

These aren't the only plot strings and character connections. Jackson discovers a dead body on the beach, which sinks beyond his grasp before he can drag it out, a story his old colleague on the police force, a hard-headed female inspector, claims not to believe. The dead girl turns out to be mixed up with a prostitution scheme involving a shady real estate developer, whose sympathetic wife... oh, never mind.

While I eventually untangled all the skeins in the plot, the TV series was a big help—not to mention that Jason Isaacs, who plays Brodie, is a lot sexier than I was getting from the page. The series encompasses two other novels besides the Edinburgh Festival story under the

overall title of *Case Histories* (the name of the first book in the series), although three more stories, starting with *Started Early, Took my Dog* (love that title) have apparently been broadcast in England.

I particularly liked the third story in the first series, involving a teenage girl named Reggie, who's even more fun as a character than Martin. Jackson's family life also gets a lift on TV, showing his ex-wife as more sympathetic than you might otherwise suppose, and his daughter, whom he dotes on (and she on him) is delightful. There a lot of humor in the dialogue, which the Scottish accents often make even funnier.

I'd suggest reading at least one of the books first, then hunting up the DVD from the library for a full immersion (I watched the whole thing twice, in addition to the time it turned up on KMND). Enjoy! —Linda Triegel (ljt23@earthlink.net)

All the reviews below are by Susan Zates, smzates@q.com

Death at Devil's Bridge by Robin Paige, Berkley Prime Crime paperback, 1998, 274 pp HC

This is the fourth book of the author's Victorian mystery series set in England. At last, Kate Ardleigh has realized her dream of marrying Sir Charles Sheridan. The newlyweds live together in Bishop's Keep, the ancestral home Kate inherited from her Aunt Sabrina. There are difficulties with Charles' side of the family; his mother is not willing to accept an Irish-American daughter-in-law at her estates in Somersworth. Charles has modernized the Ardleigh estate to suit them quite comfortably.

As a favor to their young friend Lord Bradford Marsden, they agree to host an automobile exhibition and hot air balloon race attended by inventors and investors, among them young daredevil Charles Rolls and Henry Royce. Several forces conspire to complicate the event. There is resistance from rural folk afraid of the newly invented motorcars, who

blame them for scaring a local farmer to death. The local roads designed for horses and carriages are in most cases too rough for an auto race. Local servants who don't want to move to London try mild sabotage, and a superstitious local casts a spell. There is a young aristocrat in rebellion and heartbreak over a lover. Most serious is the tampering with a motorcar that causes a driver's death.

Feisty independent Kate comes to Charles' rescue in a daring and exciting scene. An experiment in fingerprinting that Kate conducts as research for a Beryl Bardwell novel provides the key evidence Charles needs to identify the saboteur. All side plots are wrapped up with justice and humor to a satisfying conclusion. It's a pleasant read set within an interesting historical framework.

Death at Rottingdean by Robin Paige, Berkley Prime Crime paperback, 1999, 290 pp HC

This is the fifth book of the Victorian mystery series set in England. Sir Charles Sheridan and his new wife Kate want to take time off from their glittering high-society lives. They plan to visit Rottingdean on the coast for some quiet time together, just the two of them, to refresh their spirits. They're not aware of Rottingdean's infamous history as a smuggler's haven, and as outsiders, certainly don't realize the smuggling isn't over. They meet and enjoy friendship with Rudyard Kipling, also staying at Rottingdean, and also considered an outsider.

When the local constable is murdered, Charles is required by His Majesty to step in and assist the investigation. The greatest help is provided by a young boy who knows the town's secrets, and has a strong sense of right and wrong.

This is yet another fascinating tidbit of English history lesson, packaged with a cozy mystery, and perfectly meshed with Rudyard Kipling's *Puck of Pook's Hill*, which begins: "If you wake at midnight, and hear a horse's feet, Don't go drawing back the blind, or looking in the street.

Them that asks no questions isn't told a lie.

Watch the wall, my darling, while the
Gentlemen go by!”

Helsinki White by James Thompson,
G.P.Putnam, 2012, HB, 326 pp

This is the third book of the Inspector Kari Vaara mystery series set in contemporary Finland. Finn Kari Vaara and his American wife Kate are the proud new parents of a baby girl. Marring their happiness is the knowledge that Kari has a brain tumor. He has also been pressured by the national chief of police to accept a clandestine assignment fighting crime with crime. Kari survives his brain surgery, but is left without emotions. He works very hard to mimic loving emotions for Kate’s and the baby’s sake. His lack of emotion is useful for his black-ops job. He invites his former partner Milo, a computer whiz, and Sulo, a huge man, to be on his team.

Together they go outside the law to investigate drug dealers and gangsters. They intercept deals, confiscate the drugs and money, and in several cases must also dispose of corpses. Without emotions, Kari is not affected as he would have been pre-surgery. The team is wildly successful at stopping drug deals. But that has unforeseen consequences, including pharmacists being attacked and killed for drugs.

A major theme throughout the book is violent racism in Finland. Immigrants from Somalia are the main targets of racial hatred. A Finnish politician sympathetic to immigrants’ rights is beheaded, and many race riots and retaliatory killings follow. The government tasks Kari Vaara to investigate and stop the killings. Kari suspects there is a link to an old unsolved kidnapping. Kari’s team is very careful, very skilled, but a former French Legionnaire catches them in covert actions, and offers to join forces to investigate the kidnapping. At first, Moreau seems to be an excellent ally--but things seem too good to be true.

This book has very dark theme, strong language, shocking violence, casual sex; altogether darker and grimmer than I remember from the previous books in the series, *Snow Angels* and *Lucifer’s Tears*. Even the Finnish holiday Vappu (May Day), the major drinking

holiday of the year, is described in very grim terms. The author is an American living in Finland. The book portrays Finland as a frightening, unstable, violent place—not to mention the extreme cold weather. The story is as gripping and compelling as it is raw and unpalatable. I plan to read the next book, *Helsinki Blood*.

The Fire Ship, by Peter Tonkin, Crown Publishers, 1992, 289 pp, HC

This is the second book of the Richard Mariner action thriller series, set on the high seas in the late twentieth century.

Richard Mariner and his wife Robin are enjoying a vacation together on the *Katapult*, a new and experimental sailboat, in the Indian Ocean. They encounter a burning ship in shark-infested waters. They board the ship in case anyone needs rescue. The ship is curiously without identification, certainly without survivors, and they narrowly escape its final explosion and shipwreck. From the “fire ship” they proceed into a horrific storm that damages their vessel, including the communication system. So they don’t learn until later that the flagship of their company, *Prometheus II* of the Heritage Mariner tanker fleet, has been hijacked by terrorists in the Gulf. Meanwhile in England, Bill Heritage learns his flagship has been taken and that his daughter Robin and her husband, his business partner, have lost all communication. He flies to Bahrain, where he is promptly kidnapped by terrorists.

The book’s fast-paced chapters alternate between exciting plot lines around the world. The Heritage Mariner company executives call in favors from government, diplomatic ties, and political allies. Richard and Robin redirect the *Katapult* from a pleasure cruise to the Gulf, and hunt for the *Prometheus* in person. They craft a daring plot to save the hijacked ship’s crew. They team up with their new friends Sam Hood and Doc Weary, crew members/owners of the *Katapult*, plus old trusted friends from their previous adventure (*The Coffin Ship*).

Nothing goes exactly as planned – every move reveals hidden danger. This is a gripping, compulsive page-turner that would make a

thrilling movie, populated by fascinating characters with complex personalities. If I hadn't been so caught up in the suspense, I might have pulled out maps to follow their journey. A reader with nautical knowledge and hands-on experience would likely get even more enjoyment from the detailed descriptions at sea.

For the Love of Mike, by Rhys Bowen, St. Martin's Minotaur 2003, HB, 322 pages

This is the third book of the Molly Murphy mystery series set in turn-of-the-20th-century New York City. Molly is a recent immigrant from Ireland. She worked briefly for a private investigator, and after his murder she decided to continue on with his business. She is in love with Homicide Detective Daniel Sullivan, but he is engaged to a high-society young lady. He had promised to break off his engagement, but months have passed and he has not done so. He is fearful of the damage to his career should he anger his fiancée. Molly is trying to be realistic, fall out of love with Daniel and proceed with her life. With two new clients and the prospect of payments, she finds herself a place of her own to live in Greenwich Village.

Molly is hired to investigate the theft of fashion designs by a rival dressmaker. To discover who is stealing the designs, she has to work in both garment sweatshops. It's quite shocking to learn the conditions under which women struggled to earn paltry wages—no heat, no light, falsely resetting the clock to shortchange workers, and physical attacks from foremen. It's no wonder that under those conditions, workers rallied to form unions for their protection. Molly is swept up in union organizing, spends time in jail for her efforts, and meets a wonderful sympathetic man who may just be a good husband for her.

Molly is also hired to find out what became of another young woman who emigrated from Ireland to the US. At first, based on Daniel's investigation, the woman and her husband are assumed dead, but Molly finds evidence to the contrary. Of course, Molly manages to solve all her cases, and tie up all loose ends. This is an enjoyable cozy mystery with a little romance, and a lot of interesting New York City history,

including a cameo appearance by Samuel Clemens, "It should be perfectly obvious what you have to do. Give women the vote. That will do away with tyrants and dictators immediately. Women will always opt for sensible and compassionate over warlike and corrupt."

He Who Fears the Wolf by Karin Fossum, Harcourt, 2003, 271 pp, HC

This is the third book of the Inspector Konrad Sejer mystery series set in contemporary Norway. The story begins with and is primarily focused on Errki, a resident of The Beacon, a mental asylum. There is a related mystery, the death of Halldis Horn, an older woman living alone in a deserted forested area. Her death is reported by an extremely obese young juvenile delinquent, Kannick, who also lives in an institution, called Guttebakken.

While Inspector Sejer is walking along a city street, he sees a suspicious character go into a bank. Sejer follows him into the bank, finds nothing amiss, and departs. But the suspicious character was in fact a bank robber, and he took a hostage upon his departure. Sejer's examination of the bank's videotape reveals the hostage was Errki.

The bank robber spends the day with Errki, while police are trying to identify and track them. Police are also looking for clues into Halldis Horn's murder. By following up on every clue, and refusing to make obvious assumptions, Sejer eventually arrives at the truth, which ties all plot threads together. Along the way, he also meets a woman who stirs him from a decade of mourning his late wife.

I could not relate to any character in the story, and did not enjoy the detailed excursion into the wandering thoughts of a madman. I did enjoy the previous book in the series, *Don't Look Back*. Now that the series' first book, *Eva's Eye*, has been translated, I will give it a try.

Blooming Murder by Jean Hager, Thorndike Press, 2001, 337 pp, HC

This is the first book of the Iris House B&B mystery series set in the fictitious town of Victoria Springs, Missouri. Tess Darcy inherited the house from her grandmother Iris, who was famous for her gardens including the prize-winning iris varieties that she developed herself. Tess has spent her life's savings on turning Iris House into an elegant B&B for upscale tourists. Opening Day is intentionally set to coincide with the Four-State Iris Growers Conference, and all rooms are booked with the officers of the Victoria Springs Garden Club, an auspicious debut for a lovingly detailed B&B. Each room is named for and decorated to match a variety of iris developed by Tess's grandmother. Tess's aunt Dahlia will lead garden tours for the general public on opening day, and Tess plans to serve an elegant tea following each tour.

But all does not go well. One of the guests, Lana Morrison, wandered outside in the wee hours in only her nightgown, but denies it later. The garden club officers each have their own secrets, rivalries, and grudges. They begin squabbling from the first breakfast. Some are concerned about money, others about straying husbands, some about prestige, still others have deep secrets they want to keep hidden.

When a guest is found stabbed, the local police look for easy answers. Because the weapon was a cake knife Tess inherited from her family, the police chief favors Tess as the culprit—never mind motive or opportunity. To save herself from false arrest, Tess begins to investigate her guests and their pasts. When she gets close to the truth, an attempt is made on her life to keep her silent.

A fun-to-read cozy mystery with plenty of plausible suspect, and a little romance added in. I enjoyed the addition of a floor plan that enabled me to follow Tess and her guests' movements. From their descriptions, Iris House B&B and its gardens sound very lovely...wish I could visit!

†Nooseletter Submissions†

Croak & Dagger members and 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 shorter 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 submissions via e-mail to Rob Kresge at rkresge777@comcast.net, with "Nooseletter" in the subject line.

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

COPYRIGHT © OF MATERIAL PUBLISHED HEREIN REMAINS THE PROPERTY OF INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTORS. NO PART OF THIS PUBLICATION MAY BE REPRINTED WITHOUT PERMISSION FROM THE AUTHOR(S)

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. ♦

Upcoming Meetings

Tuesday, January 27, 7 p.m.

Tuesday, February 24, 7 p.m.

Tuesday, March 24, 7 p.m.

Meetings are free to the public.

As of January, meetings will be held every fourth Tuesday of the month, at 7:00 p.m., at the North Domingo Baca Multigenerational Center, 7521 Carmel Ave, NE, one traffic light north of Paseo del Norte, off Wyoming Blvd.

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

Our January speaker will be Lynn Hinton, author of the West Memphis, AR campground

mysteries and a new series in which a nun is the amateur sleuth.

Our February speaker will be New Mexico author Harlen Campbell, whose works *Sea of Deception*, *Jennifer's Weave*, and *Monkey on a Chain* have been published by ABQ Press.

Our March speaker will be Robert DeBuck, retired from many senior positions with the Albuquerque Police Department. He will speak about real-life police work, which differs from portrayals in the media, including movies and TV.

The 2015 C&D Chapter Line Up

President – Pat Wood –
pwood73@comcast.net
Vice President – Anne Zeigler –
annz1@centurylink.net
Secretary – Olin Bray –
www.robertkresge.com
Treasurer/Membership – Fred Aiken –
FAAiken@aol.com
Member at Large – Joan Spicci Saberhagen
joan@joanspicci.com
Programs/Publicity – Rita Herther –
RMHerther@aol.com
Website Coordinator – Susan Zates –
smzates@yahoo.com
Nooseletter Editor – Rob Kresge –
rkresge777@comcast.net



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!"

Summary of the Board Meeting Minutes of Sisters in Crime Croak and Dagger Chapter, ABQ, NM, January 19, 2015

Board members present: President Pat Wood, Vice President Ann Zeigler, Secretary Olin Bray, Treasurer Fred Aiken, Program Chair Rita Herther, Nooseletter Editor Rob Kresge, Webmaster Susan Zates, and Member-at-large Joan Saberhagen.

President Pat Wood called the meeting to order at 7:12. Minutes from the November 17, 2014 meeting were approved – moved by Fred Aiken and seconded by Rob Kresge.

The Treasurer reported that our checking account balance was \$1,721.14 and our savings account balance was \$1005.28. The treasurer reimbursed Susan Zates \$179.99 for our annual website charges. For 2014, we spent \$783 and took in dues of \$820. In terms of our 2014 budget, we under spent by \$35. A budget for 2015 is being prepared. The treasurer's report was approved – moved by Susan Zates and seconded by Rob Kresge.

Membership report: Our paid up membership for 2014 peaked at 53. About 22 people have renewed and paid for 2015. Note: Members need to have renewed and paid for 2015 to get the \$5 subsidy for the Albuquerque Little Theater play on February 1.

The next four programs (January, February, March, and April) will be Lynn Hinton (author of Sister Eve, Private Eye series), Harlan Campbell (author of Rainbow Porter mystery series – *Monkey on a Chain* and *Jennifer's Weave*), Robert DeBuck (an APD detective talking about his experiences), and Sarah Baker (talking about her writer's journey).

Website: Our website includes links to the websites of our members who are mystery authors. However, this is a member benefit, so authors who do not renew their membership will be dropped from the website.

Announcements: None.

Old business: We will be going to the Albuquerque Little Theater matinee of *Anatomy of a Murder* on Sunday, February 1, followed by dinner at the St Claire Winery (on Rio Grande just south of I40) for those who are interested. People who are interested and who have not already signed up should contact Rob Kresge at rkresge777@comcast.net. The costs will be \$13 for members and \$18 for non-members.

The bookmarks with our new meeting location have been ordered and should be in shortly.
New business: Southwest Writers is interested in doing a joint meeting with Croak and Dagger. Our board is discussing it with their board. It will probably be a special meeting separate from either group's regular meetings.

The Rocky Mountain chapter of Mystery Writers Association (RMMWA), which meets in Denver, is also interested in doing something in Albuquerque, probably jointly with Croak and Dagger. We are also discussing a possible event with them.

The next board meeting will be at 7:00 at Joan Saberhagen's home on March 16, 2015.

The meeting adjourned at 8:45.



Still not a member of Sisters in Crime?

\$20/year brings mystery to your life! The Albuquerque 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.

You do *not* have to be a member of the national organization to join us. Come hear our next program speaker and meet the gang. We promise to bring mayhem and murder into your life.

Contact our membership chair at contact@croak-and-dagger.com.