



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. For directions, visit: www.ocsistersincrime.org. ([IRWD map](#))

"IRVINE RANCH WATER DISTRICT NEITHER SUPPORTS NOR ENDORSES THE CAUSE NOR ACTIVITIES OF ORGANIZATIONS WHICH USE THE DISTRICT'S MEETING ROOMS THAT ARE MADE AVAILABLE AS A PUBLIC SERVICE"



MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

To join or renew your membership in our Sisters in Crime Chapter, you must also be a member of National. To renew your national membership, go to: www.sistersincrime.org/. To renew for our chapter, go to: www.ocsistersincrime.org/membership.htm and download the form, or fill out the form at the end of this newsletter and mail it in with your check. You can join national online or send your check to national to us, along with your check for our chapter.

If you have not already done so, please renew your Sisters in Crime membership today!



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UPCOMING MEETINGS

In 2014, we will meet on the fourth Sunday of every month, with the exception of December. Here are the remaining dates: May 25, Jun. 29, Jul. 27, Aug. 24, Sep. 28, Oct. 26, Nov. 23, and Dec. 14.

Our next meeting is **Sunday, May 25th**. We will begin at **2:00 pm** with a writer's forum, discussing subgenres in the mystery field.

At 3:00 pm, our featured speaker will be **Mary Marks**. Born and raised in Los Angeles and the San Francisco Bay Area, Mary earned a B.A. in Anthropology from UCLA and an M.A. in Public Administration from the American Jewish University in Los Angeles. In 2004 she enrolled in the UCLA Extension Writers Program. Her first novel, *Forget Me Knot*, was a finalist in a national writing competition in 2011. She currently reviews cozy mysteries for *The New York Journal of Books* at www.nyjournalofbooks.com. She will discuss her journey to publication and how her series came about.

Our August meeting will be a joint meeting of Mystery Writers of America and Orange County Sisters in Crime. Naomi Hirahara will moderate a panel that includes the following authors: Lisa Brackman, Steph Cha, Kim Fay, and Timothy Hallinan. Join us on August 24th for an entertaining presentation and an Asian style buffet.



MEETING ROUNDUP

Pat Broeske and Cynthia Weitz contributed to this article

Our April meeting featured a lively Readers Forum. The topic: technology in thrillers and mysteries. When is it used, misused, overused? Among the books that were mentioned:

- The Longmire series (written by Craig Johnson), featuring Sheriff Walt Longmire, who is old school and prefers to sidestep technology.
- Sue Grafton's Kinsey Millhone, set in the 1980s, so both author and character don't have to get bogged down by today's technology.
- The ultra high-tech authoritative works of Tom Clancy.



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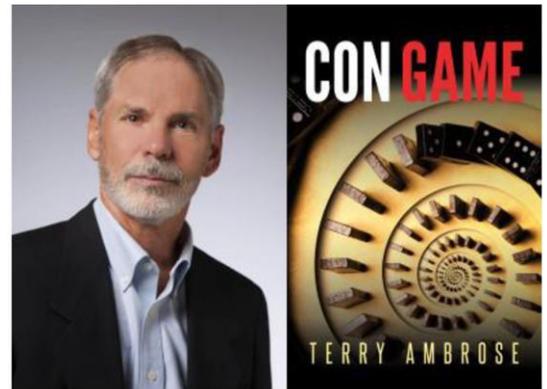
- The techno thrillers by Daniel Suarez (“Freedom™” and “Daemon”) about a computer run amok.

There are challenges in dealing with technology – including its ever-changing nature. Authors have to stay up to date or risk looking silly. Sometimes word choices can circumvent problems: instead of mentioning that so-and-so picked up his cell phone to call, just say he “made a call.”

Suggestions were made to use enough technology to make a point in a book where chronology doesn’t matter and avoid technology fillers. But if you’re writing a technology study, know what you’re talking about, and perhaps push it a little further. Consider DNA and data bases in the writing. It’s often better to use the technology to complicate the investigation and make it harder.

Nowadays, cell phones have a tracking chip which benefits the police, and, as of October, all new cars will have a location chip. It will be interesting to see how future criminals circumvent that. Also, too much technical information may slow down the action. As writers, we shouldn’t be professors. We may need to do extensive research then boil it down to one sentence.

Technology was a recurring theme of the talk by SinC member and author **Terry Ambrose**. His topic, “Staying Ahead of the Con,” zeroed in on internet and phone scams. Of the latter, Terry noted, “The good news is, the personal touch is back. The bad news is, it’s in the form of scammers.” As an example, he cited telemarketing calls from a company that calls itself TechResolvers. It’s MO is to call people and tell them their computers are infected with malware; they know this because the infected computer somehow sent a signal to the TechResolvers’ computer ... The whole idea is to get the person who picked up the phone to give up their credit card or other pertinent information.



Some of the oldest scams are variations of the Nigerian 419 scam. That’s the one that involves an advance fee ... in order to cash in on an inheritance or other monies allegedly due the target of the communication. (That communication could be via email, letter or a phone call.) The “419” comes from a section of the Nigerian Criminal Code about “obtaining money by false pretenses; Cheating”. This scam, incidentally, dates to the 18th or 19th Centuries!

Terry discussed some of the recent headline-making cases involving breach of data, such as the Target credit card case, and the need to protect and regularly update the passwords we use. He utilizes a password manager program. (Examples are Dashlane.com and 1Password.) Syncing devices can also cause problems, and Terry suggests that every account have a separate password.

Fraudulent charities prey on victims and 90% of home businesses are fraudulent. And he advises to never pay bills on-line at a hotel or at a Starbucks. As for the psychological traits of con artists and grifters, they regard their victims as “marks,” or “their living,” not as real people. Some cons have said they wanted to teach them a lesson.



So how does this relate to writing? Cons can be used as a hook, and hooks, which should always have high stakes, need to be fleshed out. Red Herrings are useful. Misinformation from an unreliable source is generally entertaining. A writer can look at each story as a con with characters who divert us from the main action and keep us hopping. Twists and turns should be believable and writers may incorporate the element of surprise.

Terry uses humor and a quick wit to make cons and scams seem both funny and downright frightening. Terry's first job collecting money as a "skip tracer," introduced him to the world of liars, who come from all walks of life. When his negotiations failed, big guys with tow trucks, working in the dark, would step in to assist him. This taught him to keep his car in the garage.

Terry, himself the victim of Identify Theft, writes a monthly newsletter about real life scams and cons. The author of two ongoing series, his just-out "Con Game," is the second title (following "License to Lie") to feature criminologist Skip Cosgrove and con artist Roxy Tanner. Terry also writes the McKenna mysteries – about a Hawaii-based skip tracer.

As Terry noted, con artists can create plenty of entertainment for the reader ... and the writer can use them as unreliable narrators. They can certainly up the stakes of the plot.

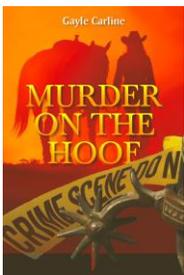
For more on Terry and his books, and his tips on how to deal with scammers, visit his websites at www.terryambrose.com and www.TheMysteryWriter.com.

Three Tips for Online Security from Terry Ambrose...

- 1) Check out businesses and charities with the Better Business Bureau at bbb.org.
- 2) Online scammers create great fake emails and websites. Don't be fooled by good artwork.
- 3) Never succumb to pressure. Pressure is the con man's friend. Walk away at the first sign.



MEMBER NEWS



SinC member **Gayle Carline** has left her Peri Minneopa Mystery Series briefly to venture into the world of romantic suspense. Her latest book, **MURDER ON THE HOOF**, is being released May 21st, and features a brand new protagonist. Young widow Willie Adams is at a horse show, trying to buy her first horse. Instead, she finds herself caught up in a murder investigation, and attracting the attention of two interesting men. Will she choose the cowboy or the detective, or is she too busy solving the crime to consider romance?

For more information, visit <http://gaylecarline.com/murder-on-the-hoof/>



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Terry Ambrose released his latest thriller, “Con Game,” on April 29. Con artist Roxy Tanner just walked away with \$2.6 million on her latest job, but left behind a dead body. Skip Cosgrove wants to help Roxy find out who killed her mark, but he has his own problems—a man the former criminologist once helped put behind bars is back for revenge. With the cops closing in on Roxy, and a killer on the hunt for Skip, the last thing they need is a gutsy street kid turning their lives upside down—until it happens. Now, all three must decide how far they will go to survive a killer’s con game. Learn more on Terry’s website at terryambrose.com.

New OC Sisters in Crime member **Barbara DeMarco-Barrett** has a short story, “Message in a Bottle,” in The Big Click magazine. Find it online at www.thebigclickmag.com.

Walt Golden just published his sixth e-book, *Mary, Mary Quite Contrary*.

Here is the schedule for the next two shows on Crime and Science Radio with **DP Lyle** and **Jan Burke**:

5-17-14: Dealing With the Dead: A Life in the Morgue: In Conversation with Dr. Cyril Wecht

5-31-14: Deadly Doctors, Killer Nurses and other Medical Miscreants

CRIME & SCIENCE RADIO, <http://crimeandscienceradio.com>. Listen live or later. Each show is archived.



MYSTERY INK NEWS

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

Store Events:

Saturday, May 17, 1:00 p.m. – Kate Carlisle & Hannah Dennison
LAUNCH PARTY! Wine & Cheese! Cake!



Kate Carlisle - THE BOOK STOPS HERE

You never know what treasures can be found in someone's attic. Unfortunately for bookbinder Brooklyn Wainwright, some of them are worth killing for....

In Kate Carlisle's eighth book in her Bibliophile Mysteries, Brooklyn is thrilled to be appearing on the San Francisco edition of the hit TV show *This Old Attic* as a rare-book expert and appraiser. But after the airing of her first subject, a very valuable first-edition copy of the classic children's story *The Secret Garden*, several violent incidents occur on the set, and Brooklyn is almost killed. And then Brooklyn finds the owner of the book dead. Brooklyn had better find the clever killer soon or more than her chance at prime time may be canceled...permanently.

Hannah Dennison - MURDER AT HONEYCHURCH HALL

Set against the backdrop of Agatha Christie's beloved Devon, Hannah Dennison debuts her new series. TV celebrity Kat Stanford discovers that her newly widowed mother Iris has recklessly bought a dilapidated carriage house on a country estate known as Honeychurch Hall. Iris's arrival is greeted with suspicion—but that's not all. Iris harbors an even bigger secret that not even her daughter knows.

"This is the perfect classic English village mystery, but with the addition of charm, wit and a thoroughly modern touch..." Rhys Bowen

"*Murder at Honeychurch Hall* establishes her as the mistress of hilarious British mysteries. Fabulous fun...." Carolyn Hart

Outside Events:

Saturday, May 10 – Literary Guild of Orange County

Headliners: Anne Perry, Nicole Mones, Hank Phillippi Ryan

Breakout Speakers: Deborah Crombie, Monica Holloway, Attica Locke, Ivy Pochoda - website:
<http://lgoc.org/our-authors.html>



UPCOMING CONFERENCES, CONVENTIONS, and EVENTS

Donald Maass Workshop: WRITING THE BREAKOUT NOVEL Sat., June 7, 2014, 9:00 am to 5:00 pm

The New York/TriState Chapter of Sisters in Crime is presenting a DONALD MAASS WORKSHOP: WRITING THE BREAKOUT NOVEL, an intensive, hands-on workshop for fiction writers who want to take their fiction to the next level. By teaching the techniques that make any story feel big, Mr. Maass shows writers how to get there. Participants should bring a WIP and writing materials. The workshop, which includes continental breakfast, two coffee breaks, and a box lunch, is only \$60 for members of Sisters in Crime. It will



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be held in Greenwich Village near Union Square in Manhattan. FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION contact Catherine at cmaiorisi@gmail.com . TO REGISTER: Mail a check made out to "Sisters in Crime New York/Tri-State" to Peggy Ehrhart, 168 Park Avenue, Leonia, New Jersey 07605. Include the following information: Name, address, e-mail address, and SinC chapter name.



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. **The deadline is the 7th 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: