



ALBUQUERQUE CHAPTER — SISTERS IN CRIME

# THE NOOSE LETTER

Volume XI, Number 2 — March/April 2017

## †The President's Corner†

Friends—welcome to more mysterious news from the Croak & Dagger chapter of Sisters in Crime! We're in the midst of lots of things for our members and friends to read and to do for a criminally good time.

Remember, you don't need to be a member to join in the action. Just come on over to the next meeting. We're always ready for mischief on the fourth Tuesday of each month at the North Domingo Baca Multigenerational Center, just off Paseo del Norte and Wyoming.

We've been opening and closing lots of great cases—display cases, that is—at our local libraries. Our writer members have been featured at the Cherry Hills library in January and at the Tony Hillerman library in February.

We've crossed the Rio Grande to the west-side Taylor Ranch library for March. Taylor Ranch has given us a double-barreled welcome, featuring Croak & Dagger sisters for Women's History Month, with a special display entitled "Women Writers, Women Sleuths." We're doubly pleased to be welcomed there for the month. We're especially pleased that our welcoming librarians have figured out places to display the 2'x4' banner from Sisters in Crime's 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year.

We're also looking for opportunities to feature our ebook-only authors with presentations of covers at libraries that don't have secure display cases. Join in the fun with your books as well as a little genteel sleuthing of your own to spot more cases for us to visit.

We do have some serious business to attend to this spring. We're updating our chapter Bylaws to reflect the ways we have developed as an organization. If you have a copy stashed somewhere, please give it a once-over. If you don't have a copy,

contact VP Pat Wood to get an electronic copy. Her contact info is in the box on page 2.

Be sure to mark your calendar for our August meeting. We're planning a party for our founders to honor the tenth anniversary of signing our Articles of Association. On August 1, 2007, we graduated from being a club to being a tax-exempt non-profit association. Every year we've filed the brief IRS form that says we've been good kids and they should just ignore all those bodies scattered around the landscape. It's worked so far.

I am incredibly honored to have been the February speaker, sharing the adventures of writing a book about evidence on computers and other electronic devices. It's about lawyers and IT experts failing to understand each other, especially when evidence on electronic devices gets lost. Or worse, when they understand each other perfectly so that evidence gets destroyed deliberately. You can guess what judges think about that. I've got the details.

The story about writing the book features ... wait for it ... a dead body (my co-author, who died suddenly right after sending me a rough draft of his half of the book). Oh, and finding out that my publisher's in-house copy-editor was not functional in written English. Scary? No kidding!

More great speakers are on the schedule, starting in March with representatives of the emergency medical flight service serving New Mexico. April's speaker will be our own Dr. Gloria Casale, author of *Bioterror*. In May, librarian Laura Metzler will answer our biggest question—how can we get our books onto the library shelves? Be sure to check the website for further bulletins.

We're eager to welcome you to more bookish adventures—see you soon!

*Mysteriously,  
Ann Zeigler, President*

**Don't Miss It!**  
**Tuesday, March 28, at 7 p.m.**

We will have not one, but three speakers at our March meeting. Kathy Wilson, a Certified Flight Nurse; Joanna Gawrada, Certified Flight Paramedic; and Jo Ann Catanach, Certified Air Medical Dispatch and Paramedic all work with Lifeguard, a UNMH-based program that transports patients of all ages, from neonatal to geriatric, via airplane or helicopter.

Wouldn't one of these caring professions be for the hero of your new suspense series?

**Coming Up...**

Our April speaker will be our own **Gloria Casale**, writer of "mystery novels for lovers of spy thrillers." So far, she has published *Bioterror: The Essential Threat*, as well as the story's prequel, to be published in the next year. Her second series, *Counting Down*, details the lives of ten women from one neighborhood who, years later, are disappearing one by one.

Dr. Gloria Casale earned her medical degree from the University of Kentucky and completed advanced training in anesthesiology, preventive medicine, and public health. She received training in bioterrorism and bioterrorism response at the United States Army Medical Research Institute of Infectious Diseases, and served as a consultant to the Division of Transnational Threats at Sandia Laboratory.



**Sisters  
in  
Crime**

Sisters in Crime was founded in 1986. *The mission of Sisters in Crime shall be "to promote the ongoing advancement, recognition, and professional development of women crime writers."*

*And our motto is: "SinC up with great crime writing!"*

Check Out the Croak & Dagger Website ([www.croak-and-dagger.com](http://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](http://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**

- President – Ann Zeigler – [annzl@centurylink.net](mailto:annzl@centurylink.net)  
Vice President – Pat Wood – [pwood73@comcast.net](mailto:pwood73@comcast.net)  
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Nooseletter Editor – Linda Triegel – [newsette@earthlink.net](mailto:newsette@earthlink.net)

## Noose News

**The 11th Annual Authors for Literacy Event**, sponsored by the Moriarty Community Library and the Read “Write” Adult Literacy Program, will take place **April 22 from 9 to 4** at the Moriarty Civic Center, 202 S. Broadway, Moriarty, NM 87035. Booth Space for participating authors is \$10, and a continental breakfast is provided. Lunch is available on-site at your own expense. All proceeds will benefit the Literacy Program.

This year, according to program coordinator Tina Cates-Ortega, “since we are charging a booth fee, we are not asking the authors to donate a percentage of their sales. We will be asking each author if they would be willing to donate \$5 to go towards the purchase of raffle prizes such as a Kindle and/or Nook.

“We have had 32 to 52 authors participate in the past. Due to limited space, we ask our authors who are willing to share a table with a fellow author. Volunteers will be available to help cover your booth if you need to step out for awhile or if you need to leave early. If you have any special accommodation requests, please let us know.”

There will be two panels, one in the morning and one in the afternoon. If you would like to be on a panel, please let Tina know and your name will be put in the hat to be drawn as a speaker. If you have served on a panel in the past at this event, please give another author a chance this year.

For more information, call 505-832-2513 or e-mail [moriartyauthorsevent@gmail.com](mailto:moriartyauthorsevent@gmail.com).

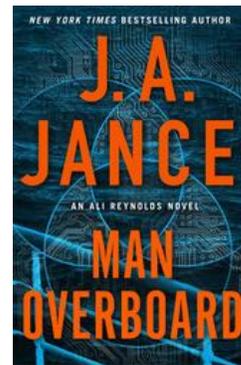
**Chris Eboch** reports that Los Lunas High School is hosting the regional 2017 Battle of the Books competition on April 29 from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. They are looking for authors to sell their books at the event. If you’re interested, contact Teresa Martinez, Los Lunas Middle School Librarian, at 505-865-7273 or [tmartinez@l1schools.net](mailto:tmartinez@l1schools.net). She needs to know your name, mailing address, phone, e-mail, title of a book you can donate to the cause, and age range of your readers (all ages welcome, including adult).

If you have the energy, you can also take in “Rotary Roots to Wings” on April 29. This a fundraiser to benefit the Dick Hillier Tutoring Program and will take place at the Marriot Pyramid Hotel in Albuquerque between 6 and 11 p.m. Local authors are invited to participate and sell their books. Each participating vendor will receive two complimentary

meal tickets and 75% of your profits (the rest to go to the tutoring program). For more details and a registration form, contact Jim McCracken at [james.mccracken.jr@gmail.com](mailto:james.mccracken.jr@gmail.com).

Word Harvest is sponsoring a “Chasing the Cure” tour on Monday, May 1. Based on the book by Nancy Owen Lewis, *Chasing the Cure in New Mexico: Tuberculosis and the Quest for Health*, the tour will offer an insider’s look at historic sites in the Santa Fe and Las Vegas areas that played a defining role in New Mexico history in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The all-day tour starts with a buffet breakfast and talk by Ms. Lewis at the former Sunmount Sanatorium in Santa Fe. A bus will then transport participants to Las Vegas. For information, go to: [wordharvest@wordharvest.com](mailto:wordharvest@wordharvest.com).

Speaking of **Anne Hillerman**... Anne is pleased to announce that her third Navajo mystery, *Song of the Lion*, is now in production at HarperCollins and will be released on April 11. Anne has been invited to talk and sign in Santa Fe, Albuquerque, Scottsdale, and elsewhere as part of the novel’s debut. Take a look at the calendar of Events on her website ([www.AnneHillerman.com](http://www.AnneHillerman.com)) to see when she is signing at a bookstore or library near you.



**J.A. Jance** reports that she’s “in the midst of writing the next Beaumont book, *Proof of Life*, but for now I need to step away from that because ... guess what? ... book tour season for Ali Reynolds #12, *Man Overboard*, is coming at me like a freight train. Go to my website, [www.jajance.com](http://www.jajance.com), and click on the [Schedule Pages](#) to see where and when I’ll be appearing.

“One of the side stories in *Man Overboard* has to do with a race horse rescue organization—a fictional one. But that aspect of the story is related to a real racehorse rescue organization—[The Equine Encore Foundation](#), near Three Points, Arizona.

Mostly Books, in Tucson has agreed to do a mail order book signing to benefit Equine Encore.

This link will tell you more about the fundraiser: [Mostly Books Equine Rescue Fundraiser](#). If you order autographed books through them by following the link, part of the purchase price will benefit the rescue where they are currently caring for 78 horses.

## 2017 Writers Conferences – Still Time to Register!

For more information, click on the links to check them out online.

### 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](http://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, 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](mailto:info@mysterywriterskeywestfest.com).

### July 11-16

**Thrillerfest 2017**, Grand Hyatt, New York City.  
ThrillerMaster Lee Child, 2017 Silver Bullet Award recipient Lisa Gardner, and the authors of ITW’s new anthology *Match Up*. “Join us for the FBI workshop, Master CraftFest, PitchFest, and more. For information, go to: [www.thrillerfest.com](http://www.thrillerfest.com).



*Sisters setting up our author display at the Tony Hillerman Library in February. This month, the display has moved to the Taylor Branch library on the West Side.*

# The Writer's Block

A column on writing.



A **verb** may be the most important part of speech, at least for writers. The verb holds everything else in the sentence together. A verb states, asserts, or implies something about its subject.

Verbs are either **transitive** (requiring an object) or intransitive (not leaning on an object). She *sent* her love a poisoned apple (transitive); The sun *shone* and Susan *sulked* (intransitive).

The **voice** of a verb tells whether its subject is acting (**ACTIVE VOICE**: She *ran* to the store) or being acted upon (**PASSIVE VOICE**: The store *was run* by an old man in overalls).

Active verbs make strong sentences; passive verbs make remote, formal, often abstract sentences. Therefore prefer the active to the passive, but do use the passive where it is inevitable (when the subject is unknown or unimportant, or the object is more important than the subject).

Even an active verb doesn't make a sentence all by itself; it needs a subject to do the acting. The subject and verb must agree with each other in number—that is a singular subject takes a singular verb (; a plural subject, a plural verb).

Too many writers nowadays seem to hang the verb onto the nearest noun, which doesn't always make for total agreement. Don't lose track of what the actual subject of the sentence is, "in spite of any internal distractions"\*: A child's face at the window, all rosy cheeks and big blue eyes, [*was/were*] a sudden distraction (subject is face, not cheeks or eyes, so "was" in correct).

\*quote and some examples from *The Transitive Vampire* by Karen Elizabeth Gordon, also the author of *The Well-Tempered Sentence*, both highly recommended for more on verbs and other parts of speech, as well as punctuation.

## THIS SENTENCE HAS FIVE WORDS

BY GARY PROVOST

This sentence has five words.

Here are five more words. Five-word sentences are fine. But several together become monotonous. Listen to what is happening. The writing is getting boring. The sound of it drones. It's like a stuck record. The ear demands some variety.

Now listen.

I vary the sentence length, and I create music. Music. The writing sings. It has a pleasant rhythm, a lilt, a harmony. I use short sentences. And I use sentences of medium length.

And sometimes, when I am certain the reader is rested, I will engage him with a sentence of considerable length, a sentence that burns with energy and builds with all the impetus of a crescendo, the roll of the drums, the crash of the cymbals— sounds that say listen to this, it is important.

MAXKIRIN.TUMBLR.COM

## ***SISTERS HISTORY – MURDER, SHE WROTE***

During her 12-year reign (1984-1996) as a prime-time super-sleuth, Jessica Fletcher solved nearly 300 murders, 64 of which happened in Cabot Cove; 58 more occurred when the show's plots shifted to New York City—possibly because by this point, there had been so many murders committed in Cabot Cove that it would have led the FBI's national crime statistics in most categories. But the show's 10 billion viewers didn't care and kept coming back. Even today, old episodes are still broadcast (currently on Cozi TV, Channel 50.4 over the air in Albuquerque).

Angela Lansbury now seems a natural for the leading character, but the producers' first choice was Jean Stapleton, who turned down the role. However, when she was sent a script, Lansbury immediately felt she could do something with the role of Jessica Fletcher, a childless, widowed, retired English teacher who becomes a successful mystery writer. Previously known for her movie and Broadway stage work, Lansbury soon became a household name for millions of television viewers.

Despite fame and fortune, Jessica Fletcher remains a resident of Cabot Cove, a small coastal community in Maine, and maintains her links with all of her old friends, never letting her success go to her head (exterior shots of Cabot Cove were filmed in Mendocino, California).

Jessica invariably proves more perceptive than the official investigators, who are almost always willing to arrest the most likely suspect. By carefully piecing the clues together and asking astute questions, she manages to trap the real murderer. However, Jessica's relationship with law enforcement officials varied as the series moved from place to place. Both sheriffs of Cabot Cove resigned themselves to having her meddle in their cases. However, most detectives and police officers did not want her anywhere near their crime scenes, until her accurate deductions convinced them to listen to her.

Some are happy to have her assistance from the start, often because they are fans of her books. In fact, a recent rebroadcast that I caught was set in New Mexico, where Jessica teamed up with a Navajo sheriff (Graham Greene, who isn't Navajo, but never mind) to solve a murder.

With time, she makes friends in many police departments across the U.S., as well as several Brits. There were more than 1,400 guest stars during the run of the series, including some semi-regulars like Jerry Orbach as a "seat-of-his-pants New York detective; MI5 agent Michael Hagarty (Len Cariou, now on *Blue Bloods*), and Keith Michell, my own favorite, as Dennis Stanton, a suave English former jewel thief turned insurance claims investigator, who always solves his cases using unusual methods, and often sends a copy of the story to Jessica afterwards.

During the series many novels written by J.B. Fletcher were mentioned. Her first novel, *The Corpse Danced at Midnight*, was made into a film in one episode, and later in the series another was made into a theatre play. In keeping with the spirit of the TV show, a series of official original novels have been written by American ghostwriter Donald Bain and published by NAL. The author credit for the novels is shared with the fictitious "Jessica Fletcher."

# Reviews

## Rob's Random Shots

*Rob reports that he became a grandfather half a day early, on February 15, and is now known as Pop-Pop. Amanda had to spend a couple of nights in Intensive Care, but she and twins Samuel Edison Curtis and Madeline Avery Curtis are fine now.*

### March Case File Number 1

***Dark Angel*** by Joseph Badal, Suspense Publishing, 2017, 330 pp (TP)

This is the second in the Lassiter/Martinez police detectives series set in Albuquerque by Sandia Park thriller author and speaker to C&D Joe Badal. (I read and blurb-ed the book in pre-publication form.)

This novel is a step beyond Joe's first foray into mysteries/police procedurals, *Borderline*, featuring the same two female sleuths. As in *Borderline*, Joe's thriller pedigree is used in this series to excellent effect. The action ranges across the Southwest, from Las Vegas, NV, into Arizona, and finally into the two detectives' jurisdiction in New Mexico.

Joe again uses multiple points of view to show us actions by the villains, actions which the two detectives do not immediately become aware of. Thus, rather than being a "whodunit," it is a "what will the bad guys do next" and how will Barbara and Susan acquire enough clues to be able to stop a killing spree that began years before the novel opens.

Solving the killings takes on greater urgency once they discover the common motivating thread that ties the original crime spree to events of the present day.

No one writes mysteries with thriller elements better than New Mexico's own Joe Badal. Readers who enjoyed *Borderline* will revel in this latest outing by an author at the peak of his form who could teach a master class in suspense fiction. ♦

### March Case File Number 2

***Hundred-Dollar Baby*** by Robert B. Parker, G.P. Putnam's Sons, 2007, 291 pp (TP)

Yes, my nightstand has been crowded with works by current masters (and personal favorites) for the last two or three months. Parker was certainly

the most prolific mystery author of the last half century (this is at least the 50<sup>th</sup> mystery under this grand master's name and one of the best).

In *Hundred-Dollar Baby*, his iconic Boston private-eye duo, Spenser and Hawk, are asked by an old friend, April Kyle (who has appeared in two previous novels), to find out who is trying to shake down the high-class bordello she has just opened.

While the mysteries in all Spenser-Hawk novels are first rate and fun to follow, one of the best reasons to appreciate these books is the well-written dialogue. Everything is from Spenser's point of view (although the author has used Hawk's a few times), and would-be writers could not do better than to learn from this master. The TV show was good, but the books are even better.

Do yourself a favor and pick up a Spenser novel. Even though the author has passed on, he left behind a legacy that will take you years to catch up on. ♦

### March Case File Number 3

***Winter's Child*** by Margaret Coel, Berkley Prime Crime, 2016, 292 pp (HC)

I hate to break the news, but this is Margaret's 20<sup>th</sup> and final novel in the award-winning Wind River series featuring divorced Arapaho attorney Vicky Holden and the reservation's Catholic priest, Father John O'Malley. Set in winter, this book follows Vicky's witnessing the hit-and-run murder of another local lawyer and her subsequent investigation of an Indian couple who have been raising a white girl as their own for several years.

All of Margaret's novels feature alternating chapters from her two sleuths' points of view and this one is no exception. Readers have long enjoyed this arrangement, and some of her admirers (this writer included) have respectfully followed that same path. Her iconic characters cooperate in solving murders and other crimes, but sometimes do not recognize the importance of some discoveries. Readers get to anticipate the progress of their inquiries, but they do not have a romantic relationship.

The sexiest point in the series occurred a dozen or more novels ago when the duo survived a situation in which they both expected to die. When they survived and overlooked the scene of arrests, they shared Vicky's water bottle. Father John tasted her lip gloss on it when she passed it to him.

Faithful readers will race through this novel, anticipating major changes and perhaps even budding romance, but this author (and a long-time friend of Margaret) will not divulge the satisfying series ending. ♦

**Key:**

PB = Mass Market Paperback

TP = Trade paperback

HC = Hardcover

#### November Case File Number 4

*The Wrong Side of Goodbye* by Michael Connelly, Little, Brown Company, 2016, 400 pp (HC)

Relax. This is not Connelly's swan song, nor that of his iconic LA sleuth Harry Bosch, as much a classic investigator in his own right as Holmes, Spenser, or Poirot, who have all completed their runs.

Faithful readers have followed Hieronymus Bosch through his career as an LAPD detective, private eye, investigator for his half-brother, defense attorney Mickey Haller (they joke about the *Lincoln Lawyer* movie starring Mathew McConaughey).

In this outing, the finally retired Harry wants to keep his hand in and so has been working part-time at low pay for a cash-strapped tiny force in an obscure LA suburb, while taking on rare private cases.

In this outing, the very aged richest man in LA, an aviation and defense mogul, asks Harry to find a possible heir to his multi-billion-dollar empire, a person who may never have existed. You can't ask for a tougher case than that.

Harry traces the dying man's long-deceased (Vietnam) heir and finds the slightest thread to a woman, also now deceased, who may have borne a son or daughter who may still be alive but promises to be hard to uncover.

At the same time, Harry's little police force has to deal with a series of burglaries and the disappearance of the force's sole female detective, who may have been kidnapped. I was sure that Harry's nearby student daughter was going to be endangered in this novel, since he's made many old enemies, but that didn't happen.

But no matter how many Bosch novels I've read, I've never ID'ed the perp, so to speak, before Bosch, and this novel also stumped and surprised me. The key to Connelly's success is this uncanny ability to surprise but satisfy his long-time fans. Read him. ♦

#### November Case File Number 5

*A String of Beads* by Thomas Perry, Mysterious Press, 2014, 400 pp (PB)

I had missed the last few stories about Perry's masterful and unique protagonist, Algonquin native Jane Whitefield, whose special calling is helping deserving people disappear ahead of those who would kill them or do them immense harm. It was so good to find Perry still writing and concocting fresh mysteries, which, like the one by Joe Badal above, feature multiple point-of-view characters.

Although the protagonist is front and center most of the time, we get chapters from the villains' points of view and that of the endangered people Jane is trying to save. An old childhood boyfriend from the Seneca Reservation has had a run-in with a drunk in another upstate New York town. When the drunk is later killed by rifle shot through his front window, we find out that a local owner of a self-storage business may have fired the fatal shot in order to move in on the man's girlfriend, whom he has long coveted.

This is unknown to Jane at the start. We get a several-chapter flashback to when she and her teen then-boyfriend trekked through a lot of forest in order to get to a concert. Jane was assaulted in a ladies room at a turnpike rest stop and they abandoned that plan and returned home.

Through multiple viewpoint characters, we learn the killer has moved in on the dead man's girl friend, gives her a date-rape drug, and is behind the plot to frame Jane's old boyfriend. But rather than merely help him disappear, she sets out to brave the multiple layers of powerful Mafiosi behind the low-level killer and find a kind of justice that will enable her old friend to disappear and live securely. Well-rendered characters with believable motivations make this a worthy outing in the Jane Whitefield series. Do yourself a favor and make her acquaintance. ♦

—Rob Kresge ([rkresge777@comcast.net](mailto:rkresge777@comcast.net))

*And Then There Were None* by Agatha Christie. St. Martin's Paperbacks, 2001, 275 pp (PB)

This Christie classic was originally published in 1939 and reprinted numerous times since, under gradually less offensive (to contemporary ears) titles. By the Albuquerque Little Theater production earlier this year, Indian Island had become Soldier Island, and the ten little Indians became ten little soldier boys.

The famous plot hasn't changed, though I admit I'd forgotten the ending so reread only three-quarters of the book before joining other C&D members at the theater for the excellent ALT performance on February 5.

An unlikely assortment of ten strangers are brought together for a supposed holiday on an island off the Devon coast by the summons of a mysterious rich couple named Owen. Their hosts knew enough about each guest that their invitations were personal and inviting, indeed impossible to disregard—particularly since all expenses were paid.

The guests soon learn that the one thing they have in common is that they were each somehow involved in the death of an innocent person or persons. Justice, a mysterious voice from nowhere announces on their first night, will now be served. Sure enough, the guests are killed off, one by one, to the tune of the famous, if somewhat macabre, “nursery” rhyme.

Even more than other of Christie's novels to be dramatized (and/or filmed), *And Then There Were None* has been tinkered with no end (*Ten Little Indians* wasn't even the first title). In the book, not every victim is innocent, nor the perpetrator guilty.

The play was first produced in 1943 and ran for 260 performances—until the theater was bombed during the Blitz. But both the play and the St. James Theater picked themselves up, kept calm, and carried on. For the 2005 Broadway revival, not only the title but the ending was changed from the original book. The ALT production, however, kept the original ending. And no, I'm not going to tell you what it is... ♦

—Linda Triegel ([ljt23@earthlink.net](mailto:ljt23@earthlink.net))

***Come Dark*** by Steven F. Havill. Poisoned Pen Press, 2016, 298 pp (HC)

Number 20 in Steve Havill's Posadas Country mystery series, *Come Dark* features familiar characters dealing with major changes in their town.

Retired county sheriff Bill Gastner, with whom the series started, makes a brief appearance, but Gastner's undersheriff, Estelle Reyes-Guzman, is the front-and-center representative of the law in this story. In her downtime, we get an update on her family life, when her 15-year old piano-prodigy son turns up to celebrate his *abuela's* 100th birthday—along with a Corvette and a gorgeous 18-year old cellist. Uh-oh.

Mysterious things start getting underway in Chapter 2, when Deputy Thomas Pasquale is on patrol. Tommy would much rather be out chasing bad guys, but makes use of his dull daytime

assignment to observe local life and learn from it. He's getting good at this, and when he spots a former high school friend, still a hottie in his eyes, he watches her movements. His moving eye then notices, in the same parking lot, a new car with old beat-up license plate that doesn't seem to belong to it.

These observations and other odd happenings build up over several chapters to a suspenseful and believable conclusion that involves a new feature in the county, which was described in Chapter One. Personally, I thought Havill could have skipped that seemingly irrelevant chapter and introduced the NightZone theme park later on. But that's just me.

NightZone is a huge astronomy theme park, the dream project of a billionaire from outside the county that has brought in jobs and a lot of new publicity, good and bad. But even more important to the locals is the high school girls' volleyball team's hot winning streak. Everyone is rooting for them, but the excitement comes to a fast halt when the team coach is found dead in the girls' shower room.

Eventually the connection comes clear as more unexplained incidents pile up, some noted by the observant Deputy Pasquale. But it's Reyes-Guzman who leads the hunt for the coach's killer. The pace of the story is compelling, and of course, everything ties together in the end, helped by a touch of humor and great characters. ♦

—Linda Triegel ([ljt23@earthlink.net](mailto:ljt23@earthlink.net))

***Welcome to Golden*** by Rory McClannahan. CreateSpace, 2016, 288 pp (PB) or as an ebook.

Golden is the ideal retirement community. Not to be confused with the actual New Mexico town named Golden (just south of Madrid), this Mayberry-like community isn't even “actual.” It's a computer program that allows people nearing the end of their lives, who would be dying painfully in the real world, a chance to relive the happiest times of their younger lives.

A smooth blend of the science fiction, utopian fantasy, and suspense genres, *Welcome to Golden's* protagonist is Dr. Billy Watson, the only scientist in the project who travels between the real world and the fantasy that is Golden. He's become friends with many of the residents and notices right away when things are a little off. Like when he spots Elvis lurking behind the shrubbery, or when one of the residents dies unexpectedly. Death is expected in Golden, but not when it's a violent one.

Billy teams up with the project's founder, Fred McKenzie, a former child star and teen idol, whose earnings originally financed the project, to try to

figure out what's going amiss in Mayberry. Fred has lived in Golden longer than anyone, and through Billy he keeps in touch with his daughter Jenny in the real world. Since Fred's money wasn't enough to keep Golden going, the Golden Foundation was set up through a government charter that Jenny runs.

Once the government got involved, however, trouble soon followed, in the form of a senator determined to shut the whole project down. This would mean all the residents would be yanked out of their virtual paradise, one by one, and die immediately in the real world, so Billy, Fred, and Jenny collaborate to keep this from happening.

All the characters in *Welcome to Golden* are sympathetically drawn and believable despite the fantasy setting, and the suspense builds to an exciting climax. The e-version I read had way too many copyediting-type errors, but I've been assured that these have been fixed. Give this unique story a try! ♦

—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.

*The Girl in the Spider's Web* by David Lagercrantz. Vintage Crime/Black Lizard, 2015, 418 pp (HC).

Lisbeth is back! *The Girl in the Spider's Web* is the 4th book of the Millennium series set in modern-day Stockholm, the book Stieg Larsson didn't live long enough to finish.

Lagercrantz continues the saga of Lisbeth Salander and journalist Mikael Blomkvist. Lisbeth's super-hacker skills are put to the test as she hacks the NSA. She's the only one who can communicate with an autistic savant child who witnessed a murder.

A tale of international spies, cybercriminals, governments ostensibly working together (but not really), ruthless terrorists, breakthroughs in artificial intelligence, and the fierce love and sacrifice of a father. It's a hang-on-to-your-seat roller-coaster ride. Remember Lisbeth's twin sister Camilla? She's the evil twin.... A sequel is likely. ♦

**C&D Members!**

Your *Nooseletter* wants to hear news of your latest releases, good news of any kind, and all about that terrific mystery you just read. Email news and reviews to the address on page 2.

*At the Water's Edge* by Sara Gruen. Mariner Books, 2012, 448 pp (PB)  
(First book of the Laurence Bartram historical mystery series set in post-WWI England.)

*At the Water's Edge* is set in 1945 Scotland. Three idle-rich Americans decide to hunt for the Loch Ness Monster, never mind the World War. The two men, Ellis and Hank, are long-time best friends. Both appear hale and hearty. Each claims 4F status keeps them from serving their country: Ellis is color-blind, Hank has flat feet. They are tired of facing public disapproval on a daily basis in the US, where so many families have sacrificed for the war. Ellis decides to upstage his father, who made big headlines with photos of the Loch Ness Monster, only to be proved a fraud. The arrogant jerks think they will redeem their honor and gain public respect by filming the Monster.

The third American, Agnes, is married to Ellis. She's glad to escape her mother-in-law, who hates her for not being from the wealthy upper class. She coasted along most of her life, marrying Ellis because it seemed like the next thing to do, after meeting and playing in his rich set.

The trio has a tumultuous wartime voyage, including the rescue of a firebombed ship crew. Agnes is shocked into a dim realization of reality by their horrific injuries; the cowardly men look away. When the Ugly Americans arrive in Scotland at their inn, they are shocked by the primitive nature of their lodgings, and the absence of servants. They expect the staff to jump to their every beck and call. Their fantasy world collides abruptly with reality.

To make a long story short...the men never really get it; Agnes slowly recognizes the hardship and sacrifice the war forces upon everyone around them, and she slowly becomes a real person. She makes friendships with the inn staff. She eventually realizes that since she is able-bodied and has absolutely nothing to do, she should help out. Hello! Up to this point, I quite frankly detested the book. Could not understand how it could be a bestseller.

After Agnes turns into a real person and develops meaningful relationships, she suddenly realizes the gigantic fraud perpetrated by Ellis, and guess what—she becomes a target for elimination. The remainder of the book is enjoyable. She tries to survive, finds meaningful friendship and love, by a gift accidentally causes a new friend great suffering. All works out in the end, with the help of a little supernatural touch.

I guess it's worth reading—if you can stick it out through the first half. The second half is enjoyable. ♦

***The Last Hand*** by Eric White. Worldwide Books, 2006, 266 pp (PB)  
(11th and final book in the Charlie Salter mystery series set in late-20th-century Toronto)

Charlie, Staff Inspector with Toronto police, has turned 60 and therefore is eligible for retirement. Even though he has not decided to retire, he is gradually being phased out—his assistance no longer requested on homicide cases.

He wants to prove to the rest of the department that he still has his sharp intellect and detective skills, so he takes over a cold case. He meticulously re-investigates, and soon comes to a quite different opinion about the murder than all the other detectives. He persists and proves himself right. Meanwhile big family changes are taking place in his household, which start off disruptive, but resolve well. ♦

***Room with a Clue*** by Kate Kingsbury. CreateSpace, 2016, 226 pp (PB).  
(First book of the Pennyfoot Hotel cozy mystery series set in the small English seaside village of Badgers End, early in the 20th century).

Cecily Sinclair, recently widowed, vows to carry on running the hotel she and her late husband James purchased 5 years ago. She is ably assisted by her competent manager Baxter, who is a good friend, if perhaps a bit too solicitous at times. Cecily wants to assert her independence more than Bax feels is proper.

Eccentric supporting characters are introduced: Phoebe, a vicar's widow who arranges entertainments at the hotel; Mrs. Chubb, the cook; Gertie, a mouthy maid; Ethel, a timid maid; John the gardener, who likes plants much more than people; Colonel Fortescue, a retired military man and frequent guest; Madeline, village resident who "communes with spirits."

The story begins in summer of 1906. On the night of the gala ball, a guest falls to her death from the roof garden. Cecily soon realizes the death was not accidental. Her challenge is to convince the local constabulary. She and her trusty sidekick Bax collect and evaluate evidence.

As if the death were not enough to keep Cecily busy, a python goes missing in the hotel, and rumor circulates about the guest in suite 3.

Eventually all mysteries are resolved. The plot is okay, with a nice touch of humor, but the writing itself steals the show. The well crafted sentences are a pleasure to read. I look forward to more of the Pennyfoot Hotel series, which continues through the WWI years. ♦

***Garnethill*** by Denise Mina. Back Bay Books, 2007, 402 pp (PB).  
(First book of the Garnethill mystery series set in contemporary Glasgow).

Maureen O'Donnell lives in Garnethill, a suburb of Glasgow. She works selling tickets in a theater box office. She decides to break up with boyfriend Douglas, a married man. She avoids his telephone calls at work all day long, then goes out drinking after work.

Maureen gets home totally drunk and goes straight to bed. Next morning she finds Douglas murdered in her living room. She's the prime suspect. Damaging evidence against her points to her past, when she was abused by her father.

Maureen can get no comfort from her alcoholic mother or her sisters, who prefer to deny the past and insist Maureen might have forgotten she killed Douglas, due to her mental illness. Only her twin brother Liam is her ally...but since he's a small-time drug dealer, Maureen wonders if the murder was part of a drug deal gone bad. She can no longer live in her apartment, so she stays with Benny, a close friend who is sympathetic to her troubles.

By talking with fellow mental illness patients, Maureen investigates long-ago events in another ward of the same psychiatric hospital where she stayed. She finds out there was a cover-up of ongoing patient abuse. Evidently Douglas had been on the track of similar evidence, and was killed to prevent exposing it. Maureen remains the prime suspect until another murder, after which she too is in danger from the killer. A gritty tale of people barely getting by.

I wish the library had the series in audio book form, for maximum enjoyment from the dialogue, which is liberally sprinkled with Scottish slang. ♦



*C&D president Ann Zeigler describing her book, Preserving Electronic Evidence for Trial, at our February meeting.*

## 2016-17 MEETING DATES

Tuesday, March 28, 7:00 p.m.  
Tuesday, April 25, 7:00 p.m.  
Tuesday, May 23, 7:00 p.m.  
Tuesday, June 27, 7:00 p.m.  
Tuesday, July 25, 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](http://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](mailto: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 [pwood73@comcast.net](mailto:pwood73@comcast.net).