

THE STILETTA NEWSLETTER

Sisters in Crime  Northern California Chapter

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MAY 2019

Dear Sisters and Misters,

Many of us have recently returned from Left Coast Crime in Vancouver, which welcomed us with splendid weather, amazing vistas—and the opportunity for a great book launch. To celebrate the publication of *Fault Lines*, Sisters in Crime NorCal hosted an Author Connection event (thank you, Nancy Tingley and, of course, Peggy Lucke) which drew many interested readers, as well as several SinC members. Sales of the anthology were brisk, and this chapter can feel rightfully proud of our success.

In 2006, following publication of *Stinger*, I first attended Left Coast Crime in Seattle. Due to the conference's "left coast" venues, LCC is an ideal "starter con," a fairly small and low-key event where newbies are warmly embraced. I will admit I was hugely intimidated my first time, but my fellow panelists took me under their wings and introduced me around. I met Louise Penny that weekend, when she won her first major award. Please don't think I'm name-dropping: LCC prides itself on its egalitarian nature. People share a camaraderie, developing bonds that lead to lasting friendships. If you haven't yet had the pleasure, I urge you to consider attending—perhaps in 2020, when the host city will be San Diego.

NorCal is gearing up for a trio of remarkable spring/summer events. On May 4, we'll host "From Page to Stage," led by Dana Fredsti, David Fitzgerald, and Lisa Brackmann, with extra spice delivered by Heather Haven and Rita Lakin! Back



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President's Letter, continued

by popular demand, this Sausalito workshop will offer a nitty-gritty focus on author readings—delivery, pacing, and use of the microphone. This is a skill we all need to develop, and I know you will appreciate the specific and gentle critique. Don't miss this valuable meeting.

On June 1 in San Francisco from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m., we are extremely proud and honored to present the bestselling and multiple-award-winning author Jane Cleland. Thanks to a generous grant from Sisters in Crime National, Jane will offer her much-in-demand workshop, "Mastering Suspense, Structure and Plot," with an emphasis on pacing as a means of ratcheting up suspense. She will give us tips on tightening story structure while adding plot complexity and character richness, integrating backstory, and balancing narrative and dialogue. There will be books for sale and handouts provided. A gracious and savvy woman, Jane will be available to chat during the mid-afternoon break and autograph her books. But you must sign up via Eventbrite: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/jane-k-cleland-workshop-mastering-suspense-structure-plot-tickets-56060780303>

After a July hiatus, we will be back August 3 with a Sausalito talk by Nina Schuyler, an internationally translated fiction and nonfiction author and highly regarded teacher. I am fortunate enough to be part of the writers' group she leads, so I can attest to her brilliance, sensitivity, and communication skills. She is also a beautiful prose stylist who has written *How to Write Stunning Sentences*.

I'm very excited about these outstanding events and hope to see you at all three.

Sincerely,
Diana Chambers
President, Sisters in Crime NorCal

Mark Your Calendar: Upcoming SinC NorCal Events

Saturday, May 4, 12:00 – 2:00 p .m.

From the Page to the Stage

Sausalito Public Library, Edgewater Room, 420 Litho Street, Sausalito

Welcome to the stage Sisters and Mistresses Dana Fredsti, Lisa Brackmann, David Fitzgerald, and guest critiquer Rita Lakin, as they share their expertise on what to do (and not to do) once you're at the mic. Heather Haven will be their guinea pig, all in good fun! Don't miss this exciting and informative talk/workshop on speaking and reading your work to an audience. You can even bring a piece you've written for personal tips. There is some free parking behind the library and on side streets. Bring something for the **potluck** and a book (or more) for our **book exchange**.

Saturday, June 1, 1:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Jane Cleland Workshop: Mastering Suspense, Structure & Plot

UnitySF, 2222 Bush Street at Fillmore, San Francisco

By integrating 13 thinking, writing, and revising tips into their writing processes, participants will write tighter, more polished first drafts. They will improve their story's pace, while ratcheting up suspense, tightening story structure, adding plot complexity integrating backstory, enhancing character motivation, choosing words for sensual specificity, balancing narrative with action and dialogue, and improving both productivity and professionalism. Handouts will be provided.

Jane K. Cleland writes the multiple-award-winning and bestselling Josie Prescott Antiques Mysteries (St. Martins Minotaur). The 13th in the series, *Hidden Treasure*, will be published in spring 2020. Her short stories are published by *Alfred Hitchcock Mystery Magazine*. Jane also writes about the craft of writing, including *Mastering Plot Twists* and the Agatha Award-winning and bestselling *Mastering Suspense, Structure & Plot*, both from Writer's Digest Books. She is also a Contributing Editor for *Writer's Digest Magazine* and chairs the Wolfe Pack's Black Orchid Novella Award in partnership with AHMM. In addition, Jane is a lecturer at Lehman College, where she is the director of the Program for Professional Communications.

Attendees will have an opportunity to buy books and have Jane sign them. Tea and tarts will be served *free* to all members.

Free to SinC NorCal members. Non members: \$40. *Free* if you join Sisters in Crime (National and NorCal)! Tickets are available through [EventBrite](#). If you are a nonmember, payment will be collected at the door. [Meetup link](#).

Check the SinC NorCal website for information on parking and public transportation. **No book exchange**.

There will be no event in July.

In Case You Missed It . . .

If you weren't able to attend our recent events, here's what you missed.

February Meeting

At our annual Meet and Greet, existing, new, and prospective members came together to get to know each other, and we learned what's new with our current members and their careers.



March Meeting

Christina Henry, criminalist with the Santa Clara County Crime Laboratory, addressed us about her work in the Chemistry/Trace unit and in fire analysis and could have fielded questions from the fascinated audience for much longer than the allotted time.

April Meeting

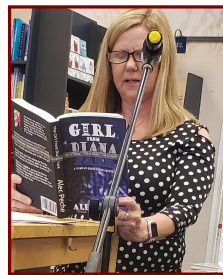
At the first of two Author Showcases this year, Sisters and Mistresses with new releases read from their latest books, and lucky drawing winners scored copies of the books. Conversation prior to the readings and tasty snacks, not to mention a capacity crowd and the introduction of our anthology, *Fault Lines*, made this a memorable event.



Emcee Susan Bickford



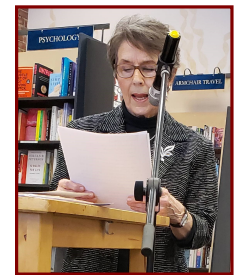
Dana Fredsti



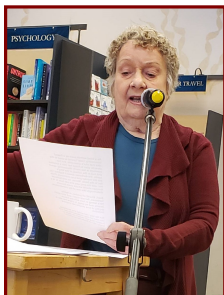
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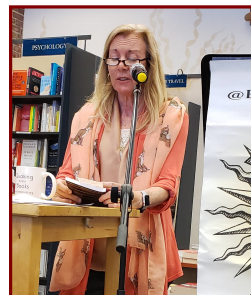
Adam Plantinga



Sharon St. George



JoAnn Smith Ainsworth



Maddy McEwen



Katherine Bolger Hyde



Peggy Lucke

San Francisco's Mechanics' Institute Library: a Haven for Writers

by Rick Homan



Why buy the cow when you can get the milk for free?

This proverbial question might seem to apply to buying a membership to the Mechanics' Institute Library when a free public library system is available. Yet many people find the price of the subscription (\$120 per year for an individual) worthwhile, and many of them are writers, myself included.

The name does not call out to writers. Mechanics' institutes were a product of the Industrial Revolution. At that time, a mechanic was anyone who did skilled labor. San Francisco's Mechanics' Institute

was founded in 1854, when all those '49ers needed to be trained for something other than panning for gold. Payment of an annual fee gave them access to the library and social status.

By 1869, the families of those mechanics wanted books of all kinds, not just technical books, and San Francisco's Mechanics' Institute Library adapted to meet that demand. In 1879, the city's public library was founded, but the founders of the Mechanics' made sure its services remained relevant and its library was well endowed. It has survived as a general-interest membership library to this day.



Photo credit: Matthew Kadi

Located on Post Street, near the intersection of Market and Montgomery, the Mechanics' has been described as an oasis in the heart of the Financial District. Its current building is a beaux arts masterpiece completed in 1910 to replace the original building destroyed in 1906. The reading rooms on the second and third floors feature stacked galleries under high ceilings. Big oak tables and leather club chairs complete the old-fashioned library feel.

A project is underway to refresh the interior with more computer-friendly furniture, additional meeting rooms, and

SF Mechanics' Institute Library, continued

cell phone booths. These will complement existing public-access computers and super-fast wi-fi. As co-working spaces go, it will be hard to beat.

As for the library collection and associated services, using the Mechanics' instead of the San Francisco Public is analogous to attending a small liberal arts college instead of a state university. It may have fewer resources, but it has most of what you need, and you get to know the staff.

Writers find abundant opportunities to meet and work with one another at the Mechanics'. Librarian Taryn Edwards oversees 15 writers' groups, a monthly Writers' Lunch, and year-round writers' classes in partnership with the San Francisco Writers Conference.

The Mechanics' has become my office when I don't want to work at home and my club when I want to meet like-minded people in both formal and casual situations. I've participated in three writers' groups while honing my skills and have schooled myself with books found in 808, the writing craft section.

Writers' Lunch features a panel of speakers on a chosen topic and has become a social occasion. It's held at noon on the third Friday of each month, and is open to the public, free of charge.

And it's cool, knowing previous patrons include Mark Twain, Gertrude Atherton, Jack London, and other illustrious literary figures.

For further information, visit the Institute's website:
<https://www.milibrary.org>



Rick Homan is the author of the Nicole Tang Noonan mysteries — *Dark Mural*, *Dark Exhibit*, and *Dark Picasso*, available at Amazon.com. The fourth book in the series, *Dark Video*, is due to be published in the summer of 2019. Prior to taking up the craft of crime fiction, Rick performed as an actor and guitarist. In San Francisco, he worked with several companies that produce new plays. In Philadelphia, he performed with the Hedgerow Theater, Pennsylvania Shakespeare Festival, and the Arden Theater. He spent most of his 30-year academic career at Rider University, teaching classes in acting and theater history, directing plays, and publishing scholarly articles. He also taught at UC Santa Barbara, The University of the South, and Warren Wilson College. Rick lives in San Francisco with his wife, Ann.

Switching Genres – Oy Vey!

by J.J. Lamb



This writing affliction started with short stories, scattered themes on this, that, and the other thing.

Along the way, my crime stories prompted an invitation from an editor to try a novel. How often does that happen? It was a welcomed opportunity, of course, but a difficult task for a wire service journalist. Even short stories were a stretch for someone trained to turn out newspaper articles in two takes, or about 500 words.

The first book-length effort, a private eye novel, happily evolved into a series. It also was an introduction to genre writing, with all its advantages and pitfalls.

Later on there was a very brief period of rebellion (no writing), where I threw up my hands—what’s life all about and that sort of thing.

Then came an exuberant request from my housemate, lover, and companion forever: “I have this wonderful idea for a book you should write.”

It was a good idea, but it didn’t jingle my creative bells. For maybe a year the same request/suggestion was reiterated on a monthly basis, if not more often. One bright day, the requester/suggester was presented with a portable manual typewriter, a ream of bond paper, and a thesaurus, plus the announcement: “If you think it’s such a terrific idea, why don’t you write it?”

“Okay, I will!” It was stated in a less than dulcet tone.

And she did . . . 300 or so double-spaced pages.

That came off so well, the next potential pain-in-the-neck request/suggestion was, “I just read this wonderful article in the *Marin Independent-Journal*. Why don’t *we* use it to write a medical thriller together?”

Okay, it wasn’t that much of a story/structure stretch from PI to thriller. And co-authoring with my cohabitant was a nice scenario, despite a previous failed co-authoring venture with an outsider.

We decided on a thriller-like structure—know who the evil person is from the beginning, then try to stop him/her from being evil again.

Now, the task was to find room on the cover for two writers’ names, not only for that book, but for the seven that followed in the “Bone” series featuring Gina Mazzio, RN.

Switching Genres, continued

Was there other writing stuff at the same time and in between? Of course, but why make a short tale long?

Co-authors Bette and J.J. had found their niche, even though immediately following the publication of the first “Bone” book, they carved into a stone slab: “We are not going to write a series!”

Of course, the lesson here is: Never carve *anything* in stone . . . unless you’re an ancient Egyptian building a pyramid.

So now, virtually all of the indicators say it’s time for a new series . . . new platform, new characters, new genre, and maybe even a new byline.

Did we think to make the transition as easy on ourselves as possible? Hah!

After much investigation (mostly into what was making money), we decided to go the cozy, or near-cozy, route, a genre where we had virtually no knowledge beyond articles in writer magazines, general hearsay, and comments from writer friends who do quite well in that field.

We did our research, which took us beyond hearsay, and soon discovered that our imagined fears had a solid footing. There were going to be problems. Big ones.

Our “Bone” books are very gritty, built around medicine, murder, and mayhem. Both main and subsidiary characters swear at each other; they get involved in spilt blood. Mutilated bodies are common, and there’s explicit sex at times. A series “. . . not for the squeamish,” *Publishers Weekly* noted.

We were well versed in all the key elements of a good cozy. Not!

Essentially, getting started wasn’t at all easy. One approach was to take an existing Gina Mazzio scene and try to rewrite it cozy-style. Couldn’t do it. All that “bad” stuff had to be there. That’s the way it was meant to be. And trying to cozy-write someone else’s noir or hard case story went the same way.

If we were going to see the project through, then, it was going to be a matter of sitting down at the keyboard and starting to write the story. Only no seat-of-the-pants approach, as is our usual way. Needed a little more than a vague idea floating around in the head. So three basic plot lines were developed, along with an ongoing profile of the protagonist. There was another thing—a list of no-no’s printed out and kept visible all of the time:

Killing—off the page whenever possible.

Switching Genres, continued

Blood – talk about it but don't show it.

Sex – the “fade to black” kind that used to be the norm for black and white movies

Language – keep it as close to Disney-style as possible.

Mayhem – keep it minimal.

Guns – talked about but not used (excessively)

Gruesomeness – no way

Body functions – don't even think of them.

There were more “rules and regulations” that popped up along the way, but the ones listed were more than enough to point out the path we were to follow. Unfortunately, not our style of writing at all.

And then there's that old adage: Never chase a trend. Yeah, but cozies are very popular right now; thrillers, not so much. And look at the need for more and more content with the ever-expanding TV movie market. Geez!

So, how's it going? We've found the strictures manageable . . . to a point. We hope to get the first book out before summer, the second about a month later, and the third before the end of the year.

That's a very ambitious schedule. Particularly because the writing isn't going that fast, what with vile swear words sneaking in every so often, love scenes that are way too graphic, and buckets of blood and gore that keep tipping over.

One thing we've definitely learned: Always concentrate on telling a good story and no one will notice the missing gruesome scenes or the lack of stacked dead bodies.

J.J. Lamb's budding journalism career was interrupted by the U.S. Army, which sent him to the U.S. Navy stronghold in Norfolk, VA. He was issued a *Top Secret* clearance and posted to a tiny, windowless, double-barred and spy-proof room to guard a site filled with classified weaponry manuals. Other furnishings included a wood table, straight-back wood chair, Royal manual typewriter . . . and the time and privacy to write short stories. Shamus-nominated *No Pat Hands* is the latest of his PI Zachariah Tobias Rolfe III series. And in collaboration with Bette Golden Lamb, he has written nine medical thrillers, a suspense-adventure, and a political thriller, *The Killing Vote*, with a plot not unlike the Washington scenario of today. His latest short story appears in SinC NorCal's new anthology, *Fault Lines*.



At Home with Rita Lakin

Before there was the telephone, there was the *carte de visite*.

Calling or visiting cards were first employed in 15th century China and later used by the aristocracy of the 17th century and became popular with England's nobility. The cards were where women of gentle status would receive visitors on a specific day.

I'm modernizing that calling card.

There was this quote: "If Mohammed won't come to the mountain, then the mountain must come to Mohammed." Translation for me: I no longer drive, I no longer travel long distances, and I miss the camaraderie of all the bright women I know. I would like you to come to visit me. (Not all at once! Duh!)

It will be Sunday afternoon Tea, from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m. I'll provide tea and coffee. (Maybe you'll bring cookies?) Bring a friend(s). Men are welcome. My friends will meet other friends; you'll make new friends. Have fun. What will we talk about? Anything you want; maybe not politics.

35 Baypoint Drive, San Rafael, CA

Let's try it out. Pick a date:

May 5, 12, 19 or 26. June 2, 9, 16, 23 or 30

At Home

Sundays with Rita

R.S.V.P: 415-485-5228

rlakejojo@aol



Introducing Santa Cruz Women of Mystery: Writers Worth Investigating by Vinnie Hansen

A gravitational vortex seems to pull crime writers to Santa Cruz. Not surprising given The Mystery Spot in our mountains, where balls appear to roll uphill. There are so many mystery writers here that our community gave rise to not one, but two, short story anthologies in 2018: *Santa Cruz Noir* and *Santa Cruz Weird*.

Now ten of us have united to form Santa Cruz Women of Mystery (SCWOM). We range from pre-published to well-established, award-winning authors.

Most of us belong to NorCal Sisters in Crime. But you may not even recognize our names because we have to trek over those aforementioned mountains on a treacherous highway to reach the meetings. For us, the two-hour events become all-day commitments. While we treasure our membership in the larger group, we've banded together for local support.

SCWOM comprises (from left in photo: Christina Waters, Katherine Bolger Hyde, Peggy Townsend, Nancy Lynn Jarvis, Nancy Wood, Jenny Carless, Leslie Karst, Mary Feliz, and Vinnie



Hansen. (Mary Flodin took the photo and is in the photo on page 13). In case you don't know us, I asked each member to introduce herself by answering this question: What is one of your hobbies or interests that has wormed its way into your fiction?

Leslie Karst: Having been a singer, songwriter, and instrumentalist for many years, it's not surprising that

music worms its way into the life of my sleuth, Sally Solari. In *A Measure of Murder*, a tenor (yes, had to be a tenor) falls to his death during a rehearsal of the sublime Mozart *Requiem*, and in *Murder from Scratch*, jazz vocals play a part in the murder investigation, Oh, and of course Sally listens to the same music as I do: Puccini, Elvis Costello, and Frank Sinatra.

Santa Cruz Women of Mystery, continued

Peggy Townsend: I fell in love with running within a few minutes of lacing up my shoes so it was only natural that running took center stage in my first mystery novel, *See Her Run* (see what I mean). In the book, however, running became a vehicle for murder, which anyone who runs long distance might understand.

Mary Feliz: There's no question that my experiences and interests influence my characters. *Cliff Hanger*, which releases July 16, is set among the rich natural world surrounding California's Monterey Bay. But more profound and surprising is the influence my characters have had on me.

I consulted members of the National Association of Productivity and Organizing Professionals to make my protagonist, Maggie McDonald, authentic. Everything I learned from them made it possible for my husband and me to juggle a move of our own at the same time my first book launched.

While Maggie and her business don't exist outside fictionland, that doesn't stop readers, friends and relatives from requesting her help as they tackle their own decluttering projects.

Katherine Bolger Hyde: Of the several interests and hobbies that have found their way into my writing, the most pervasive is my obsession with domestic architecture. I'm fascinated with old houses, unique houses, remodeling houses, designing dream houses. So far, I've written a novel whose main character is an architect; a novel featuring a restorer of old houses, in which one particular house is a major character in itself; and a series of traditional mystery novels (Crime with the Classics) in which the protagonist inherits a Victorian mansion and remodels it into a writers' retreat center. Now I'm planning a new traditional mystery series starring an architectural historian and her ghostly sidekick, a 17th century English architect. Each book in the series will be set in a different famous house, mansion, or castle. Needless to say, every house I feature in a book includes a wonderful library!

Vinnie Hansen: Santa Cruz boasts of the largest ukulele group in the world. I play keyboard with Sons of the Beach, a sub-group of this club. In my writing, the first note of this hobby is a single ukulele-playing character in *Art, Wine and Bullets*, the sixth book in my Carol Sabala series. However, by the time I wrote "Miscalculation" for *Santa Cruz Noir*, all three characters were nefarious ukulele strummers. The hobby continues to play into my work. In my WIP, my main character tickles the ivories for a band, the She Cats.

Nancy Lynn Jarvis: When I began writing the Regan McHenry Real Estate Mysteries a decade ago, I made my protagonist a realtor because I had been one for twenty years and felt I could write with authority. But in all seven books in the series, another profession from the past snuck into the books. Before starting in real estate, I was the business manager for Shakespeare/Santa Cruz. I loved that job, even if it paid like writers get paid: not well enough to live.

Santa Cruz Women of Mystery, continued

I loved the actors, backstage people, designers and directors, the parties, and singing “Waltzing Matilda” as we struck the sets. And whenever a play called for a boy, my sons were cast.

When I wrote, Regan was always involved with Shakespeare/Santa Cruz, too. She may have been a board member or mere theatergoer, but every book included a mention of Shakespeare/Santa Cruz. It gave me a special way of remaining connected.

Nancy Wood: The natural landscape of Santa Cruz County plays a central role in my books: location is as important as the characters and the plot. I love to write about where I live, and love placing my characters in all my favorite places, from the ocean to the redwoods. In *Due Date*, the first book in my mystery series, protagonist and surrogate mom Shelby McDougall lives in the redwoods, where she gradually falls in love with the trees, the meadows, and the creeks. The second book, *The Stork*, takes Shelby from south to north county, from wetlands and agricultural land to steep, isolated redwood forests that meet the Pacific. In my WIP, the third and final book in the series, Shelby has set up shop as a PI at the Santa Cruz Harbor, where a quick walk on the beach clears her head. I love when local readers say, “I know just where that is!”

Christina Waters: I’ve become an opera fan over the past ten years, and travel each year as far as my credit card will take me to hear opera—specifically the operas of Richard Wagner—in the great European concert halls. My life has been so enhanced, my imagination so inspired by these great works of drama and music that I decided to plan my first murder mystery around one of the summer seasons of Wagner’s four-opera “Ring” cycle. The one I write about in my book *Valhalla Nights* is set in the small German city of Bayreuth, the very place where the composer himself built his opera house and made his home. From my passion to the reader’s enjoyment!

Mary Flodin: I’ve always loved the ocean. I rode my first wave at Huntington Beach pier when I was 14 and was given my first surfboard—a longboard with hot pink stripes running along the center stringer—for my 15th birthday. I spent my summers surfing the waves from San Clemente to Malibu. When I graduated from university and started teaching, I settled in a house a few blocks from the beach in Santa Cruz—one of the two California towns claiming the title of “Surf City USA.” I never tire of being in the water, or of watching the ever-changing ocean, the marine wildlife, and the world-class surfers who come to ride our famed breaks. Isn’t it only natural that the protagonist of *Fruit of the Devil*, my first mystery novel, set in Santa Cruz, is a surfer?



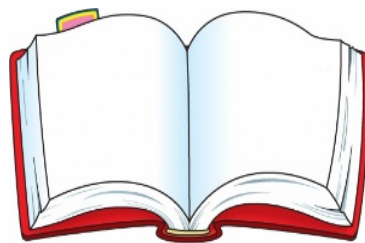
.From left: Leslie Karst, Vinnie Hansen, Mary Flodin, Nancy Lynn Jarvis, and Katherine Bolger Hyde

Santa Cruz Women of Mystery, continued

Jenny Carless: For me, it's the reverse. My love for Africa and concern for its endangered species prompted me to try writing fiction. After several remarkable safaris in East Africa, where I got to know people who work to protect wildlife, an idea began to form in my mind. If I could write compelling fiction and weave it into the issues of poaching and wildlife trafficking, perhaps that could be my way to help. As I learned more about how poachers work, plot ideas blossomed; as I spent more time in the bush, I loved losing myself in writing about those special places. I've finished a first suspense novel, which takes place in Kenya's Masai Mara and deals with elephant poaching/ivory tracking, and I'm working on a second one, about rhino poaching.

SCWOM pools a talented group of women! You will find three of us—Jenny Carless, Katherine Bolger Hyde, and Vinnie Hansen—in NorCal's spanking new anthology, *Fault Lines*. If you venture down to Santa Cruz, we will be putting on (Pinot) Noir at the Bar on May 23, 6:30 p.m. at Birichino Winery Tasting Room. For more information on SCWOM, please visit our [website](#).

The ninth of ten children, Vinnie Hansen fled the howling winds of South Dakota and headed for the California coast the day after high school graduation. She's now the author of the Carol Sabala Mystery series; *Lostart Street*, a cross-genre novel of mystery, murder, and moonbeams; and numerous short stories. The most recent are "Last Word" in *Fault Lines* and "Room and Board" in *Fishy Business*, the Guppies' fifth anthology. Still sane(ish) after 27 years of teaching high school English, Vinnie has retired. She plays keyboards with ukulele bands in Santa Cruz, California, where she lives with her husband and the requisite cat.



The Writer and the Beekeeper

by Susan Kuchinskas



My hands smell of spring. Flowers, pollen and honey. I've just opened my beehive to see what's going on in there. This is the time when the population of the hive can explode. And, if I don't make room, the bees will swarm, scaring the neighbors and reducing the force of foragers who bring back the nectar that becomes honey and sweetens my coffee.

Beekeeping is the opposite of writing – and it's just like writing.

When the part of my brain that generates words and ideas is tired, it's good to turn that off and do something with my hands. Unlike the realm of ideas, the physical space of the beehive is orderly. The hive consists of one rectangular box, or two or more stacked on top of each other. Each box contains a row of ten frames, each one a flat, rectangular piece made of wood or plastic that hangs from an indentation on two sides of the box – like hanging files in a filing cabinet.

To inspect the hive, I take off the top cover and, one by one, pull out the frames to have a look. The bees live an orderly life – most of the time. They build their comb on both sides of the frames in neat rows of hexagons. In the center of the nest, the queen travels in a spiral, laying eggs day and night. The worker bees slowly fill the outer cells with pollen and nectar.



Photo by Afiq Nashiron

The bees may not be conscious of the results of their daily labor, but each of them understands the state of the colony. Inside the hive is a heady fug of pheromones that tells each bee what should be done.

I can look at the patterns of eggs and nectar and know all is well. The bees know what to do, and they do it without any help from me.

The tidy geometry can be so restful to my brain, anchoring me to the earth.

Some beekeepers open the hive every week to look around. Others (like me) take a peek only a few times a year. Here are the things you can do when you open the beehive:

- Pull out the outer frames in the box to see if there's nectar, capped honey, and pollen stored around the brood nest. Nectar looks wet; once it's dried out enough, the bees cover it with a wax cap.

The Writer and the Beekeeper, continued

- Pull out each frame in the center to look for the queen. She's bigger than the other bees, with a longer abdomen. She can be difficult to find among the horde of worker bees covering every frame.
- Look for eggs, pollen and capped brood cells. The eggs are white dots smaller than a pinhead attached to the side of the cell. You'll also see larvae, white grubs that curve to fit the cell. When the larvae reach the right stage, the bees cover over the cell so the grub can metamorphose into a new bee.

You can't wrangle honeybees. You can only make it easier for them to do what they are intent on doing: build a safe, warm hive for them; make sure ants don't invade; keep the weeds down around the hive.

And, isn't this a metaphor for the creative process? Like the bees tirelessly filling each cell of the comb, each incident and every sensory experience fills a small part of that unreachable part of my brain where creativity resides.

The beekeeper part of my brain wants to poke at ideas, taking a critical look and managing them into the direction I think they should take. The honeybee part of my brain wants to buzz around, doing things its own way, hidden in the dark. If I'm lucky – and if I don't bother it too much – at some point a sweet idea will emerge.



After holding down a series of random jobs – exercise demonstrator, office temp, stewardess, house painter – it was probably inevitable that Susan Kuchinkas became a writer. She started her career as an architecture and design journalist and then moved into technology. She covers automotive and digital technology as a freelance journalist, as well as writing content for tech companies. Her science fiction/detective novel, *Chimera Catalyst*, was published in 2017, and the sequel, *Singularity Syndrome*, will publish early in 2020. Her crime stories have been published in *Switchblade*, *Shotgun Honey*, and our chapter's *Fault Lines* anthology. Susan lives in El Cerrito with her mate, a cat, a dog, and some 60,000 honeybees. <http://www.kuchinkas.com>



How Was Your Day at School?

by Camille Minichino

Here's an answer to a question no one has asked me in several decades:
How was your day at school?

Just fine! I'm learning lots of new things that I'd like to share. Cue milk and cookies.

I'm currently enrolled in an MFA program—Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing. About time, you say? I could blame the delay on the fact that we had no guidance counselors when I was in school, no aptitude tests, or SAT prep, or SATs for that matter. So in college and after, I wandered around taking this and that, science, a writing class or two, doing this and that, then more writing, publishing, and finally decided to fill a gap and go for an MFA.

Remember book reports? I'm about to do a report on one of our texts—Francine Prose's *Reading Like a Writer: A Guide for People Who Love Books and for those Who Want to Write Them*. For this piece, I'll take on her excellent chapter on Details. Prose (that's really her name; it's like having a carpenter named Woodman, or a miniaturist named Minichino) claims that what people remember are the details of a story, more than the bigger themes. It's all about the specific.

To make her point, Prose pulls out details from such diverse writings as those of Chekhov, Salinger, Elmore Leonard, and Greek mythology. She sites well-chosen details as more revealing of character and setting than long descriptions. Examples (paraphrased) are from:

- Chekhov, who compared the commonplace: *the setting sun bathed the waves of the darkening sea* with the detailed: *a little glowing starpoint flashed from the neck of a broken bottle*.
- *Franny and Zooey*, and Bessie Glass's bathrobe with folds that *served as the repository for the paraphernalia of a very heavy cigarette smoker and an amateur handyman* (the latter causing her to clink as she moved).
- Leonard's parrot, fed with food from Majestyk's mother's mouth, remembered more than trucks that seem to fly and characters who were pushed out of windows.
- The pomegranate seeds that Persephone ate, one for each month of her captivity, remembered more than the kidnapping and the underworld itself.

As writers, then, we need to be sure to write in the details. One tip for applying this rule is to scour our manuscripts for words such as *lunch*, instead of the detail of *a grilled cheese that looked like it had been run over by an ATV* (not great, but you get the point, and I'm competing with Chekhov and the like here); or words that end in "thing"—anything, nothing, everything—instead of a concrete detail.

How Was Your Day at School? continued

I have one homely example of a meaningful detail. A snippet from a conversation with a cousin I reconnected with after thirty years, and after all our parents had died:

“Do you remember my mother?” Robert asked.

“Aunt Annie, of course.”

“What do you remember about her?”

Here I recounted how kind my Aunt Annie was, what fun we had when I stayed over, how I liked visiting.

“What else?” Robert wanted to know.

I finally got it and gave him a detail.

“Once, when we were walking together along the beach, we were both eating popcorn. I was picking one kernel at a time from the bag, and your mother said to me, ‘You need to take a whole handful at a time. That’s the only way you’ll enjoy it.’ And that’s how I do it, to this day.”

Robert’s laughter and rush to have me repeat the story to his daughter confirmed the value of detail over generalities.

Oops, there’s the bell. Off to class, armed with a dark chocolate candy bar, 190 calories!

Camille Minichino has a Ph.D. in physics from Fordham University and teaches science at Golden Gate University and writing throughout the Bay Area. She has published more than 25 novels, as well as many short stories and nonfiction articles. Under her own name, she has published the Periodic Table Mysteries featuring retired physicist Gloria Lamerino, as well as the standalone, *Killer in the Cloister*, featuring Sister Francesca, and the nonfiction book, *How to Live with an Engineer*. As Margaret Grace, she writes the Miniature Mysteries, featuring Geraldine Porter and her 11-year-old granddaughter, Maddie. As Ada Madison, she has published the Professor Sophie Knowles Mysteries. And as Jean Flowers, she has launched the Postmistress Mysteries, with the third in the series released in July 2017. Camille is a Past President of SinC NorCal. Visit <http://www.minichino.com/>



Member Profile: Nicola Trwst

Tenth in a series to introduce our members to each other

Nicola Trwst calls herself an eclectic reader and writer. She writes, "I'm told this isn't the best way to create a writing career, but it sure is fun."

Stiletta: Your early years were spent on the East Coast. What made you leave the East to move to California?

Nicola Trwst: I always felt like a fish out of water in Virginia, which was much more conservative than it is today.

Right out of school, my friends were reading *Bridal* magazine and picking out China patterns, while marriage was the last thing I wanted. When I came to California for a job, I met likeminded people that wanted to see and experience the world, and I felt I'd come home.

Stiletta: Tell us about the jobs you've had over the years, besides being an author.

NT: There have been many. I started working when I was fourteen, scooping ice cream, and from there I worked in retail, as a dental assistant, switchboard operator, hotel manager, and finally settled into a career in computer graphics.

Stiletta: You moved to Paris to write. How long were you there, and how did living in France change your life?

NT: I moved to Paris as a computer graphics artist and lived there for ten years. In the beginning, not speaking French, I was terribly lonely. I'd already written one book about a woman who murdered her husband and got away with it so I knew writing was a form of expression for me. I wanted to write about my three girlfriends that I missed. When I came across a news story about a terrorist who was supposedly in a French prison, I decided to write a novel about three friends who come to visit their friend in Paris and get caught up in a terrorist situation. This allowed me to be with my friends whenever I wanted.

Stiletta: When and how did you start writing mysteries?

NT: As I mentioned, my first novel was about a woman who kills her husband. I was in a bad marriage and decided to take action with a pen instead of the Scott Peterson method. Looking back, I think I made the right choice. What motivates criminals has always been fascinating to me. The psychology of a crime.

Stiletta: You have published three books in the Briana Kaleigh Mystery series. Please tell us a little about that series and your protagonist.

Member Profile: Nicola Trwst, continued

NT: Briana is an Irish-American who was raised by a cop father along with six brothers (her mother died giving birth to the last brother). Obviously, she's Catholic. She comes to California and teams up with a Buddhist sheriff, Dusty Arkansas. They are a team of opposites—male/female, Buddhist/Catholic, Republican/Democrat, East Coast/West Coast, etc.—but they both have a deep-seated belief in what is right and what isn't. Briana is a little more fluid than Dusty, who must follow the letter of the law.

My goal with the series was to explore subjects that are more Californian than, say, Texan. So far I've stayed away from tech. I also choose one Marin city to place each story: *The Belvedere Club*, *Bolinas Bongo*, *San Rafael Sizzle*.

Stiletta: Is it important to you to include humor in your writing?

NT: Humor is a funny thing. Ta dah. But seriously, I'm a firm believer in the adage "Laughter is the best medicine." I also enjoy when a writer makes me laugh out loud. But humor is a difficult quality to add to mysteries because of the subject matter. It can very easily make the characters glib or insensitive.

I don't always use humor in my stories, but in my Briana series I wanted to create a fast read, one that could be read by busy people. Humor along with short chapters, short sentences, and short scenes help me reach that end.

Stiletta: You mention that you enjoy genre-hopping in both your reading and writing pursuits. Accordingly, you have published another novel that seems much darker than your series. Please tell us more.

NT: That would be *Bayou Nights*. I wanted to explore the idea of a woman, boxed in by her legal profession and ideals, who wanted revenge so much she was tempted to forget justice. This was long before O.J. Simpson vs. Marcia Clark in case you're watching *The Fix*.

I'd just finished writing the novel when Katrina struck and wiped out my locations. Also, I heard other authors didn't want to place their stories in New Orleans at the time because it felt disrespectful of what the city had just experienced. I put the book away for years, and when I brought it out, I asked some New Orleans authors how I should proceed. I was told I needed to add the devastation of Katrina or I needed to place the story before Katrina. I decided to place the story before Katrina, which allowed me to use my locations, but I added Katrina to the story.

Stiletta: You also write stories "with an ironic twist," according to your blog. Some examples?

Member Profile: Nicola Trwst, continued

NT: Those are my short-shorts that have been published in several anthologies. I won't list them because they are out of print. My story about an Italian funeral was published in the San Francisco Writers Conference anthology. In the beginning of my website, I was posting short stories for readers. These were mostly humorous about my adventures in France when I didn't speak the language or understand the culture.

Stiletta: Another place you have lived is Montreal. What did you love about living there?

NT: Montreal is a wonderful city. It is a true mixing bowl of cultures. It is also a great place to raise children because it is so safe, In the four years I lived there, only one public robbery occurred. Death by gun is rare and is usually a family affair. Man loses job, comes home and kills self and family.

Fine dining can be found in every neighborhood because of all the different nationalities. People are soooooo friendly. Because people are mostly locked inside nine months of the year, the other three months are full of activities such as the Just for Laughs Comedy Festival, a Formula 1 Grand Prix, the international fireworks festival, the international Jazz Festival, etc. If you haven't been there, you should definitely go. But go after June 1. Snow in May is more probability than possibility.

Stiletta: You told us at the February Meet & Greet that you are working on some "dark, gritty fairy tales" and "the first of a fantasy trilogy about the three major religions." Can you tell us more about those?

NT: The anthology is called *Fairy Tales, the Sequel*, which explains the premise. This is a fun project created by some Florida writers. We've all taken a common fairy tale and told the story of what happened to the main character years later. Mine is Pinocchio. So did the scoundrel Pinocchio continue his mischievous ways after the Blue Fairy turned him into a real boy? These are going to be darker than the real fairy tales. The publication date is Halloween, which is fun due to the subject matter.

The first book in the trilogy is called *Flames*. The second is *Fire*, and the third is *Smoke*. The trilogy incorporates the myths of the three major religions: Islam, Judaism and Christianity. *Flames* opens in 2010 San Francisco, but the main character has been alive since 1850. She was separated from her twin flame in 1878 by the archangel Michael and has been searching for him since. The book opens when she gets a glimpse of him in the body of a corpse. The theme of *Flames* is "love conquers death."

Stiletta: Do you have any suggestions for aspiring writers regarding the publishing process?

Member Profile: Nicola Trwst, continued

NT: Today the publishing path has opened up more than it's ever been. There's print-on-demand, there are online publishers and, of course, the traditional publishing houses. The important thing is not to rush your work and make sure of whom you are sending it to. Protect your work, whether you get a copyright or send a copy to yourself or a friend. I know many romance writers who have found their novels pirated on Asian sites.

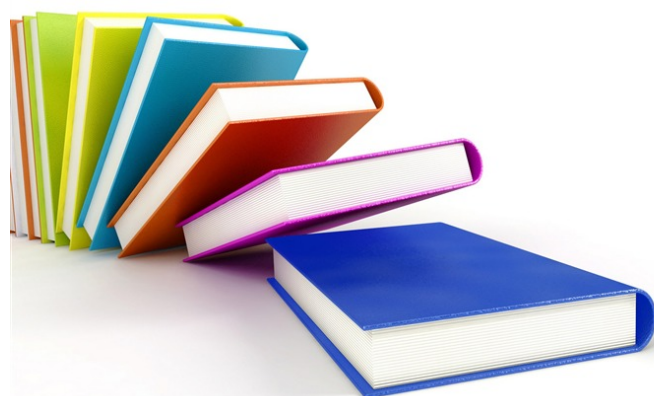
Stiletta: Your last name has no vowels. Inquiring minds want to know: how do you pronounce "Trwst"?

NT: Troost. Many years ago, I had a New York agent who wanted me to change it to Troost, but there was at that time a Nicola Troost on the New York Times Best Sellers List so I decided to be the Troost without the vowel. She was Dutch and my spelling is Gaelic.

Stiletta: What else would you like your fellow Sisters and Misterys to know about you?

NT: I love stories. The best part of writers' conferences are the stories people tell around the dinner table. I look forward to hearing all the stories of my Sisters and Misterys, not just the written ones but the day-to-day ones. The amusing and the moving ones. And the ones that make you think, "Oh, that needs to go in a book. No one will believe it." So please, as I get to know you, tell me your stories.

Nicola Trwst was interviewed by Margie Bunting, Sisters in Crime NorCal's newsletter editor.



Reading Stephen Hawking Can Project You into a Different Reality

by Bette Golden Lamb



So, it all began on a beautiful day about fifteen years ago. I was a working RN, and during my lunch hour I would hurry to my car, snap up my laptop, and start writing. But on this particular day, I'd brought a book to read instead. I'd just finished writing a new novel and starting a new project was not going to happen . . . I was drained dry.

I made myself comfortable in my car and began reading Stephen Hawking's *A Brief History of Time*. You know, things like—How did the universe begin? Does time always flow forward? Is the universe unending—or are there boundaries?

I'd been totally engrossed in the book when my mother (who'd been dead for many years) was in the car with me. This was definitely a double-blink moment. I was really stunned. She looked at me long and hard and mouthed the words, "Tell my story."

Then she said it again.

Oh, yeah? Well, no way was that going to happen!

I'd had a contentious relationship with that woman almost from the day I was born. I totally ignored the apparition and it faded away.

I should have known better. In a few minutes she was back again. I put my book down. And again she mouthed the words, "Tell my story."

All of you out there reading this: it was not only the last thing I wanted to do. It was something I would never even have attempted. Ever!

But, you know, I agreed. Because my mother was one of the most stubborn people you could ever have the misfortune to meet. At least, that's what I thought then. I knew she would haunt me forever until I told her story.

After all of the hair-pulling, and the searching and researching, I did find her story. And it was a compelling one. One that finally forced me to understand my mother. See what a really remarkable woman she was.

Reading Stephen Hawking . . . continued

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So, what is my mother's story? The one she forced me to write. One that took not only four struggling years of my life, but an additional 15 years of editing and re-editing and obsessing over *her* story. The story of a woman, my mother, with whom I'd had such a horrible relationship. A story that was never supposed to happen.

My mother's family were peasants who lived on a tiny farm outside Bobrysk, a village not too far from Minsk.

Nothing special.

But what is special is that she came from a long line of healers. Her mother—my grandmother—was known and recognized far and wide for her healing abilities. It sounds pretty New Age. Fascinating until you found out: what she healed were cows.

That's right. Cows.

Pretty amusing. But remember this was the early 1900s, the time of Tsar Nicholas II and his henchmen, the brutal Cossacks. They rode the steppes of Russia, tearing through the land murdering my people—murdering the Jews and anyone else who got in their way or was an enemy of the Royalists.

But when these Cossack monsters came to my mother's village, even the most rabid Jew haters would snatch up and gladly hide my family. It's not that they cared about them; what they cared about were their cows. Because without those cows, there would be no food—no milk, cheese, meat to survive the harsh winters.

People were expendable. Cows weren't. And cows were the only reason my family survived. That I'm even here today.

In the early 1900s, Minna Goldmich, the character I've chosen to represent my mother, was a 14-year-old peasant girl, and she killed a boy to keep from being brutalized and raped. Her life was shattered when her family sent her away to America to save her from being killed in retribution. There's no doubt, the villagers would have killed her.

Alone, she survived the ocean voyage and the horrors of Ellis Island and was sent to live in Alabama with an older brother, who put her through nursing school. In Birmingham, she soon became enmeshed in a word of blatant racism.



My mother and I. I am the same age here as Minna was when forced to leave home.

Reading Stephen Hawking . . . continued

My mother had never seen a black person until she came to the United States. But later, as a visiting nurse, she became caught up in New York's healthcare system, where she worked to help the suffering and disadvantaged, mostly in the Harlem district.



What was her solution to all of the chaos around her? To the neglect of the poor, sick, and starving people she saw every day?

She became a part of the city's Red Movement and joined its fight against the political powers that squashed the poorest of the poor.

Her entire life was one of upheaval, lost love, and activism. Through *The Russian Girl* we see the crush of a brutal 20th century – Sacco and Vanzetti, the Spanish Civil War, WWII, the Holocaust, the Rosenbergs, McCarthyism, and Vietnam.

PS: Mom, it took me a lifetime, but I finally do understand.

Bette Golden Lamb is an RN, three-dimensional artist, and writer. Unmistakably from the Bronx, she says that growing up in New York City, coupled with being an RN, is a clue as to why she loves to write dark and gritty medical thrillers. Coauthored with J.J. Lamb, the Gina Mazzio, RN Thriller Series features a gutsy nurse who can't ignore life-threatening situations. Book #8, *Bone Point*, was recently released. Bette also writes science fiction. *The Organ Harvesters I and II* will make your hair stand on end. And the newly released *The Russian Girl* is a historical novel based on the harrowing true story of a young Russian immigrant girl forced to come to America in the early 1990s. Her turbulent life is filled with upheaval, lost love, and activism in a crushing, brutal 20th century journey. www.twoblacksheep.us



Memories of LCC 2019



As always, many NorCal Sisters and Misterys attended Left Coast Crime, this year held in beautiful Vancouver, Canada. And just as many came home with fond memories . . . and a few choice photos of themselves and their fellow chapter members..

Terry Shames: LCC is my favorite convention. It's large enough to get to see lots of old and new friends, and small enough to get a chance to chat.

This year's convention in Vancouver was one of the best. The gorgeous city put on its finest weather—sunny and cool—and Canadian crime writers made us feel welcome. Every detail went smoothly. I overheard several people talking about the high quality of the panels, and I agree that the ones I attended were topnotch. You can always tell who the generous authors are—those who take sometimes silly questions and answer them in such a way to make them sound important. Toastmaster Cathy Ace did an outstanding job, with just the right balance of serious and humorous. The interviews were interesting and well-thought-out. If there were glitches at the events, it was certainly hidden. Everyone seemed to be having a wonderful time. And the icing on the cake was having our own Catriona McPherson win a Lefty Award for best humorous novel.



Cindy Sample: It was a great conference as usual. and it was wonderful to reconnect with authors and readers since I missed last year's con. Here's a photo with primarily NorCal members (and yes, we might have been a wee bit tipsy). Also, three of us were on the Amateur Sleuths panel, which was a lot of fun. Great turnout.

Ellen Kirschman: I met a lot of new people, learned a lot from some terrific writers, and enjoyed sunshine and spring blossoms in Vancouver. My favorite part was hanging out with Nancy Tingley, Pat Dusenbury, and Carol Verburg. Here is a photo, courtesy of Ann Abel, of my panel: Psychiatric Disorders in Crime Fiction. Amber Cowie was the moderator. My fellow panelists were Barbara Fradkin, Craig Henebury, and Danna Wilberg.



Memories of LCC 2019 . . . continued



See you next year in San Diego!

Member News



New Releases

Claire Ortalda's short story, "Oglethorpe's Camera," is included in the Mystery Writers of America anthology, *Odd Partners*, edited by Anne Perry, published by Ballantine Books, April 23.

The Hydra Effect by Ana Manwaring, book #2 in the JadeAnne Stone Mexico Adventures, April 2019 by del Valle Books

Getting Old Will Haunt You by Rita Lakin, book #3 in the Gladdy Gold Mystery series, April 1, 2019 by Severn House Publishers

Cyanide with Christie by Katherine Bolger Hyde, book #3 in the Crime with the Classics series, March 1, 2019 by Severn House Publishers

Blood Ink by Dana Fredsti, April 2, 2019 by Titan Books

The Girl from Diana Park by Alec Peche, book #3 in the Damian Green series, November 2018 by GBSW Publishing

Dark Picasso by Rick Homan, book #3 in the Nicole Tang Noonan Mysteries, January 28, 2019

Tied Up with Strings by Madeline McEwen, first in the Serebral Seniors Mysteries, re-released February 3, 2019 by Whitterer Press

Primary Source by Sharon St. George, book #5 in the Aimee Machado Mystery series, February 12, 2019 by Camel Press

Marcia G. Rosen (aka Glenda M. Rosen) will launch the Mystery Lovers Podcast in May. "Our mission is to inform, entertain, explore and promote an interest in all things related to mystery books. The Mystery Lovers Podcast, available on numerous hosting sites, brings conversations and guests of interest, insight, humor, even whodunit with mystery authors, publishers, book store owners, bloggers, conference attendees, and fans of all types of mysteries . . . from books to movies." Check it out at www.mysteryloverspodcast.com.

Public Appearances

Adam Plantinga (*400 Things Cops Know*, *Police Craft*) will have a booth at the Bay Area Book Festival, May 4-5. Stop on by.

Member News . . . continued

Awards

Gigi Pandian's locked-room mystery story, "The Cambodian Curse," is a finalist for the Derringer Award. The Derringer Awards are given out by the Short Mystery Fiction Society and presented at Bouchercon. Gigi's novelette was published as the lead story in *The Cambodian Curse and Other Stories*, Henery Press, October 2018.

Ann Parker's *A Dying Note* is a Foreword Indie finalist in the mystery category. Here's the [link](#).

Conferences

Check out the Public Writers Safety Association (PWSA) annual conference, July 18-21 at the Orleans Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas. The conference is open to anyone writing crime and mystery fiction or non-fiction, technical writing for public safety magazines in print or online, or anyone interested in writing. Prices are reasonable and include lunches for all three days. An additional pre-conference writing workshop is offered as well. For those of you interested in membership, we also have a members-only contest in multiple genres. -Thonie Hevron



Question of the Quarter



Have you ever had what you consider to be an “otherworldly” or psychic experience? Please describe it. If you are an author, did the experience influence your writing?

When I was a kid, one of my older brothers drew a card from a deck and said, “Guess what this is.” I guessed the correct card! By itself, that wouldn’t be much, but I did the same thing two more times. Three in a row before I became self-conscious about it. *Vinnie Hansen*

I’m not big into psychic stuff. I have a vivid dream life but I don’t consider those to be the same, even when I see dead people. ☺ Messages from myself to myself. *Susan Bickford*

I don’t believe in ghosts. But I did once have an experience I can’t quite explain. I was a patrol officer in Milwaukee and my partner and I responded to do a welfare check on an elderly person inside a residence. When we arrived at the front door, I clearly heard someone calling for help inside. My partner heard it, too. Then we heard it again. A faint but distinct voice asking for help. We forced open the door and went inside. Nobody was home. No TV or radio playing that might have accounted for the sound. We checked the neighboring homes as well. Nothing. No one. My partner and I double-confirmed that we had both heard it. We concluded that if one of us was going crazy, at least we had the company of the other . . . *Adam Plantinga*

As for otherworldly experiences, I guess I’d have to say I haven’t had such. As a scientific aside, some interesting experiments have been done in the past few years that create or induce the feeling that a “ghostly presence is near” in lab volunteers. Here’s the link to the [article](#). *Ann Parker*

I had a habit of guessing who it was whenever the phone rang. But I assumed they were on my mind anyway. I didn’t think it was psychic. But I did have an odd dramatic happening—one Sunday morning, relaxed and reading the newspaper, I suddenly felt a chill, followed by a deeply sad feeling. It was so strong that I just sat still waiting for I did not know what. Then the phone rang. It was from a cousin I hadn’t spoken to for ages. She was calling from Hawaii. Waiting for her husband’s body to return from the war in Korea. She was sobbing and begged me to meet her at my airport (in LA), where she would arrive as a stop on her way home to NYC. It was quite an experience. We were standing together, with her crying and me trying to comfort her, when two Marines came over and insisted they take over. My cousin wanted to stay with me, but they gently but firmly took her under their charge.

Question of the Quarter, continued

Another time, a friend feared for her son's life, and somehow I knew to find him at a dock at the river, ready to jump. We talked him out of it. Really happened.

I've had other events with people telling me they lost something and somehow I knew where it was. I just assumed they were lucky guesses. Or were they? (Theme of *The Twilight Zone* should be heard now.☺) **Rita Lakin**

See Bette Golden Lamb's answer to this question in the form of an article (page 23).

If you have any suggestions for future **Questions of the Quarter**, please send them to mbunting@sbcglobal.net



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 **Heather Haven**, Events ([heatherhavenstories \(at\) gmail.com](mailto:heatherhavenstories@gmail.com)), with meeting and venue suggestions and **Margie Bunting**, Newsletter ([mbunting \(at\) sbcglobal.net](mailto:mbunting@sbcglobal.net)), with newsletter article suggestions and submissions.

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