

The Purloined Newsletter



A CAPITAL CRIME WRITERS PUBLICATION

Inside this issue:

Message from the President Ken Gibson	2
From the Editor Katherine Hobbs	3
Mary Jane Maffini Launch Party	4
Scroll over Beethoven	5
The Economics of Writing, by Bill Newman	6
I never met a metaphor I didn't like, by Denis St. Jean	7
November 14th Anniversary Event: 20 Years of Writing Wrongs	8-10
The final bits & pieces	11-12

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

We meet on the second Wednesday of each month to discuss writing and crime. Meetings are suspended in July and August for the summer.

Membership fees are:
\$30 per year,
\$15 corresponding.

Meetings are held in Room 156 at the Library and Archives Canada, 395 Wellington Street beginning at 7:00 p.m.

Volume 22, Issue 4—December 2009

**Come out on
Wednesday, December 9th
for
the CCW Annual Christmas event**

with

**Special guest:
Maureen Jennings**



at Robbie's Restaurant



**1531 St. Laurent Blvd. Ottawa
613-744-8585 www.robbies.ca**

**6:30 Social
7:00 Dinner**

**Please RSVP to Tom Curran at
ericstride@rogers.com by Nov. 30**

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Message from the President - Ken Gibson

By all accounts, we had a splendid conference on November 14. The gathering provided an excellent opportunity to celebrate CCW's 20th anniversary and to showcase our published authors.

The audience of approximately 120 were entertained throughout the day by author panels and notable Ottawa personalities who read from CCW member's books.

Books flew off the tables set up by Prime Crime and everyone enjoyed a delectable lunch. Those who attended Melanie Fogel's workshop in the morning provided rave reviews.

There seems to be a consensus that we shouldn't wait another 20 years to do it again.

As an added bonus, we signed up nine new members at the conference. Welcome to CCW!!!

Of course, an event of this size cannot be put together without the time and effort of a lot of people. We owe the Ottawa Public Library a debt of gratitude for providing us with publicity and a venue.

I continue to be impressed by members of the community who are so willing to donate their time to these events.

In this case, Paul Dewar, Dave Stephens, Alan Neal, Jerri Southcott, Arthur McGregor, Clive Doucet, Tony Martins and Robin Andrew. And Margaret Dunlop for keeping us hydrated and fed throughout the day. Special thanks go to our artistic director



for the event, Katherine Hobbs. And to the rest of the CCW executive, who started planning for the event in June and didn't stop until the welcoming speech on November 14th. Let's not forget the authors either. And to all of those in attendance.

Now it's back to business as usual. Our annual December dinner meeting will again take place at Robbie's Restaurant on St. Laurent Boulevard on December 9th. The guest speaker will be Maureen Jennings, accomplished author of the ubiquitous Murdoch Mystery series.

As the holidays approach it is also time to buy new pens, sharpen your pencils and tune-up your PC, because preparations are underway for the annual Audrey Jessup Short Story contest. We will bring you up to date on the contest at the December meeting and will formally announce it in the next newsletter.

See you on December 9th.

Ken

**"Outside of a dog, a book
is man's best friend. Inside
of a dog, it's too dark to
read."**

Groucho Marx



From the Editor, Katherine Hobbs

What would a day be like without the arts? No radio, no TV, no movies, no books, no plays, no music, no photographs, no art to gaze at. It's

impossible to imagine. Yet somehow governments seem to easily forget how integral the arts and culture industry is to our national and local economies, as well as to our identities.

The Conference Board of Canada report, **"Valuing Culture: Measuring and Understanding Canada's Creative Economy"** presents a comprehensive study of the direct and indirect impacts of the art and culture industry on Canada's economy. It examines the impact a dynamic cultural sector has on attracting talent and catalyzing economic prosperity.

The Conference Board sets the real value-added output by cultural industries at \$46 billion in 2007. The report also finds that the economic footprint of the cultural sector was approximately 84.6 billion that same year. That is 7.4% of Canada's total GDP, and 1.1 million jobs.

Stats like that make one wonder why there is so little government focus on making things right for those in the artistic community. Poverty is a plague in the arts community. The term "starving artist" isn't an exaggerated stereotype; it's a reality for many Canadians whose work appears to be undervalued, and who are without a social safety net.

Part of the problem may be that artists don't have a strong collective voice to lobby governments for change. Most work in isolation without many opportunities to mingle with others in the arts and culture arena. Perhaps if we were to band together with our common interests—forming a *superlobby* group it might give the arts community more clout with governments.

That's why it was a thrill to have guests outside of the CCW writing community eager to share in our 20th anniversary event on November 14. Tony Martins, Editor of Guerrilla Magazine; Robin Andrews of Unposed Photography; Arthur McGregor, musician and owner of the Ottawa Folklore Centre; Alan Neal, Dave Stephens and Jerri Southcott of the CBC; and last but not least, Paul Dewar and Clive Doucet. The presence of these special

guests points to the value of the arts and culture community working together. Ultimately this could help us all in our individual endeavours.

In November I attended an arts summit hosted by Paul Dewar. Over 150 local artists and arts administrators worked in small groups to develop lists of the biggest problems facing area artists and how they might be solved. "The ideas best able to improve the community come from the citizens, whose experiences are best able to inform government policies," said Dewar at the event.

The suggestions offered at the summit were amazing — especially in regards to crippling taxing policies. "Why not restructure the tax system to provide income averaging so if you make money only one year out of five, you could spread your income over those five years and pay the tax accordingly?" said one group's spokesperson. "Writers aren't even taxed in Ireland." And, protecting artists by providing EI and maternity leave was another need identified.

Paul Dewar summed up the day, "The arts allow Canadians to express themselves, and helps define who we are as a country and a people. A strong cultural policy is the pillar to any national identity and is integral to preserving our heritage." HEAR, HEAR! We look forward to the formation of a policy to better support artists in Canada.

Meanwhile the CCW keeps on keepin' on. CCW authors are rocking the market with new books. That means launch parties, readings, signings and other events. There are plenty of photos in this month's issue demonstrating just how busy they are.

Technology has invited participation in creative activity on a mass scale and the CCW authors are right in the thick working with it — with websites, Facebook, Twitter, blogs, video trailers and virtual book tours. Kindle and other electronic readers are changing the playing field for writers, as well as affecting how we buy, read and store books. Watch in 2010 for more articles on the changes to the industry created by technology — and how technology is making it easier for us to not ever have to spend a single day without the arts.

Happy Holidays!
Katherine

Note: Read the full Conference Board of Canada report at:
<http://www.conferenceboard.ca/documents.aspx?DID=2671>

Deadly Dames at Library & Archives Canada

Mary Jane Maffini (pictured right) launched her latest Camilla MacPhee novel, **Law & Disorder** at the Library and Archives Canada in Ottawa. Joan Boswell (below left) also launched her newest Hollis Grant mystery **Cut to the Chase**.

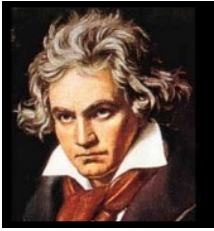


Sue Pike (below) was the MC for the evening.



Scroll over Beethoven

By Katherine Hobbs



Typing a novel is much like playing a fine Beethoven concerto on a Baby Grand. Isn't it? Well to be truthful, to the ear it may sound

vastly different, but typing does have similarities to playing the piano. For example both require you exert strong, repeated wrist motions. As a result both the writer and the pianist can experience the pain of carpal tunnel syndrome simply from doing what they love — over, and over, and over again.

Repetitive motions can cause numbness, burning, tingling, and a prickly pin-like sensation over the palm of your hand and into your thumb and fingers. You may experience shooting pain from your wrist up your arm, or down into your hand.

Continued wrist compression can cause muscle weakness making it difficult to open jars and hold objects. Eventually the muscle in your hand served by the median nerve may atrophy. Untreated it could result in permanent weakness, loss of sensation or paralysis of your thumb and fingers.

Almost every action from tying shoelaces to driving a car, depends on the strength and agility of your hands, wrists, and forearms. Here are some tips garnered from the four corners of the Internet to keep those body parts healthy so we can continue to plug away at the next Hound of the Baskervilles, or alternatively, plunk Beethoven's Symphony No. 5 out on the ivories.

First, when typing, keep the forearm and wrist muscles as relaxed as possible. Tension in

the muscles restricts blood circulation, and hinders the body in being able to draw away the toxins that result from muscle use.

Don't pound the keyboard. When striking the keys, use only as



much pressure that you have to. Just press the key, then relax. Don't keep your fingers tensed up. It's important, even if you're responding to a nasty e-mail.

Avoid bending your hands up as you type. This position puts tension on the muscles of the forearm, and restricts circulation to the hands. It's why your hands might feel cold after you type this way for extended periods. Let your hand and fingers "drip" from the end of the forearm. That position maximizes circulation.

Finally, every couple of hours, get up from your computer, move around a bit and do some body stretches. Full body stretches daily. Do lots of forearm strengthening exercises and upper body exercises to give you the strength to support a good, erect seated position.

But what if it's too late, and you're already in pain? The following exercises will help to condition and strengthen the

motor muscles of the hands, wrists, and forearms. Most recommend repeating about 15 to 20 times.

Finger stretch:

- a) Hold your hands out in front of you — fingers of each hand together, thumb in toward the index finger.
- b) Stretch your fingers and thumbs as far apart as possible, then bring them together.

Finger push-ups:

- a) With fingers spread and elbows bent, press your hands firmly together, touching from the pads of the fingertips down to the palms.
- b) Use the tension between the fingertips to arch the fingers out so that only the pads of the fingertips are touching.
- c) Continue to press the fingers and thumbs together as you move them toward each other. Hold the tension as you open.

Wrist bend and straighten:

- a) Hold your hands in front of you, arms and wrists straight, palms down. Bend both wrists, pointing your fingers toward the floor; hold this position for 5 counts. Then straighten the wrists.
- b) Reverse the direction, flex your wrists to point the fingers up; hold for 5 counts. Straighten your wrists.

Towel twister:

- a) Hold a rolled towel at chest height, arms straight and palms down, hands about shoulder-width apart. Pull the ends of the towel in opposite directions to create tension.
- b) Keeping your arms straight and maintaining steady tension on the towel, twist the towel forward, then backward.

Forearm flipovers:

- Lay your forearm on a table, palm down. Keeping your little finger on

Scroll over Beethoven, (cont'd)

the table, turn your hand so the palm faces up. Return to starting position, and repeat. Switch hands, then repeat.

Ball Squeezes:

Holding a squishy ball firmly in your palm, squeeze and release tension on the ball.

Yoga Stretches:

1. Hold one hand in a fist in front of you; slowly open each finger in sequence, then close slowly in sequence. Repeat once slowly, then repeat once quickly. Repeat the entire sequence with the other hand. Finish this exercise with both hands held out in front of you and repeating the above sequence.

2. Hold both hands in front of you, limp-wristed. Circle one hand clockwise slowly several times, then counter-clockwise slowly. Follow this quickly in each direction. Repeat with other hand, then with both hands.

3. With your hands held in front of you, separate and straighten your fingers until you can feel the



stretch. Hold this position for ten seconds. Relax your hand, then bend your fingers at the knuckles and hold for ten seconds.

Next Month: Neck and Eye Strain

The Economics of Writing by Bill Newman

When I first started writing, my accountant told me that the CRA doesn't allow the Canadian taxpayer to subsidize people's hobbies. Okay, so they give you a couple of years grace, as they might do for any fledgling business, but, he said, "Show a profit or leave your writing losses off your tax returns."



My expenses over the years have included conferences, trips to reconnoitre crime scenes, memberships of writing organizations, promotional material, and a website. The website expenses alone eclipse my royalty cheque income, so yes, it is a hobby.

Chatting to a writer friend recently, I discovered she spent \$2,000 setting up a website and \$500 a year maintaining it. It would be necessary to sell over two thousand copies of a paperback every year to just break even. She also confessed that she spends an equal sum of money on promotion and trips to "locales."

I know everyone is waiting for their "John Grisham moment," that point in time at which they suddenly make it big. Indeed, countless friends and acquaintances have asked me when my best seller is coming. I tell them that in retirement I took up golf as well as writing, but they don't ask me when I'm going to win the US Open Championship. This analogy is pretty accurate because some of them have seen me play and read my stories.

So what to do? Writers write because it is intellectually stimulating and they like to be read. I don't believe they ever expect to make money at it.

Consequently I am putting all of my short stories on my website (www.bjnbooks.com). Two of them have won Audrey Jessup awards and another one won an award from the Scene of the Crime contest.

Meanwhile my published novels are still out there in cyberspace, probably being read free-of-charge, too.

I don't care.

I never met a metaphor I didn't like by Denis St. Jean

Metaphors to the writer are like spices to a chef. Without them, your story may be palatable but bland. But use them judiciously and you will liven up your prose; give it zing. They can also be overused, like the sentence you've just read.

My dictionary describes the metaphor as "a word or phrase used in an imaginative way to represent or stand for something else". It's a way of explaining the abstract in concrete terms, like "tempest in a teapot" or "hot under the collar". It combines words or ideas that are different and renders them curiously alike.

It's fascinating to me to find the root of a metaphor. Searching for the etymon of a metaphor can bring surprising results. Take, for instance, the following:

When a jockey sees that his horse is so far ahead of the others that the outcome of the race is certain, he doesn't have to lift the reins to urge his mount forward. He therefore wins "hands down."

Getting one's "hackles up" owes its origin to cockfights. Gamecocks usually have a long, narrow feather on the back of their neck called a hackle. As they become more furious during a fight, the hackle rises.

Single words, too, can become metaphors, such as the "eye" of a needle, and a "soap" opera. Do you know why programs like



"As the World Turns" (or as a wag once said, As the Stomach Churns) are called soaps, by the way? In radio's heyday, such serialized shows were often sponsored by soap manufacturers. It's also my guess that a soap, like an opera, often teeters on the melodramatic.

**Our hearts have no cockles,
we can't really warm them...**

When you can't "fathom" something, you can't understand or get to the bottom of it. Most of us know that a fathom is six feet and was used by sailors to measure the depth of the water. But the term originally described the distance between the tips of two outstretched arms.

Our hearts have no cockles, so we can't really warm them. They get their name from a shellfish that's shaped like a heart. If you ask me, that's a bit of a stretch of the imagination. The word "cockle", by the way, comes from the French "coquille", meaning "shell".

Somehow, warming the shellfish of my heart loses that savoir faire.

Now, let's test your knowledge of four metaphors. You'll find the answers on page 12 of this newsletter.

1. Dead as a doornail
2. White Elephant
3. Pedigree
4. Haywire

Finally, in keeping with the holiday season, let me offer a toast to the merry

metaphor. Don't know where the word in this case comes from?

In the sixteenth century it was common practice to place a piece of spiced toast in the bottom of one's beer or wine to absorb the dregs. The drink itself became known as "a toast".

Merry Christmas!

About Denis St. Jean: God punished Denis by placing various media-shy CEOs behind him when crises arose. The two most difficult of these occurred when he was appointed head of media relations for AECL during the Chernobyl crisis, and of the Canadian Red Cross just as the tainted blood scandal broke.

To relieve the pressure somewhat, Denis took extra-curricular contracts as a columnist for the Ottawa Citizen, the editor of a sports newspaper, and the communications director for a CFL all-star game. In much calmer waters now, he can finally pursue his first passion: writing.

Nov. 14th Anniversary Event—20 Years of Writing Wrongs

Ken Gibson, President of CCW kicked off the Capital Crime Writer's 20th anniversary event at the Ottawa Public Library. In his introductory remarks he mentioned the CCW author's books were for sale at the event from Prime Crime Books, and the authors would be on hand for signings. In his welcome, Michael Murphy, Coordinator of Adult & Readers' Advisory Services at Ottawa Public Library reminded everyone

that he was obligated to mention that the author's books were also in the Library. Ken later countered with, "yes, but I'm not sure you are allowed to get them signed."

In his opening address Paul Dewar, MP for Ottawa Centre said he loves to read about Ottawa as a setting in books, "It warms my heart." He went on to say, "Ottawa is a wonderful community and there is lots to write about. We need to celebrate our local authors." Dewar had listened to the interview with Barbara Fradkin on CBC's *In Town and Out* that morning. He was impressed with the story of how the CCW started as a grassroots organization, and is now celebrating 20 years. "It's a blossoming of a genre,"

he said referring to Ottawa mystery writers. He also discussed how important the library is. "It's been integral in supporting artists."

Then the activities started with a liar's panel and Brenda Chapman talking about hitchhiking 450 miles to get to a wedding, bridesmaid's dress slung over her shoulder, and being picked up by Burton Cummings. Apparently only the hitchhiking part was true. Mary Jane Maffini asked C.B. Forrest if his initials stood for Could Be? or Couldn't Be? when he told the story about doing an interview in the nude when he worked as a journalist. Could be! Vicki Cameron gave an in-depth description of toilets in Asia, and the day was off and running.

Discussions ranged from the amount of background research and planning needed to write a crime novel to the dangers of modeling characters on friends or family. Editor and writer Melanie Fogel led a workshop on editing in the morning. The event also included readings by local politicians and members of the arts community, including Capital Ward

Coun. Clive Doucet, who read from *This Thing of Darkness*. Following the reading Fradkin quipped, "I've never put a body in the Glebe. I may have to think about that with Lands-downe Live."

Dave Stephens was MC for the afternoon, and read from *The Weight of Stones* by C.B. Forrest.



Coun. Clive Doucet (left) read from Barbara Fradkin's latest novel, *This Thing of Darkness*



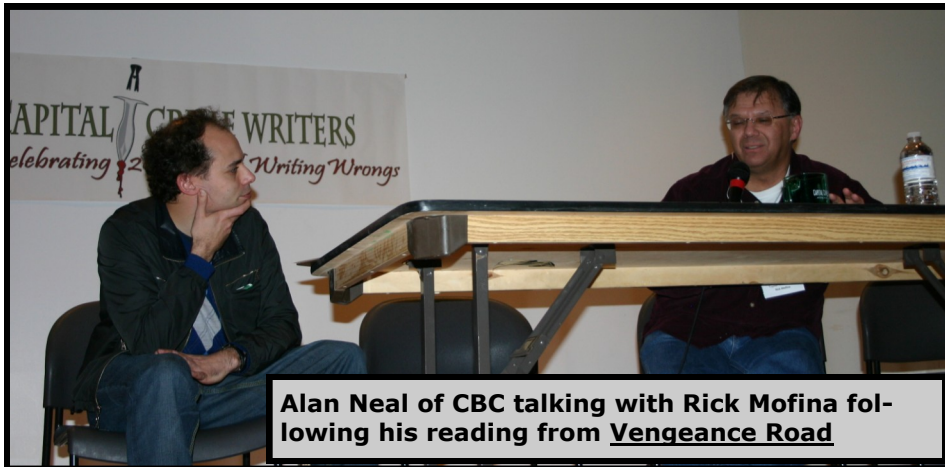
Robin Andrew of *Unposed* read from R.J. Harlick's novel *Arctic Blue Death*. Arthur McGregor of the Folklore Music Centre read Vicki Delany's latest, *Winter of Secrets*



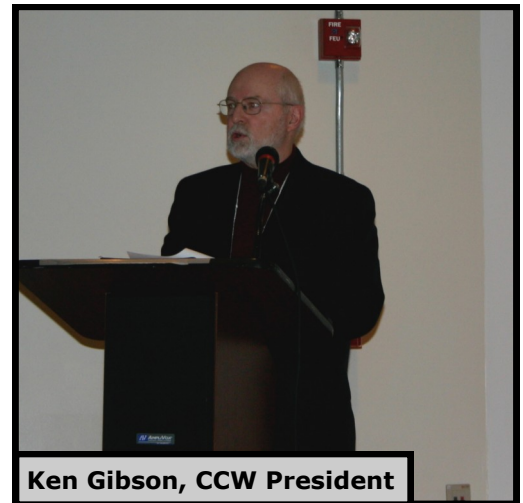
November 14th Anniversary Event, Scenes from the day

Dave Stephens introduces the last panel of the day. Author Vicki Delany is the moderator seated to his right.

Tom Curran discussed the difficulties of killing someone in the modern bathtub vs. the old cast iron variety.



Alan Neal of CBC talking with Rick Mofina following his reading from Vengeance Road



Ken Gibson, CCW President

Joe Italiano enjoys lunch! We even had roast beef with caramelized onions.



Nadine Doolittle, Darlene Cole and C.B. Forrest



NDP MP Paul Dewar



November 14th Anniversary Event, Scenes from the day, (cont'd)



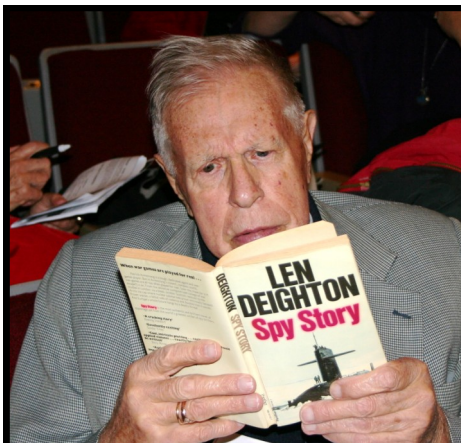
Rachel Pitcher, Wynn Quon, Nadine Doolittle, & Denis St. Jean. In the background Barbara Fradkin, Vicki Cameron, R.J. Harlick, Vicki Delany



Wow! Who took this photo of Ken Gibson? Oh yes, that reminds me. All photos are courtesy of



And with a much better positioning of the microphone, Michael Murphy of the Ottawa Public Library, and VP of Capital Crime Writers introduces Dave Stephens.



Trevor Hodge enjoys a break.



Dave Stephens, Jerri Southcott and Brenda Chapman

Bits & Pieces

Reading Opportunities:

Tree readings are held every second and fourth Tuesday of the month in the Arts Court Library, 2 Daly Avenue (behind the Rideau Centre at the corner of Daly Avenue and Nicholas Street). An open-mic set for published writers commences at 8:00 p.m., with the featured readers to follow. A workshop for newer writers is held before the reading from 6:45 until 7:45 p.m. Admission is free.

For more information, please see our web site <http://www.treereadingseries.ca/> or contact Tree at 613-292-1886, or email to: treereadingseries@live.ca

Guest Blog Opportunities:

There is a new book-related blog with reviews at <http://www.cncbooks.com/blog/>. Guest bloggers are welcome. The only real rule is to stay away from politics and religion unless they have something to do with books. Otherwise, have at it.

Any length is fine and you can email it to: cncbooks1@gmail.com.

Publishing Opportunities — Poetry:

Sugar Mule: The Canadian Issue is now on-line at www.sugarmule.com. This international literary magazine is based in the States, and the current issue was compiled at the request of editor Marc Weber, who has an interest in reaching beyond American borders to connect a community of poets and readers worldwide. If you are a poet, the magazine is currently accepting submissions for its next issue, which will be a general issue.

Sugar Mule reaches a wide audience.

Watch for news next month on the Capital Crime Writer short story contest for the Audrey Jessup Award. Details will be on the website, and in the January issue of the Purloined Newsletter.

Who's on your Holiday List?

The holiday shopping season is about to kick off. Looking for suggestions for who's on your gift list? I have two words for you: **BUY BOOKS**.

Don't know what to get the person who has everything? Introduce them to your favourite author. Give them a fast-paced novel to read at lunchtime.

Reading opens up new horizons, introduces us to new worlds, educates and entertains. What better gift could there be? So put aside your latte money for two days and you'll have enough to buy a paperback.

Go to a signing at an independently-owned bookstore this month and give signed books to your friends and family, your doctor and dentist. If they don't want to read it, they'll give it to someone who will.

Be thoughtful of your hairdresser and dog groomer and other people you encounter throughout the year. Instead of that candle or useless knickknack for your son or daughter's teacher, give them a book.

You have friends who don't read at all? Maybe they'll start with a book personally signed to them.

HOLIDAY PARTY: An invitation to writers in the Ottawa area.

DATE: **Tuesday, December 8th**

TIME: 6:00-9:00 pm

PLACE- Heart and Crown pub, 67 Clarence Street in the Byward Market -back party room

The Professional Writers Association of Canada (PWAC) invites you to mingle with members from Canadian Authors Association (CAA), the Editors Association of Canada (EAC), the Ottawa Independent Writers (OIW), the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC), the Media Club and more. No charge to attend; there will also be door prizes and a chance to find out a bit more about each association! **RSVP by November 30 to sue@codeword.ca**



Nov 28/09 Signing at Prime Crime Books. (l-r) Authors Brenda Chapman & C.B. Forrest signing at Prime Crime Books, with author Barbara Fradkin and owner of Prime Crime, Linda Wiken. Prime Crime is a tiny perfect place to scout out the latest in the mystery and crime fiction genre or to find your old favourites. www.primecrimebooks.com

www.capitalcrimewriters.com
Writing wrongs since 1988

ANSWERS TO I never met a metaphor I didn't like (by Denis St Jean) from page 7.

1. A doornail was used by carpenters as far back as the fourteenth century to strengthen and decorate doors. Large nails were hammered through the door until their ends protruded on the other side. The carpenter would then bend that end over so the nail could no longer be removed. It was effectively "dead".
2. Something that is of some worth but that no one wants or needs is called a "white elephant". Rare albino elephants were considered so sacred in ancient Siam that they automatically became the property of the king and were not permitted to work. If a subject incurred the king's displeasure he was given a white elephant. The useless animal would then literally eat the hapless recipient out of house and home.
3. This word comes from the French "pied de grue", or "crane's foot". When you trace a person's pedigree genealogically, you may find that the chart vaguely resembles the foot of a crane. Now, someone had to have an inventive mind to come up with that one!
4. Any farmer will tell you that when you try to wrap wire around a bale of hay, it's well-nigh impossible to keep it under control. Anything out of control is said to go haywire.