

# THE 3rd Degree

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE MYSTERY WRITERS OF AMERICA

march

## New EVP looks ahead

by Daniel J. Hale

It is my honor and privilege to serve as your Executive Vice President. I have the good fortune of taking office during a prosperous time for Mystery Writers of America. This is a period of growth and progress. There is much work to be done, but there is also much to celebrate.

Stephen King is the 2007 Grand Master at this year's Edgar® Awards. Al Roker, host and weatherman of NBC's *The Today Show*, will emcee the event. 2007 Edgar Week Co-Chairs Kris Montee and Kelly Nichols (who write together as P.J. Parrish) have also put together an Edgar Symposium that even the well-published will find informative.

If you've considered attending Edgar Week festivities in New York City, this is an outstanding year in which to do so.

MWA's new website — redesigned from the ground up — is coming soon to a computer near you. It's not only visually stunning, but it also promises to usher in unprecedented opportunities for you, the members of MWA, as well as deliver increased value for your membership dollar.

We are over 3,000 strong. We are financially sound. We have direction. We have purpose. MWA's health is directly attributable to the great care my predecessors, Reed Farrel Coleman and Noreen Wald, took to set us on a higher path. I can't thank them enough for their guidance and support as I take the helm. I hope to live up to their expectations as we move into the future.

Over the coming year, we plan to further increase the profile of our membership, our organization, and the Edgar, the award by which we're best-known.

MWA has just formed an Education Committee, one we hope will help to increase the educational opportunities for our members as well as the mystery community in general. Through the newly announced MWA:Reads Library Initiative, we plan to provide books for American youth who might not otherwise have access to the wonderful world of mystery.

Let us hear from you. Please let us know what we're doing right. By the same token, we want to know when you think things could be done differently. If you have an idea, tell us about it. This is *your* MWA. We, the leadership, are here for and because of you.

Speaking of leadership, I'm proud to carry out my EVP duties in the company of one of the best Boards of Directors in our long history. This year, Frankie Y. Bailey is your new National Secretary.

Back for a second tour of duty as MWA's Treasurer is Bob Williamson. I have the honor of serving under MWA's new President (not to mention one of my personal heroes, and a heck of a nice guy), Nelson DeMille.

Last but far from least, MWA would be lost without its Administrative Manager, Margery Flax, and her Administrative Assistant, Rachel Langley.

I could not do my job without them.



Daniel J. Hale



Lisa Scottoline consults with her writing coach. (Sheri Manson photo)

## Back to basics

By Lisa Scottoline

I just had the privilege of serving as chair of the Paperback Original Committee for the Edgar® Awards, and I'm a huge PBO fan. I started my writing life in PBO and respect so much that these books speak for themselves, without big marketing budgets to help them find an audience. The writing is terrific, and reading many of the PBO entries, I knew I was meeting tomorrow's bestselling authors.

But at the same time, I did notice that some of the writing could be improved upon, and I see the same basic mistakes in books by Famous Authors, too. I thought I'd take the time to reiterate some writing basics.

So for those of you who are just starting out in your career, or for those of you who might like a brief refresher course, here are the basics.

Before I begin, I should say that what follows are The Basics According to Me. These are my personal tricks of the trade, and I'll tell you what I know and what I believe.

That said, please be aware that I'm just a lady who taught myself how to write and am still learning, in many ways. So please feel free to disregard, or better yet, steal, any or all of these ideas.

First, write in an original, authentic voice. This is the first piece of good news, because like many basics, it will remind you of

Continued on page 6

IN THIS ISSUE:

LEGAL Q&A • VITAL SIGNS • FRESH BLOOD • MWA CHAPTER NOTEBOOKS

# boardreport



**February:** Members of Mystery Writers of America and their publishers will be able to assist financially burdened libraries — as well as promote MWA and the mystery genre in general — by donating books.

The MWA Board of Directors voted to authorize MWA:Reads to initiate a pilot program in conjunction with the West Virginia Library Commission (WVLC).

This summer, West Virginia will be one of the states using The Collaborative Summer Library Program “Get a Clue” for their summer reading program. Since many of those libraries have a limited number of children’s mysteries and limited funds (33 library systems have an annual book budget of less than \$5,000; four systems, less than \$1,000), MWA members can help by providing books to the libraries.

Each book will bear a bookplate designating them as donations from MWA:Reads, and details on how to donate will be announced soon.

In other action, the board approved the appointment of the 2007 Board of Directors Committee Chairs and Members, as well as additional funds for the Northwest Chapter for costs incurred while hosting MWA events at Left Coast Crime.

**On The P.R. Front:** Do you have a unique and interesting story about how being an MWA member has advanced your career? Did you perhaps find an agent or secure a book deal as a result of an MWA event or workshop? Did you find a mentor or co-author through MWA?

If so, our PR firm would like to hear from you. Please send your story and contact information to Aziza Johnson at [aziza@danielides.net](mailto:aziza@danielides.net). Please note that submitting a response to this request does not guarantee inclusion in any resulting media stories. Thank you.

--Sandy Balzo

The official newsletter of  
**Mystery Writers of America**  
ISSN #1535-9034  
Published 10 times per year

## MWA National Officers

PRESIDENT: Nelson DeMille  
EXECUTIVE VP: Daniel J. Hale  
SECRETARY: Frankie Y. Bailey  
TREASURER: Bob Williamson

## The Third Degree Staff

TTD COMMITTEE CHAIR: Sandra Balzo  
EDITOR: Beth Tindall  
ASST. EDITOR: Annie Chernow  
ADVERTISING MGR: Jeffrey Marks  
VITAL SIGNS: Bill Chambers  
THE MARKET: G. Miki Hayden

## EDITORIAL SUBMISSIONS:

E-MAIL: [ttd-editor@mysterywriters.org](mailto:ttd-editor@mysterywriters.org)  
For terms of submission please see:  
[www.mysterywriters.org/submit](http://www.mysterywriters.org/submit)

## VITAL SIGNS SUBMISSIONS:

(list your latest professional publication)  
Bill Chambers  
65 Meserole Ave  
Brooklyn, NY 11222  
E-MAIL: [vitalsigns@mysterywriters.org](mailto:vitalsigns@mysterywriters.org)

## THE MARKET SUBMISSIONS:

E-MAIL: [themarket@mysterywriters.org](mailto:themarket@mysterywriters.org)

## ADVERTISING SUBMISSIONS:

Jeffrey Marks  
5470 Asbury Lake #27  
Cincinnati, OH 45247-6973  
TEL: 513/481-4449  
FAX: 513/481-1198  
E-MAIL: [ads@mysterywriters.org](mailto:ads@mysterywriters.org)

## ADDRESS CHANGES AND






## OTHER MEMBERSHIP ISSUES:

Margery Flax  
Administrative Manager  
Mystery Writers of America  
17 E 47th St, 6th floor  
New York, NY 10017  
TEL: 212/888-8171  
FAX: 212/888-8107  
E-MAIL: [mwa@mysterywriters.org](mailto:mwa@mysterywriters.org)  
WEB: [www.mysterywriters.org](http://www.mysterywriters.org)

© 2007, Mystery Writers of America, Inc.

All rights reserved. The publication herein of news, advertising, seminars, classes, etc. does not imply any endorsement by or recommendation of MWA. The Edgar name and logo are registered in the US Patent and Trademark Office.

## REMINDERS

-  The MWA Anthology is still open for submissions. The deadline has been extended to May 15 – see our website ([www.mysterywriters.org](http://www.mysterywriters.org)) or previous issues of *TTD* for more details.
-  Active Status members should please return their Directory and Books in Print forms or fill them out online at our website.
-  Please **only** use the address [mwa@mysterywriters.org](mailto:mwa@mysterywriters.org) when e-mailing the National Office.
-  Want your *TTD* before everyone else? Sign up to receive it through e-mail. Call or e-mail the national office.
-  On the road? Remember, any MWA member is always welcome at any local MWA Chapter meeting.

## TTD by e-mail

If you would prefer to receive your *TTD* by e-mail, please let the national office know. You must be able to receive large PDFs (1-2M) as e-mail attachments.

# Meet your new board members

**SANDRA BALZO**

**MWA Regional Chapter:** Midwest

**My Day Job:** I'm an independent publicist

**What I Write:** I've written a couple of short stories (both in *EQMM*) that are darker, but my first book is a cozy — set in a gourmet coffee house, with amateur sleuth, Maggy Thorsen. The day the coffeehouse opens Maggy finds her partner dead in a pool of skim milk in front of the espresso machine. As you might suspect, it's humorous. Or so I hope. I've just signed on to do two more books in the series, and I'm thrilled.

**My Most Recent Book:** *Uncommon Grounds*

**My Website:** [www.SandraBalzo.com](http://www.SandraBalzo.com)

**Book(s) I'm Reading Right Now:** I hate to admit it, but despite the fact I have a stack of books beckoning seductively from the nightstand, I'm consciously trying to avoid them right now. I need to have the follow-up to *Uncommon Grounds* written by March and the next book by December, so I'm pretty much eating, sleeping, and writing.

**My Favorite Way to Avoid Working:** Reading. Which is why I'm trying not to do it. And e-mailing, of course. Oh, when my office was in the laundry room (don't ask), we always had clean clothes. And now that I'm working in the dining room, our dishes are always done. My husband threatens to move me into the garage so I can take care of the cars.



**My Website:** [www.leegoldberg.com](http://www.leegoldberg.com)

**The Book(s) I'm Reading Right Now:** *Hollywood Station* by Joseph Wambaugh

**My Favorite Way to Avoid Working:** Posting on my blog.

**JEREMIAH HEALY**

**MWA Regional Chapter:** Member, NE; Honorary Member, FL

**My Day Job:** Writing

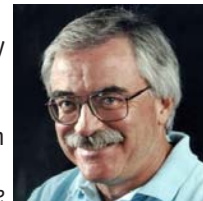
**What I Write:** Mainly crime novels, and within that, mostly private-eye and legal thrillers.

**My Most Recent Book:** *A Stain Upon the Robe* (under my pseudonym, "Terry Devane"), a legal thriller dealing with the Boston Catholic priest/sexual abuse scandal.

**My Website:** [www.jeremiahhealy.com](http://www.jeremiahhealy.com)

**Book(s) I'm Reading Right Now:** *Officer Down* by Theresa Schwegel

**My Favorite Way to Avoid Working:** Playing tennis, kayaking, fly-fishing, jogging, lifting weights, sailing — uh-oh, have I already gone too far?



**LEE GOLDBERG**

**MWA Regional chapter:** Southern California

**My Day Job:** TV writer/producer and freelance sexual surrogate. of course!

**My Most Recent Book:** *Mr. Monk and the Blue Flu* and *Diagnosis Murder: The Last Word*



**D.P. "DOUG" LYLE, M.D.**

**MWA Regional Chapter:** Southern California

**My Day Job:** Cardiologist

**What I Write:** Fiction and NF

**My Most Recent Book:** *Forensics and Fiction*, due August, 2007

**My Website:** [www.dplylemd.com](http://www.dplylemd.com)

**The Book(s) I'm Reading Right Now:** *Choice Of Evil* by Andrew Vachss and *The Fallen* by Jeff Parker

**My Favorite Way to Avoid Working:** Play the blues on one of my guitars or harass the cats.



Compiled by Annie Chernow

The Florida Chapter of Mystery Writers of America

Presents

# SLEUTHFEST LAW & ORDER MIAMI BEACH

April 19-22, 2007

GUESTS OF HONOR

Linda Fairstein

*New York Times* Best-selling Author of *BAD BLOOD*

René Balcer

Writer/Producer *Law & Order: Criminal Intent*



- Agent/Editor Appointments
- Manuscript Critiques
- Provocative Panels
- Hands-on Workshops
- Complete Forensics Track
- Author Auction
- Onsite Bookstore
- Charity Raffle
- Cocktail Party
- Oceanside Hotel
- Fun in the Sun

REGISTER ONLINE AT [SLEUTHFEST.COM](http://SLEUTHFEST.COM)

## Book Contract Trouble Spots Part 1: The "Out of Print" Clause

### Q. What should I know about "out of print" clauses?

Your grant or assignment of copyright to your publisher generally is limited only by this clause. It therefore is critical that "out of print" be defined reasonably, especially now that digital and on-demand publishing can make the literal meaning of the clause obsolete. Ideally, the definition should be pegged to the publisher's marketing efforts, not just to the book's availability—when the book no longer is in the publisher's catalog and/or available through major chains, it should be considered "out of print," regardless of whether it still can be bought online.

Unfortunately, many out of print clauses are vague, suggesting only that when a book is no longer "available," the author may ask it be declared out of print, and the publisher must respond within a certain time frame – usually six months – by either issuing a new edition or returning the rights to the author. But although there may be no print copies available (and the book remaindered), if the publisher's web site or Amazon still lists an e-book version or POD version, it's technically available.

Some other variations of the clause may state that a book is declared "out of print" if there are fewer than a certain number of books left in circulation, or if your royalties fall below a certain amount for one or more accounting periods, or if less than a certain number of e-books or POD books are sold in a year.

All the above versions of out of print clauses should be anathema to any author. It's not in your best interest to have your rights tied

up by a publisher who's no longer doing anything with them.

Once a publisher no longer actively is marketing your book and the book has stopped selling in decent quantities, your best bet is to get the rights back and either resell the rights to a new publisher (difficult, but not impossible), self-publish the book (POD publishing is great for this), or cut it up and sell the serial rights to magazines or anthologies, or so on.

Therefore, when negotiating your publishing agreements, try to get the following clause, or some close version into the contract (or modify the publisher's clause accordingly):

"Out of print' is hereby defined as the Work not being available in the United States through regular retail channels in an English language print edition (not print-on-demand or other electronic means of reproduction) and listed

in the Publisher's marketing catalog. If at any time the Work is out of print during the term of this Agreement, Author may terminate the Agreement by written request to the Publisher. Within thirty (30) days of receipt of the request, the Publisher will return all rights in the Work to Author, subject to any prior grants of rights authorized and the continuing right to retain Publisher's share of any future proceeds from those grants. If Publisher fails to provide a written reversion of rights, Author may record this page of the Agreement with the United States Copyright office in lieu of such written reversion."

*Daniel Steven is Chairman of the MWA Contracts and Grievances Committee and a publishing/media attorney (www.publishlawyer.com). This column provides general legal information; consult an attorney for application of the law to your specific circumstances.*

© 2007 Daniel Steven



What do Julie Andrews, Blake Edwards, Sue Grafton, James W. Hall, John Jakes, Stuart Kaminsky, Angela Lansbury, super agent Samuel 'Biff' Liff, and Ira Levin all have in common?

They, along with Zev Buffman (a former Broadway producer with 27 Tony nominations), have joined forces to revive the live theater production of original mystery works, via Broadway style.

Of special interest to authors is the creation of the Angie Awards, which includes Best New York Play Award (\$10,000 prize) and Most Promising New Writer Award (\$5,000.)

Buffman will join us to discuss his project "Discovering New Mysteries." The show will air on Tuesday, March 13 at 8 p.m. Central.

Along with Angela Lansbury, Buffman has set out on a mission to solicit new mystery plays, screenplays, and teleplay scripts.

In April, Kris Neri from **The Well Read Coyote** and Ray Hengst from **Remember the Alibi** will share with us the ins and outs of getting our books sold at independent bookstores and turning them

into bestsellers.

To listen to these shows, dial toll-free 866-212-0875 from USA, or 866-212-7554 from Canada, or 978-964-0049 Direct Global Toll.

When prompted, punch in the participant passcode: 7629501#. During the last fifteen minutes of the show, I'll open all lines so guests can receive questions from listeners. You can also e-mail questions and

suggestions for future guests and topics to [ontheair@mysterywriters.org](mailto:ontheair@mysterywriters.org).

Last month's show brought us the Hollywood connection. Producer Rona Edwards and Programming Director Monika Skerbelis revealed several secrets that could lead authors to a Hollywood contract. The MWA 'Members Only' website has archives of this and other shows.

*L. C. Hayden's What Others Know was a Left Coast Crime Award finalist. Her newest book, Why Casey Had to Die, was a December 2006 release.*



L.C. Hayden

Archives: <http://www.mysterywriters.org>

# chapternews



## Florida

The **SleuthFest** planning committee has come up with an idea to help authors at the always popular Agents & Editors pitch session. First, Florida has always been the home of baseball's pre-season grapefruit league so we've added a session on Friday morning called "The Perfect Pitch." In it a panel of successful authors will set out the elements of the perfect agent pitch. There will be role playing and a chance for attendees to pull together elements they hadn't thought about.

Second, we've added Pitching Coaches. A group of FMWA members will don baseball caps and work individually over the next few days with authors as they warm up before going to the mound. We're looking for a lot of perfect games.

**SleuthFest** will be held April 19 – 22 on Miami Beach at Miami Beach Resort and Spa. Please register at [www.SleuthFest.com](http://www.SleuthFest.com).

And, as a little test of who's reading TTD, the first person who e-mails Chapter President Bob Williamson with the answer to this question: "When was the first Edgar awarded?" will receive free registration for SleuthFest. Bob can be reached at [bob@bob-williamson.com](mailto:bob@bob-williamson.com). In arbitrary fashion, he is the only and final judge.

## Mid-Atlantic

March Madness infects the Mid-Atlantic Chapter, with two chapter dinners and three readings throughout the month. Patrick Hyde discusses his experiences marketing his novel at our Mar. 13 chapter dinner.

On Mar. 27, The Honorable William S. Cohen, former Secretary of Defense, and his wife Janet Langhart Cohen, will speak.

The Mid-Atlantic Chapter and Chapters: A Literary Bookstore's joint Mystery Monday lunchtime program features three acclaimed authors in March.

On Mar. 12, international bestselling author Hakan Nesser reads from his new book, *The Return*.

Award-winning author Laura Lippman appears Mar. 19 and John Billheimer, author of the Owen Allison series, rounds out the month on the 26th.

## Midwest

In March, we return to Chicago at our new "official time and place," Sun., Mar. 11, at Centuries & Sleuths Bookstore. In a departure for us, we plan to utilize this meeting as a true networking opportunity.

As writers, we all face promoting, writing, and business challenges. A gentle agenda is planned, but this day is for getting down to the nuts and bolts of the industry with other writers.

No charge to attend and coffee will be served.

April will take us back to Milwaukee, where we haven't been in a year.

There will also be a Chicago-area meeting later that month, as we continue to increase our visibility to all our widely-spread members.

## New England

Incoming President Paula Munier is happy to announce that award-winning short story writer, computer genius, and loyal MWA member Stephen D. Rogers has agreed to take on the mantle of Vice-President of NE-MWA. Together Steve and Paula will be creating and conducting the first-ever comprehensive survey of the chapter membership, coming to your online or snail mailbox soon.

The Mar. 6 meeting will feature Bill Hughes, a law enforcement veteran well-versed in all major felony investigations from narcotics to murder. A former detective, he also served as Supervisor for the Judicial District of Fairfield at Bridgeport, where he reviewed all felony arrest and search warrant applications issued in the District. He was also in charge of all extradition to and from the Judicial district involving the Inter-State Agreement on Detainers.

## New York

The New York area chapter has been busy with some great speakers at our dinner meetings. In January, we listened to fourth generation forensic document examiner John Osborn speak about his family's business of finding answers to crimes by looking at handwriting and other aspects of the paper trail. Bruno Hauptmann did write the ransom notes, said Osborn, who examined the notes himself.

In February, Shelly Reuben, Certified Arson Investigator, explained how her real life work has turned into cases in her novels, such as the just-released *Skirt Man*. Reuben talked about some major cases in our area such as the arson at the Happy Land Social Club where, tragically, 87 people died in a revenge fire.

## Northern California

NorCal MWA's next meeting is Mar. 31, 5:30-7:30 p.m., at the Foto-Grafix Bookstore in the Cartoon Art Museum, 655 Mission Street (at 3rd and Mission Streets) in San Francisco. Join us for wine and cheese and a great talk!

Our featured speakers will be Keith E. Petersen Inman, B.S., M.Crim. Senior Forensic Scientist and John Jacobson, B.S. (eq.), Senior Forensic Scientist from Forensica, a private crime lab. These experts will talk about their work at crime scene investigations:

"The call comes in. Someone's dead. The analyst packs everything his experience says he will need to probe, sketch, model, photo, measure and recreate, and a whole lot more... This talk will bring you to the scene and provide insight into the thought and analytical processes used to transport the crime scene to the courtroom for final adjudication by a jury."

## Northwest

MWA-NW's sponsorship of a special "Underground Tour" during **Left Coast Crime** in Seattle was a resounding success. Thanks to the board members and those MWA members from both our own and other chapters that helped give us all something to talk about that following Saturday morning!

# Back to basics

*Continued from Page 1*

something your mother told you long ago — *be yourself*. As applied to writing, that means, write in your own voice. Tell the story the way you think your character would. If your character is a lot like you, (and why shouldn't she be), make her sound like you. Don't try to get fancy or prettify your exposition; just tell it as naturally as possible, but always voicey and real.

Conversely, if your character is someone different from you — much younger, for example — make sure you're writing in the voice of a much younger person. Choose the voice, and stay in it, in each and every sentence. That means figures of speech, slang, and even references must conform.

For example, I always seem to end up writing in the voice of someone who's about 30 years old. I'm not 30, and don't think I ever was. But I have to make sure I sound like a 30 year old when I write.

If I can't channel this myself, I go spend time with 30 year olds. And I eavesdrop. The same goes for cops, detectives, forensic types, tax lawyers, and teenagers. (Like, totally.)

However you do it, make sure your voice rings true and remains consistent.

Second, have a terrific main character. Here is what I learned over writing 15 novels: in my opinion, it's a better idea to have a likable main character than one who's unlikable. I know that seems obvious, but it's not. What I've learned is that the reader is going to spend about 400 pages with this character, or at least the character's consciousness, and at bottom, it has to be somebody they'd like to have lunch with.

The good news is that it's not that hard to create a likable character, because it's more fun to write somebody likable than somebody unlikable. (I divorced somebody unlikable, so I know.)

As I said in my caveat above, this is my personal opinion about main characters. I know there are many of you who are groaning at this advice, and who want to write vicious, psychotic, or exceedingly dark main characters, and you're completely entitled to that. And, of course, we all want to write a main character, who, though likable, is sufficiently complex. Nobody's interested in a Goody Two Shoes — least of all, me.

But there has to be some element of your main character with whom readers will identify, whether it's her secret crush on her doctor, her love of iced green tea lattes, or her hatred of pantyhose. That's the thing that makes them relatable.

I think an identification with the main character is especially necessary in suspense novels. As the author, you want the reader worried all the time about your character's health and well-being. It's so much easier to do this with a likable character.

Here's the proof that what I'm saying is true: I have a daughter, and everything about her interests me. She's in college, and if she has a French test at two o'clock, I'm wondering how she's doing at two o'clock. Now, to be sure, French tests don't qualify as lethal jeopardy in a thriller. But if you love the main character, as I love my kid, then even the small things in your heroine's fictional life can be compelling. It works to drive the main plot — will she get out of this alive? And it works as well for the subplot — will she get a date, maybe even with her doctor?

Third, once you have a likable main character, keep it simple.

Remember that you're telling that person's story. Sometimes I keep in mind this mantra: *subject, then verb*. (That's as simple as it gets.) By this I mean, always start with the person whose story you're going to tell, and then describe what that person does. Readers want to know up front who their hero is. You can almost imagine them asking, "*Who am I supposed to like?*"

I know I'm generalizing here, but if your reader doesn't know who your main character is from the beginning of your book, or if you switch main characters on him after he's allied with the wrong character, he'll be confused and you will have broken that nice bond between you and your reader.

And he'll put your book down.

The rule pertains even if you have several plotlines, told by different characters. I know that the cool kids do this, and I tried it a couple of times, but my head exploded. Again, if you are doing this, you still have to keep it simple. Just tell the story.

All eight of them.

At the same time.

The same goes for your sentences; keep them simple. If you're concentrating on telling a story, and not showing off, it will usually come out that way.

When I re-edited my own work, as I just did for my next book, I was amazed at how frequently I was simply confused — and I had written these lousy sentences!

I realized that almost every time I was leading with some kind of clause that didn't involve the main character, or otherwise convoluting something that was really quite simple. The way I fixed it was to say each sentence out loud, whether it was dialogue or not.

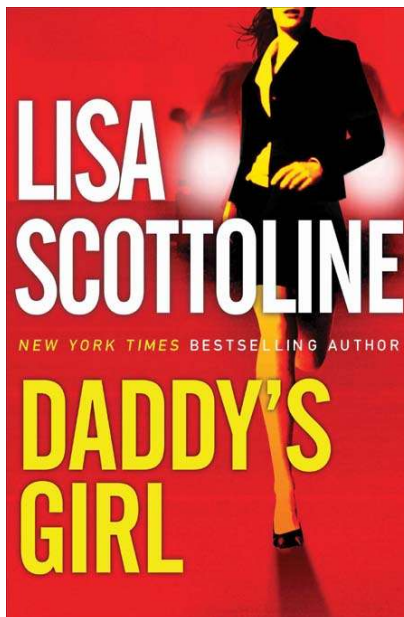
As strange as this remedy sounds, it works. If the sentence is too long or too weird to say, it's not a good enough sentence and it's probably confusing. Likewise, when I get stuck on a word, looking for the perfect verb or the way to end a chapter, I just say to myself: *tell the story*. If you just tell the story, it will come out fine.

Finally, now that you got your story out onto the page, be really tough on yourself when you edit. Make each sentence justify its existence. It has to either inform the character, drive the plot, or be hysterically funny. (If that's your thing.)

If it doesn't have a reason for being, you must strike it out. I mean it. Even if you love it and think it's the best sentence in the world. It's really dangerous to fall in love with your sentences. Your sentences are only a small part of the whole. What you have to fall in love with, ultimately, is your book. And if you have a lot of stinky sentences larding up your book, or even a lot of really good sentences larding up your book, the pace will lag and the suspense stall.

I hope these basics help you. And when I need a refresher myself, I re-read *On Writing*, by our Grand Master Stephen King, and *Bird by Bird* by Annie Lamott. Both books are thoughtful, encouraging, and exactly the thing to improve your novel.

*Lisa Scottoline is the Edgar Award winning, bestselling author of 14 novels, the latest of which is Daddy's Girl.*



# Edgar® Symposium

Date: Wednesday, April 25, 2007

Location: Lighthouse International – Lighthouse Auditorium  
E 59th Street (between Lexington and Park Avenues) New York, NY 10022

**What:** An entire day of top-notch panels. Novice or pro, you'll benefit from hearing the experts discuss their strategies for all facets of writing and publishing.

**On-site Bookstore:** Partners & Crime will be selling the latest novels by the panelists. Signings will follow

**Symposium Schedule** (subject to change).

**8:15-9:00: Registration & Continental Breakfast**  
**9:00-10:00: The State of the Market**

**Moderator:** P.J. Parrish, Authors (AN UNQUIET GRAVE)  
**Panelists:** Neil Nyrén, Editor, Penguin-Putnam  
Kelley Ragland, Editor, St. Martin's Press  
Meg Ruley, Agent, Jane Rotrosen Agency

Three top NY editors and agents talk about trends, what they want to see more of, what's the new big thing, and what it takes to survive in today's rough waters.

**10:15 -11:15: Cats, Cozies, Chicks and Corpses**

**Moderator:** Elaine Viets, Author (MURDER WITH RESERVATIONS)  
**Panelists:** Chris Grabenstein, Author (SLAY RIDE)  
David Handler, Author (THE MAN WHO DIED LAUGHING)  
Gwen Hunter, Author (BLACKWATER SECRETS)  
Nancy Pickard, Author (THE VIRGIN OF SMALL PLAINS)

Redefining the "Traditional" mystery for the 21st century

**11:30 – 12:30: Thrill Me! Chill Me!**

**Moderator:** Jeremiah Healy, Author (TURNABOUT)  
**Panelists:** Sandra Brown, Author (RICOCHET)  
Bary Eisler, Author (THE LAST ASSASSIN)  
Joseph Finder, Author (KILLER INSTINCT)  
Laurie King, Author (THE ART OF DETECTION)

Four very different takes on how to maximize the one essential ingredient of all crime fiction – suspense.

**12:30 – 1:30: Lunch Break**

**1:30-2:30: Elements of a Great Book**

**Moderator:** S.J. Rozan, Author (IN THIS RAIN)  
**Panelists:** Harlan Coben, Author (THE WOODS)  
Nelson DeMille, MWA President, Author (WILD FIRE)  
Janet Evanovich, Author (MORE PLUMS IN ONE)  
Donald Westlake, Author (WHAT'S SO FUNNY?)

No matter what type of crime novel you write, quality is all. Four of the best dissect what makes for a great read.

**2:45-3:45: Stand Divided or Stand-Alone?**

**Moderator:** Reed Farrel Coleman, Author, (SOUL PATCH)  
**Panelists:** Robin Burcell, Author, (COLD CASE)  
Lee Child, Author, (THE HARD WAY)  
Steve Hamilton, Author (STOLEN SEASON)  
Julia Spencer-Fleming, Author (ALL MORTAL FLESH)

An exploration of the pros and cons of a continuing series vs. writing stand-alones.

**4:00 – 5:00: From the Writer's Desk: Q&A with Stephen King**

**Interviewer:** Charles Ardai, Author and 2007 Edgar® Nominee for Best Short Story  
**Guest:** Stephen King, 2007 MWA Grand Master

**Cost:** \$90 members, \$125 non-members - with a \$35 retroactive discount for those who join within 30 days after Symposium. You may also pay online using PayPal – please sign up at:  
<http://mysterywriters.org/symposium.htm>

**Signing Guidelines:** All books to be signed must be purchased on site. There will be a limit of 2 books for Stephen King.

**PLEASE** include the below information with your reservation and check or credit card information. We accept Visa, Mastercard and American Express. Please note that the check is for the Symposium and make it payable to:

**Mystery Writers of America – 17 East 47 St., New York, NY 10017**  
**Phone: 212-888-8171 Fax: 212-888-8107**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Country: \_\_\_\_\_

# of Reservations: \_\_\_\_\_

Names of Additional Registrants: \_\_\_\_\_

Credit Card: \_\_\_\_\_

Account #: \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date: \_\_\_\_\_

V-Code # \_\_\_\_\_ (this is the 3-digit number on the back of the card, usually found after the "repeat" of the account number. We cannot process your credit card without it.)

## Edgar® week

Continued from Page 12

If you visit [www.theedgars.com](http://www.theedgars.com), you'll find everything you need to know about the events and the nominated books, as well as biographies and photos of the nominees.

So join us for the "Black and White and Read All Over" Edgar® Week celebration. Mystery Maven Al Roker of *The Today Show* will be our emcee guide to the gala evening, which will include more than a couple surprises and surprise guests.

Oh, one last thing. We'd like you to dress up this year for the banquet. Formal, preferably in black and white with a touch of red.

If that means a tux with a discreet blood stain — hey, that works for us.

And Edgar would surely approve.



Today Show star Al Roker

**Edgars website:**  
**[www.theedgars.com](http://www.theedgars.com)**

**Northern Californian Meredith Phillips founded Perseverance Press almost 30 years ago, originally to publish first-time mystery writers. After a hiatus to do freelance editing, she joined forces in 1999 with John and Susan Daniel to become independent mystery publishers of established midlist writers. PP/JD's books have been nominated 7 times: for the Edgar, Ellis, Anthony, Agatha, Macavity, Barry, and Shamus awards.**

*What kinds of mysteries do you acquire?*

Perseverance Press/John Daniel & Co publishes only mysteries by established writers: either continuations of their ongoing series (Janet LaPierre, Rebecca Rothenberg, Lora Roberts, Valerie Malmont, Lev Raphael, Kathy Lynn Emerson, Jeanne Dams, Laura Crum, Elaine Flinn); beginnings of new series (Eric Wright, Hal Glatzer, Taffy Cannon); or stand-alones (Cannon, Jon Breen). We've published other terrific writers, too, but we've got 30-something books now in print and space here precludes the complete list.

*What turns you on in a manuscript? What turns you off?*

I look for a distinctive voice, a sense of place, sympathetic protagonists, a clever plot. What turns me off: unnecessary and graphic violence; a setting that's uninteresting to me; too much suspension of disbelief; a substitution of merely an unusual job or milieu for a realistic world with thoughtfully developed characters. My personal preference is for books in the middle of the spectrum between very cozy and very hard-boiled. That is the sort of book I'm likely to acquire to publish.

*What are some of the typical mistakes seasoned authors make?*

Seasoned writers' errors tend to be those that careful editing can fix. I wouldn't mind if writers did more copyediting themselves; any writer can make a style sheet and character list so that characters' names and eye colors, or the spelling of a word, don't change every few pages! Also, a careful timeline would help, and Google can do excellent fact-checking. I must confess, I do love to save a writer from small careless mistakes. It's probably obvious from the foregoing that the editing I generally have to do falls more into the line-and-copyediting-category than the developmental/substance kind. It's wonderful to work with professional authors who know what they're doing!

*What current trends in the mystery business do you find the most interesting/disturbing?*

I see the mystery spectrum increasingly splitting into the two extremes I referred to: too much of a dichotomy between cozy/noir, chicklit/tough guy—or however you want to label it. The traditional mystery that brought so many of us into the field originally shouldn't now be confined to the "cute and coy," as critic Dick Adler puts it.

Also, of course, I deplore big publishing's emphasis on blockbusters and lack of interest in the midlist (although that's where our authors usually come from, and we're glad to have them). And the number of closings of independent mystery bookstores is ominous.

*What advice do you have for authors in the current publishing climate?*

The first bit of advice is always the one about the day job; I'd add not to expect to get rich or famous with our publishing company. Mainly, I'd say to seasoned authors to go on writing the books you love, because you've proven that other people love them, too. And don't prostitute your talent to follow fickle and transitory trends.



## agents&editors

Pari Noskin Taichert



*Do you buy series from proposals? If so, what are you looking for?*

I have bought a new book in a series from a proposal, but I prefer reading some or all of the new one first (in hard copy, of course). What I'm looking for is an interesting variation on an established theme.

Writers should be aware that we must have a complete and edited manuscript a year before publication date, due to other calls on our designer's and my partners' time.

*Pari Noskin Taichert is a two-time Agatha Award finalist for her Sasha Solomon mystery series from the University of New Mexico Press. The Socorro Blast, her third novel, will be available Jan. '08.*



*Continued from Page 10*

### REQUEST FOR CHANGE TO MEMBERSHIP STATUS

- GOODWILL**, Susan **MW** Affiliate to Active. *BrigaDOOM* (Midnight Ink) March 2007
- HALL**, Karen **MW** Affiliate to Active. *Unreasonable Risk* (ArcheBooks) August 2006
- LOFLAND**, Lee **NE** Affiliate to Active. *Howdunit – Police Procedure & Investigation* (Writer's Digest Books) September 2007
- MARBURG**, Peggy **MW** Affiliate to Active. *Faux Finished* (Berkley Prime Crime) February 2007
- TOUSSAINT**, Maggie **SE** Affiliate to Active. *In For A Penny* (Five Star) June 2008

## WritersTrack.com

*Take writing classes from your easy chair.*

A whole new way to learn to write--by conference call. No driving, no parking, no rushing--take our in-depth, nuts-and-bolts basic fiction course in the comfort of your favorite chair. Taught by Edgar-winner Julie Smith. New course starts January 25th.

**Check out [www.WritersTrack.com](http://www.WritersTrack.com) for details.**



# chapternews



Continued from Page 5

## Rocky Mountain

Troy Cook, author of *47 Rules of Highly Effective Bank Robbers*, kept attendees at our Feb. 8 meeting well-entertained with informational tidbits from his writing experience, plus stories from his film making career. There's nothing like hiring the Russian mafia as protection for your film crew while making a movie set in Russia...

For our March 8th Thursday night chapter meeting at the Denver Press Club, a panel of writers and directors from CSI Miami will discuss their show and manuscripts. This will be a "don't-miss" meeting.

And, since 2008 Left Coast Crime is scheduled to be held in Denver, RM-MWA is figuring out how to set up an MWA Hospitality Room, plus have a strong appearance at the conference. Margery has already promised to offer suggestions and assist us in our endeavors.

## Southeast

**Killer Nashville 2007** will be held Aug. 17-19, at the Marriott Cool Springs Convention Center in Nashville, TN. All authors interested in signing books or being on panels should send inquiries to [contact@killernashville.com](mailto:contact@killernashville.com). For updates and additional information, see [www.KillerNashville.com](http://www.KillerNashville.com).

## Southern California

The SoCal Chapter board and past chapter presidents held an all day meeting on Sat., Feb. 17. Among other things, it was decided to start more aggressively promoting SoCal-MWA's Speakers Bureau; revamp and enhance the website with both public features and a members-only section; open some of the meetings with programs to the public; look into creating supplementary programs to better include far-flung members in Arizona, Nevada and Hawaii; make an electronic (PDF) version of the newsletter the default, with an option to receive it in hard copy; and to drink more — starting with a regular members' cocktail get-together on the last Wednesday of each month.

## Southwest

Conference chair Cindy Daniel has announced that the keynote speaker for the SW chapter's annual conference in 2008 will be the Tony Hillerman. Cindy also reports that excitement continues to grow over the 2007 conference, **Hard Boiled Heros and Cozy Cats**, to be held June 15 -16 in Dallas, TX, with David Morrell as the keynote speaker. At their Feb. 17 meeting, the Houston branch of the SW chapter welcomed David Dow, law professor at the University of Houston. Since 2000, David Dow has served as the Director of the Texas Innocence Network, a non-profit organization serving prisoners who are wrongly convicted or sentenced to death.


## The experienced editorial staff of A-1 Editing Service, LLC

offers comprehensive services for your fiction or nonfiction manuscript. Free sample edit of the first five pages and critique of the first fifteen pages.

Emphasis on first-time and mystery writers. Go to [www.alphaediting.com](http://www.alphaediting.com) to read our Editors' Bios, References, and Clients' Comments, and ask for our *What We Do Guide* for more information.

[nicole@alphaediting.com](mailto:nicole@alphaediting.com) (866) 559-9603 toll free

## Complete Range of Editorial Services

Professional editor and published author offers complete editorial workout to new and experienced mystery writers. 

Benefit from years of editorial experience at major publishing houses. Honest evaluation, sensitive critique, plot/character development, line editing, rewrites.

Helga Schier, Ph.D.: 310-828-8421, [withpenandpaper@verizon.net](mailto:withpenandpaper@verizon.net)

## Creative Websites for Creative People

- Web design/redesign • Flash animation
  - Monthly site maintenance
  - Blog and/or newsletter set-up
- 30- and 60-second promotional book videos
- Custom design to fit your genre or style
  - Superior site functionality
  - Excellent customer service
  - Competitive rates

*"I've never worked with a web designer more knowledgeable, talented, responsive or capable than Justin Knupp {of Stonecreek Media.}"*

-- Brenda Novak

Bestselling author of *Dead Silence* (July 2006)

Contact us today!

[www.stonecreekmedia.com](http://www.stonecreekmedia.com)

 Stonecreek  
Media  
identity by design

# freshblood



## ACTIVE

- BAYARD, Louis MA** *The Pale Blue Eye* (HarperCollins) 2006  
**COGGINS, Paul SW** *The Lady is the Tiger* (Avon) 1987  
**COMBES, Mark MW** *Wrecked* (Midnight Ink) June 2007  
**FINKELSTEIN, Honora MW** *The Lawyer Who Died Trying* (Hilliard & Harris) 2007  
**FLACCO, Anthony Adrian SOCIAL** *The Last Nightingale* (Random House) June 2007  
**GLIDEWELL, Jeanne MW** *Leave No Stone Unturned* (Five Star) May 2008  
**HAINES, Kathryn Miller NY** *The War Against Miss Winter* (HarperCollins) 2007  
**HILL, A.W. MW** *The Last Days of Madame Rey* (Carroll & Graf) March 2007  
**HYNES, Charles NY** *Triple Homicide* (Thomas Dunne Books/St. Martin's Press) June 2007  
**KAPLAN, Janice NY** *Looks to Die For* (Touchstone/Fireside) February 2007  
**RAMSEY, Frederick SOCIAL** *Buffalo Mountain* (Poisoned Pen Press) 2007  
**RICCIO, Dolores Stewart NE** *The Divine Circle of Ladies Courting Trouble* (Kensington) March 2006  
**STRAW, Tom NY** *The Trigger Episode* (Carroll & Graf) March 2007

## ASSOCIATE

- ALLEN, Wendy MA** Librarian  
**GOODWIN, John SOCIAL** Publisher – Galaxy Press  
**HENGST, Ray SW** Bookseller – Remember the Alibi Mystery Bookstore  
**HOLLEY, Pam Spencer MA** Librarian  
**KUDISCH, Diane NOCAL** Bookseller – San Francisco Mystery Bookstore  
**REEVES, Kizman NY** Bookseller – Partners & Crime

## AFFILIATE

- BAUGNIET, Gail SOCIAL** Dispatcher  
**BOS, Marilyn NW** Violin/Viola Teacher  
**BRAUN, Denny SOCIAL**  
**BUTLER, Rebecca Roxburgh SE** Retired Professor of English  
**CASTLEMAN, Michael NOCAL** Medical Journalist  
**CHAMBERS, Diana NOCAL** Teacher  
**CHANDO, Joanne-Marie FL** Broker/Owner Avaral Gulf Coast Properties  
**COHEN, Phyllis NY** Retired Teacher  
**CONNELLI, Marco NY** New York City Police Detective  
**DAVIDSON, Hilary NY** Journalist  
**DERBAS, Rita NOCAL**  
**DUFOUR, Annie NY** Epidemiologist  
**FREEMAN, Gwen SOCIAL** Lawyer  
**GILIOTTI, Laurence RM**  
**HALBERT, Marianne MW** Attorney  
**HAUPT, Rosamond NW**  
**HODGE, Leah SW**  
**LIONTONIA, Valaney Edwards MW**  
**LOTHLORIE, Elle RM** Research Assistant  
**MATTOX, Kim NW** Retired Fire Captain  
**MILLER, Stephen MW** Insurance  
**MORIN, Patricia NOCAL** Psychotherapist  
**MORRISON, Sarah FL** Physician  
**MYERS, Monica Faeth MA** Scientist/Project Manager  
**NIXON, Clifton SW** Cr. Manager  
**NORTH, Darden SE** Obstetrician-Gynecologist  
**PEARSON, A. Scott SE** Surgeon  
**REESE, Jeffrey NY** Copywriter  
**ROUSE, Richard MA** Game Designer/Creative Director  
**RUSSELL, Katharine SOCIAL** Biotech Communications/Management Consultant  
**SMITH, Jane Davis MW** Certified Dental Assistant  
**SOLHEIM, Beth MW** Human Resources Secretary  
**WHEATON, Chris SE** Corporate/Academic Writer

## REINSTATEMENT

- ADKINS, Leslie NW** Affiliate  
**ALLEN, Stacy SE** Affiliate  
**BLOEBAUM, Billie NW** Associate  
**BOEHRINGER, Heidi FL** Active  
**BREITWIESER, Helen SOCIAL** Associate  
**CARPENTER, C.J. NY** Affiliate  
**CONRAD, Hy NY** Active  
**HILLHOUSE, Raelynn SOCIAL** Active  
**KURLAND, Michael NOCAL** Active  
**LEPOVETSKY, Lisa NY** Active  
**MCALEER, Andrew NE** Active  
**MILLER, G. Wayne NE** Active  
**MONTANARI, Richard MW** Active  
**WILLIAMS, Suzanne SE** Active

Continued on Page 8

# MAKE THE MYSTERY BEGIN ON THE COVER



BestBookcovers.com

Cover Art | Fiction · Mystery · Suspense



Quality, one-of-a-kind cover art  
 for Mystery & Suspense authors and publishers  
 978.454.4248

# vitalsigns



## Books

Peter Abrahams, *Nerve Damage*, William Morrow  
 Cordelia Frances Biddle, *The Conjurer*, St. Martin's Press/Thomas Dunne Books  
 Lawrence Block, *Lucky At Cards*, Hard Case Crime  
 James O. Born, *Field of Fire*, Putnam  
 Rhys Bowen, *In Dublin's Fair City*, St. Martin's Minotaur  
 Maggie Bruce, *Gourdfellas*, Berkley Prime Crime  
 Ken Bruen, *Priest*, St. Martin's Minotaur  
 David Corbett, *Blood of Paradise*, Ballantine/Mortalis  
 Lorenzo Carcaterra, *Chasers*, Ballantine  
 Blaize Clement, *Duplicity Dogged the Dachshund*, St. Martin's Minotaur  
 Kate Collins, *Acts of Violets*, Signet  
 John F. Dobbyn, *Neon Dragon*, Hardscrabble Crime  
 Joanne Fluke, *Key Lime Pie Murder*, Kensington  
 Christine Goff, *Death Shoots a Birdie*, Berkley Prime Crime  
 Susan Goodwill, *BrigaDOOM*, Midnight Ink  
 Ed Gorman, *Fools Rush In*, Pegasus  
 Beth Groundwater, *A Real Basket Case*, Five Star  
 James W. Hall, *Magic City*, St. Martin's Minotaur  
 Richard Hawke, *Cold Day in Hell*, Random House  
 L. C. Hayden, *Why Casey Had to Die*, Five Star  
 James Patrick Hunt, *The Betrayers*, St. Martin's Minotaur  
 Roberta Isleib, *Deadly Advice*, Berkley Prime Crime  
 Lisa Jackson, *Shiver*, Zebra  
 Craig Johnson, *Death Without Company*, Penguin  
 Linda O. Johnston, *Meow is for Murder*, Berkley Prime Crime  
 Jerry Kennealy, *Jigsaw*, St. Martin's Minotaur  
 Marne Davis Kellogg, *Friends in High Places*, St. Martin's Press  
 Christine Kling, *Wreckers' Key*, Ballantine  
 Margit Liesche, *Lipstick and Lies*, Poisoned Pen Press  
 Jess Lourey, *June Bug*, Midnight Ink  
 Tim Maleeny, *Stealing the Dragon*, Midnight Ink  
 Nancy Martin, *A Crazy Little Thing Called Death*, NAL  
 G.A. McKeveatt, *Fat Free and Fatal*, Kensington Books  
 T. Jefferson Parker, *Storm Runners*, William Morrow  
 Sandra Parshall, *Disturbing the Dead*, Poisoned Pen  
 Anne Perry, *At Some Disputed Barricade*, Ballantine  
 Cathy Pickens, *Hog Wild*, St. Martin's Minotaur  
 Joel Rose, *The Blackest Bird*, W.W. Norton  
 S.J. Rozan, *In This Rain*, Delacorte Press  
 John Russo, *The Vandenburg Diamonds*, Twilight Times Books  
 Lisa Scottoline, *Daddy's Girl*, HarperCollins  
 Sarah Shaber, *Shell Game*, St. Martin's Minotaur  
 Wendy Corsi Staub, *All the Way Home*, Zebra  
 Wendy Corsi Staub, *Don't Scream*, Zebra  
 Wendy Corsi Staub, Lisa Jackson and Beverly Barton, *Most Likely to Die*, Zebra  
 Marianne Stillings, *Arousing Suspicions*, Avon/HarperCollins  
 William G. Tapply, *Gray Ghost*, St. Martin's Minotaur  
 Leslie Wheeler, *Murder at Gettysburg*, Worldwide Mystery  
 Kate White, *Lethally Blond*, Warner Books  
 Stephen White, *Dry Ice*, Dutton

## Short Stories

Michael Beres, "The Denver Boot," Amazon Shorts, February 2007  
 Luisa Buehler, "The Scout Master," Echelon Press, January 2007  
 Lorenzo Carcaterra, "The Girl in the Park," *Strand Magazine*, Feb-May 2007  
 Renée Gardner, "Company Business," Orchard Press Mysteries, January 2007  
 Beth Groundwater, "The Murder Cache," *Map of Murder Anthology*, Red Coyote Press  
 Carol Kilgore, "Buñuelos for the Beach," *Map Of Murder Anthology*, Red Coyote Press

Chelle Martin, "You Bet Your Life," *Gone Coastal: A Mystery Anthology*, Seven Sisters Press 2006  
 Marilyn Meredith, "Death of a Deceiver," *Gone Coastal: A Mystery Anthology*, Seven Sisters Press, 2006  
 Marilyn Meredith, "Resurrection," *Never Safe*, Seven Sisters Press, 2007  
 Patrick Picciarelli, "Be Careful What You Wish For," *Hardboiled Magazine*, Issue # 36  
 Albert Tucher, "Markers," *Thuglit*, Feb-March 2007

## Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine, March/April 2007

Ed Gorman, "Brothers"  
 James Powell, "Ivory Crossroads"  
 Gillian Roberts, "The Old Wife's Tale"  
 Frank T. Wydra, "Doorway To Heaven"  
 Keith Snyder, "Dead Gray"  
 Marilyn Todd, "Death At Delphi"  
 Andrew Klavan, "Hero Time"  
 Peter Lovesey, "Say That Again"  
 Edward D. Hoch, "The Girl Next Door"

## Department of First Stories

Michael Haskins, "Murder In Key West"

## Alfred Hitchcock's Mystery Magazine, March 2007

Ron Goulart, "Dickie Danger, Boy Detective"  
 Edward D. Hoch, "First Blood"  
 M.J. Jones, "Ten Little Gangsters"  
 Janice Law, "The Limner's Masterpiece"  
 Dan Crawford, "Emeralds? Oh, Those Emeralds"  
 Dave Zeltserman, "Dave Stevens, I Presume?"

## Fact Crime Books

Robert Mladinich and Michael Benson, *Lethal Embrace*, Kensington

## Mystery Scene, Winter #98 2007

Hank Wagner, "Dana Stabenow: Dispatches from Alaska"  
 Oline Cogdill, "Cozy with an Edge: M.C. Beaton's Witty Novels"  
 Michael Mallory, "Jonny Quest: Drawn to Adventure"  
 David Corbett, "Robert B. Parker: A Code and a Quest"  
 Brian Skupin, "What's Happening With Lauren Haney"

## Television Option

Jesse Ascencio series, optioned for series by Merging Lanes Entertainment and Encore Productions. Actor Hector Luis Bustamante to play Jesse. Pilot based upon novel *The Wonderland Murders*, by Kent Braithwaite.

Submit your listing to Bill Chambers at [vitalsigns@mysterywriters.org](mailto:vitalsigns@mysterywriters.org), or use the mailing address listed on page 2 of TTD.

## New England Crime Fiction Contest

In memory of Al Blanchard, co-chair of the first three New England Crime Bake Conferences, NEMWA President, and member of Sisters in Crime, the New England Crime Bake Committee is sponsoring its third annual short crime fiction contest. The prize is \$100, plus publication in Level Best Books' fifth anthology of crime fiction. The story must be a crime story by a New England author OR with a New England setting, previously unpublished (in print or electronically), must not be more than 5,000 words in length, and may include the following genres: mystery, thriller, suspense, caper, and horror, but no torture/killing of children or animals. This is a blind contest with NO entry fee. The deadline for submissions is April 30, 2007. It is okay to submit the same story again, provided it has not been published in the meantime. It is also okay to submit more than one story. The winner will be a guest of the Crime Bake Committee at the New England Crime Bake, held every year in mid-November, where the award will be presented in person.

Mystery Writers of America Inc.

17 E 47th Street, 6th Floor

New York NY 10017

*March 2007 issue*



## *In This Issue*

- Lisa Scottoline gets Back to Basics
- Intro to MWA's new Executive VP
- SleuthFest is coming up
- New Board members
- Edgars overview, symposium schedule

## You won't want to miss Edgar® week

*By P.J. Parrish, Edgar Week Chair*

He's a homely little fellow. Large of head and sad of eye. And what's with that ugly bird tie he's wearing? It's no wonder we keep him in the closet, letting him out in public only once a year like some weird uncle.

Good old Edgar...

Okay, he's funny looking. And at 61, he's not exactly a hip dude any longer. But is there any writer out there who wouldn't kill to take the guy home come April 26?

That's the night when Mystery Writers of America honors the best of its genre, when the ballroom of the Grand Hyatt in New York fills up with publishers, agents, editors, press folks, writers, booksellers and — oh yes, about 50 or so very nervous nominees.

This year our theme is "Black and White and Read All Over." It's a nod to the MWA official colors. But it's also a statement of what MWA is all about — a worldwide club of the best crime writers working today.

This year, we've decided to expand on that idea and recognize the wonderful diversity of talent and genres that fall under the MWA umbrella. From the hardest boiled noir to the most elegant historical. From the coziest caper to the creepiest vampire tale. From pebbled-glass PI stories to pulse-pounding thrillers. There's room for all in

this club.

Yeah, even cat mysteries.

And who better to personify this spectrum than the writer we will honor as Grand Master? Stephen King's prolific output of novels, novellas and short stories deftly traverse the terrains from horror to mystery and back again.

Likewise, the Edgar® Symposium this year will pay homage to the wide range of talent working under the MWA banner.

We'll start the day with a panel of agents and editors talking about the state of the market.

Then we'll offer up four panels of bestselling authors talking about their craft — from redefining the "traditional" mystery to how to ratchet up the suspense.

And you won't want to miss this diverse group — Nelson DeMille, Janet Evanovich, Harlan Coben and Donald Westlake — as they try to define the common elements of a great book. Or the Stephen King interview.

Plus, Partners & Crime will operate an on-site bookstore, hosting the participating authors for signings — including King, who will be signing *Lisey's Story*.

We also have something new this year: the first website dedicated solely to the Edgar Awards.



*Continued on Page 7*