

BLOODLETTER

CRIMINAL ENTERPRISES

Chapter News

BOLD VOICES EXPANDING HORIZONS IN CRIME FICTION

On Thursday, September 19th, our chapter reconvened at the Jefferson Market Library, after a summer hiatus, for a panel tackling the subject of diversity in crime fiction. The panel featured *USA Today* bestselling author **Cate Holahan**; our outgoing chapter president and author of the Chiara Corelli mystery series, **Catherine Maiorisi**; award winning author of *Roachkiller and Other Stories*, and former MWA-NY Chapter president, **Richie Narvaez**; and award winning author, and our chapter secretary, **Laura Joh Rowlands**. The panel was moderated by our chapter president and author of the Abish Taylor Mystery series, **D.A, Bartley**.

The panel was launched with the question, “Is diversity good for crime fiction?” The answer from all the panelists was yes. “We need all these different stories,” said Rowlands, who made the point that diversity can add variety in what could be a very formulaic genre. Maiorisi pointed out that diversity in our writing could help to expand our readership.

“At the end of the day, we want our readers to empathise with our characters,” said Cate Holahan.

The panel confronted the issue of writing from perspectives that might not be that of the writer. Richie Narvaez stated that it would be impossible to write a



Moderator D.A. Bartley with our panelists Catherine Maiorisi, Laura Joh Rowlands, Cate Holahan, and Richie Narvaez (from L to R.)

story about New York City without including a large number of diverse characters. His debut novel, *Hipster Death Rattle* includes a variety of characters of different ethnicities in order to paint a true picture of New York.

Authors seemed to agree that whenever attempting to write a character whose race, cultural perspective, gender or sexual identity differs from that of the author, it should be done with care. Not all authors agreed with the concept of “sensitivity readers,” but they did all agree that writers should do their research!

Nina Mansfield is the author of the YA mystery *Swimming Alone* (Fire & Ice YA, 2015). Her short mystery fiction has appeared in a variety of publications, including Ellery Queen Mystery Magazine. Her short plays have been produced around the world.

BROOKLYN BOOK FESTIVAL

On Sunday, September 22nd, our chapter, once again, participated in the Brooklyn Book Festival. As in the past, we had copies of our anthologies for sale, and our published chapter members joined us at the table to sell and sign their books. For the first time ever, we also sold chapter member's books throughout the day.



(L to R) Elizabeth Mannion, Nina Mansfield, Cathi Stohler, Alison von Rosenvinge (aka D.A. Bartley), Elizabeth Crowens and Mary Jo Robertiello.



(L to R) Cathi Stohler, Alison von Rosenvinge (aka D.A. Bartley), and Dawn Barclay (aka D.M. Barr.)



(L to R) Catherine Maorisi and Cate Simon.

A NEW WEBSITE AND EXPANDED SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENCE

We have updated our www.NYSinC.org website and expanded our social media presence. The new website features a list of chapter members, with a links to author pages when applicable. It also features a scrolling book cover carousel, highlighting our published authors' works. There is also a "Members Only" section, which will soon include resources for our chapter members.

In addition to Facebook and Twitter, our chapter can now also be found on Instagram and Pinterest. Do you follow us on social media?

Pinterest: @NYSinC

Instagram: @NYTriStateSinC

Twitter: @NYSinC

Facebook: @NYSinC

Make the most of your chapter membership! If you do not have a book cover in the carousel or your website linked in the member list, get in touch with us at NYTriStateSinC@gmail.com.



We have a new look across our social media platforms.

THE INTERROGATION ROOM

An Inquisitor Questions Our Members

In this issue's Interrogation Room, we hear from three more accomplished Sisters in Crime:

Until she left to pursue her own writing, **Barbara Brett** was both a magazine editor and a book editor and publisher. Her most recent book, *Secret Agenda: Who's Castrating the Wolves of Wall Street*, won the Silver Medal in the 2018 Global Ebook Awards. She is also the author of *Sizzle*, *Between Two Eternities*, *Love After Hours*, and with her husband, Hy Brett, the critically acclaimed mystery, *Promises to Keep*.

Sharon Linnéa is the author of the bestselling *Chasing Eden*, *Beyond Eden*, and *Treasure of Eden* with Chaplain (COL) Barbara Sherer from St. Martin's, as well as *Plagues of Eden* from Arundel Publishing, which follow the exploits of female Army chaplain Jaime Richards. She enjoyed writing the teen spy novel *Colt Shore: Domino 29* as Axel Avian. Her biography of Princess Kaiulani of Hawaii won the Carter G. Woodson Award, and her book about Raoul Wallenberg was described as "one of the definitive biographies of the Holocaust" by the Museum of Tolerance. Sharon has been a book editor at William Morrow, Arundel and Taplinger and was a staff writer for 5 national magazines. In her youth she wrote Spidey Super Stories for Marvel and has spent way too much time as a celebrity ghost. Her new mystery series will debut in 2020.

Recipient of both the Agatha and the Derringer awards, **Terrie Farley Moran** is the author of the beachside Read 'Em and Eat cozy mystery series; co-author of Laura Childs' New Orleans scrapbooking mystery series; and has published numerous short stories in *Ellery Queen Mystery Magazine*, *Alfred Hitchcock Mystery Magazine*, *Mystery Weekly Magazine* and numerous anthologies. Her most recent novel is *Mumbo Gumbo Murder*, release date: October 1, 2019. The only thing Terrie enjoys more than wrangling mystery plots into submission is hanging out with any or all of her seven grandchildren who reside in New York and Florida.

Our first request of the authors was to describe their biggest influence as an author and why, bearing in mind it didn't have to be another author:

Barbara: It's difficult to pinpoint what has influenced my writing most, but if I must select only one thing, I think it would have to be my many years working as a magazine and a book editor. Helping authors shape and sharpen their stories and novels for publication has made me (I hope!) more clear-eyed about my own writing. When I finish a book, I try to read through it with my editor's eyes—looking for places I can cut to move things along or heighten the suspense, making sure the characters always behave character. I may not have realized it back in the day, but it was great training for the work I love to do now.

Sharon: The pull of the imagination. When I was young, I had three or four fully formed worlds, populated with dear friends, sworn enemies, crushes and heroes. Some were secret agents, some were kids in a put-together family, some were adventurers. It was like choosing a novel to play in for the afternoon, and I often conscripted flesh-and-blood friends to join me. When I got to school and discovered I could relive the adventures by writing them down, it was thrilling.

Terrie: This question stumped me for a moment. Then I changed it to "Why did I begin to write?" The answer is because I love to read. My biggest influence would have to have been my parents, now long gone, who raised us with the freedom to read any book, magazine or newspaper that was in the house. I never heard the phrase "age appropriate". I read *Peyton Place* when I was ten and thought it was boring. On the other hand, a couple of years later, I read *Citizen Tom Paine* by Howard Fast and fell in love with American history and politics for life.

Our second question: Steven James wrote an entire book about how Story Trumps Structure. Do you agree or disagree and why?

Barbara: I absolutely agree! Structure, of course, is important, but it won't save a story. I truly believe that when we come up with a terrific idea for a story, the plot will quickly follow. Well, maybe sometimes not so quickly, but if the story idea is great, we'll surely be able to work it out. Readers never put down a book and say, "What a great plot!" They say, "What a great story!"

Sharon: I think that's very funny, because, let's face it, story IS structure, whether you lead with it or not. Peaks and valleys keep the listener (or reader) hooked, reversals create emotion, and building tension is what brings such

Interrogation Room Con't

fulfillment at the end. It's been that way since the cavewoman storyteller.

I understand those who outline, especially for genre fiction, which is, to my mind, the artful dissemination of information. I outline for thrillers and mysteries simply to keep track of who knows what, and when. Yet, sometimes "Pantsers" seem surprised when I say that outlining itself generates surprises and also leaves lots of room for surprises along the way.

People who tell great stories without pre-planning the structure are those who do structure naturally, even subconsciously, because elements of structure are always necessary. There are no great stories that don't have great bones.

Do I think you need to lead with structure—"reversal 1: page 6. New villain: page 12"? Of course not. Bottom line, everyone's creative process is different, and if that has made our friends Chris Grabenstein and James Patterson bestselling authors, more power to them! Do what's helpful to you without apologizing—or disparaging others' process.

Terrie: I agree completely. I just googled the book and what I get from the description is that Mr. James encourages writers to write without rules and without outlines. That is pretty much what I do when I write on my own. Of course, my co-writer Laura Childs is the absolute Queen of Outlines, so our Scrapbooking Mysteries are written from that base. So, writing can be done following a strict process or flying free. And I am living proof that every author can do both.

Our final question of the issue, hopefully of help to those of us struggling to get a few words on the page: What's your tried and true antidote for writer's block?

Barbara: Oh, how I wish I had one! A while back, I baked. Unfortunately, while I sometimes solved a plot problem as I whipped the cake batter or punched down the bread dough, the end result added calories, which created another problem. Since then, I've simply told myself that I'm taking a vacation from writing. I take long walks and read some of the books that have been piling up on my night table. What we must remind ourselves about writer's block is that it's like a bad cold: it makes us feel miserable while we have it, but it isn't fatal; eventually, it goes away.

Sharon: Three Things. First, deadlines. Second, having a great pre-writing ritual that starts with something fun that you won't resist. And finally, my Hamilton mug, which exhorts: *Write like you're running out of time.* Because I am. We all are.

Terrie: I don't believe there is such a thing. Writing is a job and publishing is a business. When I worked for the City I couldn't call in and say "I'm going to take a few weeks off. I have worker's block." Writing is the same, at least to me. Having said that, recently I was fortunate enough to spend time with the brilliant mystery writer Nancy Pickard and she told me she once had such difficulty with writer's block that she actually wrote a book about it entitled *Seven Steps on the Writers Path: The Journey from Frustration to Fulfillment* by Nancy Picard and Lynn Lott. I highly recommend it.

SIC Inquisitor, aka D.M. Barr, is an award-winning non-fiction writer, and fiction author of mysteries such as Slashing Mona Lisa and Expired Listings. Her solo attempt at erotica, written under a different pseudonym, won the Golden Flogger Award for best BDSM novella 2017. She is currently working on her fourth novel from her home in the Hudson Valley.



The Inquisitor, aka author
D.M. Barr.



Author Barbara Brett



Author Sharon Linnéa



Author Terrie Farley Moran

THE POLICE BLOTTER

Member News

Elizabeth Crowen's *The Time Travel Professor Book One: Silent Meridian*, and *Book Two: A Pocketful of Lodestones* were both published this summer.

Cathi Stoler's new story, "That's My Story (And I'm Sticking To It)", in which suave dance host, an aging actress, and a wary social director meet on the decks of a luxury cruise ship, premiered in the Summer2019 edition of *Mysterical-E*.

Elizabeth Zelvin's *ME TOO SHORT STORIES: AN ANTHOLOGY* is out from Level Best—short crime fiction by women authors giving a voice to abused women and girls.

DISTURBING THE PEACE

Upcoming Chapter Events

Thursday, October 17, 2019

Catherine Richards from Minotaur Books at St. Martin's Press

Join us at The Jefferson Market Library

425 Avenue of the Americas, NYC

Meet and greet: 6:00 pm, Program: 6:30 to 8:00 pm

Optional dinner follows

Having spent eight years at Pan Macmillan UK, in early 2017 **Catherine Richards** moved across to Minotaur Books at St. Martin's Press. Her time in the London office was split between editing some of the list's bestselling authors, and growing a list of crime fiction. She is excited to be a part of the dynamic Minotaur team where every book is given focus, energy, and creativity from acquisition to publication and beyond.

In her current role she is actively looking for thrillers, crime fiction, and suspense, and in particular female voices and psychological thrillers at the upmarket end of commercial. She loves when a writer can create a totally immersive experience for the reader; having you turning the pages, heedless of your surroundings. First and foremost, for her there needs to be a compulsive plot; but beyond that she loves to see a distinctive voice or setting, small communities or complex, emotionally real relationships with dark secrets, and she enjoys reading both historical and contemporary.

Ms. Richards will be interviewed by award-winning author and chapter member, Mariah Fredericks.

Thursday, November 21, 2019: TBA

Monday, December 9, 2019: Holiday Party! Guest of Honor Kellye Garrett!

NY/TRI-STATE SISTERS IN CRIME MEMBERS:

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