

BLOODLETTER

CRIMINAL ENTERPRISES

Chapter News

2021 PROGRAMMING CONTINUED ON ZOOM

By Nina Mansfield

As we entered 2021, our chapter's programming continued via Zoom.

In January, we had our traditional *Open Mic Night*. Writers read their work over Zoom, and we even streamed the readings onto Facebook. As always, this was a delightful evening with many intriguing new and published works shared by our members.

In February, we were delighted to welcome three editors to Zoom. **Terri Bischoff**, Senior Acquisitions Editor at Crooked Lane Books was joined by **Tiffany Yates Martin**, and chapter member, **Sue Toth** for a panel entitled *Making the Cut: Editors Talk Editing*. This illuminating panel was packed with many great tips for writers. Missed this panel? You can find a recording of it in the Members-Only section of our website.

In March we switched up the usual time of our monthly meeting to accommodate some international guests. Held the weekend after St. Patrick's Day, our very own **Elizabeth Mannion** moderated a panel entitled *A Celebration of Irish Crime Writing*, with **Jane Casey**, **Brian Cliff**, **Arlene Hunt** and **Liz Nugent**. The afternoon was filled with lively personal anecdotes which illuminated the appeal of the Irish Crime novel.



In March Edgar-nominated Elizabeth Mannion moderated a panel entitled *A Celebration of Irish Crime Writing*. (From top left, clockwise) Arlene Hunt, Jane Casey, Elizabeth Mannion, Brian Cliff and Liz Nugent.



**CHECK OUT OUR SUMMER
READING LIST AT KEW AND
WILLOW.**

<https://www.kewandwillow.com/sisters-crime-summer-reading-list>

Programming on Zoom Continued

In April, we hosted **Ellen Byron** and her agent **Doug Grad** in a discussion entitled ***From Hollywood to the Halls of Publishing***. Byron spoke of her career working in television, and how this eventually lead her to her mystery writing career. Inspirational and enlightening, this event can also be watched or rewatched in the Members-Only section of our website.

In May, we did something brand new! We hosted our very first ***QueryFest***. **Terrie Bischoff** joined us again, along with **Nettie Finn**, Associate Editor at St. Martin's Press and **Victoria Skurnick**, literary agent at Levine Greenberg. After a short, yet highly informative presentation (which yes, can be viewed in our Members-Only section), writers who had previously submitted query letters were sent to break out rooms to have their letters critiqued by our guests. We look forward to hosting similar events in the future.

Sadly, we could not end the year with our traditional dinner at Cowgirls Bar and Grill. We did, however, convene on Zoom to get to know our new board, and even got to know some of our chapter's members a bit better.

While the chapter is still determining if our 2021-2022 events will be held live, on Zoom, or some mixture of the two, you may rest assured that the board is hard at work putting together many thrilling events for next year!



***Nina Mansfield** is a co-vice president of the NY/Tri-State Chapter of SinC, and editor of Bloodletter. She is a published and produced playwright, and author of the YA mystery, Swimming Alone.*

Missed a meeting?

Recordings of many of our Zoom meetings can be found in the Members Only section of www.nysinc.org. Check your emails for the new password.

BOARD ELECTIONS HELD

Our chapter is excited to announce the results of our board elections.

Alison von Rosenvinge, who writes as **D.A. Bartley**, will continue on as our chapter president for another term.

Dawn M. Barclay, who writes as **D.M. Barr**, will join **Nina Mansfield** as a co-vice president.

Ursula Shand is our new secretary, and **Catherine Siemann**, who writes as **Cate Simon**, is our new treasurer.

Mariah Fredericks is staying on as a member-at-large, and will be joined by **Sarah Burr** and **Ellen Quint**. Ellen had served on our board in the past, and we are happy to have her back!

We are grateful to our outgoing board members who have served their terms: **Lori Robbins**, **Laura Joh Rowland**, **Stephanie Flaherty**, **Cathi Stoler**, **Cynthia Benjamin**, and **Elizabeth Mannion**. Thank you so much for all you have done for our chapter!

**ARE YOU INTERESTED IN
CONTRIBUTING AN ARTICLE TO
BLOODLETTER? CONTACT NINA
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SCENE OF THE CRIME

Writing Advice

I recently had the honor of co-editing this year's chapter anthology: *Murder New York Style: Justice for All*. It was a blast and I enjoyed reading everyone's work. There were some common mistakes that came up in a few of the short stories and I thought that by sharing them, it might be a great reminder of best practices. I hope these tips can help all members when they submit to magazines or other anthologies:

1. Beware lack of continuity. If you decide to change a character's name mid-story, then run a global search and replace in Word so the name change appears everywhere. Do another search to make sure the old name is gone forever. Likewise, in terms of continuity, make sure that the crime your character is accused of is the one he actually commits. And be sure to never contradict a fact written earlier in the manuscript with a conflicting one written later. Having a beta-reader proofread your story might help here.
2. Think actions through—make sure if you start an action, you don't leave it hanging and never addressed again.
3. Make sure you don't change tenses. If you start in the past, stay in the past.
4. Make sure if you're not writing in the omniscient point of view that you change scenes when you change point of view. No head-hopping!
5. Don't jolt readers with the perpetrator or reason for the crime by introducing either one late in the story. If there's a surprise (and one would hope there would be—we are mystery and suspense writers after all), seed clues to that surprise earlier in the manuscript.
6. Research facts, systems, and protocols you're not sure of, especially courtroom and police procedure. It's easy enough for readers to check and if they find you're wrong, they may never trust you again.
7. Have the computer read the story back to you. It's a great way to spot awkward phrasing and my personal pet peeve, word repetition—something that's easy to correct by using the computer's built-in thesaurus.
8. Don't use four weak words when one strong word (especially a verb) will do. And drop the adverbs whenever possible. Search for a stronger verb.
9. Check for sensitivity—would a reader from a different culture, religion, sexual orientation, etc. possibly take offense at something you've written?
10. Make sure your story has a point and a satisfying conclusion.
11. Weed out unnecessary backstory and side plots or details that don't propel the story forward.
12. And finally—learn how to use the Track Changes function in Word. Every editor and publisher (and even agents) I've worked with have communicated their edits via Track Changes. Once you conquer the program, you'll be amazed at how easy and helpful it is.

I know these tips aren't new or earth-shattering, but I also know that as we grow in our careers, it's easy to overlook the basics. I look forward to seeing more of your published short stories grace the pages of magazines and anthologies in the future.



Dawn M. Barclay (writing as D.M. Barr) is the co-vice president of *Sisters in Crime's* NY/Tri-State chapter. Her latest domestic suspense novel, *Saving Grace*, was published by Black Rose Writing in October, 2020.

THE POLICE BLOTTER

Member News

Dawn Barclay, aka **D.M. Barr's** *The Queen of Second Chances* debuted on June 7th to good reviews. Dawn sold *Simple Tryst of Fate*, a short romantic suspense novel, and it will come out in September. Dawn also participated in the Flemington Book Festival and it was good to get back out in the world and see readers again. She also signed with an agent for her nonfiction book about traveling with children on and off the autistic spectrum.

Mally Becker's novel *The Turncoat's Widow* was released on February 16, 2021 by Level Best Books.

The third book in **Elizabeth Crowens's** alternate history series featuring Arthur Conan Doyle, H.G. Wells, and paranormal espionage during WWI, *A War in Too Many Worlds*, will be released in mid-August. Order a signed copy from The Mysterious Bookshop.

Terrie Farley Moran's novel, *Murder, She Wrote Killing in a Koi Pond* by Jessica Fletcher and Terrie Farley Moran was released on June 8, 2021 by the Berkley division of Penguin Random House. It is the fifty third novel in the long running series.

Nancy Good is thrilled that her first ever short story, "What Matters Most" will be part of our anthology, *Justice for All, New York Style*, due out this Fall.

Lori Robbins won the award for **Best Mystery in the Indie Book Awards**.

Anne-Marie Sutton's short mystery story "Diamonds and Memories Last Forever" will be published in WHODUNIT, a new anthology from Jersey Pines Ink, later this summer.

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Don't forget to retweet, like, comment, and share our posts! Let's support each other on social media!

Interested in joining our chapter? Visit www.nysinc.org to learn how. Remember, you should also be a member of Sisters in Crime National.

DISTURBING THE PEACE

Upcoming Chapter Events

We are currently in the process of planning our 2021-2022 programming. Will we be meeting in person? Over Zoom? That mystery will be solved soon.

Please stay tuned. We will be updating the events page of our website as soon as we can.

<https://nysinc.org/upcoming-events/>

TRACE EVIDENCE

Special Announcements

Our newest anthology ***Murder New York Style: Justice for All*** will be published in the fall of 2021!
The following stories will be included:

The Thanksgiving Ragamuffin by Kathleen Marple Kalb
When the Caged Bird Flies by Catherine Maiorisi
Windy Willows by Nina Mansfield
Leading Ladies by Lori Robbins
A Trial for the Books by D.M. Barr
The World According to Lucy by Susie Case
What Matters Most by Nancy Good
Harbor Life and City Silt by Elle Hartford
Risky Assumptions by Ellen Quint
Family Matters by Mary Jo Robertiello
Laundry After Midnight by Nina Wachsman
David and the Garmento by Roz Siegel
The Teacup by Catherine Siemann
The Art of Payback by Cathi Stoler
The New Guy is Black by Anne-Marie Sutton
Injustice in Brooklyn by Stephanie Wilson-Flaherty

Congratulations and thank you to everyone who submitted short stories; and thank you to Dawn Barclay and Joseph de Marco, our indefatigable co-editors, who are making all this happen.