



# ORANGE HERRING

Sisters in Crime  Orange County



## ***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  
**15500** Sand Canyon Avenue  
Irvine, CA 92618

The meeting location is still at the Irvine Ranch Water District, but it's now in the Community Affairs meeting room on the northeast side of the parking lot. Here is a map of the location: [IRWD map](#).

For more information and directions, visit: [www.ocsistersincrime.org](http://www.ocsistersincrime.org)

Following are the dates for the remaining OC SinC meetings in 2013. Please mark your calendars.

Jul. 28<sup>th</sup>, Aug. 25<sup>th</sup>, Sept. 15<sup>th</sup>, Oct. 27<sup>th</sup>, Nov. 24<sup>th</sup>, Dec. 15<sup>th</sup>



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***PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE***

Dear Sisters and Mistrs,

A lot is happening in the wonderful world of OC SinC. Jan Burke will be the speaker at our next meeting on July 28<sup>th</sup>. She will be discussing a new MWA anthology, *The Mystery Box*.

We are getting ready for our annual joint meeting with MWA in August. Pat Broeske is handling the program about true crimes of Orange County. Yes, in spite of our relatively smog-free blue sky, surfers, and a surfeit of red-tiled roofs, we do have crime. When we have MWA as guests, we always provide a buffet lunch, so we will meet earlier. A tray of sandwiches will be provided, but we need other dishes. So please, think of what you would like to bring, and let Debbie or me know what you will contribute to the buffet lunch.

We also need volunteers for a committee to work on the upcoming Enigmatic Women Day (e.g. Women of Mystery, aka women who write mysteries) projected for April, 2014. Right now, we need to figure out the venue, the format, and then we will invite about ten local authors and a couple of crowd -drawers to be the keynote lunch and closing speakers. Again, let us know if you are interested.

This month's meeting will be on the 125<sup>th</sup> birthday of Raymond Chandler, so I thought it might be appropriate to have our readers and writer's forum devoted to the great Raymond Chandler. Come ready to discuss your favorite quotes and your favorite books (Farewell, My lovely, The Big Sleep, The Long Goodbye, etc.), his movie scripts (The Blue Dahlia, Double Indemnity, Strangers on a Train), his radio series, The Adventures of Philip Marlowe, or his numerous short stories. No, he did not write The Maltese Falcon. That was Dashiell Hammett. Those were the days!

Don't forget, the meetings are now in the new community room. See you on the 28<sup>th</sup>.

All the best,  
Aileen



***UPCOMING MEETINGS***

**July 28th at 3:00 p.m.** – Our speaker will be Edgar® Award winner Jan Burke, the critically acclaimed and national bestselling author of fourteen books—twelve crime novels, a supernatural thriller, and a collection of



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short stories. Jan will discuss the recently released MWA anthology, *The Mystery Box*.

*The Mystery Box* is a thoroughly perplexing collection of locked-box puzzlers from the Mystery Writers of America. The contributors' interpretations of a "locked box" are truly "out-of-the-box," from an empty coffin to the inner workings of a scientist's mind. The stories range from humorous to chilling. From Laura Lippman's intense "Waco 1982" to Joseph Finder's "Heirloom," to R.L. Stine's "High Stakes," the twenty-one tales collected here include treasures by Karin Slaughter, Steve Berry, Jan Burke, Katherine Neville and other leading lights.

Jan served as the original editor of Sisters in Crime's guide to getting published, *Breaking And Entering*. She is a past president of the Southern California Chapter of [Mystery Writers of America](#) and has served on MWA's National Board. She also believes strongly in the importance of greater support for forensic science in the U.S., and is the founder of the [Crime Lab Project](#).

**At 2:00 p.m.**, OC SinC President **Aileen Baron** will lead our forum on Raymond Chandler.

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**August 25<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 p.m.** – Joint meeting of OC Sisters in Crime and SoCal Mystery Writers of America. Luncheon at 1:00 p.m., followed by our speakers at 1:30 p.m. The topic is True Crimes of Orange County.

One of our guest speakers will be **Larry Welborn**, longtime court reporter for the Orange County Register and an award winning investigative journalist. He'll be discussing the dark side of Orange County ... the one that doesn't involve theme parks ...

A graduate of Pepperdine University, Larry got his start as a reporter by covering the Charles Manson murder trial. He came aboard the Register in 1970 and has since been honored with two watchdog awards for investigative reporting from the Orange County Press Club. He is a past recipient of that organization's "Sky Dunlap Award" for career achievement. In 2006, Welborn won the National Headliners Award for best newspaper series for his compelling and talked-about "Murder by Suicide?" about the cold case murder of a young woman named Linda Cummings.

Welborn is the president and chairman of the board of the California Scholastic Press Association, which works with high school journalists. And he is the author of *Notorious OC*, an ebook published by the Register that chronicles the top 60 crimes in Orange County history.

Our host for the event will be Harley Jane Kozak, actress and Agatha, Macavity, and Anthony award winner for her debut novel, *Dating Dead Men*. Stay tuned for information on our second speaker that day.



## MEETING ROUNDUP

OC SinC president Aileen Baron led the Reader's Forum, and the topic was anthologies. There are countless mystery anthologies; they can be a great way to sample authors. Treasurer Diane Hemme pointed out that it makes sense to bring along an anthology when traveling, because you can finish entire stories, whereas you can't always wrap up that novel. However, according to Mystery Ink owner Debbie Mitsch, anthologies don't sell as well as mystery novels.

One attendee pointed out that an anthology is not the same as an omnibus—because an omnibus contains the works of a single author (for instance, a book of short stories by Agatha Christie), whereas an anthology contains works by multiple authors.

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During the Reader's Forum, our guest speaker **Tom Fassbender** revealed that it was via an anthology that he discovered one of his favorite writers, mystery maestro Cornell Woolrich.

Fassbender is the co-creator of the late UglyTown Publishing Company and co-author of *By the Balls: The Complete Collection*, which is enjoying a 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary edition via Akashic Books. (Fassbender was the sole speaker; co-author Jim Pascoe had to opt out at the last minute.)

*By the Balls* is a mystery set in a bowling alley featuring hard-boiled detective Ben Drake. After writing the book, Fassbender and Pascoe formed their own publishing company, UglyTown, and published their book in 1998.

That audacious move was partly inspired by—of all people—former punk rocker Henry Rollins, who established his publishing house, 2.13.61 around 1986-87. Fassbender says he and Pascoe used to say, “If Henry Rollins can do it, so can we.” And so they did.

Fassbender brought along the original *By the Balls* novel, which was designed to resemble a mapback—those slim paperbacks that were put out by Dell, beginning in 1943, that featured a map on the back cover. The map detailed the location of the story's action. Fassbender and Pascoe subsequently authored a series of Ben Drake short stories; for the new edition they wrote new pieces, and added essays from other writers and publishers.

Fassbender, who's also written comic books, discussed the ups and downs of being a writer and publisher, explaining that while he still writes daily, he's mostly detailing his adventures as a long distance runner. (He makes his living as a marketing strategist for a credit union.)

*Many thanks to **Pat Broeske**, for writing this article.*



## CONFERENCE UPDATE



## Conference Wrap Up

### From Manuscript to Marketing Your Book,

#### 2013 California Crime Writers Conference Tells How

So you've finished your manuscript!

You know, that thrilling one-of-its-kind mystery with the victim, killer, and uniquely skilled but flawed killer-finder (be he an amateur sleuth, PI or Police Detective); that manuscript you've struggled with for years, coddled and cursed, put away, threw away, then dug out and reworked; that "almost a book" that sits impatiently on your desk or in a computer file waiting for you to act.

What do you do with it now? Is it actually *ready* to be published? How should you publish it? Should you attempt the traditional route with agents, editors and publishers, or try it yourself? Where do you begin to self publish a book? How do you market it?

These are the questions that many of the 200 attendees of the **2013 California Crime Writers Conference** asked and had answered last weekend by a faculty of over 70 top specialists in crime writing and selling. Here are a few things I learned....

#### Is your book actually *ready* to be published?



The **Revision Techniques Workshop** brought together authors Daryl Wood Gerber, Shaun Morey, and Jeri Westerson.

Moderator/author Tammy Kaehler asked them each **WHEN** they revised (or edited) their manuscripts. Answers ranged from "I edit as I go," to "after each chapter," to "at benchmark stops" (or as Morey confessed, "The places where I get stuck."). All agreed to one or more final edits after the manuscript is finished. "You want it to be the best it can be. This is a business," said Westerson.

Each author revealed **HOW** and **WHY** they revise their works-in-progress. Gerber looks to "tighten and brighten." Morey tries to eliminate "all the boring places" and put in more of the "five senses."



Westerson says she may cut whole sections and maybe even change the killer. Gerber, a stickler for details and a diehard outliner, responds with a vehement, "The victim and killer *always* stay the same for me. I know the motive before I begin."

All of the authors check for consistency in details, such as character names and traits. The ladies print out their manuscripts and do "red pencil" edits. Morey does screen editing. They all advise reading the work aloud or having it read to you (a friend or software). Westerson has trusted Beta Readers.

**AUTHOR TIPS:** Read in your genre. Read everything. Finish the book. Be able to state what your story is about in 50 words or less to make sure you stay focused.

**How should you publish your book? Should you attempt the traditional route with agents, editors, and publishers, or try to do it yourself?**



Author and Writing Coach Michael Levin, in his workshop **Take Your Manuscript From Good to Great – 12 Things You Must Do**, pumped his audience (even into the lunch break – they simply didn't want to leave) encouraging newbie and struggling, published authors alike with his amazing enthusiastic "you can do it" lecture. (Best in the conference, in my opinion.)

He wanted us to "ask ourselves" if we even *wanted* an agent or traditional publisher in the first place. If so, then he advised us to ignore the rules. ("Why are the *writers* always the starving ones?") Be proactive.

But why should we set up ourselves for frustration in the first place? "If you can get a publisher to take your book today, it will be at least one year before it's out. If you self publish, it's available tonight!"

He said our biggest competitor wasn't "Sue Grafton," it was *reality*. "Publishers used to have a hammerlock on publishing. Not so today. Bookstores are disappearing too. The reality? It's over!" But---

"People still love stories. They are fascinated with crime. There will always be a market for what YOU (mystery writers) do. Readers today like "niche" writing - subgenres and sub-subgenres of mystery. Whatever niche you write in, there's a large audience looking for you, and they can't get enough! Develop a hard core audience in a specific niche first, and then expand.

Ask yourself what mini-audience you have and then OWN THEM!"



He followed by elaborating on: Build a Franchise Around Your Main Character, Write Character Over Plot, Put the Body On the First Page, Use the 3-act Structure, Published Authors use Short Scenes, Editing Means Adding Not Subtracting (Add more info on characters, and more texture until someone says it's too long, then edit.), Dialogue is Drama Not Back Story, Sloppiness is the Kiss of Death, and.... How to do Social Media in 22 Minutes per Day. (Email him for a PDF on this topic – [Michael@businessGhost.com](mailto:Michael@businessGhost.com) )

It's for sessions like these that SinC and MWA need to tape the workshops!

### Where do you begin to self-publish a book?



Author Brett Battles and freelance editor Elyse Dinh-McCrillis discussed the topic in their **Nuts and Bolts of Self-Publishing** workshop. Battles began by listing "his process" for successfully writing and self- (or Indie-) publishing a book.

FIRST write the book! Then---

1. Consider your options (self-publish or not).
2. Ask yourself if it is any good. (If not, put it away and begin another one.)
3. Hire a story (or developmental) editor and take their advice.
4. Hire a copy editor. (You must not skip this one. Your self-pubbed book must come up to traditional publishing standards.)

McCrillis advised getting a story editor *early* in your book and a copy editor *close to the end*. She said to get referrals from friends who write *in the same genre*, at conferences, or by networking at SinC and MWA meetings. Ask about fees. Ask about turnaround time. Ask for a sample edit of 3-5 pages.

5. Hire a cover designer/artist (unless you really know what you are doing).
6. Format your book yourself, or use Amazon's or Barnes and Nobles' programs.



7. Consider digital *and* print markets.

"As self-publishers, you are business owners. You must spend some money. But with good marketing, it will pay off."

### How should you market your book?



The workshop **The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly: Marketing Your Book and Your Brand** featured authors Gay Toltl-Kinman, Christopher J. Lynch, Christa Faust, and author-promoter Rebecca Dahike, with author, Sue Ann Jaffarian moderating (and adding a few tips of her own). *(Photo above is of Jaffarian between Daryl Wood Gerber and Dianne Emley)*

"*I don't have readers, I have customers.*" was the Mickey Spillane quote that started up this informative session. Panelists then shared their methods of getting and keeping "customers."



Lynch produced a TV-quality video trailer for his debut mystery (which was beautifully displayed on a large poster behind him). The trailer cost him \$2,000, took two days to film, and runs for two minutes. "It's a commercial for my book," he said, "and it's running on U-Tube for FREE." He places the QR Code for the trailer on his business cards and the back cover of his book. (What is a QR Code? <http://bit.ly/16Htchl>)

Lynch enjoys doing author talks for non-book groups, such as his Rotary Club. And he offers to give FREE self-publishing seminars at libraries.

Lynch also peruses news services for crimes that are similar to the ones his main character (a blackmailer) commits in his books. He places a link to that story on Facebook, along with a line on what his character would say about it.





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Kinman belongs to various writing organizations (SCBWI, MWA, SinC) which "help me in networking and publicizing my books." Her unique method in finding the marketing techniques that work for her is to first make a list of everything people are talking about (eliminate the ones that give you a "gag-reflex.") Ask yourself how much money and how much time you have to spend. With what's left, do some research and see what works for you. She also uses Social Media. ("It's free!")

Faust advises, "Ask yourself what makes YOU want to buy a book and what doesn't, then promote yours in that way. After that, you need another book. To sell books, you need more books to sell."

"Oh, and be nice to bloggers!" Faust adds. "And have an author web page." And, "Covers mean everything; don't short change yourself on them. Remember a lot of people see it as a 1-inch square icon!"

Dahike uses various social media to promote "herself and her authors," including creating a newsletter that has morphed into a popular blog site. She thanks people who write reviews on Amazon. She tweets on Twitter, but says RE-Tweeting is more important. She suggests gathering a group of re-Tweeters who promote you, and to whom you will reciprocate.

Jaffarian connects with her readers (and gathers more) with her Fan page on Facebook, by writing short stories (which sell for .99) and with limited time digital book giveaways. Author signings and panels also promote her many series.

Everyone in this workshop and in the others recommended "Pump Up Your Book" for top notch (though not inexpensive) publicity and marketing for you book. <http://www.pumpupyourbook.com/>

## What else is there to consider?

In the **Reviews and Blurbs – Getting them, Writing them, and Taking advantage of them**, four authors and a magazine editor voiced their opinions. Moderator, Diane Vallere asked if the panel thought blurbs on books "meant anything" to readers. Most panelists agreed that they did not.

"In the business, it's really one favor from another to another, and they are more likely to be favorable," said author Susan Kandel. Darrell James agreed with one exception, "unless it's from a top author." He then asked the audience if a book blurb actually made them want to buy a book. (Most said no.) Andrew Kaplan walked the middle ground with his "Sometimes they work," adding that some publishers use only favorable reviews and "pass" on the blurbs."

When asked if Book Blog Tours were worth it, most also agreed that they weren't. Magazine editor Nancie Clare compared a New York Times review to a Book Blogger and advised authors to "err on the side of authority."

"What matters most," Vallere asked, "the Quality of reviews or the Quantity?" Kaplan said the quantity of reviews on Amazon was worth more to him than the number of 5-starred reviews. James said, "The totality." Clare: "Lots of good reviews rather than a few shining ones." Kandel: "More reviews have greater value."

When asked how the authors use reviews, Kaplan said he uses "snatches" on his next book. James said he puts them on his website or Facebook page. He also stated that reviews in hometown newspapers were even more valuable.



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Advice to Book Reviewers: Read the book! Understand storytelling and character development. Tell a plot trick, but NOT the plot and definitely not the solution. Find something unique to write about the author's style. (Good tips, all!)

**The keynote speakers** – Sue Grafton and Elizabeth George – were super-heroes at the conference, instilling confidence and hope as well as process and technique in the minds and hearts of the attendees.



Many thanks to *Jackie Houchin* for this wonderful summary of the conference highlights.



## **MEMBER NEWS**

**Jill Amadio** has an article running in Kings River Life on July 9, titled *The Sophomore Slump*. She interviewed series authors who struggled with their second book after their first one was a smash hit. SinC Member Terri Nolan was among those she talked to, as was Dennis Palumbo. Jill's debut mystery, *Digging Too Deep*, featuring Cornish-cussing Tosca Trevant, will be published by Mainly Murder Press in paperback with a release date of December 1, 2013. Jill will also be a member of the panel on Ghost Writing at the LA SinC meeting on Sunday, July 14<sup>th</sup> in South Pasadena. For more info, visit: [www.sistersincrimela.com](http://www.sistersincrimela.com).

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**D. P. Lyle's** third Dub Walker thriller, *Run To Ground*, has won the Benjamin Franklin Silver Award in the Best Mystery/Suspense Category. Also, Doug will be a Guest of Honor (along with Anne Perry) at Killer Nashville in August. Congratulations, Doug!

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Hey sports fans. **Dmitri Ragano's** latest novel, *The Fugitive Grandma*, is now out in paperback... A crime thriller/black comedy/family drama about a boy and his grandma who rob big box retail stores for cash and medicine. Available on Amazon.

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*The Manipulator*, a new ebook thriller by OC SinC member **Michael McQuade**, is now available on Amazon's Kindle, Apple devices, and other ebook readers. In *The Manipulator*, Nathan Foster uses a Congressman, a Mafia connection, and an Interpol agent to track down a terrorist group and a money laundering operation in an attempt to influence the Presidential election.



## MYSTERY INK NEWS

Located at: Bridgecreek Plaza  
8907 Warner Avenue, #135  
Huntington Beach, CA 92647  
[714 960-4000](tel:7149604000)

**Saturday, July 13<sup>th</sup>, 4:00 p.m.** – Mystery Ink will be hosting our first young adult event with authors, **Jessica Brody, Debra Driza, and Amy Tintera.**



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In *Unremembered*, the first book in **Jessica Brody's** trilogy, Freedom Airlines flight 121 crashes over the Pacific Ocean. No one expected to find survivors, which is why the 16-year-old girl discovered floating among the wreckage is making headlines across the globe. Even more strange is that her body is miraculously unharmed and she has no memories of the crash.

*Mila 2.0*, from debut author **Debra Driza**, is the first book in a sci-fi thriller series about a teenage girl who discovers that she is an experiment in artificial intelligence.

*Reboot*, from author **Amy Tintera**, is an action-packed debut novel about 17-year-old Wren, who has risen from the dead as a Reboot and is now the government's top soldier, until she is given an order she refuses to obey.

Mystery Ink Bookstore, 8907 Warner Avenue, #135, Huntington Beach, (714) 960-4000, [www.mysteryink.com](http://www.mysteryink.com). Coffee & Wi-Fi now available.



## ***UPCOMING CONFERENCES, CONVENTIONS, and EVENTS***

### **August 22-15, 2013 – Killer Nashville**

8<sup>th</sup> Annual Killer Nashville Conference. For more information, visit [www.KillerNashville.com](http://www.KillerNashville.com)

### **September 19-22, 2013 – Bouchercon 2013**

Albany, NY, at the Empire State Plaza. For more information, follow this link: [Bouchercon 2013 | A New York State of Crime](#)



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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!**



***PLEASE CONTRIBUTE!***

If you have events coming up or announcements you want to make, let me know. Please send your contributions and suggestions to: [ocsinc.newsletter@gmail.com](mailto:ocsinc.newsletter@gmail.com). **The deadline is the 7<sup>th</sup> of each month!**



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## SISTERS IN CRIME ORANGE COUNTY CHAPTER

Print and complete this form. **NOTE: YOU MUST ALSO JOIN SISTERS IN CRIME NATIONAL TO BE A MEMBER OF THE ORANGE COUNTY CHAPTER.**

Send the completed form with both checks, \$40 payable to Sisters in Crime (National) and \$25 payable to Sisters in Crime, OC to:

Membership

Sisters in Crime, Orange County

P.O. Box 53132

Irvine, CA 92619-3132

## MEMBERSHIP FORM

Please print all information and list your name as you want it listed in the Membership Directory.

New       Renewal Name: Address:

Day Phone:

Evening Phone:

Email: I am a (check all that apply):

Mystery Writer     Published     Unpublished

Writer in other fields     Published     Unpublished

Screenwriter

--Produced:     Features     TV/Cable     Other

Reviewer     Agent     Bookseller     Librarian     Reader

I would like to help with (check all that apply):

Publicity     Refreshments     Speakers     Raffle     Other: