



# BLOODLETTER

## CRIMINAL ENTERPRISES

### Chapter News

## AN EVENING WITH CATHERINE RICHARDS, EXECUTIVE EDITOR AT MINOTAUR

Catherine Richards, executive editor at Minotaur, was the featured guest at NYSinC's October 17<sup>th</sup> meeting. [Mariah Fredericks](#), author of *A Death of No Importance*, interviewed Catherine on a wide range of writing-related topics.

As an editor, Catherine looks for a well-paced book, with fully-fleshed, three dimensional characters. She is drawn to stories that explore complicated relationships, and is interested in both contemporary and historical settings. While current trends continue to favor psychological thrillers, as well as stories that tap into nostalgia for less unsettled times, she didn't rule out any book submission that had "that intangible quality—the one that keeps us reading, page after page."

Catherine also detailed the sometimes-complicated process of shepherding a manuscript from initial acceptance to final publication. Her favorite part is the actual editing of the manuscript, which she described as a continuing conversation between writer and editor.

Both Mariah and Catherine talked about what works—and doesn't work—in promoting books. They agreed that Twitter isn't nearly as effective as Facebook, but they also spoke of other pathways to success, which include a presence at writers' conferences and meaningful connections with readers and booksellers.



Author and chapter member Mariah Fredericks (L) interviews Catherine Richards. (R)



Chapter president Alison von Rosenvinge enjoys a moment with Mariah Fredericks and Catherine Richards.

***Lori Robbins' Lesson Plan for Murder***, the first novel in her *Master Class Mystery Series*, won the 2018 Silver Falchion Award for Best Cozy Mystery and was a finalist in the Readers' Choice Book Award and the Next Generation Indie Book Award.

## WHAT WAS COOKING AT CRIME BAKE?

By Dawn M. Barclay (D.M. Barr)

On November 8<sup>th</sup>, I joined fellow SIC-NY members Mary Jo Robertiello, Ursula Renee and Master Class presenter Carol Goodman in attending Crime Bake, a small but mighty annual mystery writers conference co-hosted in Woburn, MA by the New England chapters of Sisters in Crime and the Mystery Writers of America. Ann Cleeves, award-winning author of the Vera and Shetland series, was the guest of honor. With attendance limited to 250 participants (plus 75 presenters, staff, editors, agents, etc.), Crime Bake may be smaller than Bouchercon or ThrillerFest, but it was exactly that intimate atmosphere that drew me in to attend a second time and will propel me to register again this coming May (warning: it sells out fast!).

What makes Crime Bake special is the generosity and friendliness of the attendees. It was wonderful to chat at breakfast with former editor-in-chief of the Book of the Month Club and current agent Victoria Skurnick (Levine Greenberg Rostan Literary) about the difficulties of publishing in today's climate, and tussle with Maude, the golden retriever puppy owned by Esmond Harmsworth (Managing Partner, Aevitas Creative). What presenters shared touched me on a personal level: prolific author Hank Phillippi Ryan shared that she didn't start publishing fiction until she was close to my age (sigh of relief!) and like me, Julia Spencer Fleming took a while to find her genre sweet spot and cobbles together five revisions to produce a final product. I'm not alone. I'm normal. Hurray!

Along with an amazing but not overwhelming selection of classes, another valuable aspect of Crime Bake is the Editors and Agents Program where, for a nominal fee, you and a small group of fellow writers perfect your pitch with one agent or editor, analyze your query with a second and then critique your first page with a third. By the end, you've learned enough about your fellow writers' work to root them on (and vice versa) at the Saturday afternoon pitching session, where agents and editors consider your request for book representation and hopefully request sample chapters.

Saturday night's Red Carpet Awards Night Banquet featured a Lifetime Achievement Award tribute to Hallie Ephron who many will remember hosted a Saturday day-long class for our members this past summer. A girl group featuring agent Paula Munier and author Hank Phillippi Ryan serenaded the winner with a parody of "My Girl" called "Hallie." If you have access to Facebook, you can see it [here](#).

On Sunday morning, participants lauded the winners of the Flashwords contest, where entrants must write a 150-word crime story using at least 10 of the 20 words suggested by Ann Cleeves. Three winners won a box of mystery books and the right to read their entries in front of the crowd. Three more educational sessions followed and then, with a heavy heart, we all said goodbye with a promise to meet again next November.



D.M. Barr with Mary Jo Robertiello and Jane Willan at Crime Bake.

***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 INTERROGATION ROOM

### An Inquisitor Questions Our Members

Let's say farewell to 2019! In this issue of The Interrogation Room, we're catching up with three more exceptional Sisters-in-Crime mystery authors to get their take on current issues affecting the industry. Those generous enough to spend some of their time with us include:

**Elizabeth Mannion**, who earned her PhD at Trinity College, Dublin, is the editor of *The Contemporary Irish Detective Novel* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), the first critical study of Irish crime fiction. This was shortlisted for the H.R.F. Keating Award for best critical book related to crime fiction. A second critical study of this genre, *Guilt Rules All: Mysteries, Detectives, and Crime in Irish Fiction* (co-edited with Brian Cliff), is forthcoming from Syracuse University Press. Beth recently launched the Kate Doyle cozy mystery series—*Dreaming in Irish* and the forthcoming *Traces of Irish*—under the pen name Sarah-Jane McKenna. She teaches at Baruch College and has been a Sisters in Crime member since 2018. She is a proud Board member of the New York Tri-State chapter.

**Lori Robbins** is an English teacher and former ballerina who published the first book in her Master Class Mystery Series, *Lesson Plan for Murder*, in 2018. She won the Silver Falchion for Best Cozy Mystery and was named a finalist for the Silver Falchion Readers' Choice Award. *Lesson Plan for Murder* also received recognition from the Next Generation Indie Book Awards, in the category of Best First Novel. Robbins recently completed *Murder in First Position*, the first book of her new mystery series, set in the world of professional ballet. A mother of six who also serves as vice president of the NY/Tri-State chapter of Sisters in Crime, Lori is currently working on the second book in her Master Class Mystery Series, as well as a sequel to *Murder in First Position*. She attributes her experiences as a dancer, parent, teacher, and writer as her inspiration to write about the homicidal tendencies evoked by everyday life.

**Leila Walsh** is a former beat reporter for New Jersey daily and weekly newspapers; writer and editor for a trade magazine; public relations writer and editor for corporate and nonprofit organizations and a former hearing officer for the department of labor in New Jersey. She recently completed her first mystery novel, *Death Knows No Bounds*. Like her main character, she lived on an ashram in San Francisco and taught yoga and meditation as well as read Tarot cards. She is now based in Brooklyn.

*First question, following up on our November meeting: Audiobook or no audiobook--if you've put one out, are you happy with the results? Was it worth the effort? If you haven't put one out, either because you're not published or have no interest, do you think it's something you'd want to do and why or why not?*

**Elizabeth:** I've only been involved in one audiobook so far: for the novel *Dreaming in Irish*. It was produced and narrated by Robin Miles. I made a huge mistake in the MS that required major audio edits on Robin's part. She was a good sport about it, and I learned a lot about how to do things next time, but it won't be for a while yet. The target demographic for my fiction is 40+, so I want to try both audio and large print. *Dreaming in Irish* was my first audio try, and now I'll be putting out a large-print edition of that too. Then I'll take a look at sales for both and decide on which to pursue for *Traces*. I guess it's possible, I'll do both.

**Leila:** I'm writing a sequel and a standalone while trying to find an agent/publisher for my novel, *Death Knows No Bounds*. I love to read aloud and have done some acting, so I definitely believe in audiobooks. I've worked with folks who commuted long distances and swore by audiobooks to make the ride go faster.

*Second Question: What are the biggest benefits to joining a writer's organization like Sisters in Crime? And if you have cons or criticisms, what ways do you think organizations like these can be enhanced or improved?*

**Elizabeth:** The biggest benefit I have found so far in group membership is the networking. I've had the chance to chat with many local writers who have been there/done that in so many areas of writing, editing, research, and publishing. That's been useful and rewarding. Our chapter has one full-day writing workshop each spring, and I would love to see more of those. If there is a downside for me so far it would be the scarcity of events like that. I joined our chapter Board of Directors this year, and I hope to help increase the workshop offerings as well as public readings/sales opportunities for our membership.

**Lori:** The biggest benefits have been having access to information from industry professionals, connection with other writers, and the opportunity to share one's work [Brooklyn Book Festival, Open Mic Night, etc.] There are no negative aspects to belonging to NYSinC. Even when the programs are not of specific individual interest, the after-meeting get-togethers are worth the price of admission.

## Interrogation Room Con't

**Leila:** The biggest benefit I've found through SIC are the excellent presentations at meetings and the camaraderie of other writers.

**Third Question:** *What are the top three tips you'd offer a newbie writer?*

**Elizabeth:** My top three tips are probably not original: 1) write every day at the time that works best for you (maintain a schedule); 2) remove WIFI from your writing area (avoid distractions); and 3) write the story you want to read.

**Lori:** Research the basics of your genre, read extensively in your genre, take advantage of networking opportunities like writers' conferences.

**Leila:** Love your words but be prepared to edit. Nevertheless, celebrate your work even if not yet unrecognized. Find someone who agrees and supports your efforts. And finally, keep plugging no matter what.

**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 [Lori Robbins](#)



Author Elizabeth Mannion, aka [Sarah-Jane McKenna](#)



Author Leila Walsh

## HOLIDAY PARTY WITH GUEST OF HONOR KELLYE GARRETT

We held our annual Holiday Party at Salaam on 13<sup>th</sup> Street again this year, with a slightly different format. Rather than having a sit down dinner, we switched to a cocktail party format. This year we welcomed author [Kellye Garrett](#) as our guest of honor.

Kellye Garrett's *Hollywood Homicide*, about a semi-famous, mega-broke black actress, won the Anthony, Agatha and Lefty for best first novel. It's also one of BookBub's "Top 100 Crime Novels of All Time." The second, *Hollywood Ending*, was featured on the TODAY show's Best Summer Reads of 2019 and was nominated for both Anthony and Lefty awards. She serves on Sisters in Crime's national board.



Guest of Honor Kellye Garrett speaks about her experiences writing in Hollywood.



Mariah Fredericks, Laura Joh Rowland and Carol Goodman enjoying the festivities.

## THE POLICE BLOTTER

### Member News

**Dawn M. Barclay** won the Flashwords Contest at Crime Bake and received an offer from a small press for *Saving Grace*.

**Elizabeth Crowens** will be a featured reader on *Crime, Capers and Conan Doyle in Alternate History* with Teel James Glenn at the NYRSF readings on Tuesday, February 4th at Brooklyn Commons. 388 Atlantic Avenue, Brooklyn, NY at 7:00 p.m. \$7 suggested donation. The event will be recorded on Facebook Live.

**Tim Maleeny**'s latest mystery, *Boxing the Octopus*, was released by Poisoned Pen Press. The novel is an insider's guide to San Francisco's underworld that Kirkus calls "a Hiaasen-esque delight" and PW describes as "fast-paced, cheeky fun, along with a splash of social consciousness."

**Nina Mansfield**'s mysterious short play *Bar Car Reverie* will be produced at the Red Barn Theatre in Key West as part Short Attention Span Theatre 2020, *The Twilight Zone*, February to March 2020.

**Triss Stein**'s fifth book in her Brooklyn series, *Brooklyn Legacies*, was published Dec 3<sup>rd</sup> by Poisoned Pen Press/Sourcebooks.

**Cathi Stoler**'s new novel, *Out of Time*, was released on November 25th. It's the second book in the Nick Donahue Adventures, and is available on Amazon.

## MEMBERS ONLY

The members only section of our website has been updated with publishing and social media resources. More author resources are coming soon! Make the most of your chapter membership and visit!

Is your book featured in our website book carousel? If not, make sure you get in touch with a JPEG of your book cover.

And don't forget to connect with us on social media! We love to share member news.

Pinterest: [@NYSinC](#)

Instagram: [@NYTriStateSinC](#)

Twitter: [@NYSinC](#)

Facebook: [@NYSinC](#)

Interested in joining our chapter? Visit [www.nysinc.org](http://www.nysinc.org) to learn how. Remember, you should also be a member of Sisters in Crime National.

## **DISTURBING THE PEACE**

### **Upcoming Chapter Events**

**Thursday, January 16, 2019**

#### **Open Mic Night**

**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**

Join us as our chapter members read from their published works and works-in-progress. This annual tradition is a fabulous way to hear works from a wide variety of mystery and suspense writers. Come discover your new favorite author! This event is free and open to the public.

The following writers will be sharing their work: Peggy Katalinich, Naomi Rand, Mary Jo Robertiello, Dawn Barclay, Alexa Recio de Fitch, Elizabeth Zelvin, Nancy Good, Roz Siegel, Triss Stein, Leila Walsh, Lori Robbins, Beth Mannion, Catherine Maiorisi, and Joan Ramirez

**Wednesday, February 19, 2020**

**An Evening with Private Investigator, Catherine Townsend**

**Wednesday, March 18, 2020**

**Pitches and Query Letters with Agent Janet Reid and Editor Amara Hoshijo**

**Wednesday, April 15, 2020**

**Author Carol Goodman discusses Psychological Suspense**

**Wednesday, May 20, 2020**

**Publishing Your Short Mystery Fiction**

**June 2020**

**PARTY!**

#### **NY/TRI-STATE SISTERS IN CRIME MEMBERS:**

TO JOIN THE EDITORIAL STAFF OF *BLOODLETTER*, OR TO CONTRIBUTE AN ARTICLE, PLEASE CONTACT NINA MANSFIELD AT NYTRISTATESINC@GMAIL.COM. PLEASE INCLUDE

“BLOODLETTER” IN THE SUBJECT LINE.

TO HAVE YOUR NEWS LISTED, PLEASE LOOK FOR INFORMATION IN AN UPCOMING MEMBER EMAIL.