

The Purloined Newsletter



A CAPITAL CRIME WRITERS PUBLICATION

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Capital Crime Writers is an organization of writers and editors 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.

CCW Program Committee Announcements

Next Meeting: Wed., May 14, 2008

A day in the life of a Crown Prosecutor

Come to the CCW meeting on Wednesday, May 14 to meet Ontario Assistant Crown Attorney Meaghan Cunningham.

Meaghan will share what it's like being a Crown attorney. Based in Ottawa, she has worked with the domestic violence court -- but these days is involved in prosecuting everything from drinking and driving to homicide.

June 11 CCW Meeting – Mystery Café

Come join us June 11 for the annual CCW Mystery Café and Audrey Awards.

We'll be announcing the awards and celebrating with the winners. Be on hand for readings from the winning stories. Bring your own writing along as well, as you'll have the opportunity to read from your finished or in-process work.

Where: Biagio's (www.biagios.ca)

When: June 11, 2008

7:00 for Mystery Café

6:00 for dinner

If you plan to attend for dinner, please email Bev Panasky at bev.panasky@gmail.com by June 1.

Your Program Committee
Ken Gibson, Bev Panasky and Deborah Gyapong

From the Chair – Brenda Chapman

Bev Panasky led our April panel of Alex Brett, Robin Harlick and Deborah Gyapong through an interesting discussion about setting – expanding our definition beyond merely the physical setting to include emotional and social. I know that we all took away some new ideas and ways of dealing with an aspect of writing that can sometimes prove difficult.

Well, the Audrey Jessup contest is closed again for another year and we've received a good number of entries. Our judges, Tom Curran, Jane Crosier and Barbara Fradkin are currently working hard to come up with a shortlist that will be revealed at the Main Branch of the Ottawa Library on Wednesday, April 30th along with the Arthur Ellis shortlist. Combine that with a panel of past Arthur Ellis nominees and it promises to be a very entertaining evening that is not to be missed. The fun gets underway at 7:30 and all are welcome.

Our year is wrapping up – one more regular meeting in May and then our June meeting at Biagio's with the Audrey Jessup winners announced and everyone invited to read from their work to round out the evening. If you would like to come for a meal, be sure to confirm with Bev Panasky by e-mail and consider bringing along a short selection to share.

Finally, I would like to thank Guy Mercier for the wonderful job reworking the website content – the time invested along with Guy's creativity have resulted in a site second to none.

Brenda



The CCW Executive

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"I write because I can't do any of the following : paint, sculpt, sing, take photos, play an instrument, commute, wear a suit, remember appointments, return phone calls, work for a boss, concentrate in a meeting, serve food and drink, teach, or do anything else at all, really. "

Nick Hornby

Editor's Notes – Katherine Hobbs



It's May but feels like the thick of July. I've resisted the urge to drag out my air conditioner so far, but in this issue we're dragging out some pretty cool stuff. First off Guy has provided a great overview of the new website he's designed on Page 8 – complete with screen shots of what you'll see when you sign on. Make sure you check the website often – it's constantly being updated with contests and other writing events and

articles. In terms of intelligence gathering (other than what's in capitalcrimewriters.com) page 4 has "E is for Espionage," with a page or so of fun terms to use in your next spy chiller.

Susan Gates wrote up an overview of the Bloody Words conference coming up in June on page 6. There is an overview of the panel discussion from last meeting on page 9. And, wrapping it up this month is an article on the senses, advocating why your writing should stink -- but in a good way. See Page 7. So how cool is that? **Katherine**



Announcements: Publishing News!

"**Thicker Than Water**" - Storyteller Magazine. [Brenda Chapman's](#) short story entitled "Thicker than Water" will be published in the Spring 2008 issue of [Storyteller](#) magazine.

"**The Fish Ivory Man**" - Writer's Digest. Ken McBeath's short story "The Fish Ivory Man" will appear on line this summer in [Writer's Digest](#)

"**Venture**" - [Bookstrand.com](#). [Bill Newman's](#) book "Venture" is featured in the "coming soon" section of publisher Bookstrand.com. It's a crime story entwined with a romance. There's a short blurb on it on the BookStrand site, and Bill's website www.bjnbooks.com.

Events!

Winning at Crime: Wednesday April 30, 7:00 – 9:00 p.m.

This year the Arthur Ellis shortlists will be announced on Wednesday April 30, from 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm in the Auditorium of the Main Library at 120 Metcalfe St. in Ottawa. The evening will start with a panel of past winners, Barbara Fradkin, Mary Jane Maffini, Rick Mofina and Sue Pike. R.J. Harlick will lead them through a discussion on what it takes to write winning crime stories, be they novels or short stories.

At around 8:15, the shortlists for the 2008 AE awards will be announced for the 7 categories including Unchanged Arthur for Best Unpublished Crime Novel. We will also be announcing the shortlist for the **Audrey Jessup Award for Best Crime Short Story**. Please plan to come. It promises to be an exciting evening.

A Spring
Crop of Crime!

The River Runs Orange
R.J. Harlick

The Cluttered Corpse
Mary Jane Maffini

Join R.J. Harlick and Mary Jane Maffini
in the launch of their latest mysteries
Monday May 12, 2008, 7:00 pm - 9:00
in the sunken lobby
Library and Archives Canada
395 Wellington St., Ottawa

Readings, author signings,
Refreshments and music!

A Spring Crop of Crime: Monday May 12, 2008 7:00 – 9:00 p.m.

Join R.J. Harlick and Mary Jane Maffini in the launch of their latest mysteries.

Come join them for author readings, author signings, refreshments and music in the sunken lobby of the Library and Archives Canada building at 395 Wellington Street.

Evening of Cool Canadian Crime: Thursday, May 22, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

Join Brenda Chapman, Barbara Fradkin, R.J. Harlick and Margaret Stoddart at the [Stittsville Public Library](#) for an evening of readings and discussion on their latest books.

E is for Espionage

Espionage, also known as spying, involves a human being obtaining information that is considered secret or confidential without the permission of the holder of the information. Espionage differs from **Intelligence**, which is information gathered by a government or organisation to guide its decisions. The notable Intelligence organizations throughout the world are:

- Australia - **Australian Security Intelligence Organisation** (ASIO)
- Canada - **Canadian Security Intelligence Service** (CSIS)
- France - **Direction Generale de la Sécurité Exterieur** (DGSE)
- Germany - **Bundesnachrichtendienst** (BND, Federal Intelligence Service)
- Israel - **Mossad** (formally the Institute for Intelligence and Special Operations)
- People's Republic of China - **Ministry of State Security** (Guoanbu) and **2nd Department of the People's Liberation Army** (2PLA)
- Russia - **Sluzba Vneshnei Razvedka** (SVR, Foreign Intelligence Service) and **Glavnoje Razvedyvatel'noje Upravlenije** (GRU, Main Intelligence Directorate)
- United Kingdom - **MI5** (Military Intelligence Section 5 of the War Office's Directorate of Military Operations)
- United States - **Central Intelligence Agency** (CIA)

Unlike other forms of intelligence collection, espionage usually involves accessing the place where the desired information is stored, or accessing the people who know the information and will divulge it through some kind of subterfuge. Espionage dates back throughout history. Information on it has been found in the ancient writings of Chinese and Indian military strategists. The ancient Egyptians had a system for the acquisition of intelligence, and the Hebrews used spies as well. Feudal Japan often used ninjas for this purpose, and spies played a significant part in Elizabethan England. Today many nations continue to routinely spy on both their enemies and allies, although they maintain a policy of not commenting on it. They use agencies both within government, and many also employ private companies, to collect information.

Since the late 1990s the MI5 have been releasing historical files to the UK's National Archives, providing the public with a unique insight into the work of the Service and a behind-the-scenes look at famous spy cases of the 20th century.

Check them out at www.mi5.gov.uk

This shadow world has inspired--and mandated--a vivid vocabulary of words, carefully chosen to clarify or confuse. The "spookspeak" outlined below has been drawn from fact and fiction. The complete list can be found at <http://www.spymuseum.org/educate/loe.asp>.

Agent: a person unofficially employed by an intelligence service.

Asset: a clandestine source or method, usually an agent.

Babysitter: bodyguard.

Bagman: an agent who pays spies and bribes authorities.

Bang and Burn: demolition and sabotage operations.

Birdwatcher: slang used by British Intelligence for a spy.

Bridge Agent: an agent who acts as a courier from a case officer to an agent in a denied area.

Brush Pass: a brief encounter where something is passed between case officer and agent.

Burned: when a case officer or agent is compromised.

Camp Swampy: CIA's secret domestic training base (also known as "The Farm").

Camp X: Canada's secret domestic training base.

Carnivore: computer program designed by the FBI to allow them to collect electronic communications

Chicken Feed: convincing intelligence knowingly provided to an enemy through an agent
Cobbler: a spy who creates false passports, visas, diplomas and other documents.
COMINT: all intelligence gathered from intercepted communications.
Dangle: a person who approaches an intelligence agency with the intent of being recruited to spy against his or her own country.
Dead Drop: a secret location where materials can be left for another party to retrieve.
Discard: an agent whom a service will permit to be detected and arrested so as to protect more valuable agents.
Dry Clean: actions agents take to determine if they are under surveillance.
Ears Only: material too secret to commit to writing.
Echelon: a computer program developed by the NSA that captures satellite, microwave, cellular, and fiber optic traffic and processes them through filtering technologies for the purpose of gathering information.
ELINT: electronic intelligence usually collected by technical interception.
Escort: the operations officer assigned to lead a defector along an escape route.
Executive Action: assassination.
Flaps and Seals: the tradecraft involved when making surreptitious openings and closings of envelopes, seals, and secure pouches.
Ghoul: agent who searches obituaries and graveyards for names of the deceased for use by agents.
Honey Trap: slang for use of men or women in sexual situations to intimidate or snare others.
HUMINT: intelligence collected by human sources.
IMINT: imagery intelligence.
L-Pill: a poison pill used by operatives to commit suicide.
Legend: a spy's claimed background, usually supported by documents and memorized details.
MASINT: measurement and signature intelligence
Mole: an agent of one organization sent to penetrate an intelligence agency by gaining employment
Music Box: slang for a clandestine radio.
Musician: slang for a clandestine radio operator.
Naked: a spy operating without cover or backup.
Nugget: British term for bait (money, political asylum, or career opportunity) offered a potential defector.
One-time Pad: sheets of paper with strings of random numbers for use in enciphering messages.
Paroles: passwords to identify agents to each other.
PHOTINT: photographic intelligence, usually involving spy satellites or aircraft.
Pig: Russian intelligence term for traitor.
Pocket Litter: items in a spy's pocket (receipts, coins, theater tickets, etc.) that add authenticity
Raven: a male agent employed to seduce people for intelligence purposes.
Rolled-up: when an operation goes bad and an agent is arrested.
Sanitize: to delete specific material or revise a report or other document



Shoe: a false passport or visa.
Sleeper: agent living as an ordinary citizen in a foreign country; acts when a hostile situation develops.
SMERSH: short for "Smert Shpionam" (Death to Spies!); the assassination division of the KGB.
Swallow: a female agent employed to seduce people for intelligence purposes.
The Take: information gathered by espionage.
Throwaway: an agent considered expendable.
Timed Drop: a dead drop that will be retrieved by a recipient after a set time period.
Uncle: headquarters of any espionage service.
Wet Job: an operation in which blood is shed.

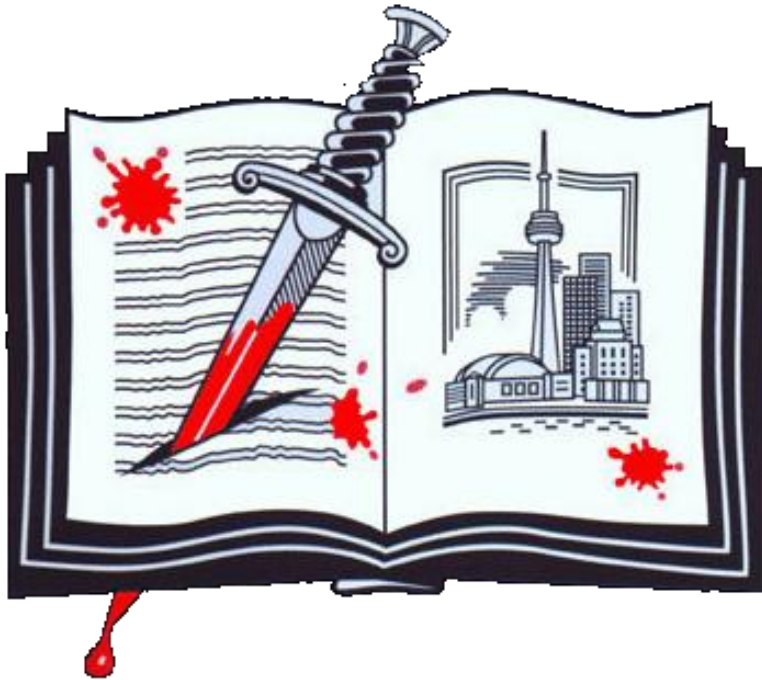
Bloody Words VIII: "Killing Time in Toronto"

By Susan Gates

Canada's national crime fiction conference will be held at the Toronto Downtown Marriott Eaton Centre from June 6th through the 8th. A

conference for both published and aspiring writers and crime fiction fans, Bloody Words is a fun, inspiring, enervating experience. This year the Canadian Guest of Honour is former editor, writing teacher and author of the Ellis Portal series, **Rosemary Aubert**. **Carolyn Hart**, author of the Henrie O and the Death on Demand series, will be the International Guest of Honour.

For a fee of \$ 175.00 you may attend the Friday night reception, the Saturday night banquet, two tracks of programs, author readings at the Mystery Cafe, shop in the Dealers' Room, get a bookbag full of bumpf, sign up for meetings with agents, enter the Bony Pete short story contest and schmooze over beer with the high and mighty.

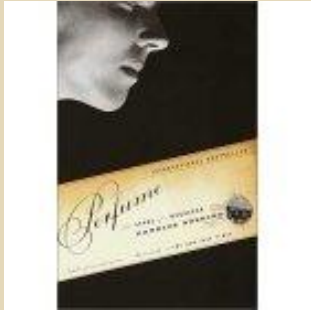


Published writers are invited to participate on panels and flog their books. The Dashiell Hammet awards will also be presented during the conference. For an additional fee of \$ 35.00 you may have your manuscript evaluated by a published author.

Visit their web site (bloodywords.com) for more information, to download the registration form and follow the link to the hotel's "special" rates for conference-goers.

I plan to attend this year to jump start my writing, connect with some fine Canadian writers and to fill my head with possibilities. To help Ottawa attendees keep costs down, we could consider car-pooling, room sharing and other economies of scale!





Writing from the Senses

By Katherine Hobbs

We all experience life through the five senses: Seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting and touching. However writing usually limits itself to the visual – to what things and people look like. But to get your writing to really pop from the page, to make a reader pay attention, and to give it life -- try writing from the other senses as well.

As an example of how to use the sense of smell, the novel *Perfume* by Patrick Süskind is a must read. It's an intoxicating fable of a murderer in eighteenth century France, a man whose phenomenal sense of smell sets him on an irrevocable course. It was originally written in German and translated into English, but what makes the writing unusual is that so much of it is written from the sense of smell. Süskind has described things as unlikely as the smell of eyebrows, or a brass doorknob.

The following passage is how the scent of a baby is described by a wet nurse: "...they don't smell the same all over, although they smell good all over. Their feet for instance, they smell like a smooth, warm stone—or no, more like curds...or like butter, like fresh butter. Their bodies smell like a griddle cake that's been soaked in milk. And their heads, up on top, at the back of the head, where the hair makes a cowlick, there, ... right there is where they smell best of all. It smells like caramel, it smells so sweet..."

But the book isn't all a breath of fresh air. In these sentences from page one of the book Süskind sets the scene with a description of the stench indicative of the time period: "*The streets stank of manure, the courtyards of urine, the stairwells stank of moldering wood and rat droppings, the kitchens of spoiled cabbage and mutton fat; the unaired parlors stank of stale dust, the bedrooms of greasy sheets, damp featherbeds, and the pungently sweet aroma of chamber pots. The stench of sulfur rose from the chimneys, the stench of caustic lyes from the tanneries, and from the slaughterhouses came the stench of congealed blood. People stank of sweat and unwashed clothes; from their mouths came the stench of rotting teeth, from their bellies that of onions, and from their bodies, if they were no longer very young, came the stench of rancid cheese and sour milk and tumorous disease.*"

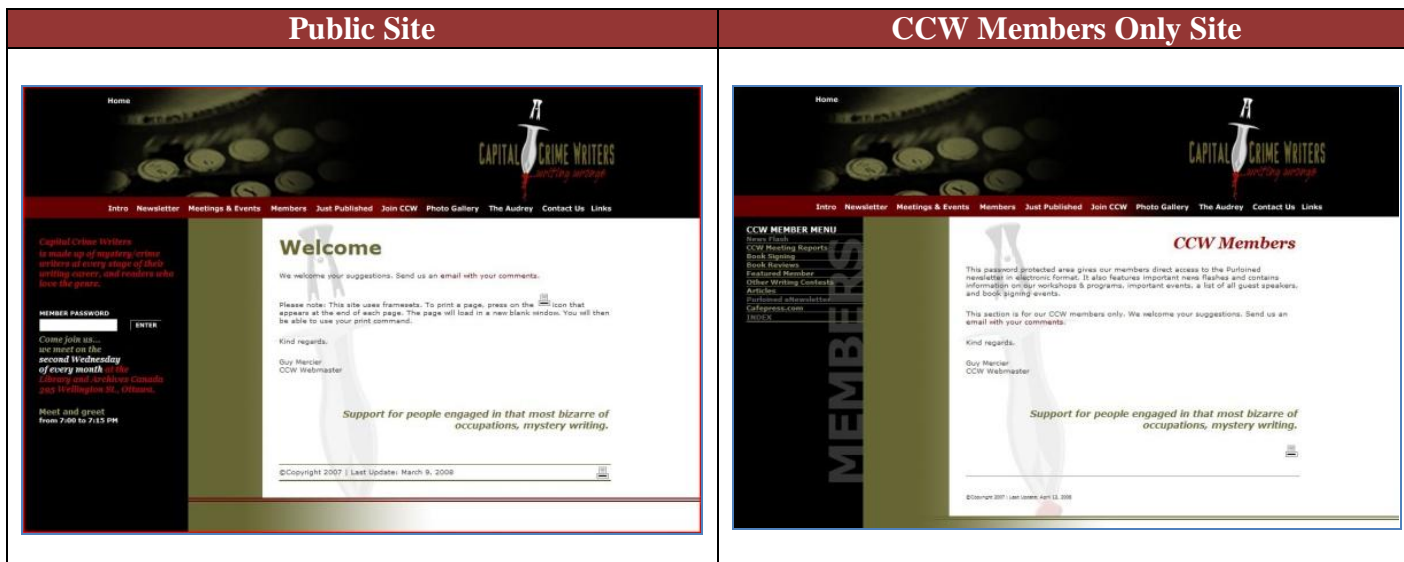
This is a dark book; there is nothing fun about the story. Although it may not be something to savour exactly, it is nonetheless a hard book to put down. You want to keep reading, in horror and fascination. In 2006 it was also made into a film of the same name -- such is the power of Süskind's lushly descriptive writing. It's the way he uses all five senses, but especially his uncanny ability to convey the sense of smell.

Our website has had a facelift!

By Guy Mercier

Members whom have visited our site lately will notice the site has been reorganized. The Capital Crime Writers (CCW) website has been redesigned to give our members access to both our public and CCW Members Only pages.

The new site is set in three frames. The first frame is the top frame which contains the links to our public pages. These links are the same for both the public and CCW members' only visitors. The second frame is the side frame which will change depending if the viewer entered their member password or pressed the enter key on our main site. The third frame is the main frame in which the page content will load into. This is the only scrollable window.



The site has been designed to fit monitors with screen settings of 800 X 600 pixels. It is best viewed with monitor screen settings of 1024 X 768 or higher.

The **Meeting and Events** link on our public page will be the only link on our site that will list upcoming meetings, workshops, or events. The information in this section is for both the public and CCW members. We have also created an index page that can be accessed in our CCW Member side frame menu. It will track the pages the visitors have seen on our site.

I've created pages for our members using information found on the web or on their personal websites. If you would like a page created for you on our site, just let me know. If you are unable to view the content in the sidebar menus, or if you have suggestions for content or recommendations for menu changes or additions, send me your feedback. I'll make the necessary adjustments.

**Your CCW Webmaster,
Guy Mercier**

April Meeting Overview: Selecting, Researching & Describing Believable Settings

By Katherine Hobbs

Bev Panasky moderated a discussion on 'setting' on April 2 at the National Archives. To begin the discussion she asked the authors in attendance, **R.J. Harlick**, **Alex Brett** and **Deborah Gyapong** for their definition of setting.



Pictured l-r: R.J. Harlick, Bev Panasky, Alex Brett and Deborah Gyapong.

R.J. Harlick: Setting is where the action takes place. It is a key part of the book, for example if it is a wilderness setting – it almost becomes a character. When I read, I want to read about setting.

Deborah Gyapong: Setting is the place where the story takes

place – like how a camera captures the background on television. Setting is something the character interacts with and creates conflict.

Alex Brett: There is the physical place that is considered the setting, but there is also a social setting. For example if the story is set in an emergency room -- that room could be anywhere. The story is tied to it and it can work together with or against the story. Then there is also the emotional setting, or the tone or sensation you have when you read the book. All are as much setting as the physical positioning of the story. Setting is not inert, it's as active in your story as your characters are – interacting to create or relieve tension.

The authors spoke about the settings they've chosen. **Robin** likes to write about West Quebec. She adores the area, which so happens to neighbour on an Algonquin Reserve – which has provided a running story through her books. **Alex** is fascinated by the culture of science and how people are shaped from that belief system. That can be moved to all kinds of physical settings. For the salmon run – there is only one in the world worth considering – and that's in BC. For astronomy the story had to be set partly in an observatory. So the setting had to agree with places that are host to observatories. (Alex chose one in Hawaii.) **Deborah** started as a journalist and lived on the Fundy Coast. She created a fictitious stomping ground based on Bear River and Digby. While there she had a glimpse of the people in real life, and developed a fascination with the mindset. There were pockets of people worse off than in 3rd world countries. So, as she says, "I do squalor really well."

In terms of advice on setting, **Alex** talked about the problems in getting bogged down in details. She advised us to just write the story – make the details up – it can be fixed later. So if you don't know what something looks like, just go ahead and write it anyway. Then when you physically see it later, you can fix it. For her book she had to write about details like how fish were anesthetized, which she'd never seen. "Don't let details hold you back," she cautions. "You can't worry about if you've been to a place and it's not the same place when it comes out of your mind onto the page. In your setting, allow yourself to write about it at an emotional level."

In terms of social setting, **Deborah** talked about her familiarity with newsrooms. So although she knows what they look like, she takes liberties with it. For example in her book she has a satellite truck dispatched from a news station to cover an event. In real life this would never happen unless the Pope was visiting. It is just too expensive. But if you are too true to setting, she advises it could potentially bore people. **Robin** laughed about a complaint she received because she had a character with a chain saw in an apartment. "There is no way," a fan wrote in, "that anyone would keep a chainsaw in an apartment." Robin laughs, but she maintains, "If you want to know which way the street runs, read non-fiction." Sometimes you have to get in the way of truth.

All the authors take research trips to become familiar with their potential settings. **Deborah** visited a ghost town in Algonquin Park. She was then able to smell the rain, and hear the sounds. "It's fun and a tax write-off." **Robin** took a trip to the Arctic. All admitted to taking photos and for the most part refer to them, with the exception of **Alex**. She takes the photos, but doesn't look at them again. She remembers the emotion -- unless it is something really specific she needs to describe.

According to **Alex**, setting is not static, not inert – it is always interacting with all your characters and your character with it. It is a dynamic thing that should be working in some tension with the character; i.e. the setting affects the character and the character affects the setting.

Bev Panasky asked if the writers plan specific descriptions that catapult readers into the setting. She quoted a passage Melanie Fogel read in April, "a worn leather chair with a swayed bum imprint." Bev wondered if there were rules for finding that *thing* that will grab the reader.

DG: It takes a lot of work and deep digging into yourself. You can write it quickly, full of clichés, or with a static setting; it's the refining process that's important and finding those specific things later.

AB: You know when you read it when someone else does it. Like Margaret Atwood. A single sentence can capture a world. She is a poet, so when she does it, it's jaw dropping. For me, it happens in the editing. In the first draft I spew forth everything, I'm there, within that story, hearing the squeaking, and smelling it. What gets it down to the perfect line is hours of writing. Because I know when it's not there!

RJH: It's with the revisions. I want to get the story down because I don't know what it's about, so I just get it written down. It is hard to do.

DG: Just get the story down, and rough in the details. Find out about calibers of guns later. Don't necessarily think about metaphors when writing, but they are there. Here's my draft, there is gold here, but it needs to be refined.



Bev asked about the five senses, and if there is a sense they don't use in as much in their writing. Comments were made that describing smell is difficult -- and feel. The texture of things and tasting things is harder to describe, while hearing and seeing readily come. You do have to consciously think about it. And finally they were asked if they'd ever changed a setting. **Alex** advised that when you are thinking about writing a novel – think before you do it. You are stuck with it for a long time. Can the setting sustain the action you want? **Deborah** discussed the issues of Canadian settings versus US settings. She felt Nova Scotia was crucial to her story. She used a fictitious county, but it is Nova Scotia. **Robin** stays true to her love for Canada. "I like my country and I want to write about it. So I won't get into Barnes & Noble!"