



Mystery Press

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President's Message: The Instinct for Gambling

This week, I spent eight hours in a casino. It was for a good cause: the Old Y asked for volunteers from member groups like Ink. This was an opportunity to do some practical research, so I put aside my objections to casino gambling and signed on as Chip Runner Anne.

What surprised me most about the gamblers is that few seemed to be having fun. They looked serious, focused, or worried, but seldom pleased, much less happy.

Years ago, I heard Gloria Steinem speak on women and marriage: about women whose lives were damaged because they made poor choices, and women who had gained prestigious positions through nepotism. She concluded that "women's total instinct for gambling is satisfied by marriage."

For many writers, the total instinct for gambling might well be satisfied by the business side of the writing life. Consider the obstacles: agents, editors, publishers, sales. Even mid-list authors fret about break-out novels.

The yearning to publish is so strong, and the competition so fierce, that a vast industry has sprung up to sell hope to writers. We can plunk our dollars down for books, conferences, workshops, editing, publishing. Some businesses are legitimate, but others offer puffery and dubious services. And wherever desperation may be found, there also will be found charlatans with schemes that are fraudulent or even flat-out criminal.

Still, writers are luckier than gamblers. The process of writing is fun; it fires up the imagination and gives the both sides of the brain a good workout. Writing is an intrinsically good activity.

For gambling addicts, the rush of winning \$600 erases the memory of the \$2,000 lost on the way. The challenge for writers is for us to keep our memories, and our wits, as we venture into that business side of writing.

Anne Jayne

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January Program Review:

Sandra Ruttan on Harrogate

Harrogate Crime Festival has the double advantage of featuring some of the biggest names in the crime genre, while at the same time keeping the conference small and friendly. Attendance of the average event is about 300 people and you're just as likely to rub shoulders in the bar with Mark Billingham and Val McDermid as you are with anyone else.

The festival begins on Thursday, with an optional day featuring small-group sessions for aspiring writers with authors, editors and agents. The festival officially kicks off Thursday night with a fan's choice award ceremony.

Normally there is only one session at a time, featuring 35-40 minutes of interview or discussion followed by 20-25 minutes of questions from the audience. All authors are available after their sessions for signings in the on-site bookstore.

Topics and speakers in 2005 included: How to Get Published in the Crime Fiction World, UK guest of honour Ruth Rendell, US guest of honor Michael Connelly, Serious About Series and Sex and Violence – Where Do We Draw The Line?

2006 features authors Mark Billingham, Ian Rankin, Val McDermid, George Pelecanos and P.D. James. For more information, visit their website:
<http://www.harrogate-festival.org.uk/crime/>

Inksters Field Trip:

Calgary Medical Examiners Office

Dates: 1 p.m.- about 4 p.m. Tuesday, March 13, or Thursday, April 13 **Cost:** \$1 per person.

Minimum group size: four people. If we have 4 people for each date, we can do both.

Email Anne at anne@annejayne.com. Put "**Death in the Gym**" in the subject line.

Bloody Words – An Intimate Canadian Experience *Lorna Schultz-Nicholson*

If you want to hob-knob with down-to-earth Canadian mystery authors, Bloody Words is a great conference to attend. Most people are writers, unlike some conferences where fans are in abundance. The attendance is around 150 so most sessions are small, allowing an attendee to ask questions and have them answered. The line-ups after the sessions, to ask even more important pressing questions, tend to be shorter and the panellists are willing to chit-chat in the hallways.

It is a three day affair, starting on Friday night and ending on Sunday morning. You are guaranteed to learn something and laugh a lot. Panels cover everything from the noir novel to the humorous novel to the latest in forensics. Other services include meetings with agents, manuscript evaluations, and the Bony Pete Short Story contest.

From a personal point of view, I enjoyed Bloody Words because it was intimate and it was about writing. I have attended BoucherCon as well, and it is about selling your product, making your name known. Authors showed up with CD's, bookmarks, free gimmicks. Every day I went back to my hotel lugging a heavy bag. Bloody Words was not like that. You sit and chat instead of trying desperately to sell, sell. I enjoyed meeting Canadian authors and discussing the business in Canada. I was able to find out who had who for an agent, what Canadian publishing houses did or didn't do for their writers, what houses were expanding, what houses were cutting back. To me this is valuable inside information.

Bloody Words in 2006 is June 9-11 in Toronto, Ontario at the Toronto Marriott Eaton Center. Canadian Guest of Honour is Mary Jane Maffini. Cost is \$175.

For more info and registration forms go to www.bloodywords.com

February Program Review: Booksellers Tell All

By Jayne Barnard

Owl's Nest Books, in Britannia Park, (Elbow Drive and 50th Ave SW, Calgary) has a lot to recommend it to Ink members: friendly service, a prominent mystery section, and a mystery book club that welcomes local authors. **Owner Michael Hare and manager Jean Cichon** shared their combined decades of insight into book-selling and the Canadian publishing industry.

One simple reality is that there are more manuscripts than publishers able to print them. Fewer still would get into print without Canadian Heritage's *Book Publishing Industry Development Program* (BPIDP aka 'Bippy-dip'). Among other things, BPIDP pays publishers a subsidy, helping them bear the financial risk of new or little-known authors. This helps Canadian independent bookstores stock Canadian authors' books on their shelves (at least as long as the books are selling).

That brought us to the second reality: bookstores can't afford to stock books that don't sell. Not even to support their hometown authors. Shelf space is money. If books aren't moving off the shelves into a customer's hands and leaving the store with a receipt tucked into them, the cost of renting/owning the space, buying/building the shelves, and paying utilities/wages will soon drive a bookstore under. Bookstores routinely pay 45-55% of cover price and pay their operating expenses out of the mark-up. They can't always afford to pay exchange rates and shipping on books published by American or European presses who don't have a Canadian distributor, either. Not and keep the prices reasonable for their customers.

Some authors try to get into print faster by going with a Print-On-Demand (POD) publisher, or by paying to have their book made at a printing company ('vanity' or self-publishing). Our speakers strongly urged against these options for fiction manuscripts, for several reasons:

- 1) POD isn't always cheaper; books may end up costing more once shipping and royalties are included. Bookstores are unlikely to stock POD books unless/until the book has a proven sales record at a price worth their precious shelf space.

- 2) POD companies often don't take returns, or they charge authors for the returns policy, or they charge returns to authors as they come in.
- 3) Although POD companies may list distribution outlets such as Amazon and Ingram's, the books must still be special-ordered to get to customers' hands. This cuts off impulse-buys and means the author must generate a lot of publicity to convince buyers to seek out places to order the book.
- 4) Book covers from POD and printing companies, the first drawing point for sales both in publishers' catalogues and on store shelves, are often not designed or manufactured as carefully as books designed and printed by publishing houses whose own money is on the line.
- 5) Book sizes and formats from printing companies may be chosen for cost-effective production and not for customer appeal or to fit standard bookstore shelving.
- 6) Printing companies and some POD companies do not help promote the book, leaving the expense of promotion or hiring a publicist up to the author.
- 7) POD and 'vanity' presses have a hard time getting reputable reviewers to look at their books, or getting reviews in publications that count with the reading public and bookstore owners (ie *Quill & Quire*, *Publishers Weekly*, *The Globe & Mail*, or *the New York Times*)

Good news: Canadians read for pleasure more than Americans do; mystery and suspense were the most-chosen genre for Canadian women readers and the second-most chosen by male readers; to be a Canadian bestseller, a book only needs to sell 3,000 copies.

Bad news: POD/self-published books to sell family and friends of the author, and are lucky to sell a few hundred books total, although self-published non-fiction directed at a specific niche market may sell more, and for longer.

For more detailed information on who reads what in Canada, see the Canadian Heritage study on '*Reading and Buying Books for Pleasure*'.

http://www.canadianheritage.gc.ca/pc-ch/pubs/lalpd-rbbp/exec/cont_e.cfm

Two Takes on Writing Schools:

Is Sage Hill for Mystery Writers?

Susan Calder Arnold

For years I had heard glowing reports of The Sage Hill Writing Experience. You study with accomplished authors, enjoy communal meals and recharge yourself with walks through the Qu'Appelle Valley. Last summer, I finally attended the ten day session. I emerged with improved writing skills, new writing connections and my mystery novel-in-progress in better shape.

The Sage Hill Writing Experience operates out of St. Michael's Retreat, 25 km north of Regina, Saskatchewan. Participants come from across Canada to study fiction, poetry, playwriting and creative non-fiction. There are three levels of instruction: Introductory, Workshop and Colloquium. Introductory and Workshop groups meet each morning for discussion and critique of students' work. You also have several private instructor sessions. Colloquia feature fewer group meetings, more writing time (you don't spend time reading others' work) and more one-on-one sessions with the instructor.

Applicants must submit writing samples, a statement of intent and, for Workshops and Colloquia, samples of published work. Applications are evaluated by juries. The chance of acceptance depends on the competition that year. This system has two advantages: Students in each group are at roughly the same writing level and the instructor/student ratio is kept low (about 5/1). A downside for mystery writers is that jurors are literary writers who may not appreciate your work.

I took the Fiction Workshop with Steven Galloway, author of two novels and an instructor at UBC's Department of Creative Writing. Unlike some literary writers, Steven believes plot and character are equally important to a story. He discussed how the two continuously impact each other to produce an action. In critiquing novel chapters, Steven asks two main questions: Did I lose interest at any point? Does the chapter make me want to read further? He believes these questions should apply to both commercial and literary fiction.

I workshopped about 50 pages from my novel, which is structured as a classic mystery. None of my classmates were mystery writers. Most probably weren't mystery readers. All offered valuable comments on writing style, characters, plot developments etc. Genres are blurring these days. A classic mystery, as I understand it, revolves around a death that is revealed in the first chapter. So can literary fiction, while some modern mysteries don't follow the formula or even have a murder.

What Steven doesn't provide is editing. Unless you request it, he won't make a single mark on your manuscript. His idea is to look at the story as a whole and teach self-editing techniques so you don't have to spend the rest of your life taking workshops. Not everyone will appreciate this approach, but it seems to have worked for me. I left feeling my writing was bumped up a notch and better equipped to improve my work.

April 24th is the deadline to apply for this summer's Sage Hill Experience. It runs from July 24th to August 3rd. Tuition is \$895, which covers instruction, meals and a small private bedroom with ensuite bathroom. For more information, you can check the website: www.sagehillwriting.ca. There is also a Fall Fiction colloquium next November.

An Ocean View by Dale Pearson

The Victoria School of Writing was celebrating its tenth anniversary last year when I attended its summer session. Its mission statement reads: To inspire and invigorate the writing of its students, refine their skills, enrich their understanding of the writing life and connect them with other writers. I found all of this and more to be true during the week I attended.

Situated close to my beloved ocean, the school with its day-to-day schedule of open mike sessions, instructor readings and lectures, networking with other students, soon set me in a world far away from life's little distractions. I mean, as a writer, one knows how very huge little attractions can be. (continued next page)

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The list of instructors included: George Bowring, Canada's first Parliamentary Poet Laureate; Bill Richardson who has been host of CBC's 'The Roundup'; Bunny Watson; Canada Reads' John Gould, whose book of short stories *Kilter: 55 Fictions* was short-listed for the Giller Award in 2003; Caroline Adderson, author of *Bad Imaging*, a collection of short stories, two novels and winner of the Ethel Wilson Fiction Prize; Sheri-D Wilson, the Mama of Dada, whose most recent book of poetry is titled *Re-Zoom*, who is Artistic Director of the Calgary International Spoken Word Festival; Lynne Van Luven, a journalist since 1968, who worked as a reporter and editor in Alberta for 20 years; Margaret Slavin Dymen, co-founder of The Victoria School of Writing, Writer in Residence at Trent University, 1995. In summation, the week included a jam-packed jar of talent to rub shoulders with.

Sheri-D Wilson's Performance Poetry class intrigued me, so I was registered in her session. Discovery of self-limitation when writing helped me make the decision. When sessions began I soon discovered the true depth of Sheri-D's talent. The days whizzed by. She had a way of drawing us out of our comfort zone as we rehearsed our performance pieces, and shared hilarious accounts of her experiences and performances throughout her career. Our laughter resonated down the otherwise quiet hallways.

Each student was given an opportunity to perform or read at open mike. We had a one-on-one consultation with our instructor, bang-up nights of Instructor Readings. Sheri-D's performance was riveting. The last night, most of us who stayed attended a barbecue supper at a cottage in a wooded area near the school. What a wind-up bash!

I made new acquaintances, learned to go beyond my boundaries when writing poetry or creative non-fiction, and was truly sorry to see the end of the week. The school staff were excellent, the executive director a joy, and the milieu a world apart from ordinary.

The School holds a Post card story contest each year and the winner receives a scholarship to the summer session. For more details go to

www.victoriaschoolofwriting.com

Since I'm Here for a Good Time, Not a Long Time...

Imagine you're a character in the novel you're penning. According to writing experts, each character must enter a scene with purpose. Not some vague, mamby-pamby aim like 'world peace' or 'finish novel before I'm too to enjoy royalties'. No. If the experts can be trusted, Joe character needs a specific goal, something like 'win race' or 'buy runners'. Furthermore, Jack Bickham, author of *Scene & Structure*, states that at scene's end your character must choose a new, short-term goal.

I encourage my piano students to apply this concept during home practice. After each session, students summarize what was accomplished. Then, based on what was achieved that day, students outline a *specific* goal for the next sitting. For example 'determine fingering on page 1', not 'learn Moonlight Sonata'.

Three years into my writing, I finally took my own advice and created a writing-only daytimer. Now, after each session, I list accomplishments: 'edited to page 29', or 'tightened description of course'. Then, I record specific goals for my next session: 'write Joe's internalization after race', or 'edit starting at page 30'.

I don't know about you, but sometimes I'll go long periods without writing. When I eventually would return to a manuscript, I wasted time reacquainting myself with it. Now, when I have only ten minutes to write, I can tackle a specific goal, instead of scrolling through a long document searching for a place to start my writing session.

Fiona Pinnell

“Well written words are a brush in the hands of an artist. They paint a three-dimensional picture in our minds. The reader doesn't see the words, he/she sees the picture.”

Randy Rawls, author of the Ace Edwards, Dallas PI, series.

NO PLOT? NO PROBLEM!

a Reference Book Review

by Donna Ann Tunney

Can you write a 50,000-word novel in a month? That's the challenge Chris Baty delivers in his book, **NO PLOT? NO PROBLEM!** Baty, the founder of the National Novel Writing Month (NaNoWriMo), has penned an amusing, easy to read "low-stress, high-velocity guide to writing a novel in 30 days."

Whether you're a plotter or a seat-of-the pants author, the book contains excellent advice—how to carve out time in your day for writing, how to stay focused, and how to handle friends and family members who are feeling neglected. There's even tips for dealing with your Inner Editor:

All you need to do is touch the "Take My Inner Editor" Button...(provided in the book)...and a small, invisible team of humane, editor-removal specialists will be dispatched from the spine of this book to collect the thing for the kennel. (pg. 108)

The second half of the book is a week-by-week guide, providing encouragement to keep you on track and get you over the hurdles. And, for those planning to take their month long masterpiece on the road to publication, Baty finishes off with a section on editing. Speckled throughout are helpful quotes from participants who successfully completed the book-in-a-month process.

The inexpensive paperback is a fun, quick read (about 50,000 words!), available at the public library, on-line and at your local bookstore. *For a fun inspiration, visit the National Novel Writing Month website: http://www.nanowrimo.org/modules/xoopsfaq/index.php?cat_id=1*

Between projects and looking for an idea?
Try checking back through your old notebooks.
I found an ancient journal with no fewer than five
short story and four novel ideas
(now to get writing them...)
Sherry Wilson McEwen

Short Mystery Fiction Contests**11th annual Great Canadian Story Contest**

This year's deadline is April 24, 2006.

For complete guidelines, please visit our website

www.storytellingmagazine.com

and click on Home of the Great Canadian Story

Contest. Melanie Fogel, Editor

Storyteller, Canada's Short Story Magazine

www.storytellingmagazine.com

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The **Key West Writer's Guild** 2006 short story contest. Rules at

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

Cash prizes plus honorable mention and all stories entered are considered for the next KWWG anthology. Entry fee is \$15. Deadline March 16.

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The **Scene of the Crime** short story contest opens on Feb. 24, the birth date of Grant Allen, Canada's first crime writer, who was born on Wolfe Island in 1848. Open to all Canadian writers previously unpublished in the mystery or crime genre [including short fiction –ed.]. Deadline is May 15, 2006. Winners announced June 30; prizes awarded at the Scene of the Crime Festival on Sat, Aug. 19. First prize is \$50 and publication in *Kingston Life* magazine. Second and third prizes are \$25 gift certificates from Kingston's Novel Idea bookstore. For contest rules, visit www.sceneofthecrime.ca

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The **Bony Pete** short story contest is open now to any writer, either published or unpublished, who is registered for Bloody Words (June 9 to 11). First prize is the much-coveted Bony Pete statue plus \$100 plus publication in next year's Bloody Words program book. Second prize is \$50; third is \$25; and both will be published in the 2007 BW program book. The deadline for entry is April 15, 2006, and the winners will be announced and the prizes awarded at the Bloody Words banquet on Sat, June 10. For more info about the contest, go to <http://bloodywords.com/bw/pages/Forms.html>.

**PI Workshop report, Part II:****How to retrieve a kidnapped child from Switzerland, and other stories from the files**

By Jayne Barnard

Way back in October 2005, Mystery Writers Ink held a full-day workshop with Kevin Ripa, owner of a private investigation firm and a computer security firm in Calgary, and past president of the Alberta Association of Private Investigators. The morning session concerned the nuts and bolts of getting licensed in Alberta, learning the tricks of the trade, and laughing at some of the ways television and movies get it wrong. The afternoon session had wider scope, from personal bodyguarding for celebrity clients to abduction retrievals from hostile territory or in foreign countries. Here Kevin's personal experiences became invaluable to writers of thriller and mystery as well as of PI novels.

Kevin summed up celebrity security in one word: boring. On tour with the band Rush, he and bodyguards spent many hours leaning up against walls, watching their musicians play and talk and sign autographs. They spent long nights on airplanes and in hotel rooms. Their biggest excitement was organizing escape routes from concert venues to avoid excited fans and over-zealous reporters. We did learn that many celebs are long gone from a back door within a couple of minutes of leaving the stage, even before fans begin to cluster around the known exits.

Another facet of celebrity security is essentially courier work: picking up and safely delivering luxury goods like million-dollar jewelry. The best technique is to be as unobtrusive as possible, while having contingency plans for any eventuality.

Retrieving kidnapped business executives is a high-adrenaline job. Corporations generally carry abduction insurance, so the main difficulty is finding someone willing to deliver a ransom to a heavily armed gang and retrieve the hostage. Kevin was quick to point out that it's not usually as dangerous as it sounds. Kidnapping is a business in places such as Central and South America; anti-government rebels in Columbia, for example, generally treat their victims well, knowing the ransom will be delivered. The central skills needed for ransom-jobs are the ability to stay calm while making contact and being shifted from place to place without

hope of backup, and the ability to constantly assess the changing threat environment while making and adjusting escape plans for yourself and the hostage if the delivery goes bad.

Bringing an abducted child back to a parent across international borders is much trickier as well as more expensive, and unfortunately more common in custody disputes than anyone would like to believe. Part of the expense is transportation: pilots cannot get insurance if they can't file a flight plan, so the rental fee is accordingly high enough for them to take the risk of having their plane impounded (and worse) if they're caught with a missing child in the absence of one of its parents. Then there are expenses for the personnel (fees and living expenses), for advance information, and for arming the team (it's often easier, if not cheaper, to get weapons on the local market than to bring them through airport security).

'Extraction teams' generally consist of four people: advance scouts to check out the child's location and the kidnapping parent/caregiver's routines; a local driver to plot escape routes, and (Kevin's golden rule) a female to bond with the child while the male members of the team keep a perimeter watch, do the driving, and so on. The woman will have her own contingency/escape plan and a designated safe house or even several of them; if the team is spotted after they have the child, her responsibility is to get herself and the child to safety while the other members delay or confuse pursuit by whatever legal means available.

Often a parent sufficiently rich or connected to move a child to another country will have someone keeping tabs on the custodial parent back home, so the legally custodial parent waits either at home or in a non-alarming locale (someplace they often go on business or holiday, for example) until the child is out of the kidnapping parent's country of residence. Thus, a third-country meeting place is usually named, meaning the child may have to be taken safely across two or more international borders while being sought by the kidnapping parent, the law officers of his/her own country, and possibly Interpol as well. This is easier, but still not assured, in the European Union, since borders between member states are less tightly controlled in recent years. Only when the team leader phones to say the child is safe does the custodial parent move to the designated meeting country.

(continued next page)

Getting a child out of Switzerland not long ago required not only finding a border crossing close enough to be feasible but also knowing the border service's routine in leaving the border crossing both open and unguarded. In that instance, the child was moved from Switzerland into Germany, then boarded a plane in Frankfurt (several hours' drive at best) to meet its father in London. Until the child is with a parent, all the team is at risk not only of failing to deliver the child safely to the person signing the checks, but also of being charged with kidnapping themselves. As we might imagine, with all that at stake for the extraction team, retrieval of a child does not come cheap.

The afternoon session came to a close before Kevin could do more than touch on computer security; however his company website has plenty of information for the curious or concerned. It's not quite enough data to write a convincing mystery, but Kevin indicated he would be happy to answer emails from authors concerned about making their computer-hacking detectives convincing. An email address is available on the website, but be sure to mention the Mystery Writers Ink seminar in your subject line.

<http://computerpi.com/security.htm>

**The Brenda Strathern  
"Late Bloomers"  
Writing Prize.**

This annual award of \$5000 is available for unpublished writers who are over 40, residents of Calgary and area, and working on completion of their first work of fiction.

The deadline to submit is March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2006.

Administered by The Calgary Foundation

More details available in the awards section of our website: [www.thecalgaryfoundation.org](http://www.thecalgaryfoundation.org).

### Ink's Links

Check out these entertaining, useful, and occasionally alarming links to websites and forums of interest to writers:

#### Agent-finding or Agent/Publisher Bewares:

<http://www.publishers.ca/publishing-literary-agents.htm>

[http://www.writersservices.com/agent/row/acacia\\_house.htm](http://www.writersservices.com/agent/row/acacia_house.htm)

<http://www.aar-online.org/mc/page.do>

<http://www.agentquery.com/>

<http://www.anotherealm.com/prededitors/pubagent.htm>

## **herland Film & Video Festival**

May 1st-7th, 2006

Venue: The Grand Theatre  
608 - 1st St SW

Admission: Pay-what-you-can  
sliding scale

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

(403) 245 - 3441

## The Power of the First Line

*Catherine Stevens-Saykaly*

**Night Watch, Terry Pratchett:** Sam Vimes sighed when he heard the scream, but he finished shaving before he did anything about it.

Thus begins the bizarre and creative tale as the reader is drawn forward, promised a story much like the oddity and humour of its first line.

Conversing with fellow writers over chai last month, we discussed what made the perfect opening line to a novel. We came to one glorious conclusion: no formula exists.

Thousands of choices before them, the potential reader picks up your book, interested by the cover art. Now intrigued by the back cover summary, the reader opens to the first page. How do you know if your opening line is strong enough of a hook to keep the reader reading to the next line; the next paragraph; the next page then the entire book?

A few things the opening line could/should do:

- invite the reader into the book
- grabs the reader's attention
- be related directly to the story. Not be cute for cute's sake.
- suit the book's tone
- imply motion/action of some kind, (whether emotional or physical or even a strong attitude)
- name the character immediately to engage the reader
- make the reader want to know what happens next

**Writing the Breakout Novel, (p. 141) Donald Maass:** "There is, in any great opening line, a mini-conflict or tension that is strong enough to carry the reader to the next step in the narrative. Its effects last, oh, half a page, a little more if it is really good. After that another electric spark of tension needs to strike us. If it does not, our interest begins to weaken and will pretty quickly fade out."

## A LITTLE FUN

American Book Review's *100 Best First Lines from Novels*

<http://www.litline.org/ABR/100bestfirstlines.html>

Quiz your knowledge of famous opening lines by matching them to the correct novel

<http://encarta.msn.com/encnet/Features/Quiz/Quiz.aspx?QuizID=61>

Quiz: How well read are you? Test yourself with our quiz on the first lines of well-known books

[http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk\\_news/magazine/3532609.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/magazine/3532609.stm)

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## Board news:

1. The board has started the process of finding volunteers to fill both board and non-board positions in Ink for 2006-2007. If you are interested in volunteering, please let the board know!

2. Sandra Einarson, who was elected as Vice-President in June, 2005, has resigned from the Board. Her contributions to Ink are appreciated.

3. In January, the board decided to sign up for the National Directors' and Officers' Liability Insurance program (DOLI) offered by Volunteer Canada. Volunteer Canada encourages non-profit organizations to obtain DOLI, because it offers protection to volunteer directors if the Board is legally obligated to pay damages to another person. DOLI coverage enables the organization to hire a lawyer.

The board does not anticipate any lawsuits. Ink's activities are quite low risk.

However, we are aware that nowadays many volunteers who are willing to serve on boards agree to do so only if the organization has DOLI. As we embark on the process of recruiting new board members for next year, we are pleased that we can assure the volunteers that this protection is in place.

**And, Last and Best: The GOOD NEWS!**

There's a lot of it this month, so we're putting it alphabetically by Ink member/author's last name. Remember, any progress in your writing goals is good news; it's not only publishing credits that count among friends.

Eileen Coughlan's second novel, *Grizzly Lies*, was **Number 4** on Pages On Kensington's Top 30 Books for 2005, and **Number 13** on McNally Robinson's Top 20 Bestsellers for 2005.

Fiona Pinnell's unpublished novel, *Ice Mask*, made the short-list in the UKA Press 'Opening Pages' Competition, beating nearly 150 other submissions to get into the top five. The judges wrote that *Ice Mask* "has the potential for wide commercial appeal to thriller/adventure readers".

<http://ukapress.com/>

Sandra Ruttan has signed a publication deal for her manuscript, *Suspicious Circumstances*, with Tico Publishing, for tentative release later this year. <http://home.earthlink.net/~ticopublishing/> Her manuscript *Echoes and Dust* is also accepted by Tico. *Crime Spree Magazine* will be publishing her short story, *The Butcher*, in their July/August 2006 issue.

**Meeting Schedule:****Second Thursdays, Old Y**

7:00 to 9:00 p.m. (except where noted)

**Thursday March 9:** "Networking for Authors: Survival Tips for Professional Socializing." Helping writers utilize opportunities to develop relationships that will positively impact their writing careers. Ink's own Brenda Collins has 20 years experience in senior management and now works as a management consultant.

**Thursday April 13: Criminal Justice System** Susan Radke (LL.B, LL.M.) is a lawyer with experience as a government lawyer, beginning as a prosecutor, and experience as a research lawyer and a public legal educator focusing on the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and human rights legislation. She is now the Program Coordinator of the Legal Assistant program at SAIT.

**Thursday May 11: Criminal Psychology 101** First-hand insight from an experienced professional who works with people with deviant behaviours, have committed a wide range of crimes and been incarcerated. Speaker from the John Howard Society in Edmonton

**Thursday June 8: Annual General Meeting and Members' Readings**

## Mystery Writers Ink Society

223 – 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue SW, Calgary Alberta T2R 0G9

**Mission Statement:** *Mystery Writers Ink shall support writers of mystery fiction by providing networking opportunities and by educating and informing writers about writing techniques, publishing, and marketing.*

2005-06 Board: President: Anne Jayne      Secretary: Pam McDowell      Treasurer: Marg Brick  
 Membership: Fiona Pinnell      Newsletter: Jayne Barnard      Publicity: Dale Pearson  
 Library: Susan Calder Arnold      Reception: Bernie Visotto      Web: Catherine Stevens-Saykaly  
 Database: Brenda Collins