

The Purloined Newsletter



A CAPITAL CRIME WRITERS PUBLICATION

Volume 19, Issue 10 – December 2007

TABLE OF CONTENTS

News from the Chair..... Page 2
Editor's Notes Page 2
Announcements, etc. Page 3
Surrey International
Writer's Conference
by Deidre Hall Jaimet ... Page 4
The Bloody Dagger. A new
design by Guy Mercier... Page 5
November meeting
Report by Paul Sadler .. Page 6
It's Your Career – Shameless
Self Promotion Page 9
October Panel Discussion on
the Mystery Market
Part 2..... Page 10

December 12th Meeting: Holiday Dinner at Biagios!



Come join us for our annual holiday dinner and guest speaker GILES BLUNT on Wednesday, December 12 starting at 6:30 at Biagio's Italian Kitchen. This is a new location this year.

When: December 12, 2007
Arrivals start at 6:30

Where: Biagio's Italian Kitchen
1394 Richmond Rd.
<http://www.biagios.ca/>

Guest Speaker: Giles Blunt

RSVP to Bev Panasky at: bev.panasky@gmail.com

Next Meeting: January 9, 2007 Identity Theft!

RCMP Sgt. Chaghan Garvey will speak on identity theft. He was formerly with the RCMP fraud section, but has recently been seconded to the proceeds of crime division.

Your Program Committee

Ken, Bev & Deborah

Capital Crime Writers is an organization of writers working in the mystery field, and readers who love the genre.

We meet on the second Wednesday of each month to discuss writing and crime, with the exception of July and August when meetings are suspended for the summer.

Membership is
\$30 per year,
\$15 corresponding.

Meetings are held in Room 156 at the Library and Archives Canada, 395 Wellington Street.

There is a meet and greet from 7:00 p.m. to 7:15 p.m., prior to every meeting.

From the Chair – Brenda Chapman

Our November meeting was well attended to hear Constable Andrew Thompson's fascinating talk about his work seeking out on-line predators. It is good to know that we have someone so dedicated to protecting our children working in this difficult field.

We've had a few changes on our board as people's lives become busier and busier and they find their volunteer commitment to become difficult to devote the necessary time. Darren O'Shaughnessy has dedicated endless hours to setting up the website, keeping it current and sending out membership messages. We all thank Darren for his good work over the past years. Guy Mercier, who has redesigned the CCW logo and worked on the newsletter, has kindly offered to be our new webmaster on a volunteer basis so we welcome him to our group.



The CCW Executive

Chair – Brenda Chapman

VP – Susan Gates

Past Chair – Barbara Fradkin

Treasurer – Rachel Pitcher

Programs – Ken Gibson, Bev Panasky & Deborah Gyapong

Membership Secretary: Darlene Cole

Newsletter Editor

Katherine Hobbs 613-263-0069

Public Relations – Katherine Hobbs

Webmaster – Guy Mercier

Web site:

www.capitalcrimewriters.com

We also apologize for the lapse in service of our website in November while we set up with a new host server. The site is now up and running at a new address: www.capitalcrimewriters.com.

Sheila Gallant-Halloran has also given selflessly of her time to be our treasurer over the past few years and we thank Sheila too for all of her hard work keeping our finances in hand. We welcome Rachel Pitcher to the executive as she takes over this role.

It is time to start thinking about the Audrey Jessup short story contest, which is open to CCW members and those living in the Ottawa region. Darlene Cole and I will be looking after the contest and we will have more details in the next newsletter and on our website. We will be raising the first-place prize money as well as looking into some sponsorship ideas. Details will follow in the new year.

So the Christmas season is fast approaching, Santa will soon be appearing in the malls, and we'll be wondering yet again where another year went. Our annual get-together is a great way to unwind and enjoy an evening of good food and friends. I'm especially looking forward to hearing our guest speaker Giles Blunt talk about writing since I am a huge fan of his books. Please be sure to let Bev Panasky (Bev.panasky@gmail.com) know you'll be attending.

Brenda

Editor's Notes – Katherine Hobbs



Marty Feldman's quote (box left) seems apropos this month with the launch of the newly designed bloody dagger. It's been the CCW logo since the group began. Designer Guy Mercier created the new dagger which you now see on the newsletter and website. Check out more on Guy on page 6.

Once again this is a long issue. Plenty to read over the holidays! Many thanks to the contributors this month. Deidre Hall Jaimet provided us with an enticing and informative overview of the Surrey

International Writers Conference she attended in October. It sounds amazing; definitely the place to be for a writer. And Paul Sadler wrote the piece on the November meeting with Constable Andrew Thompson. If you weren't at the meeting you'll certainly gain all the value of being there from his comprehensive report. This was a tough subject and Paul handled it with tremendous finesse. Finally we are finishing up the panel discussion on the mystery market from October -- then we'll be back to normal size for the new year.

It's my only resolution!

Katherine

Memorable Quotes from Writers:

The pen is mightier than the sword, and considerably easier to write with.

Marty Feldman

1934 - 1982

Announcements



Ottawa Public Library: The Ottawa Public Library provides a monthly electronic update on programs and services. It's a good resource for those living in the Ottawa area. Check it out at <http://www.bibliottawalibrary.ca>

The Arthur Ellis Award: Here they are – the submission rules for the 2008 Arthur Ellis Award for Best Unpublished First Crime Novel, aka the Unchanged Arthur. You'll notice a few changes:

- The entry fee has dropped to \$25 from last year's \$30. The entry fee must be paid in Canadian funds, whether by cheque or postal money order.
- The deadline for submissions is December 31, 2007. Bear in mind the volume of holiday mail and send your entry early enough for it to get in on time.
- You don't have to send a SASE; you'll be notified by email. Because all submissions go to the CWC mail drop, CWC won't be getting in touch with you till the first week of January (probably Jan 3 or 4) when they process and send the submissions to the judges. It is suggested you send your entry by some means that gives you a tracking number so you can make sure it was delivered.
- You're welcome to submit the same manuscript that you submitted last year as long as it has not been published or you do not have a contract to have it published; there are different judges this year.

For each submission you enter, the following is needed: 3 copies of the first 5000 words of your manuscript, 3 copies of the synopsis, 1 copy of the entry form (see attached PDF), 1 copy of your biographical info, 1 cheque or postal money order in Canadian funds for \$25. You may submit more than one entry as long as each submission is complete. Everything else should be covered in the rules. Go to the CWC Website www.crimewriterscanada.com and click on the Arthur Ellis Awards button for more information.

Finally, congratulations to **PHYLLIS SMALLMAN**, winner of last year's Unchanged Arthur for *Margarita Nights*, which will be published by McArthur & Company, the Unchanged sponsor, in early 2008.

Events:



Writers' Circle of Durham Region, which is in the Greater Toronto Area is holding a writers' conference May 2-3 2008 at the Delta Toronto East Hotel with interactive workshops on the Saturday and master classes on the Friday. Keynote luncheon speaker is popular newspaper columnist and acclaimed author Linwood Barclay, and honorary patron is award winning author Wayson Choy. More information on the event can be found on the Writer's Circle website at www.ontariowritersconference.com

December WEEKEND SCREENWRITING WORKSHOPS: Learn the art of writing for film and television with screenwriting workshops offered by the Canadian Screen Training Centre at 61A York St. in Ottawa and taught by industry professionals. Jefferson Lewis ("Les noces de papier," "Mon Amie Max," "Emotional Arithmetic") leads a French workshop, covering the essentials of plot, character and dialogue. Keith Davidson provides an intermediate workshop, focusing on how to polish and sell a script. Register ASAP! Visit www.cstc.ca or call 613-789-4720.



The Surrey International Writer's Conference (SIWC) 2007

By Deirdre Hart-Jaimet

My first trip to the Surrey International Writer's Conference (SIWC) was in 2004. I needed to get back into a novel I'd abandoned some three years earlier. This year, I badly needed a kick-start, booster dose, so October 19th to 22nd I went back to Surrey.

SIWC is an annual conference organized by a core group of area writers with the support of the Surrey Board of Education and Board of trade. Attendance at the first conference in 1993 numbered one hundred. In the 15 years since, SIWC has continued to expand both in numbers and geographic reach. This year the conference cut off registration at 800 persons. Most of those attending came from somewhere in Canada or the United States; but the conference draws transatlantic presences as well.

This year I encountered a gentleman from England (who has come each year for the last ten years; a lady from Scotland (besides Anne Perry who was there as a presenter); a gentleman from Ireland; one from Holland; a three-person film crew from East Germany; and a stunning red-head from Morocco. In 2004 I lunched with a travel writer from Japan; alas absent this year. At his keynote speech Donald Mass, president of the Mass Literary Agency in New York (publishers of Anne Perry novels) said that when asked by aspiring writers, he tells them SIWC is "the best writing conference in North America".

To get the negatives out of the way, let's admit that Surrey, B.C. is a long way to go and the conference itself is not cheap. Cost this year for the full three days with luncheons and dinners including the banquet was \$479.00. The basic package, which does not include meals, cost \$359.00; but for quality, convenience, social contacts and the always entertaining and informative keynote speakers the meals are well worth the extra \$100.00. The Sheraton Guilford Hotel, which houses the conference, is expensive at \$145.00 for a room with 2 queen size beds; but the Ramada is about a block away and costs somewhere around \$100.00 for similar, although less elegant furnishings, with breakfast included.



Now, some of what is good (for me) about SIWC? I went to SIWC with two specific goals. To get some refreshers in the technical aspects of the writing craft and make some decisions about which of the several projects I've started and abandoned over the past 15 years I might attempt to revive. I found a perfect fit for my twin goals for 2007 in SIWC's stated goal "to help writers, at all levels of development and every genre learn all you'll ever need to know about the craft (business) of writing".

SIWC aims, above all, to be a teaching conference. Many of the workshops are structured lessons, focused on imparting a block of specific information – much like a school classroom. These presenters have to have teaching skills as well as literary successes. Many have classroom teaching experience. For a beginner, or someone like me who wants refreshers in techniques, this sort of tight, information packed session is really valuable. The panels and some workshops are less structured. Content at SIWC is information overload. There are more than seventy workshops to choose from. There are workshops for genre (including crime) and literary writers, fiction and non-fiction writers, novel and short story writers; children's writers, film and television writers. Also present are editors and publishers and agents; some of whom give workshops, some consult by appointment, and some do both.

If one doesn't have a genre focus, choosing from among this wealth of offerings can be a difficult task. My goals mandated the buffet approach, so I learned a little bit about a lot of genres and craft techniques. But even when I took a genre focus, I missed Jan Burke (*Irene Kelly series*) because her workshop conflicted with Patricia Smiley (*Tucker Sinclair series*); and I only saw a bit of Anne Perry because I spent time in a conflicting session on editing.

The workshops are an hour and a quarter long. There are two blocks in the morning and two in the afternoon with nine workshops in each block. It's a good idea to have a 1st, 2nd and possibly 3rd choice workshop, so that if you decide to leave one workshop you won't have to waste time deciding where to go next. People can, and do, enter and leave while workshops are in process. Some have pre-scheduled appointments with an editor or agent; some simply want to take in part of another workshop. One afternoon I dropped in on five different workshops and met with an editor.

Included in the cost of the conference is the opportunity to book an appointment to pitch your idea/work-in-progress to an agent and/or publisher. Orca and Raincoast Book publishers had personnel present and there were 14 agents from various agencies. At The *Blue Pencil Café*; an editor will go over three pages of your manuscript and offer feedback.

SIWC is a long way to go, but it's a great learning experience and there's no wasted downtime. Oh, and I didn't mention the Night Owl story sessions for those who still have some neurotransmitters functioning after 21:00 hrs. And I forgot to talk about the writing contests with \$1000.00 first prizes in 4 categories. Want more? Log on to www.siwc.ca to see the full 2007 roster plus bios of the presenters.

The bloody dagger... a new design by Guy Mercier

This summer designer Guy Mercier created a new template for the newsletter. Now he's transformed the CCW bloody dagger logo. The new dagger is highlighted on the front of this issue and at www.capitalcrimewriters.ca.

In fact the entire website has been revamped with a whole new look and there's more planned to unfold over the winter. Because Guy is CCW's new web guy. It's going to be well worth checking the website frequently to see new photos, videos, contest announcements, event listings, a new CCW member only section, and much more.

And if you are considering promoting your own work with a website, Guy's the person to go to. This summer Guy created my website www.katherinehobbs.com with lots of flash technology and other fun features. Sharon Page of ORWA gave a workshop on Shameless Self Promotion (the write-up is on Page 10). We looked at various print materials she had designed to promote her writing career. This is exactly the kind of thing Guy will design, and brilliantly so – promotional pieces such as a story arc on a calendar that bookstores want to keep, designs for bookmarks, playing cards, matches, posters, print ads, fridge magnets – you name it.

Guy is a talented and creative designer and a true professional. Give him a call, or email him at gmgraphics@gmail.com and tell him what your needs are, and he can provide you with an estimate and plenty of ideas on what he can do to help you promote your career!

Katherine



...stand out
from the crowd.

Graphic design solutions
for print, exhibits and the web.

819.772.9609
gmgraphics@gmail.com
www.guymercier.com

November Meeting Report

By Paul Sadler

Pedophiles have been around for centuries and there is no evidence that their numbers are either increasing or decreasing. However, the same internet infrastructure that can enrich our lives, help maintain connections with family and friends, and give us a unique window on the world has also made it easier for pedophiles to share child pornography, find new victims, and use new forms of social networking to further their illegal activities. As these criminals find new ways to use the internet to facilitate their exploitation of children, new methods have to be found to fight these crimes. Constable Andrew Thompson from the Ottawa Police Services' High Tech Crime Unit gave us an overview of the types of activities he and his fellow crimefighters engage in to catch these high-tech criminals.

Constable Thompson is one of approximately 50 investigators in Canada focusing on high-tech crime, of which about 20 officers focus on child pornographers in particular. Surprisingly, his background is not computer science; he has a degree in genetics from Queen's University, with a minor in computer science. Also, he was not recruited specifically to work on high-tech crime: when he joined OPS, but rather



spent the first five years on patrol. He has spent the last three years with the high-tech unit, soon to be renamed the Internet and Child Exploitation Unit. The unit is co-located in Ottawa with RCMP and DND investigators, with RCMP looking at federal issues and national security while DND mainly focuses on issues of national defence and members of the military.

The OPS unit has four investigators and three forensics investigators; RCMP has 10 people in the national headquarters, and additional personnel in each province; and DND has four investigators, with three currently posted in Afghanistan.

Constable Thompson outlined some typical child pornography cases which can be broken into five main phases: investigation, liaison, apprehension, forensics, and court proceedings.

Constable Andrew Thompson

For the **investigation phase**, Constable Thompson and the rest of the "geek squad" (as his fellow officers refer to the high-tech

unit) take on one of two roles. First, they can go undercover in chat rooms as a fellow predator. In this scenario, they interact and chat with other people online, often in teen and pre-teen chat rooms with acronyms for names (i.e. PTHC = pre-teen hard core), until the targets feel comfortable enough to share some images with the undercover police. Make no mistake, these are often extremely horrific images that would sicken even most doctors; as a result, members of the unit undergo psychological counselling and evaluation every six months, and are rotated around within the unit to provide job variety and "breaks" from certain tasks. The Criminal Code allows a s.24 designation to be made that would allow the police to share images first (rather than waiting) in order to attract pedophiles, but OPS does not do this. In part, this is to maintain the purity of the investigation; mainly, however, it is to prevent the proliferation and spread of images. Instead, they enlist other undercover police officers to post fake compliments on the quality of their trades -- appearing, in effect, as peer reviews for other pedophiles to trust the undercover cop as a fellow predator who trades openly. Once a pedophile shares some of their images, the police can track them and arrest them for possession and distribution of child pornography.

Alternatively, Constable Thompson and his fellow cyber-knights can go even further undercover to appear as bait. Usually this takes the form of entering internet relay chat (IRC) rooms and discussion groups on Google or Yahoo, aimed at kids under the age of 14 (the age of consent in Canada), and pretending to be a young girl or boy with a name like Emily_11 or Jonathan_12. Usually within seconds, multiple windows will start popping up on Constable Thompson's screen from people wanting to chat. Some are harmless; some are not. The undercover bait can use an online tool developed for police to quickly scan all the windows that pop up and identify which of them originate in Canada, and then focus on those for interactions.

The first question from most people online is "A/S/L?" This is the short-form for "(what is your) age, sex and location?" It is the same question that adults will use in dating sites, but it takes on a far more sinister nuance when you know it is being used by pedophiles interacting with children. The pedophiles start out grooming their potential

future conquests, literally luring them into an online relationship, hoping to find out where they live, what they look like, how easy they can be manipulated or influenced. Posing as a child, Constable Thompson can wait for a pedophile to engage in sexually explicit language designed to lure a child, and then track and arrest them.

The second phase is **liaison**, although it takes place through-out the entire process. The Canadian police have particularly good relations with the United Kingdom and United States, and investigations frequently lead to evidence that could be used in the other jurisdictions. For example, an investigation of a child pornography ring may lead to evidence of pedophiles operating in the U.S. as well, and thus Constable Thompson can contact U.S. law enforcement agencies to share the information and evidence. Information is also shared with international organizations such as InterPol.

The third phase is the one most people wouldn't expect of the so-called "Geek Squad": they handle their own **apprehensions**. When it is time to make an arrest, they strap on the gear and they are the ones who lead the take-down.

The fourth phase is the **forensics** phase. While all the information is digital, the standard basics of evidence still apply – photograph the evidence and work with it without contaminating the scene. For the high-tech world, the forensics specialists do indeed physically photograph the computer and its components. They then proceed to remove the storage media (such as hard drives, etc.) and connect it to another computer that has both hardware and software controls to prevent the new computer from accidentally writing to the suspect's hard drive – the hardware and software act as "write-blockers" to ensure the original evidence is not contaminated by the new machine and remains in the exact same state as when the computer was seized. The forensics specialists then uses software titles such as "Forensics Toolkit" and "EnCase" to do a bit-by-bit copy of the harddrive, a process which could take 10-12 hours for a sample 80GB harddrive. After locking the original, unaltered drive in storage, they then work with the copy to find evidence of child pornography. They search for key words (such as Lolita), review all images and videos, check incoming and outgoing e-mails, and look for deleted files. It should be noted that the forensics portion of Ottawa's High-Tech Crime Unit have a broader mandate than the child pornography investigators – they also provide computer forensics support for cases involving embezzlement, hacking, etc. They also have a mandate to look at the computers of all deaths labeled as potential suicides in Ontario, searching the deceased's files for a suicide note or evidence of having searched internet sites for information on suicide methods.

The fifth and final phase is the participation in **court proceedings** as a witness. A judicial pre-trial is the first step in the formal proceedings, and the lead investigator, judge, Crown attorney and defense attorney review the evidence to be presented if a full trial were to happen. After reviewing the case for both sides, approximately 90% of those charged enter into a plea arrangement following offers, counter-offers and the judge's own view of what he would likely give as a sentence were the defendant to be found guilty. If no plea is obtained, the investigator then serves as a witness in the proceedings, hopefully leading to a conviction of the accused and a sentence by the judge.

The above five-step process can be launched either pro-actively by the police as they attempt to identify and apprehend predators, or reactively in response to a tip from the public or another law enforcement agency.

The investigators use a variety of tools, in addition to the ones mentioned above, to help identify and capture their targets. The most important tool is the ability to identify a user's Internet Protocol (IP) address – every time a computer connects to the internet, it is given a unique identifier like a phone number. The police track these numbers back to the service provider, and can often identify who was logged in at that specific time to that provider. In Canada, the police have entered into agreements with providers such as Rogers and Bell Canada to streamline the search warrant requirements. Twenty page warrants in the past have been replaced with single page requests to Rogers or Bell to identify whose account was using a specific IP address on their network at a specific time and date. The police do, however, have to certify that the request is related to combating child pornography. Another tool that the police can use is archaeology. For example, they may receive an e-mail from DeadHeadHacker@yahoo.com, and be unable to identify whose account it is. However, an archaeological search of the internet might identify a previous user who used to use DeadHeadHacker@rogers.com who kept the same e-mail pseudonym. And the previous Rogers account owner can be identified, even if the Yahoo one cannot.

Constable Thompson has another tool in his arsenal, designed by Microsoft and Bill Gates at the request of a police officer – an e-mail tracker utility that can act like a GPS unit attached to a car. The tracker gets attached to an e-mail and sent to the pedophiles generic address; the tracker then tells the police where it ended up, thus identifying the predator. Finally, the police can also use Microsoft programs on networks like Gnutella (a file sharing network using peer-to-peer technology like the old Napster) to search for specific "MD5 hashes". These are specific codes created to

identify certain pornographic images ... think of it as digital DNA to tell the computer what a file looks like at the binary level. The Microsoft program takes hash values for known pornographic images (as identified by police) and searches for the same "digital DNA" on the Gnutella network to see if others have the same file, even if it has a different name.

Yet, with all these tools available to them, the police still face a number of challenges:

- Defense strategies, particularly for those charged with luring minors, that suggest the predator was only "fantasizing" and had no intention of actually soliciting sex with a minor (as a result, Crown attorneys pressure investigators to identify evidence that the predator has taken concrete steps to put his plan into action such as picking a location, meeting with the child, buying props, etc.);
- the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which protects average citizens as well as pedophiles from invasion of privacy, unreasonable searches or seizures, etc., and often is raised early in court proceedings;
- evidentiary challenges to prove, particularly in charges related to distribution, that the owner of the computer was the actual user who uploaded or downloaded the materials, the digital equivalent of proving opportunity (this can often be done by focusing on date and time stamps on e-mails, deletion histories identifying users who accessed the files, etc.);
- complexity in prosecutions ranging from justices not wanting to look at the disturbing images, single charges for multiple possessions (like drug possession) rather than a charge for each image (like credit card possessions), low penalties in Canada for the crimes, related case law that makes it harder to prosecute, technically-savvy defense



attorneys who can challenge the credentials of high-tech but low-credential investigators, high ratios of reduced sentences for time served in pre-trial custody (often 2:1) although at least now convictions require mandatory minimum sentences rather than chances of probation;

- low-understanding by the public and politicians of the seriousness and pervasiveness of the crime;
- changes in technology and society, such as possible use of encryption or the increased use of wireless networks that make it harder to track individual users;
- the virtual impossibility of proving cases if the computer is destroyed by the predator rather than simply "wiped"; and,
- the seeming voiceless nature of the victims (although Interpol is now maintaining databases of impact statements of the child victims which can be used by courts in determining sentences).

But the biggest challenge of all is that the cops are looking for needles in haystacks. Given the size of the internet as the proverbial haystack, the risk to an individual predator of being caught by a passing cop either in real life or online is quite low. So they take the risk that they won't be the needle that is found. And most of them won't be. Not today at least. But with new tools, and more investigators, police officers are hoping to increase the predator's chance of being caught, and use that risk as a weapon to save more children.

Reference Websites: Historical facts

<http://www.reference.com/thisday/> Click to see what happened in history on a particular day. It is a great historical reference.

<http://www.costumepage.org/tcpinfo2.html> Provides hundreds of links about ancient to modern clothing.

It's Your Career; Shameless Self-Promotion

Adapted from a workshop given by Sharon Page, author and member of the Ottawa Romance Writers Association.

Romance Writer Sharon Page advocates that the first step to shameless self promotion is to have a strong belief in yourself and what you have to offer. She offers up promotion advice for every author at every stage of their career – from pre-published to best-selling.

We need to think about promoting ourselves to our publishers, our agents, our editors, to the industry, our peers and the end reader. What are you promoting shamelessly? Well, it's your books – your career – and your author brand. What is it about you that is unique? Author branding is about building an image, a perception or an identity that is used to create a perception of high quality and make your product more desired in the marketplace. Recently Rick Mofina talked about books being a commodity during the panel discussion in October -- therefore it's important to learn how to set yours apart from the rest on the shelf.

First of all looking at positioning in the marketplace, and determining where you want to be. You have to differentiate from other competing products or potentially from any product in the market segment competing for the same consumer dollars – such as entertainment segment. Why would someone want to buy your book rather than go to the movies? And finally there has to be consistency in your branding. That means repetition. Constantly giving the same message.

An easy place to start is by thinking about the specific goals you are trying to reach at this point. It may be that you want to get attention from booksellers, or you may be trying to build interest in your website or newsletter. (Sharon advised everyone to get a website – do it early, you may not have time later when you start to promote your book.)

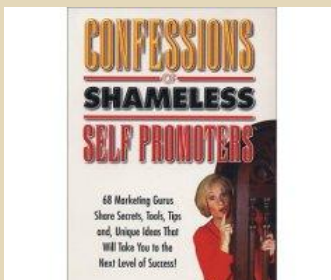
A quick marketing plan could include: Your goal; book description; target audience; positioning statement: i.e. this book is targeted to woman 30 – 75; background on why you wrote the book and competitive titles. Then you need to budget time and money. You may want to start by spending approximately 10% of your advance on promotion. Don't just rely on your publisher to do things for you. It's your career – you can take control. Some authors spend several times their advance at the beginning, then slow down later. Look for free promotional possibilities or share the costs with other authors when possible. When spending money ensure your promo items will do at least three things for you.

It's critical to not sacrifice writing time for promotion. Writing great books and selling great books is your best promo. Enlist help where possible, share, network to find good publicity people, and graphic designers. Generally nothing is really free as it requires either MONEY or TIME. Decide which you can spend.

Watch www.capitalcrimewriters.com as it will be updated soon with in-depth information on using shameless self-promotion to increase your edge using the top ten promotional tools: Networking/Buzz; On-line promotions; Reviews; Print Advertising; Promotional Giveaways; Mail Outs and Newsletters to Booksellers and readers; Book Signings; Pitching to Media; Workshops/Articles; Cross Promotions.

Sharon Page is an award winning author of erotic romance novels. She practices what she preaches at: <http://www.sharonpage.com>

References: *Confessions of Shameless Self Promoters* by Debbie Allen; and check out the articles at www.bluemooncommunications.com/articles.htm from author brand development to media training.



The Mystery Market – October Meeting Overview Part II

By Katherine Hobbs

As promised in the last issue, The Purloined continues with the overview of the October panel discussion on what's selling in the mystery genre, and how to sell it. The panelists were Mike Steinberg, Linda Wiken, Brenda Chapman, and Rick Mofina, and it was moderated by Bev Panasky.

Rick Mofina: If you're planning your first crime book you might want to consider planning a series. A series is still preferable to a standalone; publishers will look for that. So when you are planning your first book you might want to look at it structurally and how you would have it travel over a longer story arc. You might want to consider having three ideas ready because if you're picked up the publisher will want the others right away. You can get ahead of the game that way.

In a recent meeting with my publisher they shared with me some of their discussions with Wal-Mart; they are a major buyer in the US, and a major force in commercial fiction. There is only so much shelf space in a Wal-Mart and they have a lot of say about what gets in there, and a lot of clout with publishers. What they've said is that when authors are planning books it's okay to have a male protagonist, but not exclusively, there must be a role of significance for a female in the story. Wal-Mart are not dictating the story in any way, they are just relaying what they are getting back from the customers that buy their books.

Book buyers at Wal-Mart are predominately female. You've heard the old tale that women read about women, and also read about men; but men are reluctantly to read about a female lead. Now that's debatable, but regardless having a strong female role is the advice to large publishers from this huge book buyer that has clout around the world. They are going to be opening 100 stores in India soon.

There's been noise that Wal-Mart will enter the book industry and book selling industry in an even stronger way than they are now. Some of the larger chains have significant relationships with the publicity departments of large publishers and significant clout to the point there might have a say on the cover design and what the title will be. This really drives the point that you're dealing with a commercial product.

I learned a lot from Rick Mofina's sharing of his experiences, particularly for author's rights. I have written a couple of short stories with a character that I also see being the basis for a screenplay. I never even thought about ensuring I keep the dramatic rights if the short story or novel was published.

Paul Sadler

Speaking of titles, right now one word titles are big – take a look at book store shelves. Two years ago the word 'bones' in a title was really hot – you'll see a lot of books out there with a variation of the word bones out there for crime fiction. But these trends will pass and something else will come up.

Bev Panasky: Has a publisher ever forced you to change to a different style?

RM: No. But they can nudge you to do certain things. I wanted to set my second book Cold Fear in Alberta. The storyline is a little girl on a family outing gets lost in the Rocky Mountains and her parents are suspected of not telling the true story to her disappearance. I thought that story should be set in the Rockies because as a reporter I covered a real search for a missing girl in the Rockies. That stuck with me, and there was lots of natural drama to play around with that. I submitted that idea to my publisher in New York who said, "We really like the story, but can you reset it into the US?" I explained that mountains are mountains, and I just happened to want to label it as Canada and set it in Alberta. But she came back and said, "no, can you think of somewhere else." So the book is set in Montana, although still in the Rockies. I put it as close to the border as I could. I have included some Canadian threads in my books and the threads are getting longer and thicker in all my books progressively. There is more to come. I'm easing into it.

I haven't really been asked to change things that dramatically, but colleagues I've talked to when they publish in other countries have been asked by the local publishers if they can change sections in the book because of the local market or culture; something that might not fit there. And titles change as well. I can't make sense out of my

Norwegian titles. My books sell well in Norway, but my kids and I have a good laugh on how they translate -- and the covers are bizarre. The cover for *Cold Fear*, which is the story of the lost girl in the Rockies, has a steel drum spilling pollution on the grass with a doll on top. There is no element of the story in that and we didn't have a clue what that was about. *Blood of Others*, is a pretty graphic, bloody book. Its cover was a bathtub full of blood. Thought that was close enough!

Brenda Chapman: I'm with Napoleon and I've been pretty lucky because they've held true to what I've written. Any changes have been pretty minor. I did have to change the title of my first book, which I had called -- Suspicion in Springhills -- because the publisher said there were too many s's and they were tripping over them. I had a weekend to come up with a different title and I came up with *Running Scared*. I didn't realize just how many books out there are called *Running Scared*. In fact there is a Brenda Chapman at Disney who did a *Running Scared*, so if you plunk my name in Google, she comes up too.

Language can be an issue too. I had the word crap in the book and we talked about it, and finally took it out. I'm not certain with kids books when to use swearing; it's not something I want to do and I've talked to my agent about it; about what's acceptable in kids literature. She says anything goes, and there are books that have all of that in it. But I'm not comfortable writing words like that for kids so I wouldn't. But again I think it comes down to the story you want to tell, and your comfort level with that sort of language.

Audience Question: Would you kill a kid?

BC: In my first book a woman dies. There's a hit and run, and at the end of the book she dies. I had lunch with another writer and the first thing she said to me was "Why did you kill that woman, what were you thinking?" She's the only one that has been upset with it. The kids aren't. But I don't kill people off as a general rule. I met Roy McGregor at a CBC function. I'd mentioned during my interview that I don't kill people in my kids' books. He said he does. The first time he killed someone off the publisher said, "You can't do that-- this is a kid's book." He told them he was going to, put it in and the kids loved it. So now every book he kills someone.

But, I don't like reading books where kids have been murdered, so I would certainly shy away from killing a kid in my books. But you can certainly put the kids in danger. And I want them to solve the crime themselves. I also like to write strong female characters. They can have problems, but they don't have a white knight coming to rescue them. That's the other Brenda Chapman!

BP: Now back to the editors. Where do you draw the line as to how much will you ask an author to change things? When is it worthwhile and when is it not?

Mike Steinberg: With Storyteller our tagline is Canada's short story magazine, so we prefer stories that are set in Canada. The beauty of short stories is you can get around the whole specific location just by setting it in a city or in the country. You don't have to specify a place in a short story all the time. Our summer issue has the short story contest. The story has to be set in Canada. It's not really all that difficult to do, if you aren't specific in your setting. We have had some really amazing stories but they were set in the States. If the story is good we write them and say, "We really love your story but it has to be set in Canada." We had one story with the word Chicago in it once. He killed the word Chicago; and chose one particular character who at the end of every line of dialogue said "eh". It was funny; we left it in and it made it a funnier story than it already was.

But basically in a short story you can get away with a lot without being really specific about the location. Because there isn't a large short story market in Canada you'll be sending stories over to the US, the UK, Europe or Australia -- although Australia is very picky. If you are going to submit to Australian magazine, set it in Australia or don't be specific, because they won't take it if it's set anywhere else in the world.

Touching on language and using the f-bomb -- try not to. If it doesn't fit in the story and you are putting it in just to be shocking -- don't. The vast majority of magazines won't take profanity. Don't use it unless it fits the character, and the story line, but use it sparingly if you are going to. But you can kill as many people as you want.

Linda Wiken: For Ladies Killing Circle if we think a story is really good and there's something about it that makes it stand out but something doesn't hang together -- maybe not enough of a twist at the end or something is too obvious, and it can be easily fixed -- we write back and indicate where we are having problems. We offer suggestions on how to fix it but that's up to the author. If you're willing to have a go in trying to change it, then we'll have

another read of it. People are usually quite keen to do that and we will read it over again. If they've changed it so it makes a well told written story then we will probably take it.

We don't generally accept spousal stories as there are too many. Interesting how many people want to bump off their partners. We have quotas as to how many of each type of story we can take. If we have two stories that are very similar we choose the one that we think is better written or made the blend of the anthology better. We do have to look at the mix of the anthology and what goes with that blend. If it's a good story and we can't take it for that reason, we'll send it back and tell them it was a great story; we can't use it, unfortunately -- but be sure to send it to someone else.

We haven't had a lot of submissions that have been off theme, we are putting one together now for the publisher, *Going out with a Bang*. We just threw that title out there to see what would come back. We had something in mind (and it was a bit racy) but we received a lot of bomb stories and we never thought of bombs when we came up with that title. But there hasn't been anything submitted really off topic. People's imaginations are great – we just give them a title and maybe one line and they have a lot of fun with that. They are usually pretty close.



The panel from l-r: Mike Steinberg, Bev Panasky, Linda Wiken, Brenda Chapman and Rick Mofina.

Q: For Storyteller, other than being set in Canada what else are you looking for in the story in terms of Canadiana?

MS: To be honest the Canadiana level isn't all that important as long as it's set in Canada. It's pretty much the only thing we're looking for. It ultimately does come down to the quality of the story and how it relates to life here in this country. It's amazing the variety of stories you get for that, but we still do get a lot that are not set in Canada. You wonder if these people even read? But the beauty of most magazines -- in the case of an anthology if you have two similar stories you that are really, really good but you can't use them as they are too close together you have to pick one over the other and have to send them back. But in a magazine that has more than one issue a year if we get two stories that are really similar and incredibly well done, we will have to pick one for that issue. Then we'll email the author of the other story and say we really loved the story, it's too similar to one we're already using in this issue, but can we hang on to for the next issue? And of course they're going to say yes.

We've had some issues where 600 stories are submitted and 400 are basically all the same. You wonder what the heck are people eating? It's very weird. And then the next issue we'll have 600 stories and they're not alike in any way, shape or form. You never know. It's an ebb and flow thing out there.

Submissions each month are around the 600 mark and there are three of us reading. We have a rating scale between one and ten. If one of us finds it's a five or less, chances are the other two won't bother reading it. So we can cut it down about a hundred stories very quickly, and then they need a second or third read to get down to the top ten.

Q: Do you read the entire story?

MS: No. In a lot we don't get past the first line. If the first sentence is a paragraph long and has 46 commas, we can tell the rest of the story isn't worth reading. Also, try to stay away from clichés, watch your commas, watch your spelling and watch your formatting. These are the simple basics you don't screw with.

LW: What Mike said about reading the guidelines is critical. If one more story comes in without page numbers on it, I'm not reading it. That was my big bug this time round. If you're printer is spitting them out and you're not watching it and the pages get mixed up it's a problem.

MS: Use Courier or Times New Roman; white paper - black ink; inch margins all around; no crayon; no colour paper; don't perfume it. We don't want to see any of that. Read the guidelines, do the basic formatting and let the story sell itself. How you submit is one hundred percent up to your market or to your publisher. The guidelines will indicate whether email submissions are accepted or not and don't email if they say don't. Some want you to email with an outline of your story first, and if you submit without getting approval, they delete it outright. And if you mail it they just throw it away. So make sure you read your guidelines and follow everything. They are there for a reason. We have three readers, some magazines have only one. So if that guy gets 300 stories he's going to find the ones that don't meet his guidelines and toss them.

BP: I have a question from Ken Gibson: How important to you is selling what you write? More specifically do you write for yourself, the market or your old aunt Flossie?

MS: The majority of times I write for myself, I write what I want to write about and then once it's done I'll go out and see if there's a market and 99 times out of 100 there's going to be a market for it. Write what you know, write what you understand, write what you are interested in and don't worry about whether it will fit in, because chances are there are going to be a heck of a lot of other people out there interested in the same thing. If you have a good story with a good hook and find the right market for it; it will go.

BP: What if it doesn't?

MS: Well, if it doesn't then it's good practice. My first story I got 17 rejections before it was accepted. Seventeen people did not like my story. Now I'm down to about three or four. Very few markets will put a nice little note on what they did or didn't like about it -- so don't expect that, you won't get it. But if you do get one, read what they say and revise your manuscript. Or at the very least go through and see what they are saying and if you agree with it or not. And get someone else to read it. Never, ever write a story and send it out the same day. Put it away for at least a week, reread it yourself, and chances are you'll change some stuff. Get someone else to read it who isn't going to say "oh that was lovely, dear." You want someone who is going to say, "oh this is good, or this sucks". You want honest feedback. Always get feedback before submitting your story.

BP: Now for the novelists down at the end.

RM: Well at the start I wrote for myself, I'd been writing fiction all my life, since I was a kid. So after university when I started at the newspaper I was getting experience in the real world covering real crime stuff. So I thought I had to start channeling my writing into some kind of direction. I first starting tinkering with something supernatural. I was writing something I liked to read. I started a supernatural thriller in longhand. It was going so-so. Then I hit the crime desk in Calgary and it just sort of hit me --- the real thing. I was writing about it every day for the paper, and I was seeing stuff and getting philosophical about it. I thought this is it. So I sat down and started plotting a crime fiction thriller. What also got me going was that these were books I liked to read yet I didn't like the way the press was being portrayed in some crime fiction books - it was stereotypical. I figured I was living this stuff and I thought this is where I am going to put my oar in the water.

Subsequently because I was published and receiving contracts I was sort of contracted to write in the same genre. But right now I'm writing a standalone. It's still in the crime thriller genre; I'm comfortable with that. At one time I wrote a story for a children's picture book; it was something I wanted to do. It was thrown back at me, resoundly rejected. But I didn't mind at all - I enjoyed the story. I set it aside and am going start another one. I have a historical that I am playing around with in my mind as well. So I think it comes back to writing for yourself but keep an eye to the market. You don't want to be blind to it, but emphasize your own personal interests and passions.

BC: I too write for myself and it's easier to do that when you've had a book published. I guess it's like a musician who thinks his next record has to be a hit record. You go back to writing what you feel something for and what interests you. I started by writing a few short stories when I was home with my kids. I was writing stories for free for a woman's magazine and nothing made me feel better than when they got published. I remember getting feedback from a story I'd written when my daughter had meningitis and my experience with that. They editorial board read all the stories aloud and when they read that one they cried. I thought, that's what writing is -- being able to move people by what you've written. You have to keep that in mind and not worry so much about selling. It will fall into place if you write a good story.

MS: For a short story it's not so bad because you are committing a shorter time to each piece, but for a novel once you're going to commit yourself to spending years you want to write something that you are comfortable with and you enjoy. But if you're writing about something you're not interested in, it's much more of a chore. If you're going to spend a year writing a novel make sure you're going to enjoy spending that time.

Q: How often has it happened that you get a novel contract if you've not written a novel but have a wonderful short story, or have won a short story contest?

MS: That has to be exceedingly rare. I know in the fantasy sci fi genre, L Ron Hubbard has a Writers for the Future contest. It's huge, and the money you get is phenomenal. People that win that contest get flown to California and spend a week in a workshop with top editors, agents and authors. A couple of them have obtained contracts from short stories, but usually for a single book. But it's rare that this will happen and an editor might be willing to risk for one book but not a whole series

LW: But contests are excellent. Enter every one you can.

Q: Can you submit to a publisher and a contest at the same time? What are the rules?

RM: It's risky - if you win, or the publisher has shown interest then you might disqualify yourself and create a bit of a scandal. Also sometimes with a contest if you win they may own the property. So you could face a legal dilemma if a publisher didn't know you'd submitted to a contest. You could actually leave yourself open to liability.

LW: A contest has a deadline, it's over and done with. Why not try the contest first and send to a publisher after? If it's a contest like the Toronto Star or Ottawa Citizen you won't have a problem with a publisher. The same thing if you're story is being published in an anthology; when it goes out of print you have your rights back for the story and you can republish it.

Q: I had my book published from a contest. An agent told me I could have done better than what the contest did for it.

MS: I think with something like that, if you enter a contest like that and you win you may have to sacrifice that novel. When you finish the second novel, you can go to another publisher.

Q: How flexible are publishers about the rights?

MS: Here in Canada you are going to have to sign over First NA serial rights and then they have the right to publish it first. After a year they may give you the rights back. Don't give anyone universal rights, you don't need to do that, it's your short story. The vast amount of publishers will take First NA. Put that in your cover letter. I've had one story that was published here, published in the UK and published in Australia all within a year and a half, because it's different sets of rights. With the Internet you can find all these weird and wonderful markets all over the globe.

RM: Also you might want to put that you are not giving up dramatic rights, that you retain all dramatic rights. If it's not specified then you've lost them. So if Hollywood likes your story, if there's even just a nugget there as a premise and they're going to want to grab it, you want to get the money. I declare all the time that I retain dramatic rights or indicate specifically I am only offering these particular rights.

I've had a couple of film offers and it is very exciting and overwhelming and the language is beyond comprehension. But you need to hold the phone - and get an agent to go through it. It shouldn't be a rush. You really have to protect yourself. And you can cross something off, initial it and send it back. But unless you're familiar with the legalese and familiar with publishing contracts you have to be careful. I had an offer for some TV writing and was

ready to sign off on the thing as I kind of new the production company. But it was a contract and at the last minute I sent it to an agent. They found things that went right by me, because of vague language. It wasn't just as cut and dried as I thought. Vague language leaves the door wide open and you have to watch that kind of thing.

It's a little thing, film option credit. You do have to be careful and it is overwhelming. A woman I met at a conference in the US from a small Texas community wrote a story—a regional romance. It was picked up by a regional publisher and she signed most of her rights to the publisher. Michael Douglas's production company picked up on the story because it got a lovely review somewhere and optioned it. They purchased the rights for a significant amount of money and her publisher got 90% of the rights and the money. She couldn't go back on it. She'd thought it would never happen, but it did. She should have received 50% if not all. It's like a lottery, you never know when it's going to come in, and you want to protect your work. You're not writing for free. If someone is willing to come to you, they are willing to make an investment and you should take it as far as you can.

An agent will look at all these other possible avenues of earnings for you and protect it down the road. You never know. Another friend of mine had her book published in Japan. The story interested a Japanese network and it became a top rated show in Japan – all from her story, which she never would have imagined. So you just never know what your hard work is going to bring you at some point. You have to protect yourself or know you gave it your best shot in protecting yourself. Sometimes publishers won't budge and are willing to walk away. There are times you have to give opportunities up. I've given things up and kind of winced. But it's a judgment call.

Q: Where should a book be set to best sell worldwide?

RM: It's a personal choice but I'd lean towards where the best markets are. Arthur Hailey was a master at this. His books sold around the world. Although they had strong Canadian writing they were largely US stories. You still have to have your main stage. It comes back to the reader being able to identify or empathize. You want to look at it commercially as to where the largest market is going to empathize with your story. With the Bourne character the book goes everywhere in the world, yet you still have a US story even though it's a global international story. There will always be exceptions though, look at *Day of the Jackal* – I'm talking about the golden age of 70's thrillers now. You had a British subject and the main target was the French president at the time. There is no US part of the story – it was just a fantastic story. So there are always exceptions to the rules.

Again that's keeping an eye to the market. If you're the publisher, and you're going to invest money and receive a one page pitch from a writer and it's set in New Zealand, you think - How many books am I going to sell in New Zealand? So you really have to look at what's going to help you. If the story travels around the world that's fantastic, but I would think about it -- and keep an eye to the market. However that said, there is a crime series out of Iceland doing well. That's a pretty small market.

And here's another example of setting and market. I had an assignment in Iqaluit and spent time on patrol with the Mounties near the Arctic Circle. My New York publisher suggested I set a book there.

"But it's in Canada," I said.

"No. It's the North Pole," she replied. "It's exotic. It's not really Canada."

Website References: Proofreader's Marks

Here's help to understand your editor's markings, or learn some tricks for critiquing other writer's work:

<http://www.m-w.com/mw/table/proofrea.htm>

<http://www.espressographics.com/text/proofreader.html>

http://www.prenhall.com/author_guide/proofing.html

<http://www.journalismcareers.com/articles/proofreadingsymbols.shtml>