

All Points Bulletin

*The Twin Cities Sister in Crime Member Newsletter
October 2009*

October Speaker's Bio

Julie McKuras has been intrigued by the character of Sherlock Holmes since she saw the Basil Rathbone films on late night television when she was about 12. She read all of the books, then like so many adults, tucked that away. In the early 1990's, the Jeremy Brett television series got her attention. She joined the local Sherlock Holmes group, the Norwegian Explorers of Minnesota, and acted as their president for 9 years. She's on the board of the Friends of the Sherlock Holmes Collections at the University of Minnesota, and edits their newsletter. She's also a member of the Baker Street Irregulars and was the first, and is still the only, woman in the state that with that honor.

Next Meeting Date

Thursday, October 8th, at 7 PM

Once Upon A Crime

604 W. 26th Street, Minneapolis (East of Lyndale)

Minutes of the June Meeting

The meeting was called to order by **Marilyn Victor**.

This was the first meeting of the club since the summer break. Unfortunately, long time member **Lori Lake** moved away in August. Lori was club treasurer, was in charge of membership and helped in other capacities. She will be missed. Marilyn Victor will act as interim treasurer and membership officer.

New club officer elections will be held in November. Nominations for club president need to be in by the October meeting. Marilyn has served as club president for four years and needs a break. Put your name in the hat!

Upcoming events:

- October 10, 2009. Downtown Minneapolis. Our Sisters in Crime chapter will have a table at the Rain Taxi Twin Cities Book Festival. Volunteers are needed for shifts during the day. **Barbara DaCosta** gave a preview of the PowerPoint slide show she created for the event, featuring the book covers and website banners of contributing authors.

Twin Cities Sisters In Crime

- November 14 and 15, 2009. The Loft Literary Center in Minneapolis. Sisters in Crime will have a table at the Loft's first Mystery, Crime, and Thriller Festival. Volunteers are needed again. (Hey authors, this is a great chance to schmooze with people who are actually interested in what you write.)

(See *Upcoming Events* for additional information)

This month's book was *Heart of the World*, by **Linda Barnes**. To paraphrase Publishers Weekly: Boston PI Carlotta Carlyle searches for a teenager whom she loves like a daughter. One member commented how the book was very well written but that character development was rather sketchy. Another reader did not find this a problem but was confused about the age of the young girl in the story.

The guest speaker for the evening was **Laurie Hertzell**, the Senior Editor for Books and Special Projects at the Minneapolis Star Tribune, a post she's occupied for almost a year.

Under Laurie's guidance, the Star Tribune now devotes two full pages of book reviews each Sunday, one mini review on Monday, and a full review on Wednesday. She strives to get more local and regional books into the paper and not simply cover the big national authors. Toward this end she also looks for balance in the pages, so there isn't all fiction one week or all non-fiction the next. She is also more inclusive of works in different genres than her predecessor, who was mainly interested in literary fiction.

Each month Laurie gets 1,000 books submitted to her, a daunting pile from which she pulls out the titles she thinks she might want reviewed. Her process is to read the dustcover flaps of each book, skim the press release, then she'll take titles home to read the first ten to fifteen pages. Next she'll commission reviewers to look at the books that pass the quick read. Reviewers may take from four to six weeks to get back to her. They'll often read the book twice and take notes.

Laurie's philosophy is she wants honest but fair reviews. Books that a reviewer hated will not get a write up. The Star Tribune's policy is not to trash a new or relatively unknown author, though Laurie believes it's perfectly fair to be more negative with a big, nationally known author if the work warrants it. The big name writers should be able to take the criticism, she said. Laurie asks her reviewers to try to understand what the writer is trying to accomplish and to determine if the goal was met. She tries to match the books to the reviewers.

It is the Star Tribune's policy is not to review self-published books. Laurie cited that there are no standards of quality in the self-publishing world. Much of what she sees is uneven or not worth the effort. Another reason for excluding these titles is the problem of distribution. It's much harder for readers to find these books. Laurie said the readers of the Star Tribune typically will not buy books online. They do not go to Amazon. These folks want to walk into a brick and mortar store and buy the book there. Readers complained once about not being able to find a book after the review for it ran. Laurie hadn't realized the book was self-published.

Twin Cities Sisters In Crime

It was brave of the books editor of the Star Tribune to sit in a room of authors. The meeting ended without a single fist fight breaking out. In fact, Laurie took a group photo and posted it that evening on the Star Tribune page on Facebook with comment that she'd had a great time.

Twenty-two people attended the meeting.

Michael Allan Mallory
Club secretary

Next Meeting

Our next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, November 3rd, 7:00 p.m. at Once Upon A Crime, 604 W. 26th Street, Minneapolis (East of Lyndale).

President's Message

Winter seems to have come in with a crushing tackle. I'm not ready for it. But is anybody?

One thing I am ready for is passing on the baton of our chapter's presidency. It's been challenging, it's been fun, but it's time. At our Thursday, October 8 meeting we will be nominating new officers for President, Treasurer and Membership Coordinator. If you don't want one of these positions yourself, maybe you can talk someone else into it. They're not hard, but they are important.

We could also use some volunteers for the Rain Taxi Twin Cities Book Festival being held on Saturday October 10. Please e-mail me if you're interested.

Marilyn Victor

October Question of the Month

This month's question evolved from **Laurie Hertz**'s presentation about her job as Books Editor for the *Star Tribune* which prompted my musings about how I learn about new books to read. Those ruminations prompted our October question which was: How do you determine which books you read? Do you rely on friends' recommendations, browsing through the bookstore or online, or on book reviews? If the latter, which book reviews and reviewers do you recommend? Here are your responses:

- I'd have to say all of the above. Because I write a reference series on female sleuths, I watch for books that include women in significant roles. I get a lot of information as to recent books in series that interest me from: mystery magazines, publications from book stores such as Uncle Edgars, online from Amazon and

Twin Cities Sisters In Crime

Barnes & Noble, but for pleasure reading I rely on the recommendations of family members and friends. — Colleen Barnett

- I get my advice from a yahoo discussion list, 4_mystery_addicts (an endless supply of recommendations), and from the Crime and Mystery Fiction Friend Feed room where I hang out. In these online forums I know the people recommending books well enough I can find "reading twins" and people who I love but whose taste is opposite to mine. I do less choosing on my own, though, since becoming a book reviewer - the down side of getting free books is having my reading plate filled for me. — Barbara Fister
- I do much of my reading online. There, I look for authors I like and listen to recommendations from people who seem to have similar tastes. When I'm looking for paper books, I tend to go to Uncle Hugo's, look at what's available, and listen to Ken Fletcher - he's a clerk there, often, and we've known each others' tastes for over forty years. — Ellen Kuhfeld
- In addition to suggestions from Pat & Gary, comments from friends, and occasional notices from online retailers who are tracking my purchases, I learn about many new authors via StopYoureKillingMe.com and various newsletters from bookstores like Powells.com. — Lori L. Lake
- How I find books to read? I use the stumble method. So many books, so many ways (Sigh). I like the adventure of stumbling across a good story. My most common methods are wandering around bookstores, newspaper reviews, Lauri and Julia radio show. Even friends mention titles or authors that catch my attention. When I'm low on something to read I hit the library. That way I can get an armload of books and "test drive" new authors. — Diane Pearson
- One sure way of choosing a book is to read the latest by an author that I'm familiar with. I also take recommendations from my father. He reads constantly for pleasure and for reviews, and I trust his opinion. — Robyn Van Horn

Few sensations beat the thrill of discovering an unknown author to recommend to your friends. Sounds like we all have our individual ways of accomplishing this just as with our writing.

Featured Member: Christopher Valen

We're reviving an old feature due to all the new members SinC has acquired over the past year. This month's featured member profiles new member, **Christopher Valen**, whose biography appears below along with his answers to our questions (Waterboarding was not necessary; he volunteered his information willingly):



Bio: Christopher Valen is the pen name of Jerry Christopher Peterson. After debating whether to major in journalism or education in college, Christopher acquired a B.A. in English, an M.A. in special education and an administrative license. He has worked with juvenile delinquents and as a teacher, elementary principal and college professor. He is also a graduate of the Citizen's Academy at the Ramsey County Sheriff's Department. His first police procedural, "White Tombs", featuring St. Paul Homicide Detective John Santana, won the 2008 Reader Views Choice Award as Best Mystery and the Garcia Award for Best Fiction. His second novel, *The Black Minute*, was released in September. When not

writing, he enjoys sailing and traveling. He lives with his Colombian born wife, Martha, in Woodbury.

Question 1: If you could acquire a talent/skill just by asking, what would you ask for and why?

Answer: Having a photographic memory would be very helpful, particularly when writing scenes of places I've visited, remembering names of people I've met, and recalling knowledge. A photographic memory would also be helpful in remembering where I left my keys or why I entered a particular room at a given moment.

Question 2: If you were taking a long flight --15 hours or more -- who would you like to sit next to, picking anyone past or present?

Answer: This is a tough question because there are so many interesting individuals I'd like to spend time with. So I'll cheat and pick two. Talking writing with the late Raymond Chandler or John D. McDonald would be fascinating. MacDonald's Travis McGee series first got me hooked on the crime thriller and the tough, intelligent protagonist. I think his book, "The Executioners," which was later filmed twice as Cape Fear, is a classic.

Question 3: What author are you reading right now?

Answer: I enjoy reading non-fiction almost as much as fiction and try to balance the two. Right now, I'm reading "The Forever War", the Pulitzer Prize winning book by journalist Dexter Filkins. It's a must read for anyone who wants to understand the emotional, social and political costs of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Question 4: If you could be the hero/heroine in any book, which would it be?

Answer: Philip Marlowe in "The Big Sleep, although some may view Marlowe as an anti-hero. In Chandler's definitive essay, "The Simple Art of Murder", he describes the hero as a man walking down mean streets "who is not himself mean, who is neither tarnished nor afraid." Chandler's hero is "a man of honor, a complete man and a common man and yet an unusual man. He must be the best man in his world and a good enough man for any world. If there were enough like him, I think the world would be a very safe place to live in." I couldn't agree more.

Twin Cities Sisters In Crime

Question 5: If you were a superhero, what powers would you have?

Answer: I'm not sure if any current superhero has the power to become invisible, but it would be great fun to be able to come and go undetected whenever I desired. Of course, clothes would have to be invisible as well, particularly during a cold Minnesota winter.

Question 6: Who are three of your favorite mystery writers?

Answer: James Lee Burke, Michael Connolly, and Robert Crais are three of my favorite contemporary mystery authors.

Question 7: Why do you write or read mysteries?

Answer: I particularly like writing police procedurals because I enjoy forensics and the legal technicalities of homicide investigation. I'm also interested in the political and sociological factors that provide conflict for the detective and give the story a sense of realism.

Question 8: You just won \$100 million on the lottery. After you've been nice and bought Mom a new car and given all the SINC members each \$1 million, what would you do?

Answer: I would spend the money on finding a cure for Alzheimer's disease. Unless it can be delayed or cured, it's going to devastate thousands of families and cost the country far more than the \$100 million I won in the lottery.

Upcoming Events

Rain Taxi proudly announces the ninth annual **TWIN CITIES BOOK FESTIVAL** scheduled for Saturday, October 10, 2009 from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm at the Minneapolis Community & Technical College conveniently located in Downtown Minneapolis (**Our local chapter of Sisters in Crime will have a table at this event and could still use some volunteers to help out**). . The annual Twin Cities Book Festival is a celebration of books and reading that is **FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**. The Festival features:

- *All-Day Exhibit and Book Fair*—The fantastic Book Fair showcases a wide range of publishers, literary organizations, booksellers, and more! Check back for a complete listing of exhibitors, exhibitor specials, and events happening throughout the day!
- *Spectacular Author Readings and Talks*—The Festival features renowned authors from near and far!
- *Storytelling Circle*—Readings for children of all ages happens throughout the day.
- *Book Arts Fun*—Make a customized button with the Minnesota Center for Book Arts! Come dig through old books, comics, and scrap papers and find images and words to bring back to life in your button. Then, watch MCBA's button-making machine turn your bookish art into a glossy, hip little button that you can wear. Children and adults are welcome!
- *Used Book Sale and Literary Magazine Fair*—Hunt for literary treasures at our giant used book sale, featuring great fiction, children's books, poetry, graphic novels, art books, and more—all for dirt cheap! Plus the latest in lit mags at

Twin Cities Sisters In Crime

special try-out prices. All proceeds go to help support the Festival!

The Loft Literary Center's first Mystery, Crime, & Thriller Festival is scheduled for Saturday & Sunday, November 14 & 15, and features **Vince Flynn**, *New York Times* bestselling author. Other award-winning writers include **Carl Brookins, Philip Donlay, Jan Dunlap, Lois Greiman, Masha Hamilton, Ellen Hart, Erin Hart, Julie Kramer, William Kent Krueger, Mary Logue, Jess Lourey, Susan Runholt, and Richard A. Thompson**. The Festival will offer craft sessions on mystery, thriller, and crime writing; research sessions on the criminal justice system, private investigation, evidence; information on publication and promotion; and much more! **(Our local chapter of Sisters in Crime will have a table at this event)**



Like many struggling writers before him, Vince Flynn worked as a bartender at night and wrote during the day. After five years and more than 60 rejection letters, he took the unusual step of self-publishing his first novel, *Term Limits*, which earned him a two-book deal with Pocket Books. *Term Limits* hit the *New York Times* bestseller list. CBS Films has optioned the rights for Flynn's Mitch Rapp character, and Lorenzo di Bonaventura, who previously launched the *Harry Potter* and *Matrix* films as head of production at Warner Bros., and Nick Wechsler (*We Own the Night*, *Reservation Road*) will produce the films.

\$195/\$180 Loft Members (Entire festival, including Saturday luncheon)
Registration: Limited to 120 participants. [Mystery Festival](#)

Book Discussion Titles (Next Three Meetings)

November 2009

***No One Heard Her Scream* by Jordan Dane**

San Antonio Det. Rebecca Montgomery fears the worst when her little sister, Danielle, is abducted during summer break on the Texas Gulf's South Padre Island. Five months later, the discovery of a crime scene saturated with Dani's blood indicates she's been murdered. As more college co-eds go missing, Becca wants to stay on the case, but the department hands her a puzzler involving a young woman's remains found within a wall of the torched Imperial Theater. They belong to Isabel Marquez, who's been missing for almost seven years. Becca finds a surprising ally, and mutual attraction, in Diego Galvan, who works for slimy Hunter Cavanaugh, former owner of the Imperial and a prime suspect. While Dane's debut is being marketed as romantic suspense, it crosses over into plain thriller country: the tight plotting and the male characters are exceptional, bad guys and good.

December 2009

***Cop Hater (87th Precinct Mystery)* by Ed McBain**

Twin Cities Sisters In Crime

This novel introduces Det. Steve Carella and his fellow detectives at the squad as they try to find out who is murdering fellow cops and why. Although these characters will grow and expand in later novels, McBain ably sets the stage here, and truly hits the ground running. There is no awkwardness or hesitation as seen in other debut novels. As always, the strongest supporting character is McBain's fictional city of Isola which combines the best and worst qualities of several major U.S. cities, especially New York. McBain describes his city and its citizens with a palpable rhythm that stays with you after you're done reading. With such a diverse and fascinating backdrop to work from, 87th Precinct novels will never drag. Truly a masterwork.

January 2010

14 by J. T. Ellison

In the mid-1980s the Snow White Killer terrorized the streets of Nashville, Tennessee. Then suddenly the murders stopped. A letter from the killer to the police stated that his work was done. Now four more bodies are found, marked with his fatal signature. The residents of Nashville fear a madman has returned, decades later, to finish his sick fairy tale. Homicide Lieutenant Taylor Jackson believes the killings are the work of a copycat killer who's even more terrifying. For this monster is meticulously honing his craft as he mimics famous serial murders...proving that he past is not to be forgotten.

Member's Websites

(Carl Brookins) www.minnesotacrimewave.org
(Pat Dennis) www.penurypress.com or comedybypatdennis.com
(William Fietzer) www.williamfietzer.com
(Anne Fraiser) <http://www.annefrasier.com>
(Lois Greiman) www.loisgreiman.com
(Ellen Hart) www.ellenhart.com
(Erin Hart) www.erinhart.com
(C. Hyytinen) www.chyytinen.com
(Julie Kramer) www.juliekramerbooks.com
Ellen Kuhfeld - Big Washuu's Lab of Arcane Knowledge) <http://washuu.net>
(Mary Kuhfeld - Monica Ferris) at <http://monica-ferris.com>
(Lori L. Lake) www.lorillake.com
(Michael Allan Mallory and Marilyn Victor) www.snakesjones.com
(Sujata Massey) <http://www.interbridge.com/sujata/>
(Linda Morganstein) www.lindamorganstein.com
(August Schwerdfeger) <http://www.tc.umn.edu/~schw0709/>
(Richard Thompson) www.fiddlegame.com
(Christopher Valens) www.christophervalen.com
(J. L. Wilson) www.jayellwilson.com

Members Who Blog

Twin Cities Sisters In Crime

Static (Anne Fraiser)

<http://annefrasier.blogspot.com/>

Agora2 (Carl Brookins)

<http://www.agora2.blogspot.com/>

Riding with the Top Down (Lois Greiman)

<http://ridingwiththetopdown.blogspot.com/>

Killer Hobbies (Mary Kuhfeld-Monica Ferris)

<http://killerhobbies.blogspot.com/>

It Makes Us Wild (Marilyn Victor & Michael Allan Mallory)

<http://zoofari.blogspot.com/>

Probable Cause <http://christophervalen.com/blog>

Resort to Murder

<http://www.resorttomurder.blogspot.com/>

Sisters In Crime Blog Crimespace

<http://crimespace.ning.com/profile/SistersInCrime>

If you have a website or blog you'd like to have listed here, please contact our newsletter editor at twinsisnewsletter@yahoo.com.

Upcoming Mystery Conventions

Litquake

San Francisco's Tenth Annual Literary Festival

San Francisco, CA

October 9 - 17, 2009

Amy Tan roast/tribute emceed;

Bouchercon 2009: Elementary, My Dear Indy

Indianapolis, Indiana

October 15 - 18, 2009

Guest of Honour: Michael Connelly

Toastmistress: S.J. Rozan

Lifetime Achievement: Allen J. Hubin

Fan Guest of Honour: Kathryn Kennison

The Great Manhattan Mystery Conclave

A Celebration of Small-Town Mysteries

Holiday Inn at the campus, Manhattan, KS

October 30 - November 1, 2009

Guest of Honor: Earlene Fowler

Twin Cities Sisters In Crime

Bodies and Buckeyes

November 7, 2009

Columbus, OH

Sponsored by the Columbus, Ohio chapter of Sisters in Crime

Keynote speaker: Lee Lofland

New England Crime Bake

November 13 - 15, 2009

Boston, MA

Eighth annual mystery conference for writers and readers, co-sponsored by Scarlet Letters (New England Sisters in Crime) and the Mystery Writers of America New

England Chapter.

Guest of Honor: Sue Grafton

Men of Mystery

November 21, 2009

Irvine Marriott

Irvine, CA

Michael Connelly will be among the dozens of male mystery authors attending

Black Orchid Banquet

December 4 - 6, 2009

Jolly Hotel -- Madison Towers

New York, NY

Annual banquet held by the members of the Wolfe Pack, devotees of Rex Stout's Nero Wolfe series



Upcoming Events at Once Upon A Crime

Tues. Oct 6 - 7:00 **Reed Farrel Coleman** "*Tower*" (co-written with Ken Bruen).

Thurs. Oct 8 - 7:00 **Twin Cities Sister in Crime meeting** *****Please Note Day/Date Change - next month it'll be back to the regular first Tuesday of the month.*****

Book for the night is *Pegasus Descending (A Dave Robicheaux Novel)* by **James Lee Burke**.

Sat. Oct 10 - 12:00-2:00 **Laura Childs** *Tragic Magic*

Wed. Oct 14 - 6:30 **Mystery Reading Group** facilitated by Marilyn Victor. Book for the night is *The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo* by **Steig Larsson**.

Thurs. Oct 15 - 7:00 **Vince Flynn** *Pursuit of Honor* — Signing only.

Wed. Oct 21 - 7:00 **Monica Ferris** *Blackwork*.

Sun. Oct 25 - 2:00 **Michael Connelly** *Nine Dragons* (Harry Bosch).

Twin Cities Sisters In Crime

Thurs. Oct 29 - 7:00 **Mary Logue** *Hand Work* — Poetry reading and signing and serving wine only.

Tues. Nov 3 - 7:00 **Twin Cities Sisters in Crime meeting.** Book for the night is TBA.

Thurs. Nov 5 - 7:00 **John Connolly** *The Gates*.

Wed. Nov 11 - 6:30 **Mystery Reading Group** facilitated by Lois Greiman. Book for the night is *Nine Tailors* by **Dorothy L. Sayers**.

Thur. Nov 12 7:00 **Richard A. Thompson** *Frag Box* — Reception with refreshments.

Tues. Dec 1 - 7:00 **Twin Cities Sisters in Crime meeting.** Book for the night is TBA.

Thu. Dec 3 - 7:00 **Libby Fischer Hellmann** *Doubleback*.

Sat. Dec 5- 12:00-2:00 **Laura Childs** *Eggs Benedict Arnold* — Signing with refreshments. .

Wed. Dec 9 - 6:30 **Mystery Reading Group** facilitated by Michael Mallory. Book for the night is *Still Life* by **Louise Penny**.

Sat. Dec 12 - 12:00-2:00 **Margaret Frazer** *The Play of Treachery* — Signing and refreshments.

Sat. Dec 19 - 12:00-2:00 **Victoria Houston** *Dead Renegade*.

Wed. Jan 13 - 6:30 **Mystery Reading Group** facilitated by Marilyn Victor. Book for the night is *Rain Fall* by **Barry Eisler**.

Tues. Mar 2 - 7:00 **Erin Hart** *False Mermaid* — Reception and signing.

Sat. March 6 - 12:00-2:00 **Laura Childs** *Teaberry Strangler* — Signing with refreshments.

Twin Cities Sisters in Crime Members

Myles Bakke, Colleen Barnett, Carl Brookins, Marlene Chabot, Jessie Chandler, Barbara DaCosta, Pat Dennis, Julie Fasciana, William Fietzer, Maureen Fischer, Barbara Fister, Anne Frasier, Jane Gilgun, Lois Greiman, Ellen Hart, Erin Hart, Susan Hastings, Carol Hedberg, David Housewright, Camille Hyytinen, Theresa Jarvela, Bobbye Johnson, Julie Kramer, William Kent Krueger, Nicholas Johon Kroska, Ellen Kuhfeld, Lori L. Lake, Brian Landon, Jenifer LeClair, Jess Lourey, Caroline Lowe, Michael Allan Mallory, Linda Morganstein, Lori Ness, Todd New, Kathleen Nordstrom, Once Upon a Crime, Diane Pearson, Mary Monica Pulver, Kim Reis, Barbara Schlichting, August Schwerdfeger, Louise M. Signorelli, Sharon Smith, Chynne Strommen, Joan Sween,

Twin Cities Sisters In Crime

Charity Tahmaseb, Richard Thompson, Christopher Valen, Robyn Van Horn, Marilyn Victor, Celia Waldock, Deborah Woodworth

(This listing contains the names of those members who have their dues for 2009. If your name is missing from this updated list, please let one of the officers know. Thank you.)

Officers & Officialalia of Twin Sisters In Crime

President Marilyn Victor
Vice President Jesse Chandler
Treasurer Lori Lake
Secretary Michael Mallory
Newsletter editor Bill Fietzer
Web maven Charity Tahmaseb.

Interested in the Twin Sisters chapter of Sisters in Crime? Visit www.twincitysinc.org. Or e-mail tsistersincrime@yahoo.com. To become a member, you must first join the national Sisters in Crime organization at <http://www.sistersincrime.org/>. Our local chapter dues are \$10 a year. Local meetings are held at 7 P.M. on the first Tuesday of each month (except July and August) at Once Upon A Crime Mystery Book Store, 604 W. 26th, Street, Minneapolis, MN 55405 (This is half a block east of the intersection of Lyndale and 26th in south Minneapolis.