



September/October
2011

TWIN CITIES SISTERS IN CRIME

All Points Bulletin

President's Message

Message from the President

Greetings to all my sisters and brothers in crime!

The cool breezes of autumn have already begun, the signal that we're starting up our regular monthly meetings at Once Upon A Crime. The next regular meeting will be Tuesday, September 6, at 7 pm. I'll be in touch soon to let you know who we've got lined up to be our guest speaker for the evening.

The biggest news for fall is that Sisters in Crime is celebrating its 25th anniversary this year!!

We're going to invite booksellers and libraries to celebrate the milestone

with us in several different ways. We're going to co-host two KILLER COCKTAILS events with the Twin Cities Crime Writers' Co-op, one on September 21, as a kickoff to the Midwest Booksellers Association trade show in Minneapolis, and one on October 12, during the Minnesota Library Association's annual meeting in Duluth. **All Sisters in Crime members are invited to these events, and we'll use them to help spread the word about Sisters in Crime as a resource organization for writers, readers, booksellers, and libraries.** We've got 25 years of advocacy and professional



Erin Hart is president of the Twin Cities Sisters in Crime chapter and author of the Nora Gavin/Comac Maguire mysteries

development to celebrate, so there will definitely be CAKE!

We're still looking for volunteers for both KILLER COCKTAILS events; if you're interested in sign-

(Continued on page 3)

The Write Stuff The Seven-Minute Idea Factory

By Susan Runholt



As an author of mysteries for middle grade readers, I often

have the opportunity to visit classrooms. My first school visits terrified me. I'm not an educator by background, and what did I know about teaching fifth- and sixth-grade kids to do – well, pretty much any-

thing?

Over the years I've become more comfortable in front of students. I've developed an approach I call *Create a World/Create a Mystery*. In essence, I simply ask the kids to unleash their imaginations and create their own stories. For that one brief period of time, they are freed from any kind of spelling or grammatical mandates. They can even forget any ironclad notions about elements of fiction favored by those

who create state education standards: Goodbye *Character Creation*. So long *Plot Development*. Instead, I ask them to create a world in which they want their story to take place, and a mystery or question within that world that will keep a reader reading. That's it.

Since I started doing this, teachers have told me that this model can actually be called a curriculum, and that it achieves a specific learning goal: turning

(Continued on page 6)

Inside this issue:

After Action Report by Todd New	11
Conventions & Conferences	4
The Haunted Road to Publication by Anne Frasier	5
Member News	9
Murder, Mystery and Mayhem along the English Riviera	13
Newsletter Deadlines	2
Off the Griddle by Pat Dennis	10
OUAC Bookstore Events	12
President's Message	1
SinC Members' Websites & Blogs	7
Upcoming SinC meetings	5
The View from our Basement by Pat & Gary at Once Upon A Crime Bookstore	8
The Write Stuff: The Seven Minute Idea Factory by Susan Runholt	1



Twin Cities Sisters in Crime Newsletter

The mission of Sisters in Crime is to promote the professional development and advancement of women crime writers to achieve equality in the industry.

OFFICERS

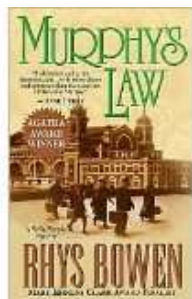
Erin Hart, President
Jessie Chandler, Vice President
Barbara DaCosta, Secretary
Susan Hastings, Treasurer
Doug Ernst, Membership Coordinator
Charity Tahmaseb, Web Maven
Marilyn Victor, All Points Bulletin Editor

Newsletter Deadline

The next Twin Cities Sisters in Crime Newsletter, **November/December 2011**, will be sent out at the end of October. Please send us news of your latest publications, honors, and/or awards for inclusion in the **November/December newsletter** by **October 1**. All columns, reports and articles are also due by **October 1**. If you have suggestions for articles or for improving this newsletter, please contact the editor, Marilyn Victor via e-mail at tcsincnewsletter@gmail.com.

Up For Discussion

Discuss these exciting mysteries at an upcoming Twin Cities Sisters in Crime Chapter Meeting



Murphy's Law by Rhys Bowen (**September selection**)—Nimble of plot and fleet in the telling, *Murphy's Law* begins a new series starring the plucky Molly Murphy. Defending herself from the unwelcome advances of the local landowner's son, Molly accidentally kills him and flees her village to escape hanging. Fleeing to America, Molly attracts the loud attentions of a crude, boisterous type named O'Malley during the Atlantic crossing. He is found murdered on Ellis Island and Molly becomes a prime suspect, along with a young man she befriended. Wending her way through a vivid, Tammany Hall-era New York, Molly struggles to prove her innocence, aided by one coincidence after another.

(Continued on page 7)

ing up for anything, just go to Google Docs address below and add your name and contact information and any ideas you might have under all the areas you'd be interested in. (For those who've not used Google Docs before, it's very easy. You just make your additions or changes to the shared document, and the program automatically saves those changes automatically. You don't even have to click 'Save'...)

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1MUZQdnR3HSdD9HMHNAfXmiKgK6KrWqflv_anYY6B74E/edit?hl=en_US&pli=1

We've made great progress on our new projects over the summer. I've been working on an updated Twin Cities SinC website with local web designer Nick Lethert. (For a sneak preview, go to: <http://208.101.30.163/~twincity/>) It's nearly ready to unveil, and will have information on monthly meetings, special events and book fairs, possible speakers bureaus and a few possible panel discussion topics. I hope that you'll let us know what you'd like to see on the site, and we'll make it reflect your needs and desires.

We realize that our membership process has been just a tiny bit confusing, so we're streamlining. Treasurer Susan Hastings has set up PayPal account so that people can now pay their annual membership dues with just a few clicks on our website. There's also a link to the SinC national membership registration page (because you must be a member of the national before joining a local chapter).

We're also working on setting up a directory of local members as part of the Twin Cities SinC website, so heads up: we'll need a good headshot and bio information from each of you, as well as some back-

ground on your interests and areas of expertise. (For an example of what we have in mind, check out the New England SinC website: <http://www.sincne.org/member>.) We'll be gathering that information through a member registration page on the new website—I'll keep you posted when that's up and running.

Sisters in Crime will have a table at the Twin Cities Book Festival on October 15, to help promote the work of the organization and our members. You'll be able to sign up to staff that table starting at the regular September meeting, or just e-mail me attsistersin-crime@gmail.com to sign up for a slot. People usually take an hour, and bring books to sell, or postcards and bookmarks to help publicize their latest titles. It's a great time, and wonderful to see so many bookish people gathered under one roof.

The Midwest chapter of Mystery Writers of America will also have a table at the Twin Cities Book Festival, and they've lined up a panel featuring MWMWA members who are also SinC members: Julie Kramer, Carl Brookins, Michael Mallory, Sujata Massey, and myself. If I'm not mistaken, I think it's the first time a crime writing panel has been featured at this festival. MWMWA has also invited us to be their guests at a joint MWMWA/SinC meeting the day after the festival, Sunday, October 16. It will be a lunchtime gathering at Once Upon A Crime—Raymond Benson, from MWMWA is bringing pizza, and I'll bring a SinC anniversary cake! Hope you can make it. (Details on the exact time TBA.)

Our intrepid VP, Jessie Chandler (author of BINGO BARGE

MURDER), is spearheading the effort to develop new membership and marketing materials for distribution to Minnesota bookstores and libraries. We're planning to have the brochure in hand for KILLER COCKTAILS at the Midwest Booksellers Association trade show on September 21, and for distribution to librarians from all over the state during a second KILLER COCKTAILS event October 12 at the Minnesota Library Association's annual meeting in Duluth.

We'll also have an opportunity to hand out brochures at the Twin Cities Book Festival on October 15.

Thanks to everybody involved for their great work so far!

If you've got news to share, don't forget about posting it on the Twin Cities SinC Facebook or Twitter pages!

F a c e b o o k G r o u p :
<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=77945762167>

T w i t t e r A c c o u n t :
<http://twitter.com/#!/TwinCitiesSinC>

W e b s i t e :
<http://www.twincitysin.org>
E-mail account: tcistersin-crime@gmail.com

That's all the news for now. Don't forget to write like you mean it!

Erin Hart
Twin Cities Sisters in Crime
Chapter President

P.S. If you'd like to volunteer or have ideas to share, please feel free to contact me directly...

[651-698-2258](tel:651-698-2258) home
[612-532-2532](tel:612-532-2532) cell
mail@erinhart.com

Susan Hastings has set up PayPal account so that people can now pay their annual local membership dues with just a few clicks on our website.

Upcoming Conventions & Conferences

BOUCHERCON 2011

Sept. 15– 18, 2011

St. Louis, MO

<http://www.bouchercon2011.com/>

Guests of Honor: Robert Crais, Charlaine Harris, Colin Cotterill, Val McDermid

WRITERS' POLICE ACADEMY

Sept. 23 to 25, 2011

Greensboro, North Carolina

www.writerspoliceacademy.com

The Writers' Police Academy, helmed by SinC member Lee Lofland, provides a hands-on interactive experience designed to help writers increase their understanding of all aspects of law enforcement and forensics.

MIDWEST FICTION WRITERS FALL HARVEST

Sept. 24 & 25, 2011

Minneapolis, MN

<http://www.midwestfiction.com/SaveTheDate.html>

An intensive workshop with Margie Lawson for her Master Class: Empowering Characters' Emotion.

MAGNA CUM MURDER

October 28-30, 2011

Muncie, IN

Guests of Honor: Parnell Hall, Banquet Speaker: Bob Brier

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

NEW ENGLAND CRIME BAKE

November 11-13, 2011

Dedham, MA

Guests of Honor: Barry Eisler and Nancy Pickard <http://www.crimebake.org/index.htm>

THIRTY-FOURTH ANNUAL BLACK ORCHID WEEKEND

December 2-4, 2011

New York City, NY

Guest Speaker: Al Roker,

<http://www.nerowolfe.org/htm/events/events.htm#bow>

LOVE IS MURDER

February 3– 5, 2012

Chicago, IL

Featured Authors: Donald Bain, Julie James, David B. Morrell, Hank Phillipi Ryan

http://www.loveismurder.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=2:-join-us-at-the-premier-midwestern-mystery-conference-february-5-7-2012

If you have a conference you'd like to see listed here, please send information to tcsincnewsletter@gmail.com

The Haunted Road to Publication



By Anne Frasier

Two years ago I decided to start my own publishing company, and I planned to begin with a single ebook. This was around the beginning of the real ebook rise. Everybody and their uncle had jumped in, but not the aunts, cousins, and kissing cousins. I settled on horror and suspense as a publishing focus, and I called the house Belfry Press. The first book would be a collection of Halloween stories, and I sent out invitations to twenty-five authors, published and unpublished, asking if they'd like to join me in my little experiment. I promised nothing but possibly a rubber bat and a free download of the Halloween anthology, which I was calling Bats in the Belfry. I thought that would be a nice launch title. The first story came in and well...it blew me away. The next story came in and, well...it blew me away. And so on, and so on.



About this time, I started releasing my backlist in digital format, and I saw that sales weren't spectacular. And I quickly came to realize that a digital ebook by an unknown press might not be the best place for these wonderful stories. They deserved more. So I asked the contributors if they'd be okay with my shopping the collection around, and all but a couple said fine. About the same time, one of my old Theresa Weir books was reissued by an ebook house, and less than twenty-four hours after the release it was being pirated in several places. So I suddenly wasn't feeling all that warm and fuzzy about

ebooks.

I submitted Bats to a print-only house in Minneapolis called Nodin Press. Nodin Press has published a lot of mysteries and anthologies, but never a Halloween book, so I was surprised and thrilled when the owner, Norton Stillman, called and said he'd like to publish Bats. Along the way, we decided the title no longer worked because, well, it was chosen with Belfry Press in mind. After some back and forth emails, we decided on Deadly Treats. The book just came out, and honestly, this anthology is such a LOVELY TREAT, and I'm in awe of the writers and the writing. I'll think, Oh, this is my favorite. No, this is my favorite. Oh, but what about this one? And this one? *SO MANY* great stories! You can order a copy directly from Nodin Press (<http://www.nodinpress.com/>), or you can find Deadly Treats almost anywhere print books are sold.

Read more about the anthology and the contributors on Anne's blog:

<http://monkeywithapen.blogspot.com/2011/05/deadly-treats-available-for-pre-order.html>



Anne Frasier is a USA Today best-selling author of nineteen novels that have spanned the genres of suspense, mystery, thriller, romantic suspense, and paranormal. Anne's upcoming novel, The Orchard, is a memoir written as Theresa Weir.

Upcoming SinC Meetings

Tuesday, September 6

Book Discussion: Murphy's Law by Rhys Bowen
Guest Speaker: TBA

Tuesday, October 4

Book Discussion: The Bone Chamber by Robin Burcell
Guest Speaker: TBA

Tuesday, November 1

Book Discussion: Grave Sight by Charlaine Harris
Guest Speaker: TBA



Meetings are held at 7:00 p.m. at
Once Upon A Crime Mystery Bookstore
604 W. 26th St.
Minneapolis, MN 55405

The Seven-Minute Idea Factory

(Continued from page 1)

reluctant writers into students eager to get their ideas onto the page. But I have an ulterior motive that has nothing to do with pedagogy. I love listening to the kids read their creations to their classmates! And the part that never ceases to amaze me is that they come up with these incredible, often fully fleshed out story ideas in *only seven minutes*.

Some examples. First, a story – actually, in this case, book jacket copy and an excerpt – handed to me by an enthusiastic sixth-grader who gave me permission to use it as I saw fit. And yes, she had created it in seven minutes.

Kayleigh lives a not-so-normal life at a not-so-normal boarding school for girls. In fact, she is an elite spy in training! Halfway through her sophomore year, her father goes on a mission and never comes back. Desperate to discover the truth behind what was said to be her father's death, Kayleigh discovers a shocking truth. Will Kayleigh survive her worst nightmare ever?

Excerpt: *"Kayleigh, come to my office," Mom ordered after dinner.*

I followed her up the grand staircase. Inside her office, she said, "Kayleigh, Dad isn't coming home."

This is just one small example of the fabulous worlds and questions fashioned by the students at the schools I visit. I hear at least a dozen worth remembering every time I visit a classroom. The ideas these kids come up with are breathtaking!

I've heard a terrific story about two orphaned vampire children living in the family castle who hear a strange noise in the basement. One about a young boy trying to survive in a detailed world in the far future, where everything had been reduced to acronyms such as MNA: Morning Nutritional Allowance.

One Minneapolis student produced a gory tale about the dismembering of Elmo, of all things. A particularly suspenseful reading involved a girl who witnesses the murder of an old woman and must now hide from the bad guys. Then there was the tale about an African chieftain kidnapped by his power-hungry brother.

Among the most memorable was a compelling, extremely well-written short-short story beginning with "Cut! the director cried." In it, said film director is trying to wring a good performance out of a young starlet who, before the story was over, somehow manages to get her face chomped off by a paper raccoon!

The writing can be extraordinary. The best first line I've heard came from a particularly nerdy fifth-grader in Texas: "In the beginning, God created the heaven, the earth, and baseball."

One young woman from California wrote about a character who had just witnessed her mother's murder at the hands of a mugger in Central Park: "My throat ached from the tears I was holding back."

If I were forced to give awards for the best stories I've heard, one would go to the young man who wrote a particularly moving tale about a dog and its master, separated by thousands of miles, now searching for one another, "drawn together like magnets." It brought tears to the eyes of many of us in the room.

Another award would go to a single story that featured, as follows: Cinderella; a glass slipper that turned out to be Buzz Lightyear's helmet; Sleepy, the dwarf from *Sleeping Beauty*; the rat Ratatouille; and the wand of Harry Potter that ultimately brings them all together.

See why I love doing this? And not only do I get to listen to these things – the kids send me thank you notes! Something definitely wrong about the symmetry there, but it makes me think that I'm in the right business.



Susan Runholt is the author of the Kari and Lucas international mysteries. The most recent in the series is ADVENTURE AT SIMBA HILL. She is currently working on a suspenseful stand-alone middle-grade action book about two young dogsledders from outside Duluth.

When kids tap into their imaginations, the results are astonishing!

WANTED: ASSISTANT NEWSLETTER EDITOR

The Twin Cities Sisters in Crime All Points Bulletin needs an assistant newsletter editor. I'm looking for someone to help with proofing the newsletter, gathering information, writing fillers and helping to keep the newsletter on deadline. If interested, please feel free to speak with me at the next Sisters in Crime meeting or email me at tcsincnewsletter@gmail.com. I could really use some help!

Marilyn Victor, newsletter editor
tcsincnewsletter@gmail.com

Up for Discussion

(Continued from page 2)



"Bone Chamber" by Robin Burcell (October Selection) Burcell's second novel to feature FBI forensic artist Sydney Fitzpatrick (after 2008's *Face of a Killer*) offers plenty of action. After Fitzpatrick helps identify the faceless corpse of a young woman as the daughter of the U.S. ambassador to the Holy See, Fitzpatrick decides to follow mysterious, predictably gruff covert government agent Zach Griffin to Rome. There they search for a third key, alluded to by a forensic anthropologist friend and colleague recently killed in a hit-and-run accident. Fitzpatrick and Griffin believe the key will lead them to a map, buried in the crypts of Rome or Naples, that may be connected to bioterrorism and a very bad guy named Carlo Adami. All this excitement takes them through standard variations on the Freemason conspiracy theory and a good deal of underground scrambling, Indiana Jones-style.

SinC Members' Websites & Blogs

Carl Brookins

www.minnesotacrimewave.org

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

Jessie Chandler

<http://jessiechandler.com>

Barbara DaCosta

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

Pat Dennis

www.penurypress.com

or

www.comedybypatdennis.com

Barbara Fister

<http://barbarafister.com>

<http://barbarafister.wordpress.com>

Anne Fraiser

<http://www.annefrasier.com>

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

Margaret Frazer

www.margaretfrazer.com

Erin Hart

www.erinhart.com

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

Ellen Hart

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

Christine Husom

www.christinehusom.webs.com

C. Hyytinen

www.chyytinen.com

Julie Kramer

www.juliekramerbooks.com

Jenifer LeClair

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

**Michael Allan Mallory
and Marilyn Victor**

www.snakesjones.com

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

Linda Morganstein

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

Colin Nelson

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

<http://colintnelson.com/blog/>

Once Upon A Crime Bookstore

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

Susan Runholt

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

Barb Schlichting

www.barbschlichting.com

<http://bschlichting.blogspot.com>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W5LMX7nYFWw>

Sharon Smith

www.slsmithbooks.com

Rich Thompson

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

Stanley Trollip

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

Christopher Valen

www.christophervalen.com

<http://christophervalen.com/blog>

Marilyn Victor

<http://mjvictor.blogspot.com>

If you'd like to see your website or blog listed here, please e-mail Marilyn Victor at tcincnewsletter@gmail.com.

The View From Our Basement by Pat & Gary

A couple things happened recently. We bought a new printer, which

happens to include a scanner and fax. I guess it's like phones these days—it's hard to get anything that does only what you really want it to do. I needed a *printer*. But of course, since I now have a scanner, I might as well use it, right? Just one more way I'm doing less kicking and screaming while being dragged into the 21st century.

The other thing that

happened was

we just bought a large collection of mystery books—about 2,000 of them. It's an impressive bunch of books, and soon and/or eventually, they'll find their way into the Mystery Annex. As tempting as it is to want to keep several of the books, Pat and I, on occasions like this, remind each other that we don't collect books any more, we sell books.

Book collecting, though, is near and dear to us; that's how we met. When it came time to merge households, things like furniture and dishware were easy to part with, but what about the books? Between us, we had roughly 10,000 of them. The solution was obvious: buy a bookstore. And the rest is history. But truth be told, we still hold on to, and occasionally add to, a modest, personal, "hands off!" private stash.

Those of you who don't have a book collecting jones probably think that collectors are nuts. Well, you're right. Book collecting has been called "a gentle madness". But to collectors, it's a fun, and relatively inexpensive hobby (unless you end up buying a whole book store). Absolutely the best part of collecting is the hunt, which is why I really don't understand the appeal of buying off the internet. Where's the joy of discovery? Browsing the shelves, finding bookstores while away from home, all with excited anticipation of finding a book you've been looking for, or finding one you've never seen or heard of before but that now you just *have to have*...now that's fun. But to true collectors, I'm preaching to the choir, while the rest of you are going

huh?

A long, long time ago, I discovered the book *The Dead Beat* by Robert Bloch (the author of *Psycho*). The cover art is simple and striking, and reminded me all too well of a marathon day of tuning pianos in which my fingers started to bleed, leaving blood spots up and down

the

keyboard. (Another book which I later found is Charles Bukowski's *Play the Piano Drunk Like A Percussion Instrument Until The Fingers Begin To Bleed A Bit*—undoubtedly the longest title in my collection). But with that first *The Dead Beat*, I was off to search the world for books—primarily mysteries—with piano artwork on the cover.

One of the best approaches for anyone to take in collecting is to focus the collection. Some will choose an era of literature, others might collect Edgar winners, some will collect every edition of a favorite title...the scope of what you can focus on is endless. Focusing on cover art adds an extra dimension to "the hunt" because most books are displayed

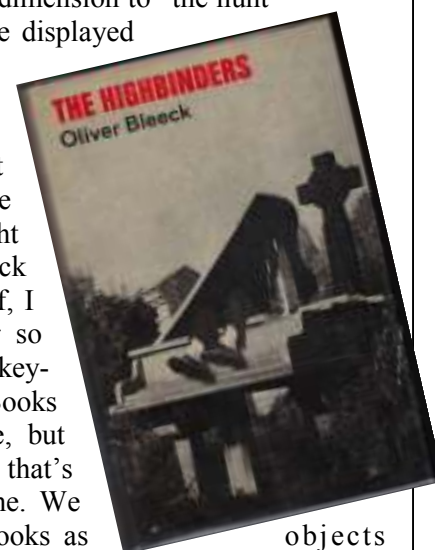
"spine out". You have to take the book off the shelf to see the cover. When I first started rearranging the Annex after we bought it, moving books back and forth, shelf to shelf, I found half a dozen or so books with pianos or keyboards on the cover. Books that I had seen before, but only their spines. Now that's my idea of a good time. We collectors appreciate books as every bit as much, and often more so, as we do for what

objects

(Continued on page 10)

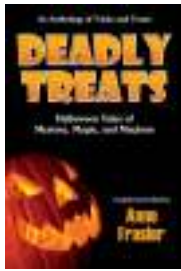


Pat Frovarp and Gary Shulze are the informal, low-tech owners of Once Upon A Crime Mystery Books. They carry thousands of new mysteries, thrillers, and crime fiction and also have a large collection of rare, used, and hard-to-get volumes



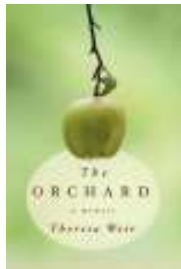


Member News

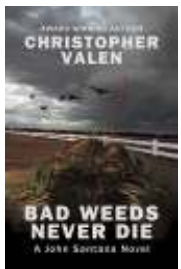


Anne Frasier has put together an exciting Halloween anthology, **DEADLY TREATS** to be released in September. Eight contributing authors, **David Housewright, Shirley Damsgaard, Leandra Logan, Marilyn Victor, Michael Allan Mallory, Lance Zarimba, Mark Hull, Pat Dennis, Paula Fleming and Anne Frasier/Theresa Weir,**

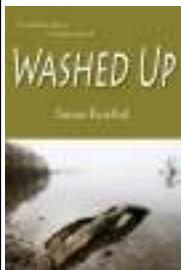
will participate in a group talk and signing on Thursday, October 6, at 7:00 at HarMar Barnes and Noble, in Roseville, MN



THE ORCHARD: A MEMOIR by **Theresa Weir** (aka Anne Frasier) will launch at Once Upon A Crime at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, September 20. It was ranked #2 on the October Indie Next list **The Orchard** is the story of a street-smart city girl who must adapt to a new life on an apple farm after she falls in love with Adrian Curtis, son of a prominent local family whose lives and orchards seem to be cursed. Theresa slowly learns for herself about the isolated world of farming, pesticides, environmental destruction, and death.



Christopher Valen's latest John Santana novel, **BAD WEEDS NEVER DIE**, will be released on September 1. The launch party is being held at Once Upon A Crime on Saturday, September 10 from Noon to 2:00 p.m. John Santana has his hands full when a blood spattered Mercedes belonging to the daughter of a prominent psychologist is found abandoned. Santana's search for answers leads him to the photo of a mysterious woman who may hold the key to solving the crime. But to find her he must return to Colombia and face the ghosts of his past and the man who has vowed to kill him. **Bad Weeds Never Die**, received a 5 Star review from Rebecca's Reads, which is posted on Amazon.



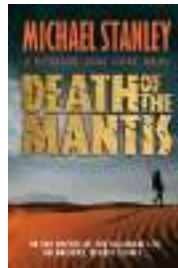
Susan Koefod's WASHED UP, is being released by North Star Press on Sept 1. **WASHED UP** is the first in a planned series of mysteries featuring Detective Arvo Thorson. Thorson is the only person trusted enough to investigate the shocking murder of a newborn baby,

drowned in the Mississippi River, but he's drowning too — in a toxic cocktail of whiskey, vodka and gin — and his career will be dead in the water unless he can solve the crime.



Linda Morganstein's, ON A SILVER PLATTER, will be released in September 2011. The third installment of the Alexis Pope mystery series involves a murder on a movie set in the wine country of California. When a film company begins production of a low-budget modern-day horror movie based on the beheading of Saint John the Baptist, Alexis

Pope is asked to lend a hand as a stunt double. In no time, she's immersed in the intrigues of the cast and crew, culminating in a terrible calamity that sends her, once again, on the trail of a killer.



Michael Stanley's DEATH OF THE MANTIS, the third of the Detective Kubu series will be launched at Once Upon a Crime on Wednesday, Sept 7 at 7 pm. When a Kalahari ranger is found dead in a dry ravine, his corpse surrounded by three Bushmen, the local police arrest the nomads. Detective Kubu Bengu investigates and is reunited with

his old friend Khumanego, a Bushman and advocate for his people. Khumanego claims the arrests motivated by racist antagonism. The Bushmen are released, but soon after, another man is murdered in similar circumstances. Are the Bushmen to blame, or is it a copycat murder?



Coon Rapids Woman Pens Humorous Murder Mystery—The Coon Rapids Herald interviewed Jessie Chandler about her new mystery **Bingo Barge Murder**. You can read the full article at

<http://abcnewspapers.com/2011/08/03/coon-rapids-woman-pens-humorous-murder-mystery/>

If you have news of interest to our members, please e-mail it to tcincnewsletter@gmail.com. Deadline for next issue is October 1.



Off the Griddle by Pat Dennis

Although I grew up as “the fat girl”, through many decades of spotty discipline and 847 diets, I have miraculously transformed myself into a fat old woman. But I’m proud that I’ve never given up dieting even though the results have been slim. (Sorry, I never use puns but that word just seemed to fit.)

I’m also as surprised that I have never given up writing. My success track as a writer writing has been limited to a smithering of scattered publications, a few awards, a couple of grants, and a few fairly nice chunks of money. If I were in my twenties, thirties or forties, this would be perfectly fine. In my 60s? It’s discouraging.

For the last few years I have been trying to peddle two novels, a Y.A. and a mystery. I ended signing with one New York Agent who sent the book to one publisher. I fired her. I had a 24-year old agent who claimed my Y.A. would be a New York Times best-seller. She submitted it to only three publishers who rejected the work. She fired me. And now when I try in person to convince publishers to look at my book it, my career usually shoots backward a decade or two.

As usual this morning, I went on the web for comfort. After watching a half-hour of funny cat

videos on youtube, I came across the following:

John Grisham’s first novel was rejected 25 times. Madeline L’Engle received 26 rejections before getting *A Wrinkle in Time* published. British Crime Writer John Creasy wrote over 500 novels, but also received over 774 rejections in his career. Our own rising star Jess Lourey received 50 rejections before her first novel was published. Mary Higgins Clark received 50. James Dashner received over 30.

Unfortunately, *Twilight* was only rejected 14 times.

Yet, Another Reason to go to Dunkin Donuts

The sting was called “Extra Sugar” by the Rockway Police Department. It involved Dunkin Donuts, the police and a female employee who took numerous 10-15 minutes breaks during her shift. When several policemen noticed the employee coming and going, they set up the operation. An undercover cop approached the woman in the parking lot and sure enough, she shared her specialized menu with him. Within a few minutes she was arrested for solicitation.

Actually, I am in favor of legalizing prostitution. But I would like a few minutes to have a talk with this young woman. “Girl, Really? A Donut Shop? How did

Pat Dennis is a comedienne and keynote speaker. She is the author of the popular book Hotdish To Die For, Stand-Up and Die (ebook only), Contributing Editor, Who Died in Here? and Hotdish Haiku



you not expect the police to notice?”

Not that mystery writers are weird...

But I have been googling weird stuff writers do. (Which of course is actually kind of weird, itself.). Truman Capote could only write while lying down. He wrote all of his books in longhand. Anne Rice will only use 14 point Courier font. Although she doesn’t have a day job, Val McDermid starts her writing at 10:00 p.m. Walter Mosely writes in the buff. Laura Levine is fanatic about doing a New York Times crossword puzzle daily.

And yes, I do have too much time on my hands.

Pat —Yes, I am decades older than my picture”—Dennis

The View from Our Basement

(Continued from page 8)

is written inside. Ebooks be damned! Sorry, couldn’t help myself.

Finally, back to why I mentioned something as pedestrian as buying a printer with a scanner: I get to show

off a few of my favorites. The Bloch was already mentioned. The Ngaio Marsh *Overture to Death* is one of my favorites (the keyboard wraps around to the spine—pretty easy to spot on the shelf). The Oliver Bleek (aka Ross Thomas) *The Highbinders* is one of the most peculiar, showing a piano-shaped

grave monument with a body lying inside.

If you collect, are thinking that you might want to start collecting, or need to focus your collection, come visit our annex. There’s more where these came from, and we’re here to help.

After Action Report by Todd New

When is the last time you were reading a novel and found yourself saying, “That doesn’t sound right”? Yeah? Me, too. By vocation, I am a police officer – by personal taste, I’m a reader of mysteries, thrillers, and other fiction. Sometimes, those two don’t mix well – particularly when an author takes certain liberties with crime novels that don’t gel very well with reality. THAT is the reason for this column – by helping YOU write more knowledgably about crime-related topics, I (hopefully) won’t experience as many moments of cognitive dissonance while I’m reading! (Seems fair to me!)

In my last column, I addressed the “CSI effect” that has begun to creep into the courtroom via TV scripts. While there certainly are some truly amazing tools being made available to police and investigators, the fallacy comes in assuming that ALL of these tools are available to ALL cops, in ALL departments, ALL of the time! In the interest of being fair and balanced, however (where have I heard that phrase?), let’s take a look at some of the marvelous, StarWars-like technology that is actually making a difference in frontline cops’ lives and livelihoods!

One vehicle that packs much of the technology used in modern policing into one package is...well, a vehicle! The modern

squad car carries a bevy of technologies that work to make it a virtually self-contained intelligence unit. Some of these tools include first-aid equipment, emergency lighting, additional weapons, digital video and audio systems, and of course the radio and computer systems.

Most of us are accustomed to seeing rescue and ambulance vehicles responding to medical emergencies, but in many communities, the police are dispatched simultaneously to these types of calls.

Because of this, officers must go through rigorous first responder training that includes first aid, CPR and even the use of Automated External Defibrillators (AED’s). As a result, many squads are equipped

with at least basic first aid kits and in many cases, AED units. Don’t hesitate to have officers in your own writing act to provide emergency first aid treatment until more sophisticated life-support units arrive. It is not uncommon for officers to render first aid to someone they have just had to shoot or engage in a life-and-death struggle with! (This is an interesting role-switch, don’t you agree?)

How many of us have driven by

The street cops in your stories may have moved away from call boxes to portable radios – but don’t sell them short on what’s available in their ultimate toolbox: the modern police patrol vehicle!

a
p o
l i c e
v e
h i c l e
e n -

gaged in a traffic stop along the side of the road? How about at night? Have you noticed the blinding lights that the officers use? In addition to the emergency strobes, powerful “takedown” lights and spotlights give officers a powerful advantage at night – not only can they see who/what they are dealing with, these lights are often powerful enough to disorient the individual they are engaging. (This is a great advantage in the potentially life-threatening encounters that traffic-stops often represent. After all, you might be pulling over a car for a minor traffic infraction –but the driver may think you’re stopping him because of that bank he just robbed!)

If you’ve ever peeked into a squad car, no doubt you have no-

ticed the shotgun mounted vertically between the seats. These are locked in place but are easily accessible via an electronic release switch. The shotgun (although many departments are supplementing or even replacing them with carbine rifles) is a powerful weapon that greatly multiplies the force/range an officer can bring to bear in an emergency. In addition to the standard 12 gauge tactical round (00 buckshot), tactical use of slugs extends the reach of the shotgun and will even penetrate the engine block of a car! New, less-lethal rounds include rubber slugs and even ‘bean-bags’ that offer different force options for different situations. Do some homework on the variety of rounds available!

Digital camera and audio systems are a valuable addition in the past few years. Using in-squad mounted cameras and wireless microphones, officers can now protect themselves against false accusations and the ensuing lawsuits that follow. Many encounters are now recorded, leaving no doubt as to what was said and done in a given situation. This is sometimes looked on with skepticism by cops themselves, but they are coming around as they see the value of having their reports backed up by video recordings!

Another use of the squad camera (that is less widely available, I admit) is License Plate Recognition software. This enables the camera to actually read license plates as the squad drives down the street. The

(Continued on page 13)

Bookstore Events



"Fracture," from the Frankie MacFarlane Geological Series.

Tues. Oct 11 - 7:00 **Jan Dunlap** "Falcon Finale" - Publication party. [CLICK HERE](#) for more information.

Wed. Oct 12 - 6:30 **Mystery Book Club** facilitated by Michael Allan Mallory. Book for the night is "Bone Chamber" by Robin Burcell.

Wed. Oct 19 - 7:00 **Minnesota Crime Wave** - Panel discussion & book signing with **Ellen Hart** "The Lost Women of Lost Lake," **Carl Brookins** "The Case of the Great Train Robbery," and **William Kent Krueger** "Northwest Angle" - Plus their entire back list (almost).

Sat. Oct 29 - 12:00-2:00 **Gerry Stimmler** "Dropped Dead in Kona" - Signing only for this Debut MN author.

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

For more information on upcoming events at Once Upon A Crime Mystery Bookstore, please visit their website at: <http://www.onceuponacrimebooks.com/>



Tues. Sep 6 - 7:00 **Twin Cities Sisters in Crime meeting**. Book for the night is Rhys Bowen's "Murphy's Law."

Wed. Sep 7 - 7:00 **Michael Stanley** "Death of the Mantis" - Reception, Signing, and a Bit of a Talk.

Sat. Sep 10 - 12:00-2:00 **Christopher Valen** "Bad Weeds Never Die" - Publication party. [CLICK HERE](#) to find out more about this Minnesota author's latest book.

Mon, Sep 12 - 7:00 **Deon Meyer** "Trackers" - Reading and signing. [CLICK HERE](#) for more information.

Wed. Sep 14 - 6:30 **Mystery Book Club** facilitated by Marilyn Victor. Book for the night is "Murphy's Law" by Rhys Bowen.

Tues. Sept 20 - 7:00 Anne Frasier writing as **Theresa Weir** "The Orchard" (A Memoir) - Reception and Signing with Refreshments.

Thurs. Sept 22 - 7:00 **John Connolly** "The Burning Soul" - Talk and signing.

Sat. Sept 24 - 12:00-2:00 **S.L. Smith** "Blinded By The Sight" - Signing with refreshments. [CLICK HERE](#) for more information.

Tues. Oct 4- 7:00 **Twin Cities Sisters in Crime meeting**. Book for the night is Robin Burcell's "Bone Chamber."

Wed. Oct 5 - 7:00 **John Sandford** "Shock Wave: A Virgil Flowers Mystery" - Talk and Signing.

Sat. Oct 8 - 12:00-2:00 **Laura Childs** "Skeleton Letters" - Book Signing and Halloween Tea Party - [CLICK HERE](#) for more information.

Sat. Oct 8 - 3:00-5:00 *It's a double feature for this Saturday!* Next up is **Susan Cummins Miller** signing her latest,

(After Action Report Continued from page 11)

plates are then run against police databases to find stolen vehicles, owners with warrants, etc. This is really incredible to watch in action! (You can do a search on sites like YouTube to find some great run-owns on this technology!)

Need I say more about the magic of computers? While many of us carry computers in our pockets that have more computing power than NASA in the 1960's (read that: Smartphones!), computers have also made their mark in policing. GPS receivers attached to squad computers give dispatch a virtually mapped view of the units around the city, resulting in more efficient dispatching to calls. In addition to

email and report writing, these computers also query local, state, and national datasets when inquiring about individuals or vehicles (or other property) – giving officers on the street real-time access to information that may have, in the not too distant past, taken investigators hours or days to trace.

So while you are tempering your readers' CSI syndrome, dazzle them with a little glimpse into the technology that IS making a difference on the street. The street cops in your stories may have moved away from call boxes to portable radios – but don't sell them short on what's available in their ultimate toolbox: the modern police patrol vehicle!



Officer Todd New is a Criminal Intelligence Analyst working with the City of Minneapolis Intelligence Sharing and Analysis Center

MURDER, MYSTERY AND MAYHEM ON THE ENGLISH RIVIERA



If you're a fan of Agatha Christie and are yearning to travel to England, then it's time to dust off your vintage clothing and head for the annual Agatha Christie Festival in South Devon. Each September the English Riviera becomes the murder capital of Europe when the seaside towns of Torquay (where the famous Britcom *Faulty Towers* was set), Paignton and Brixham host a week-long festival celebrating the life of the author who was born in Torquay.

This year the festival begins with a traditional Agatha Christie Fete, on Sunday, September 11th, where vendors will dress in their 1920s/30s period attire and entertainment will include a vintage car rally. During the week-long celebration, fans can enjoy exclusive visits to her holiday home at Greenway via a vintage 1940's bus, attend murder mystery dinners (one of

them on a dining train) tea dances, garden parties and more. Christie's *Verdict* will be performed at the Princess Theatre, produced by the Agatha Christie Theatre Company. At the Paignton Library, there will be a rare opportunity to view the original manuscript of her book, *Five Little Pigs*. There's also a character lunch held at the Borgh Island Hotel, where you can attend dressed as your favorite Christie character.

Babbacombe Model Village, a model miniature village and railway, in Torquay, has hidden miniature murder mystery scenes in its little gardens. There is also the ABC Murders Trail Competition to win a fabulous trip on the Orient Express. Visitors can also enjoy the new **Agatha Christie Trail**, a reasonably flat trail with some fabulous views which takes in twenty special places that inspired her life and works across the English Riviera and South Devon. There is also the **Agatha Christie Mile** along Torquay's seafront which takes people along eleven stops which include the town museum with its Agatha Christie exhibit, the

town hall where she worked as a nurse during World War I, when it served as a Red Cross hospital, Meadfoot Beach, the formerly grand **Pavillion** where she once loved to dance, now home to a somewhat sad-sackish little mall, and **All Saints Church** where they'll even give you an Agatha tour.

Agatha Christie's grandson, Mathew Prichard will be attending this



year and has assembled a panel of experts to discuss "The Art of Adapting Agatha

Christie". Actor Jonathan Cecil, who played Hastings opposite Peter Ustinov's Poirot, will also be in attendance along with, no doubt, hundreds of Poirot look-a-likes. The festival finished up on September 15, Agatha's 121st birthday, with a grand display of fireworks which will be viewed all along the Torquay seafront.