

Crime Scene

A Sisters in Crime (Toronto Chapter) Publication



December 2010

A Call For More Sisters in Crime

What Jill Edmondson calls her "nerdy academic background" spawned her sassy first mystery novel, *Blood and Groom*.

In recent years, the Toronto-based author wrote several academic papers on women in North American Hardboiled Crime fiction for her master's degree in cultural studies from Athabasca University. Her research found that, in recent decades, women characters have indeed staked out their territory in crime fiction. But although these characters include feisty, kick-ass fictional women like Sara Paretsky's V.I. Warshawski and Sue Grafton's Kinsey Millhone, she told Sisters in Crime Toronto's November meeting that "about 97 per cent of them are accidental sleuths."



Edmondson found that crime fiction largely hasn't caught up with the reality of women excelling in a wide variety of careers. In many crime fiction novels, women

characters hold traditional "women's jobs," such as hairdresser, caterer or travel agent. And many female protagonists, she said, need to "have the guy bailing her out."

Sisters in Crime – Upcoming Programs

December 2, 6:30 p.m. Annual Holiday Party
Spring Rolls Restaurant (2nd Floor), 240 Queen St. W., Toronto (across from City TV)

January 20, 2011, 7:15 p.m. *Contests: What Do You REALLY Win?* A panel discussion with Madeleine Harris-Callway, Rosemary McCracken D. J. McIntosh and Melodie Campbell **University of Toronto Faculty Club, 41 Willcocks St.** (East of Spadina between Harbord and College) Join us an hour or so early for dinner in the basement restaurant.

And with notable exceptions, such as Warshawski, Millhone, J.A. Jance's Sherrif Joanna Brady, and Canadian authors Lou Allin's RCMP Corporal Holly Martin and Vicki Delany's Constable Molly Smith, Edmondson observed that North American crime fiction has a decided lack of women in law enforcement .

In 2005, Edmondson took Caro Soles' course on writing

mysteries at George Brown College. One evening, the class attended a presentation given by acclaimed Canadian mystery writer Rosemary Aubert. "She stressed that aspiring crime writers needed to know the genre," Edmondson said, "and she said that should tell them what's missing from it."

So when she decided to take a stab at writing crime novels herself, Edmondson applied Aubert's advice to her own research, and concluded that her book needed a female protagonist who's a law-enforcement professional, good family dynamics because women are often called upon to balance work and family lives. She also decided

the book needed some "fun sex," to balance the "macho take" on coupling in crime novels with male protagonists.

The result was Edmondson's first Sasha Jackson novel, which came out exactly one year ago. Sasha is a fledgling private investigator who has a part-time phone sex job to tide her over until her chosen career takes off. She lives with her father and brother, and although she never gets laid in the book, there's plenty of comical one-sided sex while she talks dirty to her clients.

Visit www.jilledmondson.com to read more about Jill and the Sasha Jackson mysteries.

From Far and Wide

by Jake Doherty

As a retired journalist, I long have had an evocative sense of place and the peculiarities of people who live nearby. I have also concluded that bad things can happen in all communities, regardless of size and location. Interesting characters stand out more in small towns, or perhaps they are just easier to spot. Either way, the universal themes of human frailties are not confined to the metro cities.

For example, when I retired after Conrad Black and I disagreed on politics, I had no intention of writing. But then I attended an anniversary party in Kingston where a friend with Corrections Canada complained about the impact of budget cuts on inmates. Too many young guys would be double-bunked, both hell-bent on revenge. Four years later, and after much research, *The Rankin Files* emerged.

Most of my short stories are small town based, due in part to the deal I sold to Osprey/SunMedia. Therese Greenwood, a colleague from my Whig Standard days, provided SM with six original stories each all set in towns where they had papers-- i.e. small town Ontario. This year the series went national in both digital and print formats with a potential readership of more than one million (once a publisher always a publisher).

Working on my latest novel, *Bearwalker Alibi*, with my editor, Cheryl Freedman is a treat. We've had a couple of face-to-face meetings but the editing and revising are done by email. Once I decoded her tracking system, the pace picked up quickly. Not only do I value her as a professional editor, I respect her judgment. We are now about two thirds done, and then we turn it over to Ginger Press of Owen Sound.

Ginger Press and its publisher, Maryann Thomas, are always supportive and really do allow folks like me to tell their stories. Still, one must reach out, travel, and literally look down the side roads or regional centers. I have had great success in selling books in Chapter's London stores with Terry Carroll and Rene Natan, sometime marketed as the WOW Group (Western Ontario Writers). Like me, Terry is a newspaper publisher and well understands the challenge of moving from journalism to fiction. Crime Writers' Conferences are mandatory for us outlanders along with the Scene of The Crime conference on Wolfe Island near Kingston. The big draw for me there was Barbara Fradkin's very useful seminar on point of view, which was never an issue in newspaper writing.

Distribution and marketing are often problematic in small towns so one has to be innovative. I frequently team up with Marg Howard, a great cookbook writer, for readings. We have worked together in Williamsford, Creemore, Orangeville and Leith, all within easy driving distance from Owen Sound. The CBC's Ontario Morning Show and Freshair on the weekend are also welcoming promo opportunities.

Perhaps as a former and widely-traveled journalist, it's been instinctive in me to include foreign influences in my work. My first novel reached into the IRA and Irish media while the second book begins in Germany. The short stories are much the same -- with characters from Jamaica, Columbia, England and the United States.

I am also told that I understand the redemptive angst of older men, which was never intended when I set out on this adventure/journey but life worked out that way. I am male and I will be 75 next spring. That may be a turnoff for some publishers but heck, this is who I really am!

Round the 'Hood

Check out what some of our other Sisters have been doin' for themselves

Our brother, Stephen Booth, has plotted locations from Lost River, using Google (and notice a the mention of a Toronto bookstore on the same page!

<http://www.stephen-booth.com/news.htm>

The Atlanta Chapter is hosting Murder Goes South, Jan 28th and 29th:

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

The mothership has posted their 2010 Summit Report, focusing on the players in the high tech e-book world on the West Coast, found under Members Only, SinC links:

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

The Hawaii Chapter has summaries of their meetings. You can spend hours going through their forensic info!

<http://www.sistersincrimehawaii.org/meetings.html#summaries>

Val McDermid has a way to beat writer's block. Check out her Authormatic:

<http://www.valmcdermid.com/pages/funstuff.html>

CRIMINAL INTENT - Part 1

(Member Author Interviews)

Featuring: Jane K. Cleland

Interviewed by: Janet Costello

*Jane K. Cleland is the author of five Josie Prescott Antiques Mysteries. The Library Journal named the first, **Consigned to Death**, a core title for a Cozy Collection. She has been past president and is currently a board member of the New York Chapter of Mystery Writers of America and she chairs the Wolfe Pack's literary awards. She has been a Sister in Crime for seven years.*

Q: You write traditional mysteries. What defines this category?

A: Traditional mysteries, also known as cozies, share these four elements: One, the solution depends on the deduction ability of the detective; there are no, or little, forensics. Two, the victim and the killer know one another; there are no random serial killers, for instance. Three, there is no graphic or explicit sex, no violence, or cussin'. Four, ideally, you meet the victim before they die; further, the victim is generally killed within the first chapter or two.

Q: Your series has been described as the *Antiques Roadshow* for mystery readers. Why, in interviews, do you embrace this?

A: I think the reference to the popular TV show lets readers know both the subject and feel of my books. It informs readers that the book revolves around antiques. They don't know which one necessarily—I might write about a Navajo rug or a Victorian tea set—but they understand that an antique will be pivotal to the plot. Also, it provides an answer to the question, "What are your books about?" When I say, "Josie's an antiques appraiser who uses her knowledge to solve mysteries. If you like the *Antiques Roadshow*, probably, you'll enjoy my books", people know what I mean.

Q: You have a very diverse marketing strategy: you have a website, you blog, you have an AHMM podcast, and you have book trailers and interviews on YouTube. Is this broad range of methods worth the effort or do just a couple reach the majority of your target audience?

A: I am reminded of John Wanamaker (the founder of the department store chain, and considered by many to have been a whiz at advertising). He said, “Half the money I spend on advertising is wasted; the trouble is I don’t know which half”. My answer is in two parts. First, I don’t know. Second, while I don’t know, I suspect touring is the most important thing you can do—by traveling, you meet booksellers and readers. But the videos on YouTube... that makes you accessible to the world, not only to people who show up at stops on your tour... and bookmarks are a nice take-away... and the website is key... hmmm... my first answer was right... I don’t know.

Q: What is your stance on outlining?

A: Well, of course, I don’t actually have a stance because everybody is different. Every author needs to find what works for him or her. I wrote the first Josie Prescott Antiques Mystery, *Consigned to Death*, without an outline, and it sold quickly and did very well. After that, I found it much more difficult to write without knowing where I was heading. I now write a detailed synopsis for every book. Between you and me, I hate, hate, hate writing them, but I know it’s a great tool, so I persevere. My editor uses my synopsis to help identify plot snags before I write the book, thus saving me major rewrites. In *Deadly Threads*, which will be out in April 2011, the pivotal antique is vintage clothing. Josie gets a Maine Coon cat... they’re known for fetching like dogs. The synopsis for *Deadly Threads* took five months to write. Because it was so detailed, I was able to write the book in two months. But no one should confuse writing a synopsis for writing a book... they’re very different writing tasks. A synopsis is an aerial view of the story. You can see how the path winds, where it’s intersected by a brook, and where it’s obscured by dense foliage. When you write the book, you aren’t hovering overhead; you’re on the ground, tripping over the roots, sloshing through the brook, and hiding under the dense foliage. From my point of view, writing the book is easier once the synopsis is set. Here’s a tip for writing a synopsis for a traditional or cozy mystery: Your novel is likely to be in the 80,000-90,000 word range. That’s 300-350 pages (Times Roman, 12 pts, double spaced, no extra space between paragraphs), and about 30 chapters. Therefore, if you aim to write a paragraph a chapter, you’ll have about three paragraphs per page, and you’ll end up with a 10-page synopsis, which is ideal.

Q: Josie is dating Ty, the former police chief of her town. She also has a lot of interaction with the other local police. This shows the police detecting methods, in a well-rounded manner. How did you acquire insight into community policing?

A: Hmmm. One answer is that my brother-in-law is a lieutenant in the Newark, Delaware police force. That gives me a little bit of an inside edge. The other answer is that I make it up (grin). As there are no forensics that are relevant to the plot, I don’t need to be exact.

Q: Josie is a woman of principle, against corruption, in favour of fresh starts, and trusting her employees. What aspects of her character will this ongoing series address?

A: Thank you... I like that description of Josie, and I think it’s true. In addition to everything you named, Josie is driven by her desire to fit in, to find community. This desire is juxtaposed against the rugged, isolated coast of New Hampshire—the cold winters are beautiful, but not welcoming.

Q: Your books have tidbits of Rex Stout’s Nero Wolfe trivia tucked into them. You chair the Nero Award and the Black Orchid Novella Award. On YouTube you can be seen playing Lily Rowan in an interview. Please explain your fascination with Rex Stout.

A: Yes, I’m the chair of the literary awards for the Wolfe Pack, which is the literary society that celebrates all things Nero Wolfe. Doesn’t literary society sound better than fan club? (Charming tilt of the head.) You asked what it is about the stories that draws me in... it’s the relationship between Nero Wolfe and Archie Goodwin, it’s the astonishing power of meshing opposites. Nero Wolfe is on one end of the socially acceptable behaviour scale. Archie is on the other end. And yet, together, it’s as if their two parts form one whole.

Q: You also work as a professional meeting facilitator and corporate trainer, and you have written *Business Writing for Results*, among other business communication books. How do your corporate skills factor into your novels?

A: If left to my druthers, Josie’s business would be a more important factor in the stories. Sister in Crime board member, Jim Huang, once said “Jane created the kind of company we all wish we worked at, and Josie is the kind of boss we all wish we had.” That said, in a cozy, the business needs to be part of the setting, not part of the plot; it’s never going to be more important than that, because this is not a How-to-Grow-Your-Business book. My specific expertise as a trainer does not come into play. (Although Josie is a very good mentor to her staff.)

Q: You gave a six-word memoir in an interview, “Striving for clarity changed my life”. Could you elaborate?

A: I have, as an overarching writing goal, to express what I want to say—my thoughts, my ideas—unambiguously. I don’t want readers to misunderstand my intentions. Which is way easier said than done. It isn’t just a matter of watching antecedents. It’s dealing with perception. If I write about setting, for instance, I want to be certain people see the picture in my head. For example, when I

described winter in New Hampshire, I wrote that everything was brown or white. But the browns and the whites of New Hampshire are different than the browns and whites of, say, Colorado. In New Hampshire, there are snow-tipped, three-hundred year old stone walls, leafless maples and oaks and elms, and snow-covered dunes. In Colorado, the trees are poplars, and there are towering mountains, and acres of meadows, and no seaweed strewn beaches. Striving for clarity dictates my every move as a writer.

Q: How has being a Sister in Crime affected you?

Being a member made me aware of pay equity/review inches issues, which I never would have otherwise known

Spy Tech 2010

By D. J. McIntosh

Do you sometimes get the feeling you're being watched? Or that your next door neighbour is spying on you? Before you get ready to sign on with a shrink, think twice – you could be right! Nowadays, it's a piece of cake to secretly video and record just about anyone. The gadgets invented by James Bond's "Q" seem quaintly old fashioned by today's standards.

We spent an entertaining and sometimes shocking time listening to Ursula Lezana from Spy Tech who gave us a good idea of how widespread and easily available "spying" devices are now. She explained that there is an increasing consumer demand for these devices to keep a check on nannies and how they treat children when they are alone with them, abusive neighbours (one woman couldn't figure out why her plants were disappearing until she secretly videoed the neighbour lady next door in the middle of a theft), children being bullied at school, and significant others who may be cheating.



Private investigators and investigative reporters have traditionally made use of such products but now the array of material available to them is much greater.

about. Also, I really admire Nancy Martin's monthly updates. She provides an invaluable clipping service, and I'm very appreciative of the range of information.

Learn more about Jane at <http://www.janecland.net/>

And see her beautiful home at

http://www.janecland.net/htm/comm/2008-11-14_NYTimes.htm

Jane asks that you visit The Wolfe Pack site:

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

Another growing market is businesses tracking employee theft in the office or at the cash register much more easily with the new devices.

The law apparently permits video recording *in public places only*, or audio recordings, providing at least one individual, and that can be the person doing the recording, is aware of it.

The most fun was viewing the array of products available for a relatively low cost. Pens that are both video and audio recorders can be stuck into a front pocket or a flap on the outside of your purse or bag. An audio recorder can be attached to your phone and the conversation subsequently downloaded to your computer, a video camera is available that is less than one inch long, a child's car dinky toy can be placed with other toys and will video what takes place in the room.

Looking for an innovative Christmas gift? Think about a handsome stainless steel man's watch (video and audio), a harmless looking clock radio or a surveillance key chain for the Christmas stocking.

What if you're afraid someone is taping you? No problem. There's a device that will flash red if it detects another recording device. Several products had useful protective functions for people living alone like the device that will tell you how many times your door has been opened when you're not at home. Another can track how far and where your car has travelled if you've lent it to someone else.

There is no doubt these innovations can be useful to people encountering problems but they carry a warning flag because they can also be used against you. Women's gym rooms, public washrooms and even private bedrooms are prime candidates.

The ability to invade someone's personal privacy has never been greater.



Crime Scene, the newsletter of the Toronto Chapter of Sisters in Crime, is published every two months. We meet on the third Thursday of each month at 7:15 p.m. at the University of Toronto Faculty Club, 41 Willcocks Street.

We encourage reprints, but only with credit to the articles' writer and the Toronto chapter, and after notifying the Crime Scene editor, Janet Costello (jelcszygy@hotmail.com)

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DETECTING BOOKS TO TV

By Janet Costello

Decode these TV shows. All are using the same letter-substitute code. Below, in alphabetical order, are the authors of the books that became these shows.

1. P C F S C M O T S R D E E J
2. O F G S R D E E J
3. I O E G A T E B B F E X O
4. I M G M X G C O I R D S L E R B E F I P E V I M
5. S D D S F Z N G S S M
6. V G F J E A T V Z X O S F C S X
7. X W S M X S F
8. O T S X I C M O
9. V C X X V I F W D S

Bonus Question: A I X O D S (This current TV series has generated novels by its protagonist.)

Authors: Leslie Charteris, Agatha Christie, aka Frederick Dannay & Manfred Lee, Charlaine Harris, Maureen Jennings, Val McDermid, Robert B. Parker, Ruth Rendell, R. D. Wingfield

Answers on page 10

Dinner with Elena

By Deanna Dunn

Actor Hugh Grant has an older brother who is even better looking than him.

This is one of the fascinating tidbits we learned from English crime writer Elena Forbes, who joined about a dozen Toronto Sisters in Crime for dinner at Il Fornello's Harbourfront location on Oct. 27th.

Forbes knows this information because she acted in *The Importance of Being Earnest* with Hugh Grant, in secondary school.

Forbes was in Toronto to appear at the Harbourfront International Festival of Authors, which this year celebrated all things noir. We were contacted by publicist Kate McQuaid from House of Anansi to see if Sisters in Crime would like to arrange a get-together with Forbes.

McQuaid was tipped off by Rupert McNally, that there was a group of rabid mystery lovers called Toronto Sisters in Crime, after the event we had at Ben McNally books during the summer.

Forbes, who is tall, blond, and striking, with perfect English skin, is the author of a series of police procedurals featuring Detective Inspector Mark Tartaglia, a handsome Italian-Scottish detective with an extended family whose sister is trying valiantly to marry him off.

"I have a soft spot for Italian men -- what can I say?" shared Forbes.

Her latest book, *Evil in Return*, follows *Our Lady of Pain*. The first in the series, *Die With Me*, which was shortlisted for the British Crime Writers' John Creasey New Blood Dagger Award.

Margaret Cannon wrote in her review:

"*Evil In Return* is the third instalment in the excellent Mark Tartaglia series and it's the best to date. Forbes continues to build substantial and engaging characters and provide them with off-beat plots that have just a touch of the same sort of macabre detail that made Ruth Rendell irresistible."

So how did Forbes, who formerly worked managing portfolios for investment banks, end up as a crime writer?

Her father was a writer, she said. Then, there is a 12-year gap between herself and her stepsister, so her childhood was rather solitary. She spent a lot of time reading.

In an essay entitled "The Darker Side" for the Powell's bookstore website, Forbes wrote:

"Ever since I was a child, I have had stories spinning around in my head. Where some girls might dream of princes and princesses, in my imagination there was always a body, or at the very least some sort of mystery that required solving. I was brought up on a diet of Nancy Drew and Agatha Christie, followed swiftly by Dorothy L. Sayers, Georges Simenon, and Barbara Vine. Classical mythology and my favourite fairy stories by the Grimm brothers also had more than their fair share of violence, darkness and death."

While in Toronto, uninterrupted by the demands of family, Forbes was chugging away on the fourth Tartaglia and had just finished Chapter 2 before our dinner.

Book five in the series is already plotted, and Forbes hinted to us that future books may show a darker side of Tartaglia.

Forbes, who says she'd love to travel across Canada by train, lives in Notting Hill in London with her husband and two children. At home she loves the bookstores and antique shops there, and has seen actor Alan Rickman, who is a neighbour, walking around.

At the end of the evening, Forbes presented each of us with a signed copy of *Evil in Return*. She is in the process of putting up a website, <http://www.elenaforbes.com/> and would love feedback on it. A high-note ending to a very pleasant night!

Small extra story:

The House of Anansi is bringing out a new mystery imprint called Spider, and will publish author Ian Hamilton's Ava Lee series, about a female Chinese-Canadian forensic accountant who travels the world tracking money and often has to resort to unconventional means of persuasion to recover bad debts. *Water Rat of Wanchai* is set to come out February 2011.

CRIMINAL INTENT - Part 2

(Member Author Interviews)

Featuring: Jake Doherty

Interviewed by: Janet Costello

*Jake is the author of **The Rankin Files**, and co-editor of the collection **Mystery Ink**. He became a Sister in Crime this year.*

Q: *The Rankin Files* has many scenes set in Joyceville Institution. What appeals to you about a prison setting?

A: While I was publisher of the Kingston Whig in the early 90s I was able to arrange tours of Kingston's many prisons, not knowing at the time that I would become a mystery writer. I recognized later than prisons bring their own tension to a plot because conflict occurs in one well defined place, and the characters can't move around. The inmates are very unhappy people full of revenge and anger. In essence, this is the epicentre of crime and punishment. Of course, not everyone in prison is a hardened criminal. But when you walk by Paul Bernardo's cell, you know it's a forbidding place. More telling is that the suicide rate for natives in prison is much, much higher than non-natives. I found that even describing a native suicide was emotionally draining.

Q: *The Rankin Files* also has a plot line involving First Nations issues. Are these close to your heart?

A: I'm fascinated on several levels. Our First Nations are a deep part of our history. They have their own sense of spirituality and identity but their story has a strong sense of injustice. The land claims in the Bruce Peninsula near where I live go back to 1836. When I wrote *The Rankin Files*, one aboriginal was adamant that a non-native should not write about natives. Thankfully, that interpretation of cultural appropriation seems to have faded. Unchallenged, it would have meant that we would all live in remote silos.

Q: How did you find the legal expertise you used in your novel?

A: As retired publisher and editor, I knew a lot of lawyers, a friendly judge, Crown attorneys, and the senior legal advisor to a major bank. Also, a very good friend was with Corrections Canada at the time. I was even given a transcript from a bail hearing, which was very helpful.

Q: Why did you choose to sprinkle news articles throughout your narrative?

A: This is a good way to bring the outside world into the story. It's not rare and of course, I know how to write news articles. You can use them to sum up information,

and add variety to the narrative. My second novel, *Bearwalker Alibi*, uses emails for much the same reason. Also, it's much easier to write in the first person without going into long doses of internal monologue.

SinC Steering Committee

President: Helen Nelson
416-761-9208
helenlnelson@rogers.com

Vice-President - Programming: Rayna Jolley
416-787-8819 raynzi@hotmail.com

Vice-President: Treasurer – Deanna Dunn
416-690-6846 deanna.dunn@rogers.com

Web Mistress: Colleen Farrell
grace_too@canoemail.com

Members-at-Large: Jo-Ann Stepien
416-440-4128 jcstepien@rogers.com

Nancy Kay
416-694-9113 vulcan000@live.ca

Karen Dryden
905-427-4258
karenblakehall@sympatico.ca

Lesley Mang
416-469-0470 lesmang@rogers.com

Hyacinthe Miller
905-478-2116
miller_the_writer@rogers.com

New Member Liaison: Lynne Murphy
416-698-3718 murlyn@uniserve.com

Newsletter Editor: Janet Costello
905-603-1312 jelcszygy@hotmail.com

Q: You've worked as a reporter for newspapers including the Southam News chain and the Wall Street Journal. Many successful authors like Rick Mofina, Louise Penny, Linwood Barclay and Val McDermid have been reporters. What lends this line of work to crime writing?

A: I think because many reporters began their careers on the crime beat and have a close affinity to the judicial and

penal systems. I mostly wrote about economics, business and the stock market which often meant covering white collar crime. In any event, covering crime brings you very close to underlying social issues. Also, writing mysteries is much like sports and business writing, full of good guys and bad guys and inevitably winners and losers. On the other hand, there is nothing in journalism to prepare you for point of view writing. Fiction, of course is more about “showing and not telling” while news stories just “tell”. Reporters tend to like doing research. Finally, as P.D. James said, mystery writing appeals to many writers because it sorts out chaos in daily life. And that is also the essence of good journalism.

Q: Tell us about the Osprey/Sun Media Summer Mystery Series.

A: Oh, that started 6 or 7 years ago in Kingston. I was doing a reading and Therese Greenwood asked, “How do we get short mysteries back into newspapers?” I wrote a one-page pitch to Osprey, suggesting we provide six original stories annually and set each story in towns where the Osprey papers were published. The summer series has gone on for 6 years now, in 23 papers. We were blessed with wonderful writers and great feedback.

Q: You and Therese Greenwood edited and contributed *Mystery Ink*, a mystery anthology, using many of those stories. What is your opinion of the future for Canadian mystery short stories?

A: The future? Let me think about that. The anthology came out after the fourth year of the Summer Mystery Series and was published by Ginger Press of Owen Sound. Edward Greenspan, one of Canada’s most prominent criminal lawyers wrote the forward. He also has written a mystery, and comes from Niagara Falls, an Osprey town. When Sun Media bought Osprey, it continued the series. Then Quebecor bought Sun Media and we skipped a year, due to down-sizing. But this year, SunMedia bought our experimental proposal to publish three stories concurrently on its national website and its papers. We hope to have them again in 2011. The stories run 3,000 words in segments of 500-600 words. They need to include local colour, and identify a town. I think there will always be a market for long fiction. But, in keeping with the tempo of our time, short stories are

enjoying a renaissance, both literary and genre. And they don’t take several years to write!

Q: Tell us about your publisher, The Ginger Press.

A: The Ginger Press is really Maryann Thomas, a wonderful person who owns and manages a small town publishing house along with a book store and restaurant. Small town presses are important. They published the most recent Giller Prize winner, and in the United States, the 2009 Pulitzer winner (for the first time in 40 years). Small presses are a good entry point for writers. Not everyone will end up with Random House or McLelland & Stewart, but publishers like Maryann are national treasures.

Q: What are you working on now?

A: I’m working on revisions of my second novel, tentatively titled *Bearwalker Alibi*, which starts in Germany and ends on Manitoulin Island. It’s a buzz for me to do revisions on a computer. With cut-and-paste I can play around with different ideas and all of a sudden—it works! Cheryl Freedman is my editor. We’re on the same page and I respect her judgment. Ginger Press will publish it. It’s been 7 years in the making but I’ve had two major surgeries, and lost my wife between *The Rankin Files* and now. It takes perseverance, but I was inspired to learn that Giles Blunt had several years between his first two books. From J. M. Coetzee, I discovered that writing is not about the first thought. It’s about the second, third, and fourth thoughts. Or as many thoughts as I need to understand what I am trying to say! That takes time.

Q: What are you looking forward to with *Sisters in Crime*?

A: At Bloody Words 2010, I was wandering around with Rick Mofina, and we were invited to join the Sisters. I don’t know whether Rick and I were the first to crack the gender barrier but I’ve always had a great respect for Sisters in Crime so we joined. Meeting more writers, from different parts of North America is great. There are lots of chapters. Everyone is open and willing to coach and mentor. I don’t get to Toronto often, but I’m looking forward to learning and understanding more about the art of writing mysteries.

Puzzle Answers:

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z
I R A J S B K T C L U D V M E W N F X O G Y P H Z Q (in the code)

1. Wire in the Blood
2. True Blood
3. A Touch of Frost
4. An Unsuitable Job for a Woman
5. Ellery Queen
6. Murdoch Mysteries
7. Spenser
8. The Saint
9. Miss Marple
- Bonus. Castle

Write On, Sister!

By Kollene McKeown

"I'm going to quit my job," I said to my husband after a particularly gruelling day at work.

Shrugging his shoulders, he said, "Go ahead."

That was easy. I had been thinking for a few years that it would be nice to retire early, so there I was, retired. Now I had all the time in the world to do whatever I wanted. I had been longing for more time to get back in touch with my creative side, something that previous careers had left little time for, and now I had it. My plans were many. I could hardly wait to get started on some magnificent project. But it turned out that life as a domestic goddess wasn't what I had envisioned it to be. Don't get me wrong, I had no trouble filling my days, from morning till night, in fact sometimes I wondered how I'd ever had time to work. Nothing as noble as feeding the hungry or reading to the elderly but certainly things that amused me.

At first it was marvellous, I did some painting, some reading, some gardening, I even learned to use the power tools that littered our basement. I painted so many pictures that I ran out of walls to hang them on, I built bird houses and feeders, I gardened, and read for hours on end. All the time my constant companions were our two Lhasa Apso puppies

My decision to return to work was multi-fold. There are just so many bird feeders one yard can handle and just so many walls for paintings to hang on. The biggest reason for returning to work was that I was losing my ability to relate to people on an adult level. More than once I had to stop myself from ruffling someone's hair and saying "Have you been a good puppy?" Then offering up a Beggin Strip.

So there I was gainfully employed again and learning to converse with people without a single dog treat in my pocket. One of those conversations was with a co-worker, Karen who shared with me her passion for writing. Karen's simple invitation to attend a meeting of Sisters in Crime opened up whole new world. She introduced me to a wonderful group of people and encouraged me to join a small critique group. So I dusted off a mystery novel I had begun fifteen years prior. I now belong to a marvellous group of women who have encouraged me to continue with my novel. Sisters in Crime and this wonderful group of women in my critique group have become a major highlight in my life. Bird feeder anyone?

A Murder is Announced...

Toronto Sisters in Crime now has a Facebook page: <http://www.facebook.com/#!/group.php?gid=307635678670> Come join us there! We're still constructing it – contributions are welcome!

Newsletter articles are welcome. We are always looking for new contributions and contributors! For the next newsletter, just get your submission to Janet at jelcsyzygy@hotmail.com by about January 25.

From the Editors: There was a brief time period between newsletters, so we are a little short on news this time around. Be sure to get us your announcements so we can share them with everyone!

From the Mothership: Don't forget January is renewal time. There are now two types of membership: An **ACTIVE** member is a paid-up Sisters in Crime, Inc. member who does not have a business interest in promoting the purposes of Sisters in Crime, Inc. This includes, but is not limited to, fans and readers. Annual Dues: \$35. A **PROFESSIONAL** member is a paid-up Sisters in Crime, Inc. member who is one of the following: an author pursuing a career in mystery writing, a bookseller, a publisher, a librarian, an editor or one who has a business interest in promoting the purposes of Sisters in Crime, Inc. Annual Dues: \$40. There is no difference in the benefits regardless of which membership type you choose. You can buy or renew your membership on line at <http://www.sistersincrime.org/>

From the Mothership: The 2010-2011 Board of directors was elected at Bouchercon:

President: Cathy Pickens, Charlotte, NC
Vice-President: Dana Stabenow, Homer, AK
Secretary: Barbara Fister, St. Peter, MN
Treasurer, Kathryn Wall, Hilton Head, SC
Chapter Liaison, Sandra Parshall, McLean, VA
Publicity, Ellen Hart, Minneapolis, MN
Bookstore Liaison, Jim Huang, Mt Vernon, OH
Library Liaison, Mary Boone, Bowling Green, OH
Monitoring Coordinator, Barb Goffman, Herndon, VA
Member at Large: Nancy Martin, Pittsburg, PA
Member at Large: Val McDermid, North of England
Past President, Marcia Talley, Annapolis, MD

From Jane Cleland: Jane Explains What You'll Learn at the Aspiring Writer's Weekend—January 14-16, 2011 at MIT's Endicott House Watch Jane's Video: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=84MzQiG7kZw>

And you? If you have an announcement for this column, contact Helen at helenlnelson@rogers.com or Janet at jelcszygy@hotmail.com and we'll make sure your news makes this column.

Criminal Activities . . .

Compiled by Helen Nelson

Get out your calendars, palm pilots or sticky notes, here's the scoop on mysterious activities over the next couple of months....

Thursday, December 2, 2010, 6:30 p.m. Sisters in Crime Holiday Party, Spring Rolls Restaurant (2nd Floor), 240 Queen Street West, Toronto, ON. Tickets \$25.00 includes dinner, cash bar. Deadline: November 25, 2010. We have a private party room with lots of space to talk and get to know each other more informally – plus great door prizes, a raffle, books and other surprises! Include your email address to be notified that your cheque has been received. *NOTE: WE ARE PAST THE DEADLINE.FOR PURCHASING TICKETS. GIVE HELEN A CALL AT 416-458-7845 AND WE'LL LET YOU KNOW IF WE HAVE CANCELLATIONS!*

Saturday, December 4, 2010, 12:00 noon, Chapters Queensway (across from Sherway Gardens), Vicki Delany will sign *Negative Image* and *Gold Fever*

Monday, December 6, 2010, 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m., Toronto Public Library, Fairview Branch, 35 Fairview Mall Drive, Toronto, ON. Maureen Jennings will discuss her latest book *Shipwreck*

Tuesday, December 7, 2010 6:30 p.m., Fox and Fiddle, 190 Laird Drive, Toronto, ON, Mystery Book Club Discussion book: *61 Hours* by Lee Child. It will also be our annual holiday party. For more information contact helenlnelson@rogers.com

Thursday, December 9, 2010, 7:00 p.m., Royal Ontario Museum, Bloor and University, Toronto, ON, David Rotenberg will speak on issues facing non-Chinese writers writing about China.

Saturday, December 11, 2010, 1:00 p.m., Books and Company, Main Street, Picton, ON, Vicki Delany will sign *Negative Image* and *Gold Fever*

Sunday, December 12, 2010, 1:00 p.m., Novel Idea Bookstore and Company, 156 Princess Street, Picton, ON, Vicki Delany will sign *Negative Image* and *Gold Fever*

Monday, December 13, 2010, 6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. Crime Writers of Canada Holiday Party, Back Alley Woodfire BBQ & Grill, 188 Augusta Avenue, Toronto ON, CWC and SinC members - \$20.00, Non-members - \$25.00. Send cheques to Crime Writers of Canada, 2160 Colonel William Parkway, Oakville, Ontario, L6M 0B8. Cheques are payable to Crime Writers of Canada. Please include email address so you can be advised that your cheque has been received.

Thursday, December 16, 2010, 2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. Toronto Public Library, Pape & Danforth Branch, 701 Pape Avenue, Toronto, ON, Tea and Murder.

Tuesday, January 4, 2011 6:30 p.m., Fox and Fiddle, 190 Laird Drive, Toronto, ON, Mystery Book Club Discussion book: *Old City Hall* by Robert Rotenberg. For more information contact helennelson@rogers.com

Thursday, January 27, 2011, 2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. Toronto Public Library, Pape & Danforth Branch, 701 Pape Avenue, Toronto, ON, Tea and Murder.

Thursday, February 24, 2010, 2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. Toronto Public Library, Pape & Danforth Branch, 701 Pape Avenue, Toronto, ON, Tea and Murder.

March 24 – 27, 2011, Left Coast Crime La Fonda Hotel, Santa Fe, NM, For more information: <http://www.leftcoastcrime.org/2011/>

Saturday, April 16, 2011, GenreCon, Sarnia Library, 124 Christina St. S., Sarnia, ON. Free! www.lclmg.org, phone: 519-337-3291

April 29 – May 1, 2011, Malice Domesitc, Hyatt, Bethesda, MD. For more information: <http://www.malicedomestic.org>

September 15 – 18, 2011, Bouchercon 2011, Renaissance St. Louis Grand, St. Louis, MO, For more information: <http://bouchercon2011.com/>

Now That You've Done the Crime...

Time to pay

By Deanna Dunn

Thank you to everyone who has already renewed their membership for the Toronto Chapter of Sisters in Crime.

This is a small reminder that it's time to pay your annual membership dues of \$35 unless you have joined since September 2010 or were among those who joined for a year and a half at Bloody Words - in that case, your membership is also covered for 2011.

There are two ways of paying:

1. Please bring a cheque for \$35 made out to Sisters in Crime to our meeting.
2. Please mail a cheque for \$35 made out to Sisters in Crime to our treasurer, Deanna Dunn

Deanna Dunn
22 Earl Haig Ave.
Toronto, ON
M4C 1E1

In either case, please take a minute and fill out the membership form attached to this newsletter so we can keep up to date on your contact info.

It's also valuable information to us when planning programs to know how many members are authors, pre-published authors, fans etc. And feel free to write down any suggestions/ideas/requests you may have for speakers or programs, and attach to the form.

If you have already renewed your membership for 2011, pass the membership form along to a friend!

As you know, our chapter is part of the larger international Sisters in Crime and the annual membership fee for the international group is also due.

You can renew your membership by going to www.sistersincrime.org and clicking on Join/Renew. Do not forget to pick a payment method! Annual dues are \$35 for an Active member and \$40 for a professional member. See above in "A Murder is Announced" for new information on the new dues structure!

You can also send a cheque (in U.S. funds) to:
Sisters in Crime
PO Box 442124
Lawrence, KS 66044
U.S.A.

The deadline is Jan. 30, 2011."



Date: _____

Membership Application Form

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/Postal Code: _____

Phone, Home: _____ Work: _____

Cell: _____ Fax: _____

E-Mail: _____

New Member:

Renewal:

Please check all that apply:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> published mystery writer | <input type="checkbox"/> unpublished mystery writer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> bookseller | <input type="checkbox"/> agent/publicist |
| <input type="checkbox"/> editor | <input type="checkbox"/> critic/reviewer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> mystery reader | <input type="checkbox"/> other _____ |

Dues: \$35.00 annually. Make cheques payable to "Sisters in Crime"

Mail cheques to: Sisters in Crime, c/o D. Dunn, 22 Earl Haig Ave. Toronto, Ontario, M4C 1E1. E-Mail: TorontoSinC@gmail.com

After June 30, membership fee is prorated as follows based on dues of \$2.92 per month:
July 1: \$17.52, Aug. 1: \$14.60, Sept. 1: \$11.68, Oct. 1 dues will be \$35 and will be considered payment for October, November, December and the following year.

Please note: Separate Registration for SinC International is required. See www.sistersincrime.org for more details.