

# THE STILETTA NEWSLETTER

Sisters in Crime † Northern California Chapter

VOLUME 17, ISSUE 3

AUGUST 2016

## Dear Sisters and Mistery,

I hope you all have a chance for a little vacation time this summer. It's hard to believe that the year is now officially half over. We've had some great events arranged by Elin Barnes, plus the June showcase arranged by veep Diana Chambers. Everybody take a deep breath, because the rest of the year is going to be crazy busy. First we have an August meeting with what I'm sure will be a fascinating talk called Furrensics: Animal CSI, with Beth Dictum, former director of the forensic unit of the UC Davis Veterinary Genetics Laboratory. For information, see the website: <http://www.sincnorcal.org/wp/>

In September our event coordinator, Elin Barnes, has some hands-on gun experience planned (no, there is no coup in the mix). And on October 8, Norcal SinC will be holding a fantastic workshop. You will be receiving information soon.

I just got back from Thrillerfest in New York. Several sisters and mistery attended and we had great fun as well as learning a lot. In conjunction with the conference, I attended an all-day FBI workshop. We heard about some real live counterparts of *The Americans* TV show, got a sobering look at cyber-crime, and found out about the everyday workings of the FBI. But the highlight of the event was a special agent—a black lab trained to sniff out hidden electronic gear. Her handler is dedicated to her care and training 24/7 for her entire life. It was inspiring.

Sisters in Crime is celebrating its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year, and your Executive Committee is busy figuring out the best way to celebrate. Stay tuned!

*Continued*



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## President's Message, continued

Meanwhile, happy writing, and once again thanks to our terrific newsletter editor, Margie Bunting, and the entire Executive Committee that works hard to make the organization strong and vital. If you haven't had a chance to attend any meetings, I urge you to do so. We'd love to get to know you.

Along that line, if you have special needs to be able to enjoy a meeting, such as hearing or sight issues, please let me know and I will look into getting help. Sisters in Crime is making a special effort to include potential members who are unable to fully participate because of needs that aren't currently being addressed at meetings. And if you know of someone in that situation who might join if assistance were available, I would appreciate hearing from you,

Sincerely,  
Terry Shames

## It's All about YOU!

Make the most of your membership. Your Executive Committee members are working hard to present the most interesting, educational, useful and entertaining programs to our members. We invite your participation regarding ideas for speakers, events, and potential meeting locations, as well as articles for **The Stiletta**, our quarterly newsletter.

Please contact **Elin Barnes**, Event Coordinator ([belinbs@gmail.com](mailto:belinbs@gmail.com)), with meeting and venue suggestions and **Margie Bunting**, Newsletter Editor ([mbunting@sbcglobal.net](mailto:mbunting@sbcglobal.net)), with newsletter article suggestions and submissions

### SinC Norcal Executive Committee

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Member-at-Large: Jenny Carless [jenny@jennycarless.com](mailto:jenny@jennycarless.com)

## Mark Your Calendar: Upcoming SinC Norcal Events

**Saturday, August 6, 12:00-2:00 p.m.**

### ***Furrensics: Animal CSI***

**Venue:** Contact Elin Barnes. [belinbs@gmail.com](mailto:belinbs@gmail.com)

Every dog has its day . . . in court. Join animal forensics specialist Beth Wictum as she introduces us to the fascinating world of animal DNA and how it's used to solve criminal cases. She'll tell us about the kinds of cases she saw in the UC Davis Veterinary Genetics Lab and share some possibilities for DNA-based plot twists.

**Beth Wictum** recently retired as director of the UC Davis Veterinary Genetics Lab, which she established in 2000. She began her career in animal profiling after obtaining her B.S. in zoology and served as a member of the American Academy of Forensics Sciences, the CA Association of Crime Lab Directors, and the International Society of Animal Genetics Forensic Standing Committee.

**Saturday, September 3, 12:00-2:00 p.m.**

### ***The Writer's Guide to Firearms***

**Milpitas Shooting Range, 122 Minnis Circle, Milpitas**

Whether you're shooting a gun or writing about one, it's important to be accurate. Instructor Joe Torre will give us the lowdown so that you can write about firearms with greater credibility – even if you've never laid hands on one before. Learn the differences between rifles, pistols and shotguns, the pluses and minuses of each, and what kind of guns your characters would most likely use.

**Joe Torre** first learned how to shoot as a young artillery officer in the US Marines. He is proficient in rifle, pistol and shotgun and holds five instructor certifications from the NRA and concealed carry permits in Arizona, Nevada and Utah. His advanced training is ongoing from shooting schools such as FrontSight, GunSite and the Direct Action Group.

**Saturday, October 8, 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.**

### ***Workshop: Process. Publish. Promote***

**San Francisco TBA**

Tips and techniques for character, plot, pacing, understanding your contract, finding and selling to your audience. Speakers include Deborah Crombie (keynote), Kelli Stanley (leader, hands-on workshop), Cindy Sample (marketing), Helen Sedwick (attorney on contracts). Lunch by Panera. Book signings and more. \$65 for SinC and MWA members / \$75 for non-members / \$85 for conference + 1-year membership (new members only). Registration opens August 15 on the SinC Norcal website.

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**Check our website for more info regarding venues and directions: <http://www.sincnorcal.org>.**

# In Case You Missed It . . .

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If you weren't able to join us at our May and June events (we took a vacation in July), here's what you missed.



**May Meeting:** Literary agent and freelance developmental editor Liz Kracht made a fascinating, comprehensive, and well-received presentation outlining her advice for authors on a wealth of topics, including structure, titles, word count, writing quality, voice, plot, themes, characters, dialogue, and pacing.

**June Meeting:** Norcal Sisters and Misters with new releases read intriguing excerpts from their books and gave away copies to lucky ticket-holders.



Sharon  
St. George



Emily  
Brightwell



J.J. & Bette  
Lamb



Marla  
Cooper



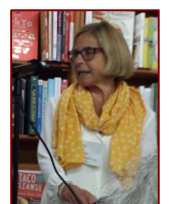
Priscilla  
Royal



Rita  
Lakin



Susan  
Shea



MC Diana  
Chambers

**2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Bay Area Book Festival (June 4-5):** SinC Norcal, in collaboration with SinC Capitol Crimes (Sacramento), participated in the Bay Area Book Festival in Berkeley with our very own booth on Writers Row. Rotating pairs of authors interacted with booth visitors to sell their books and generate interest in Sisters in Crime. Cara Black, Lisa Brackmann, and Terry Shames participated in a mystery-themed panel as well.



Margie Bunting, Terry  
Shames, Marla Cooper



Rita Lakin, Heather  
Haven



Cindy Sample, Marla Cooper,  
Heather Haven

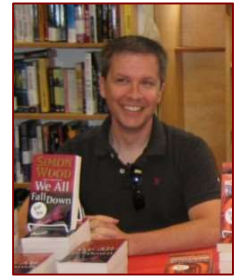


Lisa Brackmann,  
Cara Black

**We hope you can join us at our upcoming meetings!**

# Shelf Life: The Element of Luck

By Simon Wood



In March, J K Rowling posted a couple of rejection letters from publishers in the UK who passed on the books she's writing under her Robert Galbraith pen name. She released the rejection letters to encourage writers not to give up on their dream...and hopefully not to depress the publishers who passed her over. 😊

The reason I bring up J K Rowling isn't to do with the rejection letter but with the element of luck that's involved in creative pursuits. Luck gives you a break and if you've got a story, it'll connect. To not acknowledge it is folly. I'm not sure why JKR chose to write under a pen name, but it does show success doesn't come without an element of luck. To have a book series like Harry Potter become a global phenomenon took a great deal of luck. Who knows, if those books were published six months earlier or later, it could have been a different story. It's stunning how timing can change outcomes. The reason I mention the Galbraith books is despite a major publisher behind them, they didn't sell well until it was leaked that Robert Galbraith was in fact J K Rowling. Stephen King did a similar thing with his Richard Bachman identity. In that case he did want to see if he could be just as successful as Bachman as he was as King. The answer was that yes, he could be successful but not in the same realm.

The point I'm making here is don't turn your nose up at good fortune. It can only lead to disappointment. Once you're successful, capitalize on it, don't shun it. Look, I get it, once you become successful, there's a little voice that nags at you. *They only like you because you're famous. They only publish you because you're bankable.* So you start to doubt yourself. It's the problem of success. IMHO, I think it's a mistake to attempt to capture lightning in a jar twice because it's never going to happen. Both Stephen King and J K Rowling are great writers who deserve their due and shouldn't doubt themselves. It wouldn't matter if they wrote a stunning book under a secret identity, because there is a really good chance it wouldn't do as well as the same book written under their real names. Notoriety has its privileges.

## Shelf Life: The Element of Luck, continued

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If I look at my own career for a second, it's gone pretty well in the last five years. Personally, I can point to five or six events that have propelled my writing career during that period. Now, I freely admit that some of my luck in recent years is of my own making. I can say that if I hadn't sought to get my rights back from one of my publishers in 2010, I wouldn't have any of the success I have right now. However, I also accept that if it hadn't been for the rise of ebooks at that same time, I wouldn't be in the position I'm in right now. I also toss in that if that publisher had hit rocks a year later, I probably would have missed a specific window of opportunity. And on the flip side, I think my success would have been even greater if I'd listened to a writing friend who told me to go into ebooks in 2008. I'm sure I could bore you crazy with a cause and effect chart plotting all this out. Sorry, it's the engineer in me.

I suppose I come from a different place than many other writers. I've slogged away at this for nearly twenty years and I thank my lucky stars for the breaks I've gotten in recent years. Luck is something that can feel cheap because it can be seen as undeserved but—I accept it, embrace it and enjoy it—as it's better to have luck on your side than not to have it.

Simon Wood is a California transplant from England. He's a former competitive racecar driver, a licensed pilot, an endurance cyclist, an animal rescuer and an occasional PI. He shares his world with his American wife, Julie. Their lives are dominated by five cats. He's the Anthony Award winning author of more than a dozen books. His next thriller is *Deceptive Practices*, due out in November. Curious people can learn more at <http://www.simonwood.net>.

SISTERS   
IN CRIME  
Northern California Chapter

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# The Joys and Foibles of Self-Publishing

by Heather Haven



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I was with two traditional publishing houses before I self-published. They treated me just fine. I have no horror stories about being stolen from or anything like that. However, in today's clime, with roughly a million books being published every week—okay, maybe not a million, but it sure feels like it sometimes—there wasn't a devotion to shining a light on *my* novels.

Yes, I was hot the first couple of weeks after the book came out, but then I was competing with the next author on the publisher's slate and the next and the next. Furthermore, when you sign with a publisher, you relinquish a lot of rights, such as choice of book cover, release date, pricing, marketing, etc. I had no idea I'm fussy about this sort of thing, but apparently I am.

In this life, timing is everything. Mine for striking out on my own couldn't have been better. Self-publishing is quite acceptable now whereas, even five years ago, I received a few tsk-tsks from fellow authors, with waves of pity thrown in on the side. But here I am, self-pubbed and loving it.

Right up front, the most challenging aspect is doing a professional job on the various components needed to get a novel on the shelf, whether it's a real shelf in a bookstore or a virtual one online. Many demands arise after authorship—proofing, editing, formatting, creating a cover, choosing your print house, running promotional campaigns, building readership, etc. I know it sounds daunting, but often things are just putting one foot in front of the other. These boots are made for walking. Get a good pair and go where no man or woman has gone before.

And there is a rewarding side to self-publishing. I have complete control of my novels from start to finish. I'm the boss of me. And I love every part of what I'm doing. My novels sell consistently. Maybe not a yacht's worth—more like a rowboat's—but they sell! I'm building an ever-increasing fan base, and having a fabulous time. You can't beat that.

On the down side, the biggest mistake I've seen among self-published writers, and made myself, is to put the work out there too fast. We tend to be over-eager and rush the product when we don't have someone standing over us saying it's not ready yet. Whether you are self-published or not, quality is all. If you want to compete with the big guys on any level, you gotta do it right. Just like mama said.

A few tips if you decide to self-publish. Try not to take on too much at one time or reinvent the wheel. There are resources. Go online and find them. You can job out a thing or two, if you have any kind of budget. A lot of artists and services are quite reasonable. You don't have to do EVERYTHING yourself, really, truly, pinky swear. But you might find you have a flair for something you never knew you had. Life is, after all, a learning process. Ask questions, but be judicious. If you want the right answers, go to the right sources. Don't be afraid. If I can do it, you can do it.

## The Joys and Foibles of Self-Publishing, continued

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Above all, respect what you do. You walk a path trod by Shakespeare, Dante, Jane Austen, Wordsworth, Virginia Woolf, Hemingway, Steinbeck, James Joyce, Stephen King, Agatha Christie, P.G. Wodehouse, and many, many others. We are members of a noble craft, self-published or not. Be proud. I know I am.

After studying drama at the Univ. of Miami (FL), Heather moved to Manhattan. There she wrote short stories, novels, comedy acts, TV treatments, ad copy, commercials, and two one-act plays, produced at Playwrights Horizon and well received. She even ghostwrote a book on how to run an employment agency (while unemployed). Heather has won numerous awards for her Silicon Valley-based Alvarez Family Murder Mysteries, Manhattan-based WWII Persephone Cole Vintage Mysteries, Ringling Brothers Circus mystery noir *Death of a Clown*, and short story anthology *Corliss and Other Award-Winning Stories*. She and her husband of 34 years are allowed to live with their two cats, Ellie and Yulie, in the San Jose foothills, where Heather is currently writing her ninth novel. <http://heatherhavenstories.com>

## SinC Norcal Members Out and About

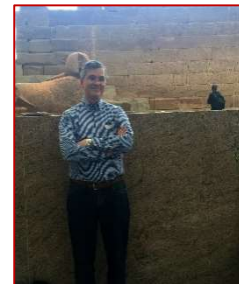
### At Thrillerfest:



Terry Shames and Elin Barnes



Susan Bickford on a panel about the emotional condition of characters



Reese Hirsch, who sneaked off to the Met during Thrillerfest

### At Pegasus Books:



Kelli Stanley on a panel discussing not using guns in crime fiction



## Member Profile: Myra Jolivet

First in a series to introduce our members to each other



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Myra Jolivet is the author of *Pushed Times*, *Chewing Pepper*, a self-published mystery novel set in Oakland and including a visit to Creole country, where her protagonist's family still lives. Myra lives in San Jose, CA.

**Stiletta:** I have to start by asking about that title!

**Myra Jolivet:** My heroine has Louisiana Creole roots. There is an old Cajun-Creole expression that goes: Pushed times will make a monkey chew pepper. It means difficult times inspire extraordinary or unique actions. My mother and other relatives used to say it.

**Stiletta:** Most of us come to writing fiction by way of some other profession. How about you?

**MJ:** My career path has been a delightful zig-zag of linked opportunities that began with more than a decade as a television news anchor and reporter. One of my opportunities led me into the political arena, and I worked as a communications strategist in several political campaigns, two congressional and five local. A mayoral candidate's wife is a published author, and one day we talked about writing. I told her that I had been writing short stories since childhood and later used short stories to detox from the stress of news, especially after covering crime. We talked about my love of cozy mysteries and the surprise ending. She said, "You have to write a novel."

**Stiletta:** And *Pushed Times*, *Chewing Pepper* is your first?

**MJ:** Yes, and it took me six years and two writing coaches!

**Stiletta:** Did your primary occupations prepare you for writing crime fiction?

**MJ:** Actually, that's one thing I had to learn from my writing coaches. I wrote TV news stories, which, by nature, are short on words. The transition to writing a novel wasn't smooth.

**Stiletta:** Some writers do their own editing. Do you think your coaches were important in the end?

**MJ:** As a former television news reporter, I am accustomed to being edited . . . a lot. I am not offended by editing, and I understand how that process leads to a better product. A longer process? Definitely. Costlier? Absolutely. But the training made a huge difference in my writing. I actually have used two coaches. Both taught me the formula for the genre, how to build plot and subplot, and the development of characters. I am continuing to learn, but I knew little about these processes before working with the coaches. I became discouraged several times with myself. At one point, I told my coach that I was a loser who couldn't write. I was giving up on the book and wouldn't be working with him any longer. He said, "OK, call me when you're ready to continue." I called a few days later and we continued working.

## Member Profile: Myra Jolivet, continued

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**Stiletta:** Why did you decide to self-publish? What pros and cons did you weigh?

**MJ:** I tried one or two agents at first, and they said they liked the concept but it wasn't what they were looking for. I decided to jump in and use my first novel as a trial balloon. Successful traditionally-published authors were leaving in favor of self-publishing, so I was interested. I had guidance to come to the decision. I met author Pamela Samuels Young, who is also an attorney, on a panel at a book fair. She encouraged us to self-publish by explaining the difference between earning from \$.99 to \$2.00 per book to between \$6.00 and \$10.00 for a \$14.95 book. And I found out traditionally-published authors do their own PR anyway, and make less money per book.

**Stiletta:** Did you hit any stumbling blocks you think were related to your being a writer of color?

**MJ:** I know there is an assumption that writers of color write for one audience and cannot attract a wider audience, and that their audience doesn't buy books. As with most stereotypes, that is inaccurate. I wrote a book that includes many races, because as with my life and family, it's not about one race. My family is multi-racial and my friends are of many nationalities and races, as well. I wanted my stories to reflect that. But more importantly, even before Oprah's Book Club, I was always aware of the popularity of African-American writers, book clubs and readers.

**Stiletta:** All writers face the problem of getting exposure for their work. How did you approach solving that issue?

**MJ:** One of my sisters is a retired librarian. She has been an active member of California Librarians Black Caucus, a professional association whose purpose is to seek authors and to support them through libraries. They are only one example. I have been invited to speak to book clubs of African-American and non-African-American groups. I haven't been pushed into a niche.

**Stiletta:** How does Sisters in Crime fit into your experience as a published author?

**MJ:** I learned about Sisters in Crime from my librarian sister. It has been the absolute best part of my writing journey. Because of Sisters in Crime, I have attended highly visible book fairs, the producers of a reality show found my book, and I am a recurring guest on their national crime show ( *For My Man*, <http://tvone.tv/23220/for-my-man-episodes/>), and I could go on. I am a huge fan and life member.

Myra Jolivet was profiled by Susan Shea, Immediate Past President of Sisters in Crime Norcal.



# Can't Find a Writers Group? Create One Online

by Laura Boss

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I don't know about you, but sometimes I need a deadline to get anything on paper. And I do mean anything. One particularly effective procrastination killer is participating in a writers group. In addition to providing a regular deadline, good reasons to join a group are to meet target word counts, to get used to having your writing viewed by other people while seeing your work objectively, and to have fun while upping your game. If you're not already part of a writing group and want to find one, consider creating your own online.

## *Advantages of an online group include:*

- Not having to clean your house nor send the family out to dinner while your writer friends take over the living room (you only have to brush your hair).
- Your group isn't limited to a single geographic location – my group has members on the East Coast, the West Coast and in Mexico.
- You're more likely to attend regularly – a long-time excuse I no longer have is business travel. With access to WiFi and a laptop you can participate anywhere, even from a hotel room.
- No need to fight your way across traffic and look for parking to get to a meeting.

## *How does it work?*

The online group I'm in is a spinoff from a novel writing class taken through Stanford's online continuing education program. So many of us found "workshopping" our WIPs useful that we decided to try replicating the experience ourselves as a group after the class ended in order to continue supporting each other and our writing.

We meet every week, using Zoom as our online venue ([www.zoom.us](http://www.zoom.us)). It's free and easy to use, offering video, audio and wireless screen sharing. All of us show up on the screen as we talk in real time, and we've found that seeing each other's faces is much friendlier and more motivating than an audio conference call. Each week we discuss written submissions uploaded the week prior to the meeting, giving everyone enough time to read the work and post written comments. We've also found it helpful to let each person state what they want readers to focus on when reviewing their work – be it point of view, characterization, structure, plot gaps, dialogue, etc. We try to focus on what each of us will find most helpful.

We were lucky in that we had already found each other through a class and knew we had a format that we liked and goals that we shared. If you're starting a group from scratch, there are some steps you should think through first.

## Creating an Online Writers Group, continued

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### *Parameters for setting up a writing group:*

#### **Set a common goal.**

What do you want to get out of your group? Is it a place to review and support long-term projects or short stories? Or is it a place for brainstorming and kicking ideas around? Is it a big group or a small one – what dynamic are you looking for? Decide what you need before you find your members.

#### **Are there any qualifications to join the group?**

Does it matter whether your members are published or unpublished? What about absolute beginners? Are you open to all types of writing or do you want to stick to a certain genre subset such as cozy or historical versus a thriller or police procedural?

#### **What is the time commitment?**

Is it a 12-week group with a specific end goal, or an ongoing group that meets weekly or biweekly for an hour with a set amount of pages? Does everyone submit every time, or do you rotate through the group a few people at a time, focusing in greater detail but receiving feedback less frequently? Don't set yourself up for failure with an overambitious timeline – work out a plan that seems realistic.

#### **What are the rules of engagement?**

We all want feedback, but how it's delivered matters. Think about how you want to critique and receive criticism in a way that is helpful and not hurtful. Be respectful and objective, critiquing the writing and not the writer. Allow time for questions and answers. Be supportive!

#### **Find your peeps!**

My group started as an extension of an online writing class, a good place to find people who share your interests and genre, and who might be at the same stage in their writing. Another place to find like-minded members might be on one of the many SinC online sub-groups, and don't forget Craigslist, Facebook, and NaNoWriMo.

#### **Looking for more information?**

UNC Chapel Hill has a good starter kit: <http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/writing-groups/writing-group-starter-kit/>

Laura Boss lives in San Francisco and designs spas for resorts but would rather be writing. In her free time, Laura is working on her first international crime novel under the name LB Hunter. She's been a member of SinC and the Guppies since 2014.

# Europe by Train

## Arezzo: Hilltop Queen of Tuscany

by Diana Chambers

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It was hard to leave Rome, but time to move on. Bidding the great city *arrivederci*, we boarded our train at the mammoth Termini and two hours later reached the Tuscan hill town of Arezzo.

A fellow traveler, a journalist, told us he lives here and commutes to Firenze, about thirty miles north. *Quelle vie*, as the French say. What a life!



From the railway station we climbed the flagstone street to the Old Town. Turning right at the summit (we thought!), we passed the Basilica di San Francesco, known for its sublime Piero della Francesca frescoes.



Two doors down via Cavour is the Graziella Patio Hotel. Small and welcoming, it has seven rooms, the décor of each inspired by traveler and writer Bruce Chatwin. Once we'd dropped our bags, it was out to lunch in the square opposite the church.

Avanti. Another uphill jaunt led to the town's Piazza Grande, the former marketplace so worthy of its name with its dramatic scale, elegant churches and arcades.



## Europe by Train: Arezzo Continued

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A group of college students gathered near our café outside Santa Maria della Pieve, a thousand-year-old church rebuilt over the ages.



After a much-needed espresso, we continued upward through cobbled lanes to another summit crowned by tumbling wisteria.



Further up the San Donato hill, I spotted the medieval citadel, Fortezza Medicea, and the Cattedrale de San Donato. Its park-like grounds were dotted with flowers and people enjoying the spring day. At the rear of the meadow I peered over ancient stone walls at the Arno valley below.



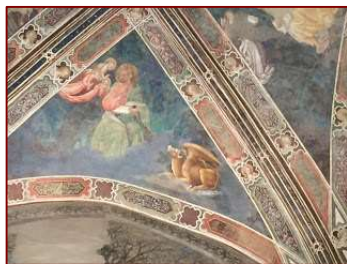
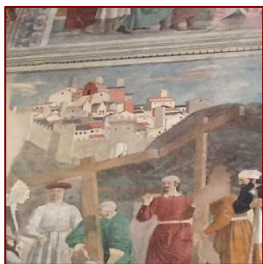
## Europe by Train: Arezzo Continued

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I wandered back down winding lanes, past the San Domenico church, humble and sturdy, more Italian kids studying their past.

I marveled at the beauty of this town that draws art lovers and students. Thinking of all the other lives I long for, I passed a witty hillside “pasture,” art supply shops, quirky museums, cheery windows, and this Vespa that made my heart go pitter-patter.



It was time for my visit to the St. Francis basilica, where 15<sup>th</sup>-century painter Piero della Francesca created his serene frescoes, *The History of the True Cross*. The wood-beamed church is calm, its age comforting.

Later, beckoned by lights at the end of a darkened lane, we ate dinner at a homey osteria . . . Rome already behind us.



Tuscany is seductive that way. There is only one Rome, but the beauty of this hill country is like no other.

Next stop: Bologna.

For more Europe by Train, please visit Postcards, the blog: <http://dianarchambers.blogspot.com/>



Diana Chambers is SinC Norcal's current Vice President and the author of two Nick Daley Series books: *Stinger* and *The Company She Keeps*.



## Member News

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### *New Releases*

*Expect Deception* by [JoAnn Smith Ainsworth](#), book #2 of the Operation Delphi series, June 21 by She Writes Press Inc. of Berkeley

*Arsenic with Austen* by [Katherine Bolger Hyde](#), debut novel in the Crime with the Classics series, July 12 by Thomas Dunne Minotaur

*Squeezed & Juiced* by [Vinnie Hansen](#) (formerly titled *Tang is Not Juice*), #4 in the Carol Sabala mystery series, re-released June by Misterio Press

*Cancelled by Murder* by [Camille Minichino](#) (as Jean Flowers), book #2 in the Postmistress Mysteries, September 6 by Berkeley Prime Crime

*Matrimony in Miniature* by [Camille Minichino](#) (as Margaret Grace), book #9 in the Miniature Mysteries, September 9 by Perseverance Press

*The Hooker* by [Simon Wood](#), book #1 in The Reprehensible Acts series, July 11 by Dark Woods Books

*Tenths of a Second* by [Simon Wood](#), May 24 by Dark Wood Books

*Father Figure* by [Simon Wood](#), May 24 by Dark Wood Books

### *Public Appearances*

August 16, 1:00-4:00 p.m., [JoAnn Smith Ainsworth](#) joining CA Writers Club Fremont Area Writers group at book signing at Fremont Main Library, 2400 Stevenson Blvd., Fremont, CA, Fukuya Room

August 20, 2:00-3:30 p.m., [JoAnn Smith Ainsworth](#), *Expect Deception* book launch party, Marina Community Center, 15301 Wicks Blvd., Multipurpose Room C, San Leandro, CA

August 28, 2:00-4:00 p.m., [JoAnn Smith Ainsworth](#), [Margaret Lucke](#) and [Kate Jessica Raphael](#), mystery authors panel and book signing, Barnes & Noble, Hacienda Crossings, 972 Dublin Blvd., Dublin, CA

September 24, 1:00-3:00 p.m., [JoAnn Smith Ainsworth](#), [Margaret Lucke](#) and [Kate Jessica Raphael](#), mystery authors panel and book signing at Barnes & Noble, 5604 Bay St., Emeryville, CA

October 21, 12:00 pm., [Camille Minichino](#) and [Ann Parker](#) will speak at the Huntington Beach Library Luncheon, 7111 Talbert Ave., Huntington Beach, CA

### *New Contracts*

[Diana Chambers](#) has signed an agency agreement with Jill Marr of Sandra Dijkstra Literary Agency.