



President's Message

We started the year off right with two powerhouse months filled with interesting guests with informative presentations, not only gobs of info that a writer can use, but enlightening entertainment for our reader members as well. I'm hoping programs such as these, and those that we have upcoming throughout the year, will not only encourage new members to sign up but will inspire our current members to get more involved. You can be recruiters, too. Talk to your local librarians and friends and let them know we are here. What? They don't like mysteries? There's nothing like coming to an event and meeting authors in person to change someone's mind.

And there's more ahead! We've got a cozy panel this month, with authors who are some of the best in their genre. Get ready to be entertained when Dorothy Howell, Linda O. Johnston, Melinda Wells, and Hannah Dennison come through our doors. How cozy is murder? You'll get to ask.

By the way, if you're an author and you aren't on Facebook, well, why not? It's just another tool in which you can communicate with your fans, whether you have your own page, a fan page, or, like me, my character has his page (but I get to answer the posts, too). The OC chapter has its own page. Do us a favor and "friend" it. Even if you aren't a Facebook fan you can't deny the exposure it gives you. Yes, authors really do have to involve ourselves in these avenues. Readers expect it. With bookstore sources like Borders closing down it becomes ever more important for authors to maintain a presence anywhere we can. You don't have to spend a significant time online with blogging and social networks, but it must be done, just like going to bookstores and other events must be done. We'll talk more about promo at the Writer's Forum at 2 pm on March 20.

Your president, Jeri Westerson

SISTERS IN CRIME MISSION STATEMENT

To promote the professional development and advancement of women crime writers to achieve equality in the industry.

MEETING PLACE:

Irvine Ranch Water District
15600 Sand Canyon Avenue
Irvine, CA 92618

For more information: www.ocsistersincrime.org

MARCH

Don't miss this month's meeting, a cozy panel featuring:

Melinda Wells, author of the Della Cooks mystery series, including The Proof is in the Pudding.

Hannah Dennison, who writes about the exploits of investigative journalist Vicky Hill, in her latest book, Thieves!

Linda O. Johnston, author of the Kendra Ballantyne Pet-Sitter mystery series and the first book in a new Pet Rescue series, Beaglemania.

Dorothy Howell, author of the most recent Haley Randolph mystery, Shoulder Bags and Shootings.

Patricia Wynn, author of the Blue Satan historical mysteries will moderate. Don't miss it!

March 20, at 3:00 p.m. Writer's Forum at 2:00 p.m.

And don't miss our April 17 meeting, when our speaker will be Don Winslow, writer of mysteries and thrillers, most recently Satori.

<http://www.donwinslow.com/>



Editors' Column

Finding Time

This month, as I labored over the edits for a “paying” book for Bedford/St. Martin’s Press (versus an academic one where all you get is kudos, if you’re lucky), I also found myself faced with a dilemma that I think bedevils many writers. I belong to several different writers’ organizations in SoCal besides SinC OC (not to mention a bunch of them for historians). One of these groups held a talk by Harry Turtledove, one of the foremost writers of science fiction and “counterfactual” historical novels out there, on the topic of researching historical novels. The talk sounded very interesting and I was sorely tempted to take time off and attend. I had several other interesting meeting and writing group possibilities last month as well.

I have joined various types of critique groups over the years. So far, to my surprise, I’ve not been “voted off the island” of any of them. But over the years I’ve had to take “sabbaticals” from them for extended periods, because, in the end, we all have to make choices. How do we balance our need, as writers, to make a living, often involving one or more “day” jobs, to network with other writers, to learn the basics of marketing and self-presentation and, of course, actually to write? It’s not an easy equation. It’s also an interesting dilemma, because we have to choose those organizations that give us the most payback in return for the time and energy we spend on them. If we spread ourselves too thin, we end up doing everything except getting our writing done. If we become too insular, we lose touch with the business and miss out on valuable advice and support from our fellow writers.

Last month, I declined the opportunity to hear Turtledove. As I told the organizers, if I am ever to have a hope of getting my very own “lifetime achievement award,” I need to make sure I make time for some achievements! Sisters in Crime has always, in my view, given excellent “value” for the

time I have invested in it, which is why I continue to participate in our chapter.

But I would be interested in hearing from the writers among you in coming months. How have writers in our chapter balanced writing and other activities, such as networking, marketing, and critique groups? To what extent, if at all, has social media helped, or added to, the problems of time management? Do any of you belong to online critique groups, for example, and if so, have you found them valuable? Send us information about your experiences and we will try to compile them for a future newsletter article; or, if you want, write a column yourself for the newsletter on this topic.



Gayle K. Brunelle

Gayle K. Brunelle and Theresa Schultz are taking over as editors of the newsletter from Linda Smith, who has moved on to other opportunities in life. We wish Linda the best and thank her for her years of service with the newsletter. We hope that we can follow in her footsteps and do a good job with the *Orange Herring*. We hope you will be patient with us during the transition.

Please note one important change. As Jeri announced at our January meeting, the newsletter will now be delivered electronically to all members who do not specifically request a hard copy. This will save the organization money and time. To request a hard copy, please email Ocsinc.newsletter@gmail.com. Please also send any news you might want included in the newsletter to this address.



MEETING ROUNDUP

Serial killers and skeletons, corpses and cold cases, buried bodies and blood spatter. There was no shortage of intriguing stories or eye-popping images at our last meeting, during which four experts in forensic science gave us their unique perspectives on DNA, eye witness accounts, crime scene cleanup and forensic anthropology.

First to speak was SinC OC member **Dr. D P. Lyle**, who provided us with a brief history of DNA and the role it has played in apprehending criminals, such as serial killers Gary Ridgeway and Lonnie Franklin. Advancements in extracting DNA from fingerprints are ongoing, as well as developments in the use of messenger RNA to establish or break an alibi. Dr. Lyle has a web page where you can submit a forensic question:

<http://www.dpylemd.com/forcomm.html>.

Retired police sergeant **Michael Streed**, aka The Sketch Cop, discussed the synergistic relationship between the eye witness to a crime and the sketch artist. "It's about drawing information out. The best artists are the best communicators." Michael showed us pictures of several famous killers and the accompanying sketches that helped lead to their arrests. More information can be found at SketchCop.com. Also, Michael will respond to questions sent to him via email at Michael@SketchCop.com.

Gary Bittner, of ServPro, provided the goriest photos of the day, detailing what goes into crime scene cleanup. He stressed the need to remain as objective and detached from the situation as possible. More than once, he mentioned the need to consider the feelings of friends, family members and co-workers of the deceased. His goal is to return the crime scene to the condition it was in prior to the incident.

The final speaker was **Dr. Judy Myers Suchey**,

forensic anthropologist, whose current focus is on cold cases. Dr. Myers shared several photos of facial reconstructions and discussed the different images one may obtain when using clay versus a pencil sketch. She provided insight into the delicate method of excavating buried bodies and the use of archeological methods in retrieving those bodies.

This was the second installment of Forensics Fest 2011, following last month's talk about death investigation by Jan Burke.



Theresa Schultz

THE WRITER'S BOOKSHELF

Writing Mysteries: A Handbook by the Mystery Writers of America, ISBN 10: 1-58297-102-1, is a revealing look at the slings and arrows of the professional writer's life. Edited by Sue Grafton, with assistance by Jan Burke and Barry Zeman, the thirty-five essays are packed with practical instruction written by a who's who of contemporary mystery writers. An added bonus is that the authors also reflect on the ways in which learning the craft taught them something about themselves. This second edition came out in 2002, ten years after the first. I hope there's another in the offing, but don't hesitate to add this one to your library; with the exception of some outdated websites and publishing information, the advice is timeless.

The book is handily organized into three sections: Preparation, The Process, and Specialties. Preparation features work schedules, writing with a partner, location and setting, and my favorite on



research: “Where Do I find a Jewish Indian? or How I Stopped Worrying and Learned to Love Research” by Stuart M. Kaminsky. His witty anecdotes are particularly valuable to anyone who is shy about asking experts for information.

Part II: The Process, is further divided into The Beginning, The Middle, and The End. Essays on getting started include two on character delineation: one by Michael Connelly on the importance of effective details, another by Margaret Maron with an excellent analysis of the fully rounded cast in Josephine Tey’s Brat Farrar. Other preliminary considerations are Sara Paretsky’s reasons for writing a series character, Nancy Pickard’s take on the perils and payoffs of the amateur sleuth, and three essays on outlining: one by confirmed outliner George C. Chesbro; another by anti-outliner Robert Campbell, who explains how to use your computer to painlessly create an outline; and a poignant piece by the late Tony Hillerman on his struggles to develop novels without outlining--and what tools he used instead.

The Middle of the Process section is devoted to getting that first draft written--dialogue, pacing, clues, red herrings, etc. Wrapping up Process are revision, working with agents, and marketing.

Finally, the Specialties segment offers tips on mysteries for young readers, the short story, legal and medical thrillers, and Laurie R. King’s research methods for historical mysteries. Rounding out the text is a good list: “The Best of the Genre and a Reference List of Books on Writing and Technical Information.”

This is one of those tomes a writer can enjoy revisiting time and again. Though nearly all the contributors agree on the fundamentals of craft, studying the basics from numerous writers’ perspectives heightens understanding. The book provides comfort, too, that there are many ways to arrive at a successful novel. More important, it

tenders frequent reminders of what the art of mystery writing is, and why it’s worth pursuing. In her introduction Sue Grafton writes: “The mystery is . . . a means by which we can explore, vicariously, the perplexing questions of crime, guilt and innocence, violence and justice. The mystery not only re-creates the original conditions from which violence springs, tracking the chaos that murder unleashes, but . . . eventually restores order to the universe.”

So wreak havoc, Dear Writer, then fix that messed up universe you have wrought. Dig deep into your psyche to create compelling characters and don’t think of your work as “*just* entertainment” or “*just* escapism.” Instead, consider that righting the wrongs of your imaginary sphere is a gift of hope for the real world that is oh, so weary of injustice.

Laurie Thomas



GUEST COLUMN

Raymond Chandler’s Final Wish

A disturbed grave. Wrenching separation. An unfulfilled desire. A literary detective’s discovery of a “hidden truth,” the granting of a wish after death, and gin gimlets to finalize the deal.

A murder mystery? Hardly. Instead, the real-life granting of Raymond Chandler’s fervent wish for his beloved wife, Cissy, to be buried with him. Since she died in 1954, her ashes have lain in storage in a mausoleum that abuts the Mount Hope Cemetery in San Diego where Ray is buried.



For decades Ray has waited for her to join him. Were it not for Chandler historian Loren Latker whose delving into the Chandler archives revealed the writer's intention for him and his beloved to share the same grave, the historic event this year would never have taken place. Before he died in 1959, five years after Cissy's death, Ray expressed his wishes regarding burial but he never completed the legal paperwork.

A court order was needed to move Cissy's ashes. Aissa Wayne, John Wayne's daughter, took up the challenge, and on the sunny morning of Valentine's Day, February 14, 2011, Ray and Cissy were reunited in a ceremony presided over by Reverend Randal Gardner.

I drove down from Dana Point vowing not to miss this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to be present at one of literature's most poignant moments. When I arrived at the cemetery, which sprawls over a hundred and ten acres, many of the hundred or so invited guests were already seated on folding chairs beneath a canopy of trees facing a podium. It was a gloriously sunny day, the kind Ray longed for when he lived in rainy England.

Chandler's grave is located in a semi-isolated spot among the rolling hills and marked by a humble plaque in the ground next to a small evergreen bush. After I expressed disappointment that no impressive headstone marked the icon's final resting place, Pastor Gardner said plaques are for the convenience of the lawnmowers of the maintenance crew. Then I remembered how private a person Chandler always tried to be and how self-effacing. He would have approved.

I also mused that there was plenty of burial space all around him, and wondered if any local writer would have the temerity to request to be his neighbor when the time came.

After being directed to parking areas, we were

handed a program and a sheet printed with The Lord's Prayer and Beethoven's Hymn to Joy. Everyone, it seemed, preferred to honor the man in a sartorial manner. Several gentlemen wore 1920s and 30s-era pin-striped suits, fedoras, Oxford-style black and white shoes, and to top it off, a pipe clenched between the teeth. The women were splendid in authentic crepe dresses, a few wearing split skirts and black stockings with seams running up the back. Platform shoes were the order of the day and many wore plate-shaped hats of the era tilted saucily to one side. Others favored crushed velvet and felt Robin Hood caps. In The Big Sleep Chandler wrote: "Her black hair was glossy under a Robin Hood hat that might have cost 50 dollars and looked as if you could have made it with one hand out of a desk blotter."

Three classic 1920s roadsters and sedans arrived, their drivers attired in vintage suits and straw boaters. In one of the cars, a 1929 Graham Paige, was Loren Latker bearing the urn that contained Cissy's ashes. As Loren walked over to the small table next to Ray's grave, the Crown Island Jazz Band played Dixieland music. I didn't get emotional about any of the goings-on until they struck up "When the Saints Go Marching In." It was a seminal moment, the New Orleans funeral procession music bringing home that this was a jubilant occasion.

After a prayer and a singing of Beethoven's "Ode to Joy," we were welcomed by Dr. Annie Tiel-Latker who, with Loren, had arranged the reuniting of Ray and Cissy. It took two years of courtroom pleadings, finding Ray's will and codicil, and filing petitions before Chandler and his wife would finally be laid to rest in the same burial plot.

As Marine helicopters from Camp Pendleton droned overhead, Powers Boothe, the actor who played Philip Marlowe in the HBO television series, brought to life excerpts from Chandler's writings, especially his masterful metaphors and similes that



stopped you cold and forced you to re-read them: “[he] was as inconspicuous as a tarantula on a piece of angel food cake.” Los Angeles “had the personality of a paper cup,” and many, many more. Boothe’s performance was so exciting his publicist called him shortly after dawn the next day.

Judith Freeman, who wrote The Long Embrace, read movingly from her 2007 book about Raymond Chandler and the woman he loved. She wrote: “Cissy... kept him sane. She watched over him, cared for him, worried about him,” and remarked on the fact that Ray burned all of Cissy’s letters to him after she died, probably to keep their love private.

It was time for Raymond’s wish to be with his wife even in death to be fulfilled. A rectangular hole about three feet deep and measuring around 8” x 14” had been cut from the middle of the grave. Rev. Gardner took the small, square casket that held the ashes and placed it in the space. The deed was done.

Two TV crews covered the event, two documentary film makers, the local PBS station reporter, and several still photographers. Boothe concluded the ceremony with, “I’m not going to say goodbye. In the tradition of Raymond I’m going to say, ‘I need a drink and I’m going to have one.’”

Chandler’s favorite gimlets were served at a hotel reception afterwards and at a gala dinner. I was so wiped out by the entire day I drove home in a daze, determined to read more of the master Chandler. “What a man wants and needs,” said Chandler, “...is the tangible and ineffable sense that a life is shared.” In death, it is now also shared.

Jill Amadio



MEMBER EVENTS

Jeri Westerson:

Saturday, March 19, 2011, 10:30 am –Yosemite Romance Writers, in Fresno. Talk (medieval weapons!) and book signing. Marie Callendar’s 3602 W. Shaw Ave., Fresno, CA 93711. \$20 for RWA members, \$30 for non-members–lunch is included.

<http://yosemiteromancewriters.com/id30.html>

Wednesday, March 23, 2011, 6:00 pm – Perris Public Library. Talk and signing. 163 E San Jacinto, Perris, CA (951) 657-2358

MYSTERY INK EVENTS

Saturday, March 12, 2:00 p.m. – Joseph Badal

Like Joseph’s two previous novel, The Pythagorean Solution and Terror Cell, his latest thriller, Nostradamus Secret, is based on historical events.

Tuesday, March 15, 1:00 p.m. – Zoe Sharp

Join us for snacks with English author, Zoe Sharp who will be visiting us on her U.S. book tour to sign the 8th book in her Charlie Fox series, Fourth Day.

Friday, March 18, Noon – Cara Black & Libby Fischer Hellman

Cara Black, Murder In The Passy, and Libby Fischer Hellman, Set The Night On Fire, will be discussing and signing their latest novels.

Saturday, March 19, Noon – Darryl Dawson

Signing his horror novel, Fear Of Sleep.



ORANGE HERRING

Sisters in Crime  Orange County



Friday, April 1, 4:00 p.m. – Brett Battles

Discussion & signing of his new novel, The Silenced.

Sunday, April 3, 4:30 p.m. – Carola Dunn

Carola will be talking about and signing her 18th book, The Case Of The Murdered Muckracker in her Daisy Dalymple series set in 1920s England.

And in May - Carolyn Hart will be signing her new Death on Demand mystery, Dead By Midnight on May 5, 5:00 – 6:30 p.m.

Mystery Ink Bookstore (across from Goldenwest College): 7176 Edinger Avenue, Huntington Beach, CA 92647, (714) 960-4000, www.mysteryink.com.

MEMBER NEWS

Jeri Westerson's third Crispin Guest novel, The Demon's Parchment, was nominated for the Bruce Alexander Historical Mystery Award to be presented at Left Coast Crime in March. This is the second nomination for the novel, with another nod from Romantic Times Magazine for the RT Reviewers' Choice Award for Historical Mystery.

Gayle K. Brunelle's Murder In The Métro historical true crime book got a great review in the December 17, 2010 *London Times Literary Supplement*, and in the *Virginia Pilot*, also in December. Catch an interview with Gayle in the *Fullerton Observer* at: <http://www.fullertonobserver.com/artman/uploads/foearlyfeb.pdf>.

LINKS OF INTEREST

A social network of crime readers and writers: <http://crimespace.ning.com/>

North American branch of the International Association of Crime Writers (IACW):

<http://www.crimewritersna.org/>. The IACW is based in England, and can be found at: www.iacw.org.

[Please pass on any links you think that might be of special interest to our members to: Ocsinc.newsletter@gmail.com]



PUBLICATION POSSIBILITIES

Kings River Life Magazine is a California online magazine. Due to our expanding mystery readership, we have created a special mystery section, Mysteryrat's Maze, and we are now accepting submissions of mystery short stories. Stories need to either be written by a California author or set in California, and can be up to 2000 words in length.

This is a non-paying market, but every author will have the chance to include promo information with each story for whatever project/website they are currently promoting. A new issue goes up every Saturday. Visit: <http://KingsRiverLife.com>
Contact Lorie Ham, publisher, at: life@kingsriverlife.com

Call for Articles: London: Mystery Readers Journal (Volume 27:1)

The next issue of the [Mystery Readers Journal](#) (Volume 27:1) will focus on **Crime Fiction set in London**. I'm looking for **articles, reviews** and **Author! Author! essays**. We may go to two issues, but in the meantime, the deadline for reviews, articles and author essays is **March 15!** Beware the Ides of March!

Author! Author! essays are 500-2500 words, first person, upclose and personal about yourself, your



mysteries and the 'London' connection. Think of it as chatting with friends, writers and writers in the bar or cafe. [Send me an email](#) if you're interested or know an author who would like to write an essay!

[SUBSCRIBE OR RENEW](#) your subscription to **Mystery Readers Journal** for 2011 (Volume 27). If you're not sure if you've renewed, send me an email, and I'll check. Thanks for your support.

FROM NATIONAL

Recent News: Sisters in Crime Really Loves Libraries!

SinC recently awarded two more grants from their "We Love Libraries" book-buying lottery, to the Folsom Public Library in Folsom, California, and the Seymour Johnson Air Force Base Library in Goldsboro, North Carolina. Each library received \$1000 to use for purchasing books of any type or genre for the library's collection. To date, the SinC "We Love Libraries!" project has awarded \$1,000 to 14 libraries in the U.S. The library lottery program began in January 2010.

The instructions for participating are as follows: Libraries may participate by completing the online entry form at www.sistersincrime.org and uploading a photo of one or more staff members with three books in the library's collection written by Sisters in Crime members. At the end of each month, a library winner will be selected in a random drawing from the entries submitted online. Libraries must be located within the United States to be eligible to participate in the program. Only one entry per library is required. Once the entry is on file with Sisters in Crime, it will remain active in the lottery selection process for the duration of the program. **If you know of any libraries you'd like to support in this way, urge them to participate!**



Also, check out this article on the SinC National Blog (http://sisters-in-crime-sinc.blogspot.com/2011_03_01_archive.html) :

[Nine Must-Have Clauses for Digital Rights Contracts](#)

By Michael Stackpole

Originally published at:
<http://www.michaelastackpole.com>

Stackpole explains clearly and succinctly what digital publication is coming to mean to writers and what provisions writers need to ensure are in their contracts regarding rights and royalties for digital editions of their work.

UPCOMING EVENTS

March 24 -27
Left Coast Crime, Santa Fe, New Mexico

April 9
Literary Orange

April 30 - May 1
L.A. Times Festival of Books, USC campus
OC SinC will be at the Mystery Ink booth talking up our chapter and its benefits.

June 11-12
California Crime Writer's Conference,
Pasadena, CA

September 15 - 18
Bouchercon 2011 - World Mystery Conference,
St. Louis, Mo



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Support your local SinC chapter. Buy a lovely mug at the next meeting, and bring your novels for our Sister Share!

TELL US WHAT YOU REALLY THINK!

If you have ideas about how this newsletter could be better, let us know. Also, if you have events coming up or announcements you want to make, or ideas for columns you'd like to share, let us know that too. We want to support our members in their literary endeavors and publicize their signings and achievements far and wide. Please send your contributions and suggestions to:

Ocsinc.newsletter@gmail.com.

The deadline for the newsletter is the 1st of each month!