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## PUBLIC SAFETY WRITERS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER VOLUME XII SPRING 2009 ISSUE

Editor: Marilyn Meredith, [mmeredith@ocsnet.net](mailto:mmeredith@ocsnet.net)

This is your newsletter, please contribute articles, your news, book reviews, or anything else you think might be of interest.

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### MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Fellow Public Safety Writers:

Kudos in advance to Marilyn Meredith for organizing an outstanding conference this year. Registrations are still coming in and the 2009 conferences promises to be the most exciting ever.

Those of us who've been attending these conferences since the mid 1990s know well what a terrific experience this conference is. In addition to hearing great speakers, there is always a lot of time for discussion and, perhaps most important of all, the chance to get to know our fellow members personally.

In addition to making the conference even more fun, as anyone who has ever attended will tell you, the contacts you make offer you an invaluable resource that will help you become a better writer, give you great ideas for marketing your book and allow you to share your area of expertise with others.

Once the conference has ended, you'll have the opportunity to continue your association with the people you've met via our listserve and stay in touch by e-mail. You'll find

everyone you meet will be more than happy to offer you tips and guidance with your writing projects.

Although the conference is just eight weeks away, there's still time to sign up. You'll find all the details on this website. Just click on "Conference" to find out more.

Looking forward to seeing you in Las Vegas in June.

Marilyn Olsen  
President  
Public Safety Writers Association

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### **PSWA CONFERENCE UPDATE**

The last lower rate for the conference has been extended to May 31. If you haven't signed up yet, be sure to do it right away. See the registration form on this website. We've more than doubled the number of participants over last year and we have a wonderful program scheduled with something for everyone.

Unfortunately, the bookstore where we had our last booksigning has folded. Member Keith Bettinger was able to find a coffee shop to host the signing at 3 P.M. on Sunday after the conference. Members will have to bring their own books and take care of their own selling. More about that in another article.

We also have a bookstore during the conference (in the same room as the meeting so you'll be able to peruse and purchase books at any time during breaks, before and after the conference). You are responsible for bringing your own books for sale. Sales will be taken care of for you. PSWA receives 10% of all sales to help defray conference costs.

One of our major speakers had to decline. As a replacement, we're happy to announce that Joyce Spizer Foy will be our Friday luncheon speaker, talking about making books into movies.

Betty Webb will do a workshop on "**The Deadly Writing Sins**," an overview of the "red flag" writing weaknesses that lead to rejection slips. This is the kind of workshop we all need to attend. She is also going to be our Saturday luncheon speaker. Having met and heard both of these authors speak before, I can guarantee you're in for a treat.

We also lost one of our publishers, so Joyce Spizer Foy, who beside all her other many pursuits has done much editing, will be on the **Publishing and Editing Panel**: What publishers are looking for in a manuscript. Common Errors in Submitting and Writing, with Moderator: Marilyn Olsen, Editor, and Panelists: Billie Johnson, Publisher, Joyce Spizer Foy, Editor.

Towards the end of the month, I'll be sending panel assignments out to those of you who asked to be on panels.

If you haven't already, be sure to register for the hotel, Suncoast Hotel and Casino. Let them know you want the Public Safety Writer Association (PSWA) Conference rate.

I am extremely pleased by the caliber of speakers we have this year, and I know you will be too.

Marilyn Meredith, Conference Program Chairperson

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### **BOOK SIGNING AFTER THE CONFERENCE**

**Sunday, June 21, 3 to 5 p.m. Maui Wowi Coffee Shop**

1. Paul Goldberg, the owner, has graciously waived any fees for the sale of our books during the book signing.
2. We will take care of press releases.
3. I will forward to Marilyn a letter announcing the book signing/greet and meet. Marilyn will forward it to each of you. You will then send it and directions to all your friends in the LV area and commutable distances to **Maui Wowi** and invite them to the book signing being held on your behalf and that of your fellow writers.
4. Paul Goldberg would like to have a firm number of **our** attendees so he knows if he needs extra help. So if you intend to participate let Marilyn M [mmeredith@ocsnet.net](mailto:mmeredith@ocsnet.net) know and please don't back out at the last minute.
5. Maui Wowi sells Hawaiian coffees, tea, specialty coffees, tropical smoothies that are fantastic, pastries, juices and waters, even coffee beans to take home and make your own coffee and tropical candies. Personally besides the coffee, I like the giant coffee cups he sells that hold about 4 cups of coffee. (After that I am set for my morning.) We will all buy something while we are there. Please do not ask for small coffees. They are a losing item for the store and only sold in an effort to attract new clientele. Also, please remember to be generous with the help. Most of them are kids in school working for minimum wage and tips.

There is a tip jar next to the cash register, please keep the help smiling, because when you go back home I have to go back there for my coffee.

--Keith Bettinger

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**MEMBER ARTICLES****THE LITTLE BOOKFEST THAT COULD**

by Sunny Frazier



*If you build it, they will come.*

That was my mantra when I decided to put together the First Annual BookFest in Hanford, California.

For those of you unfamiliar with Central California, Hanford is a smallish town in the middle of the state. This is an agricultural region and not known for being literary. A shame, since

William Saroyan is the favorite son and John Steinbeck did a fine job depicting the area in "The Grapes of Wrath."

Marilyn Meredith, my continual partner-in-crime, joined me at the Chowchilla BookFest. Not too many people attended the event, so I went around collecting business cards. When I got back home, I approached the Kings County Librarian and suggested we copy Chowchilla and put on an even larger event. Gail Lucas loved the idea. I felt a little like Andy Hardy: "Come on, gang! Let's build a stage in the old barn and put on a show!" Cue Judy Garland.

Red tape doesn't exist in a small town. Julie at the Veterans & Senior Center offered us the top floor, tables and had the vets sell water and sodas. It was a beautiful location, with an elevator to accommodate authors with stacks of books and seniors. The weather cooperated. We tied silver and black balloons to the cannons out front. Marilyn and I did media releases and Public Radio interviewed me. My sexy book cover and a plug for the BookFest made it on a local morning show.

I started with 24 authors from my contacts; it grew to 40 authors as the word spread. Several were self-pubbed, with memoirs on the Dust Bowl and migration to the San Joaquin Valley. We had several Hispanic authors, a Harlequin author, a woman who wrote cookbooks, several children's authors. They came from as far away as Oregon, from the coast, the foothills and the desert.

We had a small stage and a great PA system for authors to have their "10 minutes of fame." We also raffled off donated items. The event was free, the raffle tickets were free. Marilyn and I promoted PSWA. Friends went on lunch runs for us starving authors. Afterwards, some of us headed over to the terrific ice cream parlor for homemade peach ice cream to celebrate.

Kings County is my Field of Dreams. I have waited too long for Fresno to get their literary on and support the local talent. My small town demonstrated what can be accomplished with motivation and community support.

I have a reason to invest in this endeavor. I'm a writer. I write about the Valley because it's what I know and love. The Valley is rich with authors who are overlooked because Central California isn't considered a literary mecca. I'm proud to be a "regional writer." I think every author can target their own little part of the world and create the same experience.

The Hanford BookFest gave the public a chance to meet all the local literary talent under one roof. For free.

In this economy, you can't find a better bargain.

--Sunny Frazier is the author of *Where Angels Fear* available through Amazon.com, Oak Tree Press, and on Kindle.

<http://www.sunnyfrazier.com>

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### **MY BEST WRITING TIPS**

by Sheila Lowe

Be ruthless in cutting out nearly every adverb (words that end in "ly"). After seven years of trying to sell my first mystery novel, *Poison Pen*, I finally heard that advice and followed it. The result? I got published by a small press, which led to a starred review in *Publisher's Weekly*, which produced a deal with a major publisher. Another piece of good advice that helped me improve my writing was to strengthen my main character. I discovered that I was weakening my character by making her constantly feel guilty. Readers want strong characters, which doesn't mean they can't be flawed; they just can't be weak. I recommend finding a good independent editor before you start looking for an agent or a

publisher. It will cost you some bucks, but if you find the right editor, it will be well worth the investment (and it's tax deductible!). It can be the difference between publication and leaving that manuscript in the bottom drawer.

Coming August 4: **Dead Write** (a forensic handwriting mystery) by Sheila Lowe  
 Dating can be dangerous, so clients who can afford the services of eccentric Russian "baroness", Grusha Olinetsky, are willing to pay the hundred thousand dollar fee she charges for an introduction to their perfect mate. Forensic handwriting expert Claudia Rose gets involved when Olinetsky hires her to come to Manhattan and uncover apparent screwups made by her nemesis. The assignment puts her at odds with Detective Joel Jovanic, who suspects that Grusha herself is trouble. Drawn into the feckless lives of the rich and single, Claudia delves into a twisted world of love and lies fueled by desperation. But desperate enough to kill? Clues in the suspects' handwriting might help Claudia save Grusha's already dubious reputation before the names of more victims are scribbled into someone's little black book.

Award-winning author Sheila Lowe is herself a real-life forensic handwriting expert. **Dead Write** is the third book in the series featuring Claudia Rose.

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

[www.claudiaroseseries.com](http://www.claudiaroseseries.com) Forensic handwriting mystery series

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### **MORE ON PROMOTION**

by Marilyn Meredith

Because Sunny wrote about organizing a book fest, thought I'd write about some other ideas for physical promotion (as opposed to that done on the Internet.)

Of course there's always the usual signing in a book store. This is probably my least favorite type of promotion unless I can give a talk along with the signing. I recently had a regular signing in a favorite independent book store and though I sent out flyers and emails to people I knew in the area, only two responded. A couple of people in the store bought books, and all told I sold 8 in a two hour period.

Much more fun is when you are asked to talk about your book or some aspect of writing and this can happen in a bookstore or library or with a service or social group. Not only is it more fun, but you are more apt to capture people's interest and entice them into purchasing a book or two. Once I was invited to an AAUW luncheon with several other writers—all much younger and better looking than I am and a couple were quite famous. I told my husband the only way I could compete was to be funny. Not sure what I said, but everyone laughed a lot and when it was time for the guests to buy books, the greater majority clamored to my table. I sold the most book ever at any event.

Besides bookfests, craft festivals can also be lots of fun. Again, if you have an opportunity to speak, be sure and do it—because it interests people in you and your books. In my little home town, there is an annual Apple Festival which is mostly crafts. About 30,000 people invade the street for two days. I have a booth set up and always do well selling books. There are fans who come looking for me.

And there are lots of really big book festivals, such as the LA Times Book Festival at UCLA, I've gone three times and paid for a signing spot in one booth, and had a two hour spot with the L.A. Sisters in Crime.

I always like to do something special when I have a new book out, and for **Kindred Spirit**, which a large part was set in Crescent City CA, we had two luncheons on the same day one at 11 a.m. and the other at 1:30 p.m. A copy of the book was included with the price of the luncheon. A Tolowa woman who'd inspired part of the story and a couple of the characters, autographed books right along with me. We spoke at both luncheons. It was a

great success. We also made an appearance at the local library the following day.

I've had launches at the Springville Inn (our most elegant eating establishment which appears in my Deputy Tempe Crabtree mystery series quite often under another name), our local coffee house, the Visitor's Center, a gift shop, and an antique Store. I spent two days during the before Christmas shopping spree at the Porterville Art Gallery on Main St.

For ***No Sanctuary***, the latest in the Rocky Bluff P.D. series, because of there are two churches in that mystery, I held the launch in our little church's recreation hall. I decorated with crime scene tape and wanted posters. (You can find anything on the Internet.) We served refreshments and had great time.

For all these types of venues, I always give a copy of the book to the local newspapers in a folder along with information about the book, some reviews, information about the event and me.

Betty Webb did a spectacular book launch for her new series—be sure to ask her about it at the conference.

Of course all this takes time away from my writing, but it is fun to get out and about and visit with people and tell them something about my books.

Marilyn Meredith, the author of ***Kindred Spirits***, the latest in the Deputy Tempe Crabtree mystery series, available from <http://www.mundaniapress.com> and the usual online venues—also ***No Sanctuary***, the latest in the Rocky Bluff P.D. series, available from the publisher, <http://www.oaktreebooks.com> under the Dark Oak section, Kindle, and of course, Amazon.  
<http://fictionforyou.com>

(Editors Note: The best way to keep me from writing articles is to write some yourself.)

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#### **PUBLICATION TIP**

HARRIS PUBLICATIONS pays \$100 for each submission published in the "IT HAPPENED TO ME" column. Send them to "Police Stories" at Harris Publications: 1116 Broadway New York, New York 10010. They can also be submitted electronically at: [tactical-life@harris-pub.com](mailto:tactical-life@harris-pub.com)

--Tip thanks to John Bellah

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#### **BOOK REVIEWS**

**Suffer the Little Children**  
(A Commissario Guido Brunetti Mysteries)  
*By Donna Leon*

Donna Leon is an author I'd heard about for years and wanted to read. However, my stack of books "to read" is very tall, so I hadn't rushed to purchase any of her novels. Then Amazon.com sent me an email regarding a super sale, and "Suffer the Little Children" was one of the books in their offering. Still, I almost didn't purchase because I found the title disconcerting. This is her 16th novel in this series.

On the plus side, her protagonist, Guido Brunetti, is a very likable character. Thoughtful,

with a good soul. Glimpses one gets of his wife, Paola, their children, and his police associates are also engaging. The most compelling aspects of this novel are her descriptions of Venice as seen through Guido's eyes, and the political and social aspects of Italian life. Donna Leon has a smooth writing style, with descriptions that aren't forced or cardboard. But I thought several key characters were inadequately developed in relation to their importance to the story.

The opening scenes did grab me, and I wanted to read more. But after the opening, her story moved slowly, and was sometimes disjointed. And even though the storyline was not compelling enough for me to read her entire novel in one or two sittings—which I often do with an engaging read—I did keep returning to Guido and his Italy.

The ending scenes were well done.

Review by: PSWA Member, M.M. Gornell

Rated:

Not to Miss

X Glad I Read

Okay

Pass

\* \* \*

## MEMBER NEWS

### Brand New for 2009!

***Common Sense Management – Quick wisdom for good managers*** By: Roger Fulton

From the Publisher:

Roger Fulton distills the wisdom from two previous books, ***Common Sense Supervision*** and ***Common Sense Leadership*** into this streamlined volume of helpful advice for anyone in a management position in any industry. With practical sections on winning respect, improving confidence, and preventing and handling problems, this inspirational book combines solid guidance with quotations from visionary experts throughout the ages, such as Confucius, Abraham Lincoln, and Walt Disney.

\* A no-nonsense motivational book for supervisors and managers, featuring practical advice on getting the most from employees.

\* Useful sections provide quick tips, such as "25 Common Mistakes Made by New Supervisors."

Available after April 1, 2009, but can be pre-ordered for shipment when it is released.

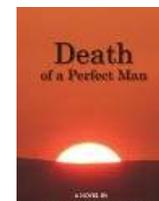
2009, 170 pages, softcover, ISBN: 978-1-58008-983-8, \$12.95

To order go to: <http://www.rogerfulton.com/books.htm>, or ask for it at your local book store.

In addition we revamped my webpage to make it easier to navigate and find out about our new titles. So please take a few minutes to click onto [www.RogerFulton.com](http://www.RogerFulton.com) to take a look around.

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M.M. Gornell's Red Rock City Mystery "***Death of a Perfect Man***" was released by Aberdeen Bay Publishing April 24th, 2009. Jada Beaudine drives south from Seattle to escape the horrors of her husband's tragic death in the San Juans--only to find herself stuck overnight in the stark Mojave high desert of interior Southern California. Alone, and amid mounting apprehension, she does find the odd "Red Rock Inn & Café." It's



a lost, creepy old resort from some other place and time--where Irina, a strange emerald-eyed woman materializes and convinces her to stay the night. She'll check out early in the morning and be on her way, right? But then, a potter is murdered....

This is M.M. Gornell's second mystery. Both her debut novel "Uncle Si's Secret," and "Death of a Perfect Man" are available at: Amazon.com, Barnesandnobles.com, book sellers, and on publisher and author websites - <http://www.mmgornell.com>, <http://www.aberdeebay.com>, [mmgornell@earthlink.net](mailto:mmgornell@earthlink.net)

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### **New Mexico Murder Mystery Series Off To A Promising Start**

About J. Michael Orenduff's new book, Governor Bill Richardson of New Mexico says, "***The Pot Thief Who Studied Pythagoras*** has all the components of a great read – an intricate plot, quirky characters, crackling dialog, and a surprise ending. What's more, Orenduff successfully captures the essence of New Mexico through humor, romance, and even a little philosophical musing. New Mexico's rich history, people, food, and landscape come alive on its pages. But, while Orenduff's account is authentic, this book leaves you wanting more of New Mexico, and the only way to remedy that is to come see for yourself."

Like all classic murder mysteries, this one is part of a series. The first two chapters of the second book, ***The Pot Thief Who Studied Ptolemy***, are bound at the back of *Pythagoras* as a sneak review.

A reviewer in Amazon.com writes, "This light mystery is witty and highly entertaining. This author has created a main character who I hope to get to know better in his future books. I really like the dry humor and the way the mystery is paced and after having traveled to New Mexico many times, the descriptive style of the author brought back great memories of Old Town in Albuquerque. I'll definitely be waiting for the next book!"

Orenduff will be signing books at Maui Wowi Coffee along with other writers attending the Public Safety Writers Association Conference in Las Vegas.

Available from <http://www.oaktreebooks.com>, Amazon and Kindle.

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Michael A. Black is the author of ***Dead Ringer*** (with Julie Hyzy) ~ Private Detective Ron Shade teams up with reporter Alex St. James in their first adventure together. It has Shade investigating a dead man from Chicago who may have resurfaced in Las Vegas, and St. James doing a story about the homeless. Sprinkle in a few stolen body parts and a couple of murders and you have a breakneck adventure. The pace never slows as the two cases intersect and lead the protagonists from Chi-town to Sin City in search of the truth.

***I Am Not a Cop*** (with Richard Belzer) ~ Television star Richard Belzer (*Law & Order SVU*) has a new role: Starring as a character in his own mystery novel. In the first book in a new series, Join Richard as he investigates the disappearance of his friend in a case that involves diamond smuggling, the Russian mafia, and a host of rather unsavory characters.

***Windy City Knights*** ~ Ron Shade's second adventure hits the racks in mass market paperback from Leisure Press.

***Random Victim*** ~ The first in a new police procedural series that features the male/female detective team of Frank Leal and Olivia Hart. (The second in the series, ***Hostile Takeovers***, is due out in September '09) <http://www.MichaelABlack.com>

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John Bellah reports: I had two stories recently published in *GUNS & WEAPONS FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT*, under the "IT HAPPENED TO ME" column. These are my personal experiences, but were not published under my byline--the writer is identified only as "JB, CA"

"*NOT QUITE NECESSARY SHOOTING*" was published in the May, 2009 issue relates to a standoff I had as a young officer against a young man who was armed with what appeared to be a AR-15 or M-16 rifle. (The gun was a toy--part of a movie shoot we were not told about, and the subject almost was shot as he refused to drop the weapon).

"*SUSPICIOUS MINDS*" was published in the July,2009 issue and it relates an eerie off-duty incident I encountered very early one morning on my way home. My "6th sense" was fired up as I almost arrived at my house. (Still don't know why as to this date--some 28-years later) and instead of heading into my driveway, I went around the block and encountered a suspicious vehicle (later determined to be carjacked). My going around the block "spooked" the occupants of the suspicious car and they left the area. No arrests were made (that night) but I believe my actions prevented a neighbor from being relieved of their possessions, robbed, terrorized or...? Why my "6th sense" was triggered, I don't know as the suspicious car was a full city block away from my house and way, way, out of my line of vision.

**The End**

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