

The Purloined Newsletter

A CAPITAL CRIME WRITERS PUBLICATION

Volume 19, Issue 8 – October 2007

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Capital Crime Writers is an organization of writers working in the mystery field.

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.

Next Meeting: October 10, 2007 The Mystery Market

Do you ever wonder, "What's selling out there?" or "How do I write to the dictates of a particular market?" October's meeting will help answer those questions.

Linda Wiken of Prime Crime Mystery Bookstore and Mike Steinberg from Storyteller Magazine will discuss what's selling in the current market and trends.

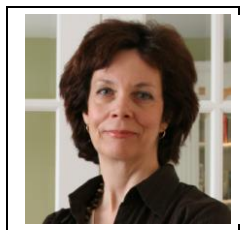


Mike Steinberg



Linda Wiken

As well, we will have a panel consisting of Brenda Chapman (children's mysteries), Rick Mofina (thrillers), Mike Steinberg (various short story genres) and Linda Wiken (mystery short stories) to discuss the tips, challenges and pleasures of writing to a particular market.



Brenda Chapman



Rick Mofina

Bring your questions and spend a few hours in lively and informative discussion.

**Your Program Committee:
Ken, Bev & Deborah**

From the Chair – Brenda Chapman

Thank you to Dr. Shelley Brown for helping us to sort out the female psyche and to understand what drives some women to crime. Her insights into female and male behaviour have opened a number of doors for future research and intriguing story ideas. (I know that next time I ask my husband what he is thinking, I won't be taking anything for granted.)



The CCW Executive

Chair: Brenda Chapman

VP: Susan Gates

Past Chair: Barbara Fradkin

Treasurer: Sheila Gallant Halloran

Programs & Workshops: Ken Gibson, Bev Panasky & Deborah Gyapong

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We had several new members join us for the September meeting and are pleased to welcome you to our group. While meetings officially get underway at 7:15, we encourage members to come early to mingle and chat – this is the time to share ideas and make connections with other members. Writing is a solitary occupation for the most part, and it is good to meet others with the same interests and the same need to write . . . and to kill off characters in a myriad of creative ways.

With autumn comes the time to renew membership and fees remain at \$30 for full members and \$15 for corresponding members. I am delighted to report that Darlene Cole has agreed to help treasurer Sheila Gallant-Halloran with membership in addition to taking over secretarial duties at committee meetings. Darlene will be available to take membership fees at the October meeting, or you can send your cheque by mail to Sheila if you prefer.

I would also like to thank the committee for all the work going on behind the scenes, including the publicity efforts of Katherine Hobbs. We are a supportive writing community with a lot to offer other writers and readers, but we need to get the word out to attract new members and to promote our authors. Please invite interested friends to come to a meeting to find out what we are about because – in the immortal words of somebody – the more the merrier. Until next time,

Brenda

Editor's Notes – Katherine Hobbs



It's exciting to see all the opportunities for writers coming up in the fall, including those outlined on pages 3 and 4. In line with those events, and the upcoming Mystery Market workshop planned for the October meeting, this issue concentrates mainly on tools for writers: Tidbits on agents, an article on business planning, dialogue tips from Bill Newman, and our usual book review from Linda Wiken.

This is rounded up with a report on the author event -- Stop, Lunch and Listen – at the International Plowing Festival in September, and a summary of the thought-provoking and interactive session on crime with Dr. Shelley Brown. I knew girls weren't that bad!

Thanks are due this month to Deidre Hart Jaimet for alerting me to the Surrey Writer's Festival that is detailed on page 4, and to Denis St. Jean for sending in a great selection of quotes from writers. You'll be seeing them over the next few months! **Katherine**

Memorable Quotes from Writers:

"You can be a little ungrammatical if you come from the right part of the country."

Robert Frost (1874-1963)

Announcements



Contests

Byline New Talent Short Story — Deadline Nov. 4, 2007. Open to any writer who has never won a cash prize in a ByLine fiction contest. Maximum length 3,000 words. Entry fee \$5. Prizes: \$50, \$30, \$20. See <http://www.bylinemag.com/contests.asp> for further information.

John Steinbeck Award for the Short Story

For original unpublished stories up to 6000 words. Deadline: Dec 1 Prize: \$1000
Refer to <http://www.sjsu.edu/reed/steinbeck.htm> for contests details.

2007 Paul Gillette Writing Contest

The 15th annual Paul Gillette Writing Contest is accepting entries from unpublished writers of short stories and book-length fiction. Deadline: Nov 1 Prize: \$100.00.
Website: <http://www.ppwc.net/contest.html>

CBC Literary Awards: Entry Fee \$20.00 Prizes \$6000, \$4000 plus publication and broadcast. The Awards are Canada's only literary competition celebrating original unpublished works in both languages. www.cbc.ca/literaryawards

Check out other contests at: <http://www.freelancewriting.com/content/browse-contests-7-1.html>
or <http://www.canauthors.org/links/markets.html>

Writing Markets



Futures Mystery Anthology Magazine

Mystery fiction published in FMAM is eligible for the Edgar Award, given by Mystery Writers of America. Unpublished writers welcome. http://www.fmam.biz/guidelines_story.shtml

HakuRoSya Publishing, Japan

Hakurosyas is the in the business of translating, publishing, promoting and marketing books. For the first time they are extending an open invitation to all aspiring writers to submit their previously unpublished or published works for consideration. www.hakurosyas.com

Events & Conferences



Tony Hillerman Mystery Writers Conference

Nov 1-4, 2007 Albuquerque, New Mexico www.hillermanconference.com

2008 CanWrite Conference: Conference information for next year is already being posted on www.canauthorsalberta.ca.

Making a good script great A three-day clinic with Dr. Linda Seger sponsored by The Writers' Retreat Date: November 9, 10, 11, 2007 Place: Cascade, Colorado (Pikes Peak Region) Six participants only. Full description: <http://www.writersretreat.com/Makingagoodscriptgreat.htm>
REGISTER online at <http://www.writersretreat.com/Makingagoodscriptgreat.htmDial> (819) 876-2065 or send an e-mail to info@writersretreat.com



Events & Conferences Cont'd

The How-to of Critiquing Workshop Sunday, Oct. 14, 2007 9:00 - 4:00 Algonquin College with presenter Sharyn Heagle. Learn how to provide worthwhile and constructive feedback to your fellow writers, and how to accept and process the feedback you receive. This workshop is presented at no charge to CAA members; non-members \$20. Register through Arlene Smith: somertonsmith@yahoo.com

Building Your Story: Plotting Novels and Writing Short Stories. November 3, 2007. Presenter Brian Henry teaches creative writing at Ryerson University and George Brown College and has been a writer and book editor for 24 years. He will be accompanied by Violette Malan, a former student of Brian's with two published novels to her credit, who will give a brief presentation in the afternoon on her experiences with plotting. The cost for the day is \$50 including lunch. For more details contact Bev Colpitts at bcolpitts@sympatico.ca or 613-831-8955.

Writing Dialogue Workshop Saturday, Nov. 3, 2007, 9:00 - 4:00 Algonquin College
Presenter: Harold Rhenisch. In this workshop, you will learn how to use dialogue and voice, and what they are capable of doing in your writing. The workshop will span effective dialogue structures, narrative voice in fiction and narrative and lyric poetry, naturalism and timing in drama and performance pieces, in a series of focused yet wide-ranging exercises and hands-on activities of benefit to writers in any genre. Harold Rhenisch is the author of 21 books of creative nonfiction, poetry, fiction, essays and translation, most recently the Ryga Award-winning *The Wolves at Evelyn* and his selected poems, *Return to Open Water*. He lives in Campbell River, British Columbia. Register through Arlene Smith: somertonsmith@yahoo.com

Find an agent! The Surrey International Writer's Conference takes place from October 19 - 21 in Surrey B.C. It's been called the best writers' conference in North America by presenters and participants alike. CCW member Deirdre Hart-Jaimet attended a few years ago, and submitted this item for the newsletter, along with her personal endorsement on the value of the conference. Check out <http://siwc.ca/> for complete details.

Last month we missed the bio on the **CCW short story contest –Audrey Jessup award** second place winner **Gail MacDonald**. Here it is:

Gail MacDonald was born during the war and grew up an air force brat in Canada. She started her Arts degree at Ottawa U and finished it at Sir George Williams. During a ten-year stay in Montreal she acquired a husband and the first of three children and started a writing/editing career in scientific stuff. Back in Ottawa for twenty-odd years she kept working, at first full time and then free-lance until leaving to retire along the St. Lawrence, where she picked up an environmental studies degree.

She returned to Ottawa three years ago after the death of her husband and joined CCW, hopeful of taking to a life of crime, at least on paper. Like her heroine, Freddy, she has an orange tabby cat and a novel-in-slow-progress (*The Deadly Dandelion*, since you asked) -- but she's not nearly as tall sadly.

Same time next year: Business planning for writers.

By Katherine Hobbs

When you decided to start writing what did you do? Sit down, write a story and then submit it to as many places as possible, hoping for sales? That strategy may have worked well, but generally a writing career can benefit from more careful planning. That is where a business plan can help us, by identifying where it is we want to be and developing the strategies to help get there.

A starting point is to ask ourselves what it is we'd like to achieve? How do I envision my writing business a year from now? Do I want more income? The ability to quit my day-job? Maybe see our novel published? Even if there are multiple goals, a business plan can help prioritize our time. So a good first step is to develop a vision statement, or where we want to be in a year from now. It should be as specific as possible, such as: "By this time next year I want to increase my writing income by 50 per cent." By establishing a figure it will help us evaluate the merits of potential projects. Therefore if you're the goal to achieve that 50% is \$5000, and it is only possible to write ten stories in a year, then higher paying markets may have to be considered.

The next step is to develop strategies around our vision statement in order to reach our goal. To reach new markets, we may need to spend more time on market research. The strategy statement may be: Identify at least eight markets and prepare query letters. If the goal is to increase certain skills, you may want to budget time for some professional development activities, such as courses, conferences or workshops. If its an increase to personal satisfaction desired, we may want to turn down some lower-paying activities to make time for that long-postponed novel.

And finally if the goal is to get the novel published, we may want to consider the publicity and marketing side of our business. Set aside time to surf the net for publishers. Develop professional promotional material. Attend key conferences where we can interact with agents and network with other writers who have had different successes and may be able to offer some good tips.

To make sure we can get it all done -- use a calendar to help plan. Plotting our projects on a calendar will help us determine how much time we can allocate to each, and how much time is left over for new projects. Once we've determined some likely writing projects for the coming year, you can do some backward planning to break those projects down into steps, and determine when each step must be taken if we are to reach our goal.

A business plan doesn't have to be complicated. When asked about the key to success Carol Burnett once said "you have to visualize where you want to be --actually see that place inside your head." The development of a vision statement, then physically writing it down and taking the time to make a plan to get there, can help ensure that our writing career takes you to that wonderful place you've pictured in your mind's eye.



IF YOU POST IT ONLINE – IS IT PUBLISHED?

Does posting a manuscript ruin its chances for publication? If you post a piece of writing to a public electronic bulletin-board or discussion group (USENET, GENie, FIDOnet, et al.) or mail it to a generally-accessible mailing list (sf-lovers), you have published it. This means that you cannot sell "first rights" to that manuscript to a magazine, anthology, et cetera. Furthermore, most publishers won't buy secondary rights to a piece that has been published on an electronic network. (Sending E-mail copies of a manuscript out to a few friends and reviewers probably doesn't constitute "publication", but posting definitely does.)

From: Newsgroups: misc.writing,news.answers,misc.answers

A variety of tidbits on the craft of writing...

Trends: A good way to get story ideas

Read the magazines you want to get published in, at least one newspaper a day, and log on to online message boards and informational websites. What are people talking about? What are the current trends? Focus on these trends, and try to think up ideas related to them.

Create believable characters

In the December issue of "Writer's Digest," Elaine Marie Alphin explains that thinking like a kid will help you to write more realistic characters. The article is an easy read – not too long, and she provides helpful advice and examples on developing characters that act, think, feel and speak. To read the full article, visit:

http://www.writersdigest.com/articles/alphin_believablecharacters.asp

Do I need an agent?

(An excerpt from Writing FAQ from the Newsgroup: misc.writing,news.answers,misc.answers)

Markets that only accept submissions through agents:

- Mainstream fiction (not SF, romance, or mystery)
- Screenplays and teleplays (studios won't read unsolicited submissions for fear of copyright lawsuits.)

Most other markets still read their own slushpiles, so you can cut out the middleman by submitting your fiction directly. If you're concerned about your ability to negotiate, you can always get an agent after you've made the sale through the slushpile.

Markets agents aren't normally interested in short fiction (not enough money in it).

Things agents generally won't do:

- Rewrite/edit your work (they don't have time)
- Handle several genres (e.g. romances and screenplays and cookbooks)
- Serve as a crying towel

Web resources for query letters & synopsis guides

<http://www.authorsden.com/visit/viewarticle.asp?AuthorID=12152&id=11869>

Teaches how to write query letters and novel synopsis to gain entry into a publishing company.

<http://www.bethamos.com/query.htm>

Outlines an approach to use in writing query letters and providing a synopsis when trying to find an agent or publisher.

<http://www.lindaneedham.com/synopsistwn.htm>

Contains an example of a synopsis.

Stop, Lunch and Listen: An author event at the 2007 International Plowing Match

By Katherine Hobbs



About 80,000 people experienced agriculture, food, entertainment and fun at the 2007 Leeds-Grenville International Plowing Match & Country Festival (IPM) in Crosby, Ontario from September 18 to 22. The event showcased Ontario's dynamic agricultural industry, including farm machinery, ways to enhance country living, along with competitive plowing.

For all the brave folk who drove to the IPM managing to find their way through the hundreds of acres of parking lots ("Where's L?" we kept asking, but no-one knew) and then allowed themselves to be locked into cages like cattle and pulled by tractors to the entrance gates, there was a treat in store. **Stop, Lunch and Listen** was a new daily feature in the Living Country Theatre Tent. Everyone was invited to bring food and listen to authors read from their stories in lunch time sessions MC'd by Sue Pike and Vicki Cameron.

Some of CCW's notable authors were in attendance at the festival throughout the week:

Barbara Fradkin
Violette Malan
R.J. Harlick
Thomas Rendell Curran
Brenda Chapman

Meanwhile out in the madding crowd helicopters buzzed overhead, there were milking competitions, and log-sawing contests. Last but certainly not least, housed in the tent beside the authors, was the famous cow that gave birth to four calves – that would be of course at the same time. Nevertheless, besides all of the entertainment competing for festival attendees, the authors were pleased to have throngs of people in the audience for the readings. It was a good place to "set awhile... take a load off" and be quietly but thoroughly entertained.



Pictured (l-r) Sue Pike, Vicki Cameron, Garth, Maggie Wheeler and Brenda Chapman

Can you hear me now? Dialogue tips.

by Bill Newman

The means of communication with which we are most familiar is also one of the trickiest to put onto paper. It's dialogue. In a story dialogue can serve many functions.

Provide a hook:

Very few novels kick off with dialogue, but it's a great opportunity to involve your reader early. In Len Deighton's *Spy Line* he opens with: "Glasnost is trying to escape over the Wall, and getting shot with a *silenced* machine gun," said Kleindorf. "That's the latest joke from over there." This dialogue quickly lets the reader know where we are and introduces the major characters. Kleindorf's talking to the spy Samson who laughs at the joke. Encouraged, Kleindorf continues to joke and gives Samson, and the reader some useful information.

Move the plot along:

In *Tinker Taylor Soldier Spy* John Le Carré uses dialogue between Smiley and Connie, the former SIS staffer, to discuss how the Soviet spy, Aleks Polyakov, fits into the mole conspiracy. Connie recalls the conversation she'd had with her boss at the time, who is now Smiley's boss. "Percy calls for me again... 'You're to leave Polyakov alone. You're to put him out of your silly woman's mind. Do you understand?'" Over the next few hours, Smiley peppers Connie with more questions, aimed at jogging her memory. The technique reveals some vital clues.

Define characters:

Dialogue is the best way to describe your characters' mood, emotion and how they interact with other people in your story. You can also convey their physical attributes by having someone else talk about it. In *Anil's Ghost*, Ondaatje uses dialogue to let us position Anil in our minds: "How long has it been? You were born here, no?" In the ensuing Q&A, Anil reveals her age, her favoured-daughter status, and that she speaks fluent Sinhalese.

Create conflict:

Conflict is the life blood of the novel, and it's easier to convey to the reader via dialogue than through narrative. In a mystery, the conflict can appear in a police interrogation or a court scene. In Graham Hurley's *Turnstone* the detective puts pressure on a small-time crook by making him believe he's a suspect in a murder case. The detective asks the suspect if he has an alibi.

"Told you already. I was with my girlfriend."

"Name? Address? Phone number?"

The interrogation continues in that vein until the interviewee breaks down and gives the detective the information he needs. Rapid fire dialogue is not untypical of police interviewing techniques. You can Google transcripts of interviews from actual cases.

Describe a back story:

A conversation between two people over lunch is a good way of telling a back-story. The person relating the story and can be interrupted by the listener requesting clarifications that the reader might also want. In my *House in the Woods* (unpublished, still working on it) I use the conversation between Alice and her best friend, Penny, to tell the story of Alice's troubled childhood.

"Can you keep a secret?"

"Of course," Penny said. "As long as it doesn't put me in an impossible situation. If it will, don't tell me."

"What do you mean, put you in an impossible situation?" Alice looked worried.

"Like you've robbed the bank where you work and you want me to hold onto the cash."

"No, it's nothing like that..."

Inject humour

Humour also helps define your characters. In Joseph Heller's *Catch 22* Major Major, whose middle name is also Major, has risen in the Army to the rank of, yes, major. In this humorous scene it becomes clear that he's stressed out and doesn't want people to bother him in the office.

"From now on," Major Major said, "I don't want you to come here while I'm here if there's anything you can do for me."

"Yes, sir," said the orderly. "When should I come here to find out if there's anything you want me to do for you?"

"When I'm not here."

There is certainly more to dialogue than these seven facets. How to sound realistic? Do characters have to speak in a grammatically correct fashion? Can they use dialects? Those are trickier topics I'll leave for someone else to tackle.

Girls Gone Bad? September Meeting Overview

Our guest in September, Dr. Shelley Brown received her PHD in applied forensics psychology from Queens University. She spent ten years working with Correctional Services Canada and the National Parole Board Canada and was involved in variety of corrections-based research studies. Her work became increasingly gender-focused with a major research project on the revamping of the correctional intake assessment process for men as well as women. She recently co-authored a book that summarized the research to date on effective assessment and treatment for women offenders. It was this work which catalyzed her move from Public service to academia. Currently she is a professor at Carleton University and focuses on Theoretical and practical advancements in the realm of female criminal conduct.

When we think of women who commit horrific crimes we think of serial killers like Karla Homolka, or Aileen Wuornos (Monster) who was actually one of the first females to engage in male type serial killing methods; using a gun. Dr. Brown offers this hypothesis: If a woman is going to murder she is going to adopt a different type of method -- softer methods, like poison. However research literature indicates that in our system we don't have a lot of female serial killers, nor do we have a lot of male serial killers -- which is the stuff of interest to the public and to CCW crime writers. So she advised us we'd need to spin what she tells us to make it marketable.

"The female criminal is monotonous and uniform compared with the male companion just as the general woman is inferior to man ..." So said Cesare Lombroso, a noted Italian criminologist considered to be the father of criminology epitomizing his opinion of female criminals in his preceding statement.



Thus we've had a rocky start in terms of some of the biases that scientists have applied to studying female crime. The majority of early theories were all written by men. Until the last ten to fifteen years only male criminality was studied. So far there's not a lot of research on female criminality and therefore many questions about women's pathway's into crime, their motives or their methods cannot be answered conclusively.

So why are we interested in female crime now? Worldwide we have seen a trend in incarceration rates going up for female offenders. This is most noticeable in US, somewhat in Canada with adult female offenders in the federal system, England and Australia. In the U.S. between 1995 and 2004 there was an increase of 34% women incarcerated. There was an increase in male incarceration as well, but not to the same extent. There has been a similar rise in the female juvenile arrest rates in the US, but not so much in Canada because of the

Criminal Justice Act. Therefore in Canada we haven't seen the same climb.

But the reason why the female incarceration rates are up is because of changes in the law. It's not a real rise in crime. Simply because incarceration rates are going up, doesn't mean crime is going up. So this rise in crime isn't due to behaviour, but something else in our policies. So although some people claim crime is going up among females, if you look at the data it is more likely that it is due to changes in the law -- zero tolerance as an example.

One thing researchers do know is that the strongest predictor of crime is age. Younger people commit more crimes. Offending for the average person begins in their early teens. If it's any comfort they tend to grow out of it by their later teens and early twenties. It's normative at that age to indulge in slightly anti-social behaviour. So unless there's a snag with drugs or other problems, if they were late starters into crime they tend to grow out of it.

But if criminal activity starts early on in a child's life, say at the age of 8 -- the child is in trouble within the family, or skipping school, or the police know the child by name, it is more problematic and much more likely they will continue criminal behaviour throughout their lives. Those are the high risk people. If you can save those ones you get the biggest bang for your buck in terms of saving money as you reduce crime.

There is a theory with young girls that it's the influence of their male counterparts as to why they engage in criminal behaviour. With males it is their friends. However women also offend by themselves; not everyone fits into a nice standardized box. However one offence gestalt variable that differs is the victim. Looking at all homicides in a five year period shows that women more liable to offend against someone they know, whereas with men it will be against a stranger or a casual acquaintance.

In general society may feel female crime has gone up and we may feel this way due to the sensational headlines – Paris Hilton goes to jail, Lindsay Lohan, Nicole Ritchie and Britney Spears are always in trouble and always in the news. It makes it seem like girls are out of control. But the data doesn't support that. Our visceral reaction is to get tough on crime; it makes us feel better.

But have girls really gone bad? Dr. Brown says no. It's an artefact of policy changes; the widening of the net. Both qualitative and quantitative analysts say there's been no increase in female crime, it's media hype. After all homicide is rare. Less than 1 % of all arrest charges are for homicide. But when it's committed it is predominately by a male or an older male. Of all the homicides committed 90 % are by male, 10 % by women and within that 10 % it is a very small percentage that are committed by young girls. The bottom line is that crime is a male phenomena. Sorry guys!



BOOK REVIEW

by Linda Wiken, Prime Crime Books, 891 Bank St. Ottawa

FORENSICS AND FICTION

by D.P. Lyle, M.D. \$29.95

Here are all the questions (plus a lot more) that you wanted to ask a doctor or pathologist but didn't. As the subtitle says, "Clever, Intriguing & Downright Odd Questions from Crime Writers". For instance, "What actions can a victim of catatonia perform?" "How does 'sewer gas' kill?", and my favourite, "Can a condom be used to save the life of someone suffering severe lacerations from shattered glass?" (I kid you not!) Many of the questions come from well-known writers. It's a fun and fascinating book, just right for any reference shelf.

ART COPIES LIFE

by Bill Newman

Crime authors beware. The police might read your stories and charge you with crimes similar to the ones in your stories. This is what happened to a Polish author, Krystian Bala. He was found guilty of the murder of a businessman four years after he published a novel that bore strong resemblance to an actual crime. Bala believed that his estranged wife was having an affair with the businessman. There appeared to be nothing linking Bala to the wife's presumed lover, so it is likely if he hadn't have written the book he wouldn't have been caught. Bala denied involvement in the crime, saying that he'd gleaned details of it from the news media – a plausible defense, but in this case, an unsuccessful one.

(Adapted from a BBC news item, 5 Sept. 2007)