



PUGET SOUND SISTERS IN CRIME NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 21 MEETING: This month we are piggy-backing on an author reading/signing at Third Place Books, where Robert Crais will be promoting his newest book, *The Forgotten Man*. His website states that "Robert Crais is the author of the best-selling Elvis Cole novels: A native of Louisiana, he grew up in a blue collar family of oil refinery workers and police officers, and was trained as a mechanical engineer before pursuing his dream of becoming a writer. After years of amateur film-making and writing short fiction, he journeyed to Hollywood in 1976, where he quickly found work writing scripts for such major network television series as "Hill Street Blues," "Cagney & Lacey," "Quincy," "Miami Vice," and "L.A. Law," as well as scripting numerous series pilots and movies-of-the-week for all four major networks."

Robert Crais' 2001 novel, *Hostage*, is in a new paperback edition with a cover featuring Bruce Willis, who is starring in the movie. Other novels by Crais are: *The Last Detective*, *Demolition Angel*, *L.A. Requiem*, *Indigo Slam*, *Voodoo River*, *Free Fall*, *Lullaby Town*, *Stalking the Angel*, and *The Monkey's Raincoat*. For more information and reviews of his books, check out <www.robertcrais.com>

JANUARY DOUBLE FEATURE: We were treated to a delightful visit from Patricia Smiley and our own Jane Isenberg, each talking

about her new book. Jane went first, with *Hot on the Trail*, her seventh in the Bel Barrett series. She said she was inspired by Larry [Karp] to share how she got her ideas; all her books are influenced by her experience of "hundreds of years" teaching at a community college.

Community College faculties don't deal with typically aged students; classes there are filled with people of all ages. So Jane didn't have far to look for character inspiration for her books; Bel herself was born after Jane had her first hot flash.

Hoboken, New Jersey—the location of her novels—had "negative cache" long before Jane moved there; however, gentrification took place soon after her arrival. Ten thousand extra people moved in, whom Jane characterized as "yuppies living in newly built condos."

Jane uses some sort of middle-age problem or trial in each of her books, and Bel, an "online support group groupie," researches the each one avidly. With *Hot on the Trail*, though, Jane was stymied about just what problem to choose. She focused on bladder management after receiving

what she calls "a message from God" right after moving to Washington, when a headline in the *Seattle Times* caught her eye: "Stress Urinary Incontinence."

The eighth Bel Barrett mystery has been turned in. In it, Jane makes her debut as a rap artist; a circumstance which, Jane says, "is long overdue."

Patty Smiley shared why she wrote her novel, the first in what promises to be an entertaining

ATTENCIÓN!

AVISO!

ACHTUNG!

***NOTICE* LOOK
HERE!**

**February 21
Meeting
THIRD PLACE
BOOKS**

**5:30 PM on
For dinner
Speaker:
Robert Crais**

FEBRUARY 2005

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and informative series: She wanted to be a famous actress. To that end she studied drama in college; toward the end of her junior year, though, she changed her major to Sociology. She worked in juvenile detention, but kept acting on the side. Throwing caution to the winds, she went off to Los Angeles to pursue her dream. Of course, she ran out of money before the dream was realized, and had to get a job. She went back to school for an MBA, figuring that would feed the exchequer more handsomely, and in her particular program had to do a lot of writing. She found she loved writing, and number one on her strategic plan for a career was to write a successful mystery novel.

Patty alternated writing and working, and finally decided to finish her book. She applied to a prestigious school, but was rejected; however, the rejection was accompanied by a note from the author of *Schindler's List*, who recommended she join Elizabeth George's writing group. She managed to get into the group, and at last finished her novel, *False Profits*. The writing group experience was most beneficial to her, Patty said, and she is very grateful to its members.

Patty's web site is: <www.PatriciaSmiley.com>

BOUCHERCON 2004:

"**Murder Among the Maples**" took place in Toronto between Oct. 7-10. The venue, the Metro Toronto Convention Centre, was excellent, spacious and bright, and the weather cooperated beautifully.

On my flight in Wednesday evening, I met Michael Collins, an Irish expat, living in Bellingham. One of Michael's earlier books, *The Keepers of Truth*, had been shortlisted for the prestigious British Booker Prize; now, he is writing mysteries, and his "20 on the 20" presentation, "A So-called Literary Novelist in Search of a Genre" gave me a lot to think about. I picked up a copy of *The Keepers*, and really do intend to read it.

But not to get ahead of myself. My panel, "Hidden Treasures: Antique and Archeological Mysteries," was nicely scheduled early-on, at 3pm Thursday. Our moderator was Dana Cameron, and the panel included Lyn Hamilton, Elaine Flinn, and Sarah Stewart Taylor. I'm glad to report no blood was shed, and by 4 o'clock we were all free to enjoy the rest of the meeting...well, almost. I'd have liked to have gone to the 4 o'clock panel, "Can Crime Novels Be Great Novels?," but authors went to the Signing Room directly after their own panels, and first things come first.

Thursday evening was the Opening Bash and Auction, a pleasant time to meet some new people

and scarf some free food. I'd never met Adam Woog, the Mysteries Reviewer on the Seattle Times, but he noticed my name tag and introduced himself, and we had a good talk. I'll admit to giving in to a bit of jet lag and ducking out of the auction early, though.

Highlights Friday were an interview of Peter Robinson by Ian Rankin, followed by a panel, "Place as Character." Panelists were Dennis Lehane, Michael Connelly, Gregg Hurwitz, and Kirk Russell; moderator was Cathy Dunphy. After that, I couldn't wait to tear into Lehane's *Shutter Island*, so I went to the Dealers' Room, talked to some of my friends behind counters, and bought a copy of the book. I was not disappointed.

Then, I went to hear psychologist Joel Ross talk about "Evil Incarnate: Coming Face to Face With Your Worst Nightmares." (As if once were not enough). Ross discussed the characteristics of serial killers, sociopaths, and women who kill. I sat and scribbled notes—there was some really useful stuff there for my current writing project.


That evening, featured an MWA Cocktail Reception, and receptions to Meet the Canucks and Meet the Brits. A good opportunity to shmooze with charming and interesting people with funny accents.

Saturday featured panels on "Points of View," "The Effects of Violence," and "Fact/Fiction Interfaces." Then, an informal reception for Poisoned Pen authors, pizza and beer at a pub across the street. It was fun meeting some of my PPP colleagues. Finally, the Anthony Awards Banquet, with possibly the best food I've ever had at one of those affairs. That weekend was the Canadian Thanksgiving weekend, so we had, what else, tokey, stuffing and all the fixings.

And Sunday morning, I gave my "20 on the 20" talk, reading my "Little Scene That Isn't There" from *First, Do No Harm*. Thanks to the Seattle Sisters in Crime for giving me the chance to review it the week before, so I could go up to the podium smiling and confident. Directly after that, I headed out for the airport to fly to Chicago and meet my wife, for a 2400 mile, 8-day promotional tour of the midwest.

Sorry I can't remember more of the convention, but I'm glad I could dredge up this much.

—Larry Karp

 MEMBER BOOKS IN PRINT: No one sent a list this month. [HINT, HINT—Ed.]

On the Road with the Women in Blue

by Pat Lunneborg

Our travels over this past Christmas found us in London where the January 4, 2005, Evening Standard introduced me to Metropolitan detective-sergeant Paula Craig. The article by Emine Saner described how in 2001 a car had ploughed into Paula's bike, leaving her paralysed from the waist down. She was a runner at the peak of fitness and had been looking forward to a triathlon the following week.

Right after the accident she was most worried that she would no longer be a police officer and no longer able to do sports. But Sir John Stevens, Metropolitan Police Commissioner, visited her in the hospital and told her she still had a job. That job is a bit different because she can no longer visit crime scenes or get statements from people out in the field. She now sits in an intelligence unit office where she works on murder cases. She is among familiar colleagues who treat her no differently than before the accident.

During one of Paula's first meetings with physiotherapists she was asked if she had any goals. She said, yes, that she wanted to do the London Marathon. The therapists had meant something like putting her own socks on. Eleven months after the accident she was back at work and after only five months of training she had seven marathons behind her and had beat her previous time as an able-bodied runner by 10 minutes.

Now at the age of 41, she has been with the Met 19 years and has passed the exams to become an inspector. She is one of Britain's most promising wheelchair athletes. In recognition of her achievements and services to the police, she was made an

MBE (Member of the British Empire) in this New Year's Honors List.

Last year she concentrated mainly on her job but managed to do the London Marathon, as well as a 10-mile swim in aid of Aspire, a charity for people with spinal injuries, and a London-to-Cambridge hand-cycle ride. She is now training for the Commonwealth Paralympic Games. She lives on her own in a bungalow, has a boyfriend who loves her "for who I am," and, like so many other female officers, never planned to have children.

She said that while she'd never say she was glad she had the accident, it has given her opportunities that she never would have had. Three years ago if she'd been asked if she were going to train for the Olympics, she'd have called the idea ridiculous.

Asked if people treated her differently now, she said strangers would strike up a conversation because they felt that couldn't ignore her. She was getting into her car recently, and a man came over, grabbed her, and lifted her in, to which she was on the verge of saying, "What the hell do you think you're doing?" Instead, because he obviously thought it was a nice thing to do, she curbed her annoyance.

The reporter described her as an attractive, athletic blonde who radiated confidence and good humor and I'd have to say that the photo accompanying the article bears that out.

<lunneborg@comcast.net>

UPCOMING PROGRAMS, 2005:

FEBRUARY 21: Robert Crais for his new book, *The Forgotten Man* at 7 pm. Dinner beforehand, as usual.

MARCH 21: Elizabeth George, *With None as Witness*, 7 pm; dinner beforehand as usual.

APRIL 18: Open

MAY 16: Open

JUNE 20: Open

JULY: Peek-Neek social event, date to be decided

AUGUST: No meeting

SEPTEMBER 19: Open; Possible meeting Sept. 7

OCTOBER 17: World-Famous Flash Story Night

NOVEMBER 21: Open

CONFERENCES:

Whidbey Island Writers Conference, March 3-5, Langley, Washington

The mystery presenters at this year's multi-genre conference include **Carole Nelson Douglas**, **Patricia Rushford**, **Steve Berry** (The Amber Room), **Steve**

(Continued from page 3)

Martini, Robert Ferrigno, Michael Gruber (*Valley of the Bones*—he's also contributed to mysteries written by cousin, Robert Tanenbaum), and **Sheriff Mike Hawley**. Presenters from other genres include **Jane Yolen** (SciFi, Fantasy) and **Richard Lederer** (Humor). For more information, take the Writers Conference link at <www.writeonwhidbey.org>.

Pacific Northwest Writers' Conference: The call for entries for the literary contest is out. There are ten categories, and more than \$10,000 in cash awards. For more information, see the website <www.pnwa.org> or call 425-673-2665. Submissions must be postmarked by February 22, 2005.

Mayhem in the Midlands, May 26-29 at the Sheraton Hotel in downtown Omaha. **Peter Robinson** will be Guest of Honor and **Donna Andrews** is Toastmaster.

The fun begins with an opening reception on Thursday night. Panels go on all day Friday and Saturday and the conference ends with a brunch on Sunday morning.

The registration fee is now \$80 with extra fees for a Friday night buffet, a Saturday mystery dinner and the Sunday brunch.

For a registration form, go to <www.omaha.lib.ne.us/mayhem>

Please Note: **AUTHORS MUST REGISTER BY MARCH 15TH IF THEY WISH TO HAVE PANEL ASSIGNMENTS.**

Space is limited so procrastinate no longer. Evelyn Whitehill, Program Chair

No Crime Unpublished Conference. This year it will be held on June 11th at the Women's Assistance League in Hollywood.


The theme of the conference is **WRITING AND SELLING KILLER MYSTERIES**, and the keynote speaker is Lee Child, best-selling author of the Jack Reacher series.

Early bird registration prices are in effect until March 31, 2005:

\$99.00 for SinC/LA members; \$125 for non-SinC/LA members.

For more information, please see our website <www.sistersincrimela.com>.

Sue Ann Jaffarian, President, SinC/LA

 **INTERNET:** Our website is <www2.whidbey.net/sinc>; our websister is Linda Jedlicka. The URL for the internet chapter of SinC is: <<http://www.sinc-ic.org>>

Puget Sound Sisters in Crime usually meets at 7:00 PM on the Third Monday of the month, January through November, except August. In July, there is a picnic, at a date determined by the membership; in December, there is an alternate meeting date chosen by the membership. We normally meet at Third Place Books at the Lake Forest Park Towne Centre.
February 21, 2005 Meeting at Third Place Books, Lake Forest Park Towne Centre,, 5:30 pm for dinner.
Co-Presidents are: **Judy Morrison**, 3823 Hoyt Ave #3, Everett, WA 98201; Phone 425-252-8028; email: <judyjmor@aol.com> and **Carol Thiel**, 13434 NE 119th Way, Redmond, WA 98052; Phone 425-822-4817; e-mail: ctthiel@gte.net
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WEB SITE: <<http://www2.whidbey.net/sinc>> Linda Jedlicka, WebSister.
There is a requirement to belong to National if you want to belong to Puget Sound SinC. To mail your NATIONAL dues of \$40.00 for 2005, send them to Beth Wasson, Exec. Secretary SinC, PO Box 442124, Lawrence, KS 66044.
Local annual dues from Jan. 1 through Dec. 31 are \$20.00. From July 1-December 31, \$10.00. Send a check made out to Nan Robkin to the address above or to 120-128th Ave NE, Bellevue WA 98005-3221.
Please DO NOT make the check out to Sisters in Crime, please, please, please, and don't include your national dues.

 **FROM LARRY KARP:**

It's been a long haul - more than three years - from the bankruptcy of my previous publisher, Write Way, to the appearance of *First, Do No Harm*, via Poisoned Pen Press. Novelists usually don't feel so good when they're out of print; it's kind of like being dead. So, thanks to all my Sisters in Crime - your enthusiasm and encouragement during my stretch in literary limbo kept my optimism pumped, helped keep me believing that I really would publish again, and publish well. I want you to know how much I appreciate your support.

Cheers, Larry Karp