



President's Message

This month, I'm talking about two seemingly unrelated things. One is how an author approaches speaking engagements, and the other is about our chapter elections.

First, speaking engagements. I think it's tough for people to walk into a room cold to give a presentation. Whether the audience is of fifteen or fifty, it can be nerve wracking. But here's a tip. Look at it as if it's *your* party, or even something like a wedding reception. More than likely, the hosts will come to greet you and let you know how it's all going down; when you speak and for how long, whether there will be an introduction and by whom. And then after that, you are more or less left to your own devices. Use this time! Start moving around the room. If the guests are at tables (say, for a luncheon) then great! They're trapped! Go to each table just as if it were your wedding reception, and greet them all. Introduce yourself and ask them questions: Do you come to these meetings often? Is this your first time here? What are some of the things you like to read? And let them ask *you* questions, too. Try to get to as many tables or as many clusters of people as you can.

Now it's your turn to speak. Don't go over budget on your time. If they told you that you should speak for fifteen minutes don't take thirty. Be interesting, be light, be funny if you're a funny person, and try *not* to read from a script. It's much more engaging for your audience if it looks as if you are speaking extemporaneously. Make eye contact with different people throughout the room as you speak. And relax! They *want* you there.

After your talk, don't run away. You will probably be signing books. Engage each reader with some conversation. In all, be open and available to all the guests who came. Thank the hosts before you leave, and when you arrive home, be sure to pen a thank

you note and mail it off right away. All this puts you in the "we want to have them back" category.

Now that you've had your tips for speaking at other venues, you might wish to put them into practice as part of our chapter steering committee. Elections are coming up in November, and it would be wonderful if new people would step forward to be a part of it. Yeah, that's right. I'm talking to you! Our officers are as follows:

- President—sets goals and responsibilities, serves as an ad hoc member of committees, polls board members on major decisions, keeps members informed, serves as group spokesperson, and performs such other duties as the Steering Committee may deem necessary.
- Vice-President—assists the President in her duties and serves as a substitute, presiding over meetings and committees as directed by the President.
- Recording Secretary—keeps minutes or records of the chapter speakers and activities and performs such other duties as may be directed by the Steering Committee, including emailing the membership to announce meetings.
- Corresponding Secretary—serves as a PR person for the chapter and handles those emails and correspondence in coordination with the President, and performs such other duties as may be directed by the Steering Committee.
- Treasurer—receives all monies of OC SinC and deposits the same as directed by the Steering Committee. The Treasurer makes disbursements from these funds as authorized by the Steering Committee, and keeps accurate financial records and maintains our checking account. The Treasurer submits financial statements on an annual basis or more



ORANGE HERRING

Sisters in Crime  Orange County



frequently as requested by the Steering Committee.

- Members at Large—serve as tie-breakers for Steering Committee votes and as boosters for the chapter.

Now none of these are as scary as they sound. This is not a large chapter and coordinating it is therefore a smaller task. Officers serve for one year, not to exceed five terms. I urge you to ask steering committee members what their jobs are like and then email your requests to be included as a nominee to secretary@ocsistersincrime.org. Nominees will be posted in the October newsletter and announced at the October meeting and voted on by a show of hands at the November meeting. Please consider participating in a meaningful way by joining the steering committee. This is your chapter and you will find that being involved more intimately enhances your experience.



Your Prez,
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

Upcoming Meetings

September 18, 2011

2:00 PM: Reader's Forum: Mysteries with an archaeological theme.

3:00 PM: OC SinC Member at Large **Aileen Baron**, will speak on the topic of "Archaeology for Writers." Author of *A FLY HAS A HUNDRED EYES*, *THE TORCH OF TANGIERS*, *THE GOLD OF THRACE* and, most recently, *THE SCORPION'S BITE*, Aileen knows whereof she writes, since she taught for twenty years in the Department of Anthropology at California State University, Fullerton. To find out more about Aileen and her mysteries, go to <http://www.aileengbaron.com/> or, better yet, come to our meeting!

October 16, 2011

2:00 PM: Writer's Forum: PI books

3:00 PM: Dennis McDougal will be our speaker for the October meeting. Most recently author of *THE CANDLESTICKMAKER* and *FIVE EASY DECADES: HOW JACK NICHOLSON BECAME THE BIGGEST MOVIE STAR IN MODERN TIMES*, McDougal has chronicled Hollywood, crime and the media for over 30 years. His forthcoming *THINGS HAVE CHANGED* (2011) is the new biography of music legend Bob Dylan.

November 20, 2011

Note – No forum this month! Instead, we will start earlier, at 2:30 PM. Sisters in Crime



members will read from their new releases, followed by a panel discussion. This is also our celebration of Sister-in-Crime's 25th anniversary, so



there will be cake!

Panelists and SincOC members reading their work will be: Patricia Wynn, Gayle Brunelle, Jack

Martin, Jeri Westerson, and Doug Lyle. Don't miss it!

December 11, 2011

Holiday Party: at Mystery Ink bookstore. Details in next month's *Orange Herring*.



EDITORS' COLUMN

I'm going to keep my Editor's Column short this month, and simply endorse Jeri's message regarding getting involved. In 1958 Nigerian author Chinua Achebe wrote a famous novel (not a mystery) called THINGS FALL APART. Whether or not the novel is to your taste, the title is a very telling statement on life. Things do fall apart—people's lives, marriages, businesses, economies, even whole countries (Somalia, anyone?).

Organizations fall apart too, even excellent, worthwhile ones like ours. Sometimes that happens because the organization no longer fits the needs or interests of the members. More often, however, it is because the members follow that natural human instinct of hoping that someone who is not them will assume the responsibilities and duties of running the organization. I see a similar phenomenon every day in my classes, when I ask the class a question and everyone seems to sink a

little lower in his or her seat, even in college, in hopes that I will call on someone, anyone, else. Ironically it's not usually because the majority of the students really are unprepared or unable to answer my question, or even that the question is really that hard. It is that they *feel* less prepared or capable than the other students and hope that they can avoid putting themselves on the line and perhaps being embarrassed. Or they just don't want to add something else to their busy lives.

As Jeri points out, the tasks involved in the offices of our small chapter of Sisters in Crime are not that onerous. Everyone has a busy life. No one really feels like they have the time or the expertise to do the job. But if everyone doesn't take a turn holding the offices of an organization, the organization gets stagnant for lack of new perspectives and ideas, and the same "doers" keep running the show until they eventually get burned out. Then "things fall apart." Let's not let that happen to SincOC!

Do you have some insight into the writing life or the mystery reader's passion that you would like to share? If so, please drop us a line or two at Ocsinc.newsletter@gmail.com. Let's get some new voices in the newsletter!



GAYLE K. BRUNELLE

MEETING ROUNDUP

At our August meeting we had the pleasure of hearing the talented and very entertaining Susan Goldstein. Susan, author of HOLLYWOOD FOREVER, practices family law in Los Angeles where the legal arena has given her a unique view of the often humorous, highly emotional and



occasional murderous aspects of divorce. Goldstein uses 1940s film noir as the background for her book by having her character consult her only trusted confidantes, Bugsy Siegel and William Desmond Taylor, as she walks through the Hollywood Forever Cemetery where they are buried. It turns out that the Hollywood Forever Cemetery is a place of sanctuary for Susan as well, one of the many Los Angeles sites and aspects of the unique culture of Los Angeles that have shaped her perspective on our region and its colorful characters, past and present.

In her talk for SincOC, Susan related episodes from her legal career and her experiences in Los Angeles that have informed her writing, not so much in terms of plotting as of character development. Some of them were sad, since they involved the personal tragedies that are woven through family law – broken marriages, abused children, and litigants often angry enough at each other, or each other’s lawyers, to be dangerous. Among the latter, according to Susan, was one well-known actor who, fortunately for Susan if not for him, died in a hotel room in Thailand before he could carry out the threats he made to her during a particularly ugly divorce case. Susan recounted all of her stories with the same mixture of energy, humor and sympathy for human foibles that makes her fiction entertaining and endearing at the same time. She clearly cares about her clients, and her characters, on an emotional as well as a professional level. Although she stated that she eventually hopes to write “darker” mysteries, it seems likely that her lively voice and humorous approach to life will color her writing for some time to come.

To find out more about Susan, HOLLYWOOD FOREVER and her future publications, go to: <http://www.susangoldsteinbooks.com/>.



GAYLE K. BRUNELLE



THE WRITER’S BOOKSHELF

Once upon a time you could have copied WAR AND PEACE into the dust on my overflowing inboxes and stacks of papers to file. I’m quite organized, yet couldn’t conquer the wreck, and that nagging guilt invaded my writing time. Endless tomes on “time management” and fancy day planners didn’t help. This did: GETTING THINGS DONE: THE ART OF STRESS-FREE PRODUCTIVITY by David Allen, ISBN 978-0142000281 (pbk).

Allen’s system is built on the premise that “If it’s on your mind, your mind isn’t clear.” To focus on one task, everything else—100% of your personal and professional life—must be captured in a trusted system outside your mind.” Because priorities constantly shift, trying to organize your day into 15-minute increments is a recipe for failure and frustration. Allen’s advice? Step one: put everything you need to do in your inbox, using sticky notes for anything that won’t fit. Step two: arrange two uninterrupted days to “clear your psychic decks.”

Was this guy nuts? I have a home office, which is to say my entire HOUSE is my inbox. And what working woman with a family can get two uninterrupted days anywhere? Intrigued by this fantasy, I read on. The next step was to “process” the inbox by doing any task that could be completed in two minutes or less, and putting reminders of



actions that take longer than two minutes on a list or calendar. This made sense, so ignoring step one, I tweaked step two and spent 30-60 minutes each day ~~processing~~ all that paper cluttering up my house and mind.

Now, only items with a specific day or time commitment go on my little week-by-week Moleskin calendar; blank facing pages note what must be done that week, but not on any particular day. Attached to the front of the calendar are 3x5 sticky notes listing errands. A magazine-style wall file beside my desk holds pocket folders for current client projects, Pending, Word Woes--a running list of aggravations, so whenever I have to call a geek to fix a disaster, I get minor problems solved as well. A Library folder notes materials to check out and return. Supporting details and research for large projects are on a bookshelf, in a file cabinet, or in computer files.

Everything else I want to do is indexed on a ~~Projects List.~~ I use a 1-inch binder that as Allen suggests, is separated not by day and time, but by context—In the Office, People to Contact, etc. It includes three categories new to me that have proved invaluable: Someday, Maybe, and Tickler. Allen combines ~~—someday~~ and ~~—maybe~~, but I separated them—I know which stories I'm dying to write and which I'm on the fence about. ~~—Tickler~~ reminds me of once-in-a-while tasks like defragging the computer.

Though my calendar, files, and folders were already in place, it took nearly 6 weeks—about 40 hours—to set up this system. It was worth it. I no longer have ~~To File~~ piles and my inbox is—drumroll, please: Empty. Checking my calendar daily, and my Projects binder & folders once or twice a week requires less than half the time I once wasted making daily To Do lists.

Allen maintains that any task carping on your consciousness creates anxiety because you feel like

you've broken an agreement with yourself. So if you've ever uttered those six little words, ~~—Someday, I'm gonna clean the garage,~~ just slap that promise right out of your head and onto your Someday list. Then, you'll be able to concentrate on your novel.

Laurie Thomas



MEMBER NEWS

HUNTING THE WOLFPACK is a new novel by member Michael McQuade. It is an ebook and available on Amazon's Kindle, Barnes & Noble's Nook, all Apple devices, Smashwords, and other ebook readers, as well as an iPhone. The story begins at the close of World War II and tracks the escape of top Nazi war criminals, who flee to South America. Mark Shelden is the protagonist that attempts to bring them to justice.

Jack Martin is pleased to announce that Fireship Press has just published the third of his Alphonso Clay Civil War mysteries, MARCHING THROUGH GEORGIA. This tale continues the adventures of the Union sleuth that began in JOHN BROWN'S BODY and continued in BATTLE CRY OF FREEDON. In MARCHING THROUGH GEORGIA General William Tecumseh Sherman commands a mighty Union army, tasked with delivering a knockout blow to the Confederacy by rendering the rich resources of Georgia unavailable to the rebellion. Relying on seemingly unimpeachable intelligence, he launches an all-out attack on the Confederate lines at Kennesaw Mountain—and is bloodily repulsed. To make matters worse, his most reliable scout, Captain Ambrose Bierce, is critically wounded, and



Sherman's most reliable general is mysteriously killed under the cover of battle. Sherman is persuaded by the army nurse Teresa Duval that these are murderous attacks perpetrated by a traitor in his army. She urges him to summon Major Alphonso Clay, General Grant's sinister troubleshooter. However, Sherman is unaware that Duval is a spy for the Wall Street financier Jay Gould, and has her own agenda regarding Clay. Alphonso Clay and his friend Lieutenant Jeremiah Lot find themselves accompanying Sherman's army on its march through Georgia, desperate to identify the traitorous murderer before he can strike again, and possibly allow the Confederacy to snatch a miraculous victory from the jaws of certain defeat. **MARCHING THROUGH GEORGIA** can be obtained through Amazon.com at http://www.amazon.com/Marching-Through-Georgia-Alphonso-Mystery/dp/1611791731/ref=pd_rhf_p_t_3 either in paperback or kindle.



Mystery Writers of America

The publishing business is experiencing massive changes and if MWA is to remain relevant, we have to change, too. That's why we've revised our Approved Publisher criteria to make books published solely in e-book format or using print-on-demand eligible under certain conditions for MWA membership (and, perhaps later, for Edgar eligibility as well). Self-published books, whether they are published in print or as e-books, still do not qualify for MWA active membership.

To see the new MWA Publisher Guidelines, follow the link below:

<http://www.mysterywriters.org/?q=PublisherGuidelines>

WRITING SEMINAR OPPORTUNITY – Another SinOC Member Benefit!

James Bell, organizer of **So What Does It Really Take to Sell Your Novel or Screenplay?** will be offering discounts to some select writing groups, like SinC chapters. For any three or more people from a group who sign up, he'll knock \$50 off the price...for EACH person. For more information, email him directly at: jamescottbell@gmail.com. For more information about the seminars, go to: http://web.mac.com/jamescottbell/Site/The_Seminar.html.



MEMBER EVENTS

Our President has a series of great events coming up:

September 15-18, 2011 – Jeri Westerson will be at Bouchercon with two panels:

Thursday, September 14, 10 a.m.–11 a.m., –MAKE THE SUN SHINE: It's a great umbrella: discussing the sub-genres." Jeri Westerson (M), Tasha Alexander, Timothy Hallinan, Adrian Magson, Jon McGoran, Kelli Stanley.

Saturday, September 17, 2:30 p.m.–3:30 p.m., –THE COLOUR OF AMBER: Ancient times, plenty of crime." Patricia Rice (M), Albert Bell, Tony Hays, Sharan Newman, John Maddox Roberts, Jeri Westerson. **(During Bouchercon)**

Saturday, September 17, 2011, 6:30 p.m. – We're sneaking away from Bouchercon this evening. A



star-studded line-up of LGBT authors to be at Left Bank Books in St. Louis. Who will be there? Neil Plakcy, Greg Herren, Jean Redmann, Jeri Westerson cleverly disguised as [Haley Walsh](#), Ellen Hart, Jeffrey Ricker, Rob Byrnes, and Val McDermid! 399 Euclid Ave., St. Louis, MO.

Tuesday, September 27, 2011 – THE DEMON’S PARACHMENT out in paperback!

Member and Newsletter Co-Editor **Gayle K. Brunelle** will be speaking on **October 2** at the West Hollywood Book Fair (WeHo), **10:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.**, at the Mystery and Suspense Pavilion: CAN YOU HANDLE THE TRUTH?: TRUE CRIME AUTHORS DISCUSS THEIR MOST CHILLING CASES. True crime writers discuss their fascination with society’s most disturbing crimes, how they dig for the most revealing details – and how they live with what they’ve uncovered after the final page is written. Gayle and co-author Annette Finley-Croswhite will discuss their recent book MURDER IN THE METRO. Signing @ 11:30 a.m., Mystery Ink Bookstore Booth. For more information, go to: http://www.westhollywoodbookfair.org/?page_id=3756.

In addition to Gayle, three more OC SinC members will be participating on crime panels throughout the day: Aileen Baron, D.P. Lyle and Jeri Westerson. Their books will be available at the Mystery Ink booth. Please come and support our fellow members and enjoy the Book Fair!



MYSTERY INK EVENTS

Mystery Ink Bookstore

Saturday, October 29, 2:00 p.m.

Marcos Villatoro discusses and signs BLOOD DAUGHTERS

Emmy Award winner and author of the Romilia Chacon thrillers, Villatoro’s latest thriller has FBI Agent Romilia Chacón, a Salvadoran American, investigating a child’s death on the border between California and Mexico. Following this case leads her into a world that swallows her in with its horror and leads her deeper into her own troubles.

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

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

Members might want to check out BOOK COUNTRY, a website dedicated to genre fiction readers and writers. Here is how the site’s creators describe their service:

–Focused on romance, fantasy, sci-fi and crime fiction, Book Country is designed to help new authors hone their craft and obtain useful feedback



on works in progress from readers and fellow writers. The site offers agents and editors a place to discover new talent.

Book Country is a subsidiary of Penguin Group (USA), a Pearson company. Though owned by Penguin Group (USA), Book Country is a separate entity, both legally and practically with fulltime Book Country staff members. Books from all publishing houses will be mentioned on the site, and staff members from all publishers are welcome to participate. Book Country is focused on the success, education and enjoyment of its members.

For more information, visit their website at www.BookCountry.com.

KINGS RIVER LIFE MAGAZINE offers another publication possibility. Its owners describe it thusly: –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.” For more information, Visit: <http://KingsRiverLife.com> or Contact Lorie Ham, publisher, at: life@kingsriverlife.com.



FROM NATIONAL

Recent News – Find out more about all these happenings at the Sisters in Crime website:

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

- Sisters in Crime has produced an excellent Summer 2011 Summit Report on how readers find books of interest to them in the digital age. Check it out at: <http://www.sistersincrime.org/associations/10614/files/SummitReportSummer2011.pdf>
- Congratulations! You've just sold your first book. Then you get the big question: How do you plan to promote it? [Shameless Promotion for Brazen Hussies](#)
- [SinC Into Great Writing!](#) workshop: Mapping The New World of Publishing: Or, How to Succeed in a Business That's Really Trying, **September 14, 2011**.
- [Writers' Police Academy](#), **September 23-25, 2011**. Sisters in Crime members can attend for a deeply-discounted registration fee of \$100.

UPCOMING CONFERENCES AND CONVENTIONS

September 15 - 18

Bouchercon 2011 - World Mystery Conference, St. Louis, Mo

For more information, go to:

<http://www.bouchercon.info/>

October 2

Don't miss the West Hollywood Book Fair to be held at the new West Hollywood Library and West Hollywood Park. The fair features a Mystery and Suspense Pavilion all day long! For more information, go to:

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

September 15th through November 15th – Malice Domestic



Greetings from Malice!

Every year, Malice Domestic awards two grants to unpublished writers to help support their writing careers. The winners are awarded \$1500 as well as a paid registration for the following year's convention and two nights lodging. Submissions will be accepted from **September 15th through November 15th only!**

For more information about the William F Deek-Malice Domestic Grant Program including submission instructions and guidelines, click here: <http://malicedomestic.org/grants.html>

Thanks to everyone who has registered for Malice Domestic 24 so far. If you haven't yet, registration is open on our website as well.

November 4-6, 2011, the La Jolla Writers Conference will be kicking off its second decade at Paradise Point Resort & Spa on the water in San Diego. Visit www.lajollawritersconference.com.

Keynotes – who will also teach classes:

Jan Burke

Andrew Gross

Raymond Feist

Since its beginning, this has been a pay-it-forward conference. Everyone, from organizers (us) to keynotes to faculty donates their time so we can keep the cost to a minimum (early-birds sign up at \$295 for three days with three keynote meals included).

We choose our faculty for their knowledge, their ability to share that knowledge effectively, and their generosity in doing so. And from Michael Connelly to Stephen J. Cannell, from Lisa Jackson to Lisa Gardner to Tess Gerritsen (returning in 2012) to James Rollins, and all the rest, they have done so.

Covering the art, craft, and business of writing, it is

a great conference, and we would love your members and individual chapters to know about it. Please check out www.lajollawritersconference.com and contact me at [858-467-1978](tel:858-467-1978) or by email with any questions you might have.



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 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 is the 1st of each month!