



ALBUQUERQUE CHAPTER – SISTERS IN CRIME

THE NOOSELETTER

Volume XI, Number 1 — January/February 2017

†The President's Corner†

WELCOME to 2017! We have an exciting year planned for Croak & Dagger, and you'll need both your party hat and your fedora.

PARTY HATS: 30/10. This year marks not only the 30th anniversary of Sisters in Crime, but the 10th anniversary of the official formation of Croak & Dagger as a chapter.

We'll be doing a year-long public service project, aimed at both identifying groups that can use books and developing contacts for our writer-members to hold readings, signings and other presentations. Ready to earn your investigator's badge?

We're also planning an event to honor the original co-perpetrators of this chapter. Think T-shirts! If you know the names and/or locations of any of the founders, let me know!

We're also working to make C&D better known to librarians across the region. We have a display in the main case at the Cherry Hills public library branch through January, including a bookmark giveaway. We're re-invigorating the Library Committee, to get our bookmarks into as many libraries as possible and to develop working relationships with librarians who can help us with opportunities for readings and other speaking gigs. Don't forget to pick up a packet of bookmarks at the next meeting to deliver to your neighborhood branch (and introduce yourself as a C&D mystery reader/writer).

FEDORAS: We need to do some serious revisions to our chapter bylaws, and perhaps

adding a separate Policies & Procedures document. If you belong to another non-profit group, ask for a copy of their bylaws and send them on to me.

We also need to address some membership issues related to the SinC requirement that every chapter member must also be a dues-paying member (\$40 for readers; \$50 for writers) of the national organization. We're not intending to be dishonest, but we want to find ways for you to participate in C&D, and to be sure you know you are welcome to be a part of C&D.

GREAT SPEAKERS! Rita is hot on the trail of more great speakers from many different fields. Whatever else is going on, you know you don't want to miss our meetings at the North Domingo Baca Center.

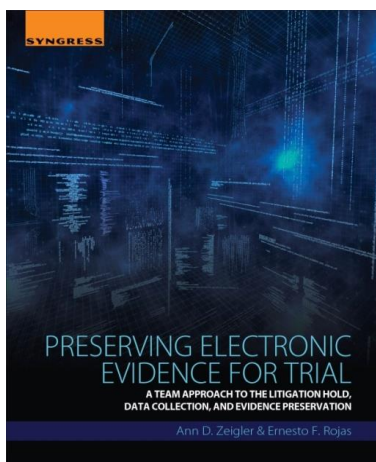
OTHER MYSTERIOUS STUFF: We have no idea what else we'll think of to make C&D more attractive to you, its members and guests. Pass along your suggestions!

*Mysteriously,
Ann Zeigler, President*

Don't Miss It! **Tuesday, January 24, at 7 p.m.**

Judge R. John Duran, our January speaker, is a graduate of the University of New Mexico and has worked for the District Attorney's office, Metro Court, and the Felony Domestic Violence and Gag Crimes Division, trying and prosecuting numerous cases in his career. He has also taught Law at UNM.

Judge Duran will speak to us about his work assisting the homeless.



Coming Up...

February's speaker will be C&D president **Ann Zeigler**, author of *Preserving Electronic Evidence for Trial*, a hand-on guide to preserving digital/electronic evidence.

She will be talking about what happens when people tamper with evidence, which these days is almost always in electronic form. She'll also talk about how publishing a book with a major publisher is the short route to complete craziness.

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. C&D meetings are held in the North Domingo Baca Multigenerational Center at 7521 Carmel Avenue NE, north of Paseo del Norte and west of Wyoming. Unless otherwise noted in the Nooseletter or our website, programs are free and open to the public.



**Sisters
in
Crime**

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 (www.croak-and-dagger.com) for all your Croak & Dagger information needs:

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

REMEMBER: All the above provide opportunities for free publicity for members. Contact our website maven, Susan Zates (address below) for more information or with an idea for a blog article. Get your name out there wherever you can!

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, etc., as well as online courses.

The Line Up

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Noose News

Merry Christmas 2016 from the Kresges



Holiday greetings and best wishes from snowy Fort Collins, Colorado. We moved here to be closer to daughter Amanda and her husband Jason Curtis. Their twins (boy and girl) are expected mid February, but then twins can come early.

We've kept our same phone numbers with 505 area code. Our new mailing **or visiting** address is: 3921 Ridgeway Court, Fort Collins, CO 80526. Emails are same: jnrsge@comcast.net or rkresge777@comcast.net.

While still in Albuquerque, Rob attended author events in Albuquerque, Placitas, Gallup, Moriarty, and Santa Fe. His sixth Warbonnet historical mystery, *Over the Brink* (1875), was published by ABQ Press in September (we finally got the e-version for Kindle published in December). Rob spoke for the last time at the Albuquerque chapter of Sisters in Crime in late September. He will miss these friends enormously.

In the summer, with the news of Amanda's expected twins, we found our new house, and signed a contract August 8 to buy it. We put our ABQ house on the market Labor Day weekend, but as of this writing, have not sold it. We went ahead and closed on our Fort Collins house Nov. 18 and with several months of packing and unpacking, we got in the new house before snow fell! A great big thank you goes to Ann and Paul Ziegler who delivered fabulous boxes for art and book packing. As we close this chaotic 2016, we remember fondly all the influences you have had on our lives and give thanks for your friendship and help along the way.

Our best Christmas and New Year's wishes,
—Julie and Rob

Joe Badal is "pleased and honored" to report that the Military Writers Society of America awarded their 2016 Gold and Silver Medals in the Mystery/Thriller category to *Death Ship* (Danforth Saga #5) and *Terror Cell* (Danforth Saga #2) respectively. (The 6th book in the Danforth Saga, *Sins of the Fathers*, will be released in 2017.)

Jim Tritten had a short story, "21st Century Illustrated Man," published in *Caesura Journal*, Issue 3 (December 2016). A shorter version of this story entitled "Illustrated Man" won 1st Place and a Gold Medal at the 2016 National Veterans Creative Arts Festival. Jim also had 3 short stories published in online journals in November. They include "Taking off the Uniform" (*As You Were: The Military Review*, November 11, 2016); "Dad, I'm on an All-Plant Diet" (*The Basil O' Flaherty*, November 11, 2016); and "Saunagus" (*Lost River: A Literary Magazine*, Issue 1, Fall 2016).

Jim says that anyone who can read "Saunagus" without laughing does not have a sense of humor.

The stories can be read for free on: <http://militaryexperience.org/taking-off-the-uniform/>, <http://thebasiloflaherty.weebly.com/jim-tritten.html>, and https://issuu.com/lostriverlitmag/docs/lost_river_fall_2016_edited.



It's Never Too Late

by J.A. Jance

Reprinted with permission from her blog (<http://www.jajance.com/jajance.com/blog.html>)



This week I heard from a female reader who, like me, was discouraged from taking a creative writing class in college. The e-mail went something like this. “I’m sixty-two years old and I’ve always wanted to be a writer. Is it too late for me?”

My initial reaction—a bad one—was to wonder, “Too late for what?” Too late to start writing? Let’s see, your fingers obviously still work as do both your brain and your computer. If you want to write, what’s stopping you? Write for Pete’s sake! Start now. How old will you be if you don’t start writing?

The thing is, at age 62 she’s probably learned one or two things along the way, important details of living that a newly graduated twenty-something MFA won’t learn for say ... well ... some forty years or so. If you have something you want to say, say it. Put it down in words. Let your kids read it and your friends and your grandkids. What you’ve written doesn’t have to be War and Peace to be interesting or meaningful to somebody else. What you really need to have is something to say and/or share, and it needs to be put down in black and white for all to see.

The “too late” part of the equation probably has less to do with the actual writing than it does with possible outcomes, as in: “Is it too late for me to become a best-selling author?” The truth is, for some of those shiny, fresh-off-the-factory-floor MFAs out there, it’s probably both too early and too late because they’re never going to make it big. Or even small because most writers don’t. Most of the people who call themselves writers earn less than \$5000 a year from writing. By the way, if you do the math, that means they’re making WAY less than minimum wage but they’re doing it anyway for the love of writing.

So if this lady is hopes writing will be a way of augmenting her Social Security, it probably isn’t going to happen, although it could. Lightening could strike for her the same way it did for Helen Hooven Santmyer ([here’s the Wikipedia Page](#)) whose charming first novel, *And Ladies of the Club*, was published and became a mega hit bestseller when the author was in her eighties. It was her first published book. I read it in the early nineties when I came down with pneumonia and had to stay in bed for a couple of days! I loved the book so much that I barely minded having pneumonia!

But it wouldn’t have happened for her and won’t for my 62-year-old correspondent if she doesn’t put her butt in a chair, her fingers on a keyboard, and go to work.

What I’m really trying to say here, is this. If you want to write, what’s stopping you? Don’t look at the date on your driver’s license and decide you’re too old to start. Write what you want to write. Write what you like to read. Say what you want to say and don’t even think about getting published. Think about learning to say what you want to say by using words on the page.

Once you do that, you may not be a PUBLISHED writer, but if you’re writing, you are a writer.

When I bought my first computer in 1983, David Graham, the guy who sold it to me, fixed it so that when I booted up in the morning, these are the words that flashed across the screen: A WRITER IS SOMEONE WHO HAS WRITTEN TODAY.

2017 Writers Conferences – Plan Ahead!

Below are some mystery writing conferences coming up in the first half of 2017. For more information, click on the links to check them out online.

February 23-26

Sleuthfest 2017, Boca Raton, Florida.

Featured guests: Keynote speaker David Baldacci, Forensic Guest of Honor Dr Vincent Di Maio, Publisher Guest of Honor Neil Nyrén, several guest authors and multiple workshops and moderated panel discussions. For more, go to: www.mwafloida.org/sleuthfest

March 11

Murder and Mayhem in Chicago, at Roosevelt University, Chicago, IL.

Special Guests: Sara Paretsky and William Kent Krueger.

Sign up by March 10. For more, go to: <http://murdermayhemchicago.com/>

March 16-19

Left Coast Crime, Honolulu, Hawaii.

Lifetime Achievement: Faye and Jonathan Kellerman; Guests of Honor: Dana Stabenow and Colin Cotterill; Toastmaster: Laurie R. King. Noir, cozy, thriller, historical, and more... We are working on creating panels and events to meet a wide variety of reading tastes. Get the latest on: <http://www.leftcoastcrime.org/2017/>

April 28-30

Malice Domestic, Hyatt Regency Hotel, Bethesda, MD

Guest of Honor: Elaine Viets; Toastmaster: Marcia Talley; Lifetime Achievement Award: Charlaine Harris; Poirot Award: Martin Edward; Fan Guest of Honor; Luci Zahray. "Plus lots of other mystery authors and fans." For more info, go to: www.malicedomestic.org.



June 10-11

California Crime Writers Conference, Double Tree by Hilton, Culver City (Los Angeles), CA.

Sponsored by Sisters in Crime/Los Angeles and SoCal Mystery Writers of America.

Special Guests Hallie Ephron and William Kent Krueger. Also publishing industry and marketing experts, Agent & Editor Cocktail Party, Book Room Charity Auction, craft workshops. For more, go to:

<http://www.ccwconference.org/>

June 16-18

Third annual ***Mystery Writers Key West Fest***, held at the Doubletree by Hilton Grand Key Resort.

"A meet-and-greet where authors can catch up with old friends and readers can chat with their favorite mystery writers." Keynote speaker is Robert K. Tanenbaum. Guests include John Hemingway, Clifford Irving, and Randy Rawls. For more, write to info@mysterywriterskeywestfest.com.

July 11-16

Thrillerfest 2017, Grand Hyatt, New York City.

ThrillerMaster **Lee Child**, 2017 Silver Bullet Award recipient Lisa Gardner, 2016 ThrillerMaster Heather Graham, 2016 Silver Bullet recipient John Lescroart, and the authors of ITW's new anthology *Match Up*. "Join us for the FBI workshop, Master CraftFest, PitchFest, ThrillerFest, and more. We encourage all thriller enthusiasts to join the ThrillerFest family." For more, go to: www.thrillerfest.com

10 Supernatural Detectives We Love to Drag Into Trouble

Excerpted from: <http://www.tor.com/2016/10/12/supernatural-detectives-we-love-to-drag-into-trouble>

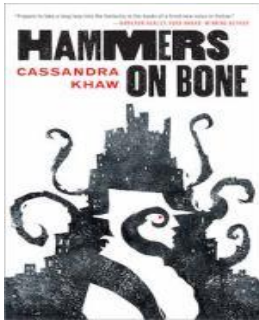
From hard-drinking former super-people to “consulting wizard” detectives, the best supernatural gumshoes are the ones who should really know better. They’ve stumbled onto apocalyptic conspiracies, gone toe-to-toe with demons and supervillains, and have the curses and scars to prove it. And yet, they just keep getting dragged into the kinds of cases that regular private investigators don’t even know exist.

Our favorite supernatural detectives are the ones who take their bizarre cases begrudgingly. Like the changeling who gets cursed into investigating a murder; the private eye who must defend a toon accused of offing other toons; and the FBI trainee who becomes an unwitting “Witness” to all manner of magical ridiculousness.

Harry Dresden (*The Dresden Files*)

Harry Blackstone Copperfield Dresden may have been named after three stage magicians, but his *real* sleight of hand is in navigating real-world Chicago and the magical spheres that exist just beyond humans’ reach... to his eternal chagrin, as he gets yanked into every supernatural drama, from werewolves let loose to the vampiric Red Court (who kidnap his girlfriend)—and we haven’t even gotten to the clashing courts of the Summer and Winter Fae, who love using Harry as their reluctant pawn. A wizard PI who wields a revolver and rune-carved staff in each hand, Harry takes on any job, no matter how apocalyptic. —*Natalie Zutter*

John Persons (*Hammers on Bone*)



John Persons, the private eye at the dark heart of Cassandra Khaw’s fantasy noir, is the perennial gumshoe: He’s got the wardrobe, the slang, the fast-talking way of getting to the heart of a case. But the creature inhabiting Persons’ human form is thousands of years old, and knows better than to get wrapped up in the kinds of cases that aren’t worth the price. That is, until an eleven-year-old drops a piggy bank on his desk and asks him to kill his stepfather—”because he’s a monster.” And “because you’re a monster too.” Just like that, Persons is dragged into trouble. —*Natalie Zutter*

Jessica Jones (*Alias*, *Jessica Jones*)

Okay, Jessica only works with the supernatural insofar as superhero universes often have elements of magic and the supernatural bound up in them. And she’s only a detective for a little while in the comics (though her current TV show is focusing on that aspect thus far). But Jessica as a character has all the hallmarks of a grumbling private eye; she’s no-nonsense, she’s blunt, she’s sardonic. She’s a romantic deep down under that scruffy exterior. Her television incarnation’s love of Wild Turkey cannot be understated. Whether she’s working as a detective, a reporter, or as a super-person, Jessica may not always be the hero she wants to be, but she’s definitely the hero we need. —*Emily Asher-Perrin*

Raymond Electromatic (*L.A. Trilogy*)

Here’s the thing: Ray—the last remaining robot from a government experiment—only *pretends* to be a PI, down to the wardrobe and hat. While he and Ada, his girl Friday in computer form, were designed to be an eclectic private detective agency, Ada’s prime directive to turn a profit prompted her to reform both of them into a much more lucrative business: killers for hire. However, their latest gig combines Ray’s unique talents, as silver-screen ingénue Eva McLuckie contracts him to find her missing costar, and then dispose of him. Not to mention that what should be a straightforward kill instead uncovers a massive, continent-spanning conspiracy including mind transplantation and movie screens. And while Ray lacks the human empathy that would stop him from

murdering people in cold blood (er, oil?), he makes for a sympathetic detective when he must solve the mystery of what happens after his memory tapes get wiped every 24 hours. —*Natalie Zutter*

Eddie Valiant (*Who Censored Roger Rabbit?*)

Eddie Valiant has to deal with living cartoon characters, and even if that's relatively normal in his world, it fits pretty snugly in the realms of supernatural from our world perspective. Based on classic noir tropes, Valiant is a chimney-smoking P.I. who ends up having to figure out who "censored"—or killed—cartoon mid-lister Roger Rabbit. (Or in the case of the film based off the novel, who framed the poor sop for more than one murder.) His investigations lead him toward the 36-year-old infant Baby Herman, and Roger's femme fatale wife, Jessica, and it only gets more interesting from there. Valiant keeps swearing off toon cases, only to get pulled back into their orbit no matter his protestations. You'd think the guy could take the hint after a while—he's clearly the only one for the job. —*Emily Asher-Perrin*

October Daye (*October Daye* series)

You can't blame changeling Toby Daye for wanting absolutely nothing to do with the faerie side of her heritage: After embracing her supernatural roots, becoming a loyal knight to the duke and *the* go-to PI for magical matters, Toby gets transformed into a koi fish, cursed to live 14 years in a pond while the rest of the world keeps turning. Upon returning to her human form—having lost her husband and daughter—Toby would rather bag groceries than track down dangerous fae. But she didn't count on Countess Evening Winterrose—a mentor of sorts, if not the warmest person—being brutally murdered and leaving a *geas* on Toby's answering machine. While other PIs are motivated by briefcases full of money or sad-eyed dames, Toby's reason for returning to her roots is much more straightforward but no less sinister: The *geas* binds her to find Evening's killer, or die herself. —*Natalie Zutter*

Lieutenant Abbie Mills + Ichabod Crane (*Sleepy Hollow*)

For the first two seasons of Fox's *Sleepy Hollow*, we were given a great supernatural detective in the form of Abbie Mills, played by Nicole Beharie. She's initially set up as the show's Scully, the skeptical, by-the-books police officer who is dismissive of the supernatural nonsense around her, and just wants to split Sleepy Hollow to go off for FBI training at Quantico. Instead she finds herself tied to time-traveling Revolutionary War soldier Ichabod Crane, forced to be a "Witness", and locked in a battle to stop the Apocalypse. She's begrudging about the supernatural aspect of her role as a detective, but only because, as viewers gradually learn, her family has been cursed to deal with apocalyptic doom for hundreds of years, and it's left all of them broken. Abbie's greatness lay in her willingness to confront this past, and tackle supernatural mysteries despite the risk. If you'd like to follow Abbie on a literary adventure, we recommend Keith R.A. DeCandido's *Sleepy Hollow: Children of the Revolution*, which takes Abbie and Ichabod on a hunt for a Revolutionary War-era artifact! —*Leah Schnelbach*

Constantine (*Hellblazer*)

John Constantine really doesn't want to help you with your mysterious problem, because if he does... you'll probably die. Then again, if he doesn't, you'll also probably die. So he has to try? But he'd rather not. It's a vicious cycle for the occult detective, and his less-than-savory means are balanced out with his roughly humanistic point of view. Constantine isn't a cuddly guy, but he does believe that humanity deserves to be what it will, and that people are pretty okay overall. He just has the most rotten luck, coupled with a tendency to meddle when he shouldn't. We see this over and over, as Constantine loses people who are close to him, and still gets back out there every time he smells a little brimstone. It's a bad habit that he can't seem to rid himself of. —*Emily Asher-Perrin*

Narrator + Friend ("A Study in Emerald," from *Shadows Over Baker Street*)

"A Study in Emerald" features one of the most famous detectives of all time going toe-to-tentacle with the eldritch gods of H.P. Lovecraft. For the first few paragraphs of the story, you'd be forgiven for thinking this was just a straight-ahead retelling of a Sherlock Holmes story, but then, when the Great Detective is summoned to a crime scene in Whitechapel, you learn that the victim has entirely too many limbs to be a human. Plus there's all the green blood...

The Narrator and his Friend aren't begrudging gumshoes so much as classic Doyle detectives. They use deduction to track a murderer, and trust in their reason and attention to detail to guide them to the correct answers. To say much more would spoil the story, so I'll simply urge you to go read it.

"A Study in Emerald" was originally written for a collection called *Shadows Over Baker Street*, a collection of stories combining the worlds of Arthur Conan Doyle and H. P. Lovecraft, has since appeared in Gaiman's collection *Fragile Things*, but you can read it online as a Victorian-themed broadsheet here. And once you've finished it, you can check out the Lovecraft Reread's take on the story here! —*Leah Schnelbach*

Honorable Mention: Dirk Gently (*Dirk Gently's Holistic Detective Agency*)

Honorable mention to Dirk Gently, who emphatically does not believe in the supernatural. He thinks the whole thing an elaborate con, but that doesn't seem to change the fact that remarkable things keep happening around him... so that makes him begrudging, in his own naysay-ish way. Besides, if "holistic" detecting isn't its own brand of paranormal investigation, then I don't know what is. —*Emily Asher-Perrin*

I Love a Mystery



Here is some more trivia for the mystery lovers (answers on page 12)

Thanks to Maxine Hermann of the Delaware Valley chapter of SinC, who dreamed this up, and to *Belles Lettres*, the newsletter of DVSinC. Ye editor has added a Southwestern flavor.

1. What is the title of Michael McGarrity's first Kevin Kerney mystery?
 - A. *Mexican Hat*
 - B. *Tularosa*
 - C. *Hermit's Peak*
2. Nevada Barr's creation Anna Pigeon follows what profession?
 - A. Chef
 - B. Botanist
 - C. Park Ranger
3. Which character from Tony Hillerman's mysteries also appears in Anne Hillerman's?
 - A. Bernadette Manuelito
 - B. Jim Chee
 - C. Joe Leaphorn
4. Judith van Gieson's novel, *Land of Burning Sun*, is about what little-known group of New Mexico settlers?
 - A. Mormons
 - B. Crypto Jews
 - C. Amish

5. Joe Badal's first thriller, *The Pythagorean Solution*, is set in:
- A. Lebanon
 - B. Greece
 - C. Saudi Arabia
6. The protagonist in J.A. Jance's mysteries set in Seattle is:
- A. J.P. Beaumont
 - B. Ali Reynolds
 - C. Joanna Brady
7. Before she started investigating murders, Connie Shelton's Charlie Parker was:
- A. A lawyer
 - B. An accountant
 - C. A bail bondsman
8. The dual protagonists in Margaret Coel's Wind River mysteries are:
- A. A lawyer and an Arapaho chief
 - B. A priest and a lawyer
 - C. A sheriff and a bartender
9. Craig Johnson's *The Highwayman* was inspired in part by a short story by:
- A. Charles Dickens
 - B. Alfred Noyes
 - C. Shirley Jackson
10. Many of Steve Havill's mysteries are set in fictional:
- A. Walnut Grove, TX
 - B. Posadas County, NM
 - C. Cimarron City, OK
- Bonus question: Who was the eponymous (non-Southwestern) subject of the recent film, *Genius*?
- A. Scott Fitzgerald
 - B. Thomas Wolfe
 - C. Max Perkins

HAMMETT PRIZE PRESENTED

The Hammett Prize is given annually by the North American Branch of the International Association of Crime Writers to honor literary excellence in the field of crime-writing published in the English language in the US and/or Canada. The 2015 Award, given in 2016 for books published in 2015, was presented at the NoirCon literary conference in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, on October 29, 2016. Congratulations to the winner (listed first) and to all of the nominees.

***The Do-Right* by Lisa Sandlin**
The Whites by Harry Brandt
The Stranger by Harlan Coben
Sorrow Lake by Michael J. McCann
The Organ Broker by Stu Strumwasser

Reviews

Piranha to Scurfy by Ruth Rendell. Doubleday Canada, 2000, 218 pp (HC)

This collection of short stories and one novella begins with the title story, one with which writers and editors may identify (or not, depending on how you see yourself on the fussbudget spectrum). Ambrose Ribbon has taken it as his life's work—unpaid, but he lives on the royalties from his late father's best-selling science book—to read every current fiction and nonfiction book and point out to the writer the mistakes in grammar and fact that he finds. And he finds plenty.

Ambrose is a solitary soul, whose only friend had been his Mummy, now also deceased. He writes to authors in a spirit, he thinks, of gentle suggestion, but when the errors he finds fail to be corrected in the subsequent paperback edition of a book, he is less than kind. Most authors do not respond to even his initial nudges, although one threatened to sue, which may be what set Ambrose on a spiraling descent into lonely delusion. When the author of a horror novel, which Ambrose despises, fails to respond to his letter, he begins to imagine that the author has malevolent powers that will ruin his life and supposed reputation.

Toward the end, the story moves out of Ambrose's claustrophobic environment to provide a twist ending that brings us back to earth, leaving only a whiff of the sinister air Ambrose had stirred up around himself. The story's (and collection's) creepy title refers, more prosaically, to a volume of the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, but I'll leave it to you to find out its significance.

Of the seven shorter (10-12 pages) stories, I particularly liked "Walter's Leg," about a man who entertains his grandkids with tales of life before social media, in the telling of which he reminds himself of a bully he knew in primary school, and when chance shows him where the bully now lives, he pays him a visit, hoping he's changed. Big mistake. "The Catamount" takes place in Colorado, and the wild mountain scenery is described beautifully, although the POV is that of a visiting Englishwoman not at all accustomed to such wildness. I like the plot twist in "Fair Exchange" best, but every story has a twist ending of some kind.

The novella, "High Mysterious Union," is set in one of those mysterious villages endemic to horror stories, in which All Is Not What It Seems on the

bucolic surface. The protagonist buys a cottage near the village, in what seems a perfect setting for a scenic weekend retreat from her busy London life. It doesn't take her very long to catch the creepy vibes, but reluctant to give up her dream cottage, she decides to rent it out for a while. Alas, the renter, Ben, proves even more susceptible to the malevolent spell of the seemingly perfect village and its initially welcoming, handsome but strangely similar-looking inhabitants.

I thought this might work better at a shorter length, like the title story, since more hints to a dire fate for the "outsiders" are dropped than really necessary to convey the point, and at least a couple of incidents used to describe the weird characteristics of the villagers are probably superfluous. ♦

—Linda Triegel (ljt23@earthlink.net)

The Hanover Square Affair by Ashley Gardner. Berkeley Prime Crime, 2003, 262 pp (PB)

The flawed hero of this story, the first in a series, is Captain Gabriel Lacey, late of the 35th Light Dragoons and a veteran of the Peninsular campaign against Napoleon. Lacey left the cavalry after an unsavory dispute with his commanding officer and returned to London to live in relative poverty despite influential connections. He's too proud to accept anything reeking of charity (which can make him insufferable at times), but his behavior is consistent and understandable, even admirable when his protective instincts come to the fore.

Lacey happens to be in Hanover Square, a fashionable part of town far from his own digs, when he comes across a near riot, during which an over-zealous cavalry officer, supposedly there to keep the peace, shoots the leader. Lacey witnesses the unprovoked attack and immediately takes the side of the victim, who turns out to be simply looking for his missing daughter, Jane. He thinks she's been kidnapped for nefarious purposes and hidden in the house at No. 22.

Lacey's sympathies for the underdog are aroused, and he can't help involving himself in the hunt for the missing girl. This leads to a sinister crime lord, another disappearance, the death of a servant girl, and an exciting climactic fight on a boat in the Thames.

Lacey's prominent friends haven't entirely given up on him, despite his reluctance to accept help, and they take a useful part in the investigation. The solution is planted in the right place, but

depends on the competent characterization rather than any further clues, to help the reader make sense of it at the end. I also found the atmosphere more bleak Victorian in feel than sunny Regency (it's 1816) despite current events being dropped like names to bolster the setting. I suppose that there being an actual police force in Victoria's day might have hindered Lacey's activities. Still, the story is a suspenseful one, the writing first-rate, and Lacey does grow on you. ♦

—Linda Triegel (ljt23@earthlink.net)

Series mysteries:

All reviews by Susan Zates

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

Candy Cane Murder by Joanne Fluke. Kensington, 2008, 432 pp (PB)

(Book 9.5 in the Hannah Swensen cozy mystery series set in contemporary Minnesota.)

Lake Eden is a small town where all the residents know one another and pretty much keep tabs on everyone's activities. Hannah owns and operates her own bakery business, The Cookie Jar, with business partner Lisa. Hannah's sister Andrea is fashionable and attractive, married to policeman Bill, and they have two daughters, Tracey and Bethany. Hannah's sister Michelle is single, studying in college, home for the holidays.

Hannah has two boyfriends who are both serious about her, but she cannot make up her mind which one to marry. Norman is gentle and kind, easy to be with, the town dentist. Mike sets her pulse racing. He's a police detective, frequently frustrated with her meddling in his cases. But Hannah cannot seem to stop finding dead bodies...as she points out to her mother.

This time it's Wayne in a Santa suit. Hannah enlists her mother and both sisters in her search for clues. They pay visits to Wayne's widow and his ex-wife, and discover valuable information to solving the case. As usual, Hannah wants to verify a hunch by herself before sharing suspicions with Mike, for fear of seeming silly if she's wrong, and she unwittingly puts herself in grave danger.

Although this novella is shorter than the other books in the series, it has all the familiar characters and includes many recipes: Peppermint Martini,

Pepper Mint Martini, Lemon Whippersnappers, Regency Seed Cakes, Quiche Lorraine, Holiday Quiche, and many others. ♦

The Witch of Painted Sorrows by M. J. Rose. Atria Books, 2015, 385 pp (HC)

(First book of the Daughters of La Lune historical gothic series set in 1894 Paris.)

Sandrine Salome flees her loveless marriage, after witnessing how her husband caused her father's death. For safety she goes to her grandmother's house in Paris. But her grandmother plans to make it a museum, to honor their infamous ancestor La Lune. Sandrine feels at home in the house, and defies her grandmother's pleas to leave Paris.

Sandrine falls in love with the architect who will create the museum, and suddenly feels compelled to paint. She tricks the famous Ecole into allowing her entry (the first woman ever allowed in the school).

Disasters befall anyone who gets in the way of Sandrine's love for the house and her lust for Julien. Sandrine delves into the occult to figure out what's going on, against her lover's warnings. She solves a centuries-old riddle to save him...but to do so she must become La Lune. ♦

Pepperoni Pizza Can Be Murder by Chris Cavender (Book 2 of the Pizza Lovers culinary-cozy mystery series, set in contemporary North Carolina)

Eleanor Swift owns and operates A Slice of Delight, the pizza restaurant she and her late husband Joe created and ran together. Eleanor's sister Maddy is her fulltime employee at the restaurant and her best friend. Eleanor has 2 part-time employees: deliveryman Greg Hatcher and cleanup/waiter Josh Hurley, teenaged son of Police Chief Kevin Hurley. Back in high school Eleanor and Kevin were at it; now they frequently find themselves at odds over a crime scene.

Greg and his brother Wade are disputing their shares of an inheritance from their grandparents. When Wade is found murdered in Eleanor's pizza kitchen, Greg is the only suspect Kevin will consider. Eleanor and Maddy believe in Greg's innocence, so they must investigate the murder, identify all possible suspects, and interview them, no matter how dangerous.

Recipes are included for pizza and sauce. An interesting cheeseburger pizza sandwich is described several times in the story, as Eleanor makes them for herself or friends. ♦

Murder on Mulberry Bend by Victoria Thompson, Berkeley 2003 (PB).

(Book 5 of the Gaslight mystery series, set in New York City in the late 1890s)

Sarah Brandt is a widow and a midwife, born into a Knickerbocker family but who lives and works in the working-class and more impoverished areas of the city. She had rejected her former high-society lifestyle when she fell in love and married her late husband, Dr. Thomas Brandt. Her parents still hope she will “marry well.”

In the previous book, *Murder in Washington Square*, Sarah was introduced by her parents to Richard Dennis, a bank owner and widower. She needed his help during a murder investigation, but it pleased her parents that she agreed to attend social events with Richard in return. The story opens with Sarah and Richard attending the opera.

Frank Malloy is an honest, hard-working policeman in the corrupt NYPD. New Commissioner Theodore Roosevelt is trying to clean up the corruption, but Frank knows he still must save up to pay bribes to earn a promotion. His wife died in childbirth, and his young son needs special medical care, not affordable on Frank’s current pay.

Sarah and Frank have worked together on four previous murder investigations. Sarah is a well-known and popular face in every neighborhood where she has delivered babies, and she can often learn more from people who are willing to confide in her than Frank can from official questioning. They are also attracted to each other, although Frank feels strongly that he cannot care for Sarah due to her higher social standing. His feelings are intensified when he observes Sarah going off to social events with Richard Dennis in his elegant carriage.

Richard’s wife was passionate about volunteering at The Prodigal Son Mission, a home for young women, where she suddenly fell ill and died. For closure in his grief, Richard would like to understand what motivated his late wife, and Sarah agrees to go to the mission with Richard and learn more about it. Sarah brings some of her clothing to donate for use by the young women at the mission.

Frank is called to a crime scene, and by the clothing, identifies the victim as Sarah. It shocks him into realizing how much he cared for her. When Sarah learns the young woman she had just met at the mission was a murder victim, she feels compelled to investigate. She seeks out the parents of the dead girl, and learns tragic stories of the family’s past.

Plot twists and turns keep the reader guessing exactly how and why the murders were committed.

Once again Sarah finds herself in grave peril, face to face with a killer.

I highly recommend the series to fans of historical mysteries. The next book is *Murder on Marble Row*. ♦

Time Heals No Wounds by Hendrik Falkenberg (Patrick F. Brown, translator). Mariner Books, 2012, 448 pp (PB)

(First book of the Baltic Sea contemporary mystery series set along the German seacoast.)

A unique protagonist for the police procedural genre, rookie detective Hannes Niehaus is an athlete training for the Olympics. Hannes partners with veteran detective Fritz Janssen, a reluctant mentor who prefers to work alone.

Their first case begins when a woman’s body is found along the shore. First challenge is to identify her, next is to resist taking the “easy out” of writing her death off as a suicide. Chapters about progress in the murder case alternate with chapters about a kidnap victim and chapters describing an unknown person’s nightmares over long-past trauma.

Hannes has dedicated his life to his sport, and is not socially adept; new friendships he makes during the course of the investigation are possible conflict-of-interest relationships with suspects. Surprises abound in this thriller, in which current-day murders are motivated by crimes in the Third Reich. ♦

Murder by Serpents: The Murder Quilt by Barbara Graham. Mariner Books, 2012, 448 pp (PB)

(First book of the Theo & Tony Abernathy mystery series set in the Smoky Mountains.)

Theo Abernathy is a quilt shop owner and the sheriff’s wife. She discovers a dead body, nearly covered with snakes, in a parked car. The victim was a snake-handling preacher who had shown up in town, invited himself to stay with a relative, then proceeded to set up a nefarious business on the side.

It’s a challenge for Tony to identify and investigate the victim’s behavior, and Mother Nature makes his job harder. The final scene resolves the mystery, but is mainly a battle against the elements.

Although the sheriff investigates and solves the case, this novel is much more of a cozy mystery than a police procedural. Quilting references enhance the story for a quilter, and instructions for a mystery quilt are included! ♦

Answers to Quiz on page 8/9: 1-B, 2-C, 3-A, B & C, 4-B, 5-B, 6-A, 7-B 8-B, 9-A, 10-B, Bonus: C.

Face of a Killer by Robin Burcell. Mariner Books, 2012, 448 pp (PB)

(First book of the Sydney Fitzpatrick FBI thriller series set in contemporary San Francisco.)

Sydney works for the FBI as a forensic artist. She interviews victims to create sketches of their attackers, or if a corpse cannot be easily identified, she recreates a sketch of the face from physical measurements. Sydney feels her sketches can include more subtle shading, more hints to personality, than a forensic sculptor provides.

Twenty years ago, Sydney's father was murdered. She has wanted to confront the murderer to ask why. She finally goes to San Quentin, and it profoundly disturbs her. Now she doubts his guilt, wonders if the real killer is still at large.

In the mail, she receives a photograph of her father with his military buddies. The photo was sent by one of them, who has committed suicide. Sydney doesn't understand the meaning of the photograph, or why her ex-boyfriend Scotty, also an FBI agent, wants to take it away from her. ♦

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The Dark Vineyard by Martin Walker. Vintage, 2010, 321 pp (HC)

(Second book of the Bruno, Chief of Police, series set in contemporary France.)

The story begins with a fire, in a research facility that was built covertly—no permits filed—for the purpose of growing GMO (genetically modified) crops, which are widely unpopular.

Bruno is a great protagonist. He loves his home village and wants to do the very best for all who live in it. For example, when he visits his friend Alphonse at the commune, he warns him that if there are any banned substances around, they'd better be removed before the national police arrive. Bruno doesn't want to arrest good people who mean well, and he values the traditions of his village.

Bruno is in love with Isabelle, who works in Paris for the national police. She wants him to

relocate to Paris so they can be together. He wants to remain in Saint-Denis, but he longs for her. She comes to visit as part of the arson investigation, and their separate personal goals are as clear as ever.

The much less interesting plot (which is the main plot, unfortunately!) concerns an American winemaker, Bondino, who wants to buy up the prime vineyard land in the area, by whatever means he can, fair or foul. He exhibits violent behavior, but for his friends' sake, Bruno avoids arresting him, to the point of taking him home with him and giving him a bed to sleep off a drunk & disorderly night.

But then a landowner and his heir, who would definitely not agree to selling their land to the American, are murdered. The land inheritance depends upon who died first. The mystery continues on with many community events and a new romantic interest developing for Bruno. The big wine-making deal is eventually finalized, but in a far different manner than originally proposed. The killer is overlooked and unsuspected until Bruno accidentally discovers a family vendetta. ♦

Death of a Turkey by Kate Grille Borden. Mariner Books, 2012, 448 pp (PB)

(Third, and apparently last, book of the Peggy Jean Turner cozy mystery series set in contemporary New England)

Peggy is the mayor of Cobb's Landing and owner of her late husband Tom's hardware store. She lives with her 11-year-old son Nicky in the house she grew up in, next door to her lifelong best friend Lavinia ("Lovey"). Their friendship forms a bond stronger than sisterhood.

All the familiar characters from the previous books are back. It's November, near Thanksgiving, just 9 months since Max arrived in town and rejuvenated it economically. Peggy resists Max's plans for a commercial Thanksgiving event to attract tourists. Once again newcomers to their small town stir up trouble, and Peggy has to solve the crime. ♦

BOOKMARKS

Have you seen them? Light green, with blood-red accents? Do you have one? Do you have a handful? The 2017 Croak & Dagger bookmarks are a great way to spread the word about our Sisters in Crime chapter. Hand out plenty, but keep one for yourself: they list all our meeting dates and times for 2017.

2016-17 MEETING DATES

Tuesday, January 24, 7:00 p.m.
Tuesday, February 28, 7:00 p.m.
Tuesday, March 28, 7:00 p.m.
Tuesday, April 25, 7:00 p.m.
Tuesday, May 23, 7:00 p.m.

Meetings are free to the public.

Unless otherwise noted, meetings are held every fourth Tuesday of the month, at 7:00 p.m., at the North Domingo Baca Multigenerational Center at 7521 Carmel Avenue NE, north of Paseo del Norte and west of Wyoming. Check our Web site, www.croak-and-dagger.com, for schedule changes and upcoming programs.

Summary of Findings

The *Nooseletter* is the internal organ of the Croak & Dagger 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 and ideas for sources are also welcome.

Deadlines: Publication is every other month, starting in January. Submission deadlines are the last day of the month *prior* to publication: Feb 29, April 30, June 30, Aug 31, Oct 31, and Dec 31.

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

Submissions: Please submit via e-mail to newsette@earthlink.net, with "Nooseletter" in the subject line. The *Nooseletter* is distributed to all members electronically. ♦

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Croak & Dagger members must also be members of the national organization of Sisters in Crime. For information on joining SinC, go to <http://www.sistersincrime.org>. For information about your local chapter, contact our membership chair at contact@croak-and-dagger.com.