

MURDER AND MORE



SPEAKING OF MYSTERIES...

A Letter from the President.

Hi, Sisters –

Yesterday we heard the sad news that our dear friend and fervent supporter Lesa Holstine's beloved husband, Jim, has passed away. Desert Sleuths Chapter will be sending condolences on behalf of the group, if any of you would like to do so individually go to her blog at:

www.lesasbookcritiques.blogspot.com

Is it just me or is February a very short month? I know many of us are hard at work on our vacation-themed stories. That anthology submission deadline will pop up before we know it, so get your stories in today! You may well pick up some true-life inspiration or plot twists from our highly-



anticipated speaker, Tracie Fife. Last month's meeting was positively energetic & we expect to see even more new faces tomorrow.

Speaking of mysteries are you bored with the standard ways to kill your victim? Check out *Clever Clues* on Page 3 for some bizarre tips!

Keep writing,
- Roni

ABOUT US

The Desert Sleuths Chapter of Sisters in Crime meets on the 3rd Wednesday of each month at Café Carumba in Scottsdale. Authors please feel free to bring your books to sell at meetings!

6:00-6:30 Dinner & Networking

6:30-7:00 Business Meeting

7:00-8:00 Speaker or Program

2010 Chapter Officers

President: Roni Olson

Vice President: Susan Budavari

Secretary: Diana Manley

Treasurer: Jean Steffens

2010 Committee Heads

Programs: Judy Starbuck

Membership: Chantelle Osman

Publicity: Kate Herbert

Websister: Susan Budavari

Newsletter: Chantelle Osman & Roni Olson

Write Now: Merle McCann & Chantelle Osman

LOCAL CHAPTER AND NATIONAL DUES

Yearly chapter dues are \$20.

Make checks payable to:

Desert Sleuths SinC

Mail to: Desert Sleuths

11259 E. Via Linda #100

PMB 163

Scottsdale, AZ 85259

jeansteffens@cox.net



National dues are \$40.

Checks should be made out and sent to:

SinC Membership

PO Box 442124

Lawrence, KS 66044

www.sistersincrime.org

CAUGHT IN THE ACT - LOCAL & INDUSTRY NEWS

Kris Neri Nominated for *Lefty* Award at Left Coast Crime Conference

Kris Neri is a finalist for the *Lefty*, an award for humorous mystery given at the Left Coast Crime Convention. She is nominated for her book *High Crimes on the Magical Plane*.

Trade Paperbacks Thrive in Hard Times

Per USA Today a growing number of authors' first books are being published in trade paperback rather than hardcover. The cheaper format is a smarter business model in these economic times according to book sellers/publishers.

Poisoned Pen Conference

To be held June 24-26, there is no conference fee. Thursday and Friday events are held at The Poisoned Pen, Saturday at the Biltmore Resort (special 3 night conference rate) with a party in the grand ballroom. For more information:
www.poisonedpen.com

Remembering Laura Hruska

The co-founder and editor-in-chief of Soho Press and Soho Crime passed away at the age of 74. Her daughter Bronwen Hruska

will follow her as publisher of Soho Press.

Join the Guppies!

The Guppies are a special interest group of Sisters in Crime, comprised of writers dedicated to improving their craft and helping each other on the road to publication. Members range from



beginners to writers with several publishing credits. They share information about writing and publishing in a newsletter, on-line, and through critique groups. Contact: GuppyPrez@sinc-guppies.org

Sisters Launch Blog

Diana Manley, Roni Olson and Chantelle Osman announce the launch of their website and blog www.SirensOfSuspense.com, where they share the trials and tribulations of the writer's life, the creative life, and, well... life.

Amazon Launches Royalty Plan for E-Books

Amazon, in an effort to lure established writers to its self-publishing ventures, launched an aggressive strategy to pay self-published authors an estimated 70% royalty on sales of all e-books priced between \$2.99 and \$9.99.

Turning Classics into Comics

Per Publishers Weekly: graphic novel adaptations of classic and contemporary works have surged in recent years as publishers explore ways to create book-length comics that can be used as art and to encourage literacy.

Booklocker and Amazon Settle

Booklocker and Amazon have reached a settlement agreement in the antitrust class action lawsuit Booklocker filed against the e-tailer in 2008.

Apple iPad Destroys Amazon's Kindle Advantage

Simply by allowing a \$14.99 price on the iPad, Steve Jobs destroyed Amazon's \$9.99 price advantage. It may look like Amazon is still ahead but they in fact will lose \$4 on each Kindle bestseller (and more when 70% deal is in place), which leads publishers to flock to iPad.


SAVE THE DATE!

WriteNow! 2010, the Desert Sleuths' annual conference, will take place on August 14, 2010 at the Stonecreek Golf Course. Details to come!



NEFARIOUS NOTES

The Sisters heard from Rhys Bowen, author of the *Molly Murphy* and *Her Royal Spyness* mysteries at our January meeting.



She discussed her own writing techniques as well as her experiences with publishers, and how she markets her work. As publishers today give little or no marketing help, she suggested that authors should market their first book themselves rather than hiring a publicist by visiting bookstores, and going on www.DorothyL.com.

Learn more about Rhys at www.rhysbowen.com

LARCENOUS LINKS

Interested in the iPad?

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/IPad>

The Worst Mistakes Authors Make in Self-Promotion:

<http://1stturningpoint.com/?p=3085>

Trends and Triumphs in 2009:

http://www.usatoday.com/life/books/news/2010-01-13-best-selling-books-trends_N.htm

Ghost Themed Short Story Contest.

<http://www.clarklibraryfriends.com/>

Blog Connecting Mystery Writers with Law Enforcement:

<http://bookembookem.blogspot.com/>

The Writer's Forensic Blog:

<http://writersforensicsblog.wordpress.com/>

CLEVER CLUES

Does a gunshot or knife wound strike you as boring? Strangulation a snooze? Arsenic in the tea seem old hat? Check out these bizarre ways to die that will leaving your readers thinking it's too strange to be believable; but the truth is always stranger than fiction.

Death by Storm Drain. - In 2008 a man died trying to retrieve his stolen wallet from a drain, he became wedged in headfirst several feet below the street.

Death by Deodorant - In 1998 an English boy had a heart attack after being exposed to too many deodorant fumes. Apparently 130+ people have died this way since 1971.

Death by Beard - An Austrian man in the mid 1500s tripped over his 4.5 foot long beard whilst trying to escape a fire, leading to his untimely death



Death by Hungry Sheep - Although generally docile, when hungry they are quite dangerous. A woman was killed by a charging herd while driving hay out to her sheep on an ATV. They knocked her over a cliff.

Death by Bra - Two women walking through Hyde Park sought shelter from a storm under a tree. Unfortunately, the underwires in their bras acted as conductors and they were struck by lightning.

Death by Video Game - A man in South Korea died from severe

exhaustion after playing a video game for 50 hours straight with only short breaks to nap and use the restroom.

Death by Molasses - 21 people were killed in 1919 when 2.5 million gallons of molasses exploded in Boston, causing a wall of molasses 25 feet high to flow into a neighborhood at 35 miles per hour, drowning many.

Death by Junk - Two Harlem men, after collecting various items over the years, accumulated an estimated 180 tons of 'junk', from which they would create booby traps to prevent intruders. This became one man's undoing as he tripped one and became buried under an avalanche of junk.

Remember, these tips are for fictional use only! With thanks to Charles W. Bryant and <http://health.howstuffworks.com/10-ways-to-die10.htm>

EGREGIOUS EXCERPT - "JAMES PATTERSON, INC." BY JONATHAN MAHLER

Like most authors, James Patterson started out with one book, released in 1976, that he struggled to get published. It sold about 10,000 copies, a modest, if respectable, showing for a first novel. Last year, an estimated 14 million copies of his books in 38 different languages found their way onto beach blankets, airplanes and nightstands around the world. Patterson may lack the name recognition of a [Stephen King](#), a [John Grisham](#) or a [Dan Brown](#), but he outsells them all. Really, it's not even close.

(According to Nielsen BookScan, Grisham's, King's and Brown's combined U.S. sales in recent years still don't match Patterson's.) This is partly because Patterson is so prolific: with the help of his stable of co-authors, he published nine original hardcover books in 2009 and will publish at least nine more in 2010.

There are many different ways to catalog Patterson's staggering success. Here are just a few: Since 2006, one out of every 17 novels bought in the United States was written by James Patterson. He is listed in the latest edition of "Guinness World Records," published last fall, as the author with the most New York Times best sellers, 45, but that number is already out of date: he now has 51 — 35 of which went to No. 1.

Patterson and his publisher, Little, Brown & Co., a division of the Hachette Book Group, have an unconventional relationship. In addition to his two editors, Patterson has three full-time



Hachette employees (plus assistants) devoted exclusively to him: a so-called brand manager who shepherds Patterson's adult books through the production process, a marketing director for his young-adult titles and a sales manager for all his books. Despite this support staff and his prodigious output, Patterson is intimately involved in the publication of his books. A former ad executive — Patterson ran J. Walter Thompson's North American branch before becoming a full-time writer in 1996 — he handles all of his own advertising and closely monitors just about every other step of the publication process, from the design of his jackets to the timing of his books' release to their placement in stores. "Jim is at the very least co-publisher of his own books," Michael Pietsch, Patterson's editor and the publisher of Little, Brown, told me... When Patterson published his breakout book, "Along Came a Spider," in 1993, Little, Brown was

still a largely literary house, whose more commercial authors included the historian [William Manchester](#), biographer of [Winston Churchill](#). Patterson's success in the subsequent years encouraged Little, Brown to fully embrace mass-market fiction. But more than that, Patterson almost single-handedly created a template for the modern blockbuster author.

There were, of course, blockbuster authors before Patterson, among them [Mario Puzo](#), James Michener and Danielle Steel. But never had authors been marketed essentially as consumer goods, paving the way for a small group of writers, from Charlaine Harris to Malcolm Gladwell, to dominate best-seller lists — often with several titles at a time — in the same way that brands like Skippy and Grey Poupon dominate supermarket shelves. "Until the last 15 years or so, the thought that you could mass-merchandise authors had always been resisted," says Larry Kirshbaum, former C.E.O. of the Time Warner Book Group, which owned Little, Brown until 2006. "Jim was at the forefront of changing that."

Read the article in full at: <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/01/24/magazine/24patterson-t.html?pagewanted=2&sq=publishing&st=Search&scp=1>

SUBMIT YOUR SHORT STORY NOW FOR HOW NOT TO SURVIVE A VACATION!

Due to the overwhelming success of our first anthology *How NOT to Survive the Holidays* (we are in our third printing, order yours at www.desertsleuths.com), we are pleased to announce that we're doing it again!

We are now accepting submissions for *How Not to Survive a Vacation*. We're looking for previously unpublished mystery/crime fiction of 5,000 words or less with a vacation theme. Deadline is Midnight on April 1, 2010, so get writing!

Submission Guidelines:

Who Can Submit: Must be a member (dues are current) of Desert Sleuths chapter of Sisters in Crime as well as a member of [National Sisters in Crime](#).

Format: Submissions must be double-spaced, 12 point, Times New Roman font.

How to Submit: Submissions must be sent as a MS Word document e-mail attachment to jeansteffens@cox.net. In the body of the e-mail, please include your name, address, e-mail address and phone number. This is a blind submission process, therefore DO NOT include any personal information (name, etc.) in the story document itself.

Multiple Submissions: Members may submit up to 3 stories, though only one can be chosen for inclusion.

Authors Will Receive: Authors of stories chosen for publication in the anthology will receive their choice of \$10 or one copy of the anthology.

Publication: *How Not to Survive a Vacation* will be launched at WriteNow! on August 14th.

See full guidelines at: www.desertsleuths.com

DESERT SLEUTHS MYSTERY REFERENCE LENDING PROGRAM

At every monthly meeting the Desert Sleuths will now loan to members. Titles include *Wicked Plants: The weed that killed Lincoln's mother & other botanical atrocities* by Amy Stewart, and *Talking About Detective Fiction* by P.D. James. Members wishing to borrow the books will fill out a lending log, and books must be returned by the following months' meeting. Donations to our reference library are needed and welcome!



PERFECT YOUR CRAFT! SUPPORT OUR SISTERS!

Join the SOS critique group! Meeting the 2nd THURSDAY of every month at 6:30PM at Borders (across from Paradise Valley Mall) 4555 E. Cactus Road

Contact Susan Budavari at susanbudavari@aol.com for details

NOTE: SOS has moved from Wednesday to THURSDAY

CALENDAR

February 14- March 13, 2010

New courses at Bootcamp for Novelists including "Endings" with Connie Flynn. For info: <http://bootcampfornovelists.com>

February 17, 2010 6:00PM

Monthly Meeting featuring Tracie Fife of the Scottsdale Police Department.

February 26, 2010

Annette Mahon is signing her new book. Bits & Pieces @ The Poisoned Pen.

March 17, 2010 6:00PM

Monthly Meeting featuring Jenn McKinlay aka Lucy Lawrence author of to mystery series.

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