

# *Myster-E Press*

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**Next Meeting: Thursday, February 14, 2008. 7:00 p.m. at the old Y**

## **Dave Burroughs - A Career In Law Enforcement**

Dave Burroughs began his career with the Calgary Police Service. During his 25 years with the CPS, his duties included forensic investigation and analysis – notably the examination of fatal motor vehicle accidents. As head investigator in over 200 fatal crashes, his responsibilities included everything from the collection of physical evidence to accident reconstruction.

In addition to his work in this area, Dave also gained extensive experience in identification methods and techniques. He is a member of the Canadian Identification Society and has compared in excess of 10,000 fingerprints. He is also a certified blood splatter analyst. Dave has appeared as an expert witness for the courts.

After leaving the Calgary Police Service, Dave served for three years as Security Analyst at the Drumheller Penitentiary before becoming a Provincial Prosecutor. For the past five years he has been a Provincial Prosecutor for the Attorney General of Alberta. His presentation draws upon these wide ranging experiences.

*Can you guess this month's mystery ink member?*

*Clue #1: If you were cast as a character in a book, how would you describe yourself?*

I am the kind of character who likes to daydream and plan great adventures and then talks all the other characters into coming along for the ride.

## Faye Reineberg Holt, January's Speaker Review

Are you planning to write an historical mystery set in Calgary's early days but need to do research to get the details right? Do you need to interview a crusty police detective so you can create a believable police procedural? Published author and Mount Royal College instructor Faye Reineberg Holt spoke to Mystery Writers Ink on the tactics and courtesies of conducting interviews and on performing other research.

In her talk (with the amusing sub-title "Truisms and Risky Behaviors for Writers") Faye laid out some of the general rules for conducting interviews. Generally speaking, it is better to ask open questions, which give the interviewee plenty of room to elaborate on their comments, rather than a closed question, which requires only a short, one or two-word answer. While doing an interview, you will have to keep your wits about you so that you can keep talking, listening and taking notes while also keeping an eye on your recording equipment to ensure it is still functioning. If you plan to record an interview, you should secure your interviewee's approval in advance. Arrive on time, which means allowing extra time for unexpected delays. Don't bring anyone with you unless that person happens to be the "in" that helps you gain the confidence of your interviewee. And don't take your interviewee's word as truth even if they honestly believe it is. On the other hand, don't automatically discount what they have to say, either. A good rule of thumb is to find three independent sources if you need to confirm a fact.

Keep your notes, tapes and photocopies around in case you have to consult them again later or need to prove something you've written. Develop good research habits so that you will have credibility with your readers and editors. Try different search terms when doing research on the Internet, since different words may yield different results. When consulting books, academic works are the most reliable but the least easy to read, while personal accounts are less reliable but more interesting. Photographs and films from earlier times may help you to capture the atmosphere of an era. Interviewing older people may assist you in recreating the manner of speech of people from the era in which your story is set.

At the start of her talk, Faye turned the tables on her audience by asking them to interview her. She revealed that her interest in stories began when she was a girl and she had a neighbour who kept a mentally disabled child in a small room with a barred window. While she cites her mother as her biggest influence overall, it was her Irish story-telling grandfather who provided her with the greatest influence to become a story-teller herself. Faye is the author of a number of books about local history and geography, including her latest, a travel guide prepared for the AMA, titled "Alberta: 100 Journeys".

- *Gordon Neufeld*

**Clue # 2: Who are the mystery authors you enjoy reading?  
Janet Evanovich, JD Robb**

*Clue # 3:* If you could be anyone in history for a day, who would it be?  
Martin Luther King. I respect his ideals, and his charisma. And he had a dream. Social Justice is an important value to me.

### Member News:

**Join Shirlee Smith Matheson** at the formal book launch of her latest book, *Maverick in the Sky: The Aerial Adventures of WWI Flying Ace Freddie McCall*. The launch will be held at the Glenbow Museum in the McCall display of the *Mavericks of Alberta* Exhibit, 2:00 pm, Monday, February 4, 2008.

Danger is Sweet!

*Maverick in the Sky: The Aerial Adventures of WWI Flying Ace Freddie McCall* by Shirlee Smith Matheson (ISBN 9781-897181-16-4) \$9.95

“From the perils of World War I aerial dogfights to the daring antics of his post-war barnstorming stunts, the adventures of Captain Freddie McCall, flying ace and maverick Calgarian, come to life in Shirlee Smith Matheson’s newest aviation story.”

### And a little diversion or two...

Thanks go to Jayne Barnard for finding this comic and to Joey Comeau of [www.asofterworld.com](http://www.asofterworld.com) for permitting us to use it.



Test your Mystery Novel Knowledge at:

<http://www.funtrivia.com/crossword/play.cfm?gid=551>

## **Out of Town and On-line Events**

### ***Online workshops:***

The Kiss of Death (KOD) chapter of Romance Writers of America (RWA) will be holding a month-long online workshop.

MurderOne workshop (technical elements workshop) – Training and Deployment for Special Operations. This workshop examines the training, methods of deployment, and psychological make-up of members of a number of US Special Operations groups.

Cost of workshop is US\$15 for KOD members, US\$30 for non-members. Payment must be received by Jan 27. For more info on what the workshops cover, the presenters, or how to register, visit <http://www.rwamysterysuspense.org/murderone.html>.

### ***Spring 2008 & Fall 2008***

#### ***The Banff Centre: Writing with Style***

The *spring session* runs April 21 to 26, 2008, and the deadline for applications is Feb 1. Faculty include Tim Bowling (Chapter One Novel), Sarah Ellis (Writing for Children), Myrna Kostash (Creative Nonfiction), and Sean Virgo (Short Fiction).

The *fall session* runs Sept 15 to 20, 2008, and the deadline for applications is May 15. Faculty for the fall include GAIL BOWEN (Mystery), Steven Heighton (Poetry), Audrey Thomas (Travel Writing), and Bill Schermbrucker (Memoir).

For more information, visit <http://www.banffcentre.ca/programs/program.aspx?id=639>.

#### ***Sunday Serial Thriller Contest***

It's the return of the Sunday Serial Thriller, a writing contest inaugurated last year by *The Vancouver Province*, where aspiring authors contribute chapters to a murder mystery serial story, competing not only for a chance to be published but also for some pretty nifty prizes (trip for two, writing course at SFU, and more).

ER physician and best-seller medical thriller writer Dan Kalla will again this year write chapter 1 of this mini-novel set in Vancouver. Dan will set up the plot and cast of characters and will provide writing tips to would-be participants. Readers will contribute the next 7 chapters, and Dan will finish the novel by writing chapter 9.

Starting Sunday, Jan 27, with Dan's intro chapter, a new chapter will appear each Sunday, and readers will have until the following Wednesday morning to take a stab at writing the next chapter. A panel of judges at *The Province* will review all entries each week and a senior panel, including Kalla, will decide on the winning chapter. All chapters will be posted on *The Province's* website so that readers can catch up if they missed one. <http://www.canada.com/theprovince/index.html>

## National Novel Writing Month - Two INK Member's Perspectives

30 days. 50,000 words. A finished first draft. That's the goal of National Novel Writing Month, NaNo for short.

In Mid-October I registered at <http://www.nanowrimo.org/>, hoping to develop a novel that was lurking, half-plotted, in my head. I dusted off the clue lists, read over old character notes, deferred non-essential social events, warned family, and laid in a supply of Toblerone chocolate as a small reward for every day I made the minimum word count (1667 words). I mentally composed my opening sentence, then paragraph. As the clock approached midnight on Halloween, I was ready. So ready, in fact, that my first day's word count was reached in the first two hours of November.

The writing began to roll. When discouragement threatened, I remembered the goal was not to finish a whole chapter or scene today, but merely to write a few more sentences. When my brain got completely stuck, I took a mini-vacation: socialized, watched movies, and read the funny and encouraging posts from fellow sufferers on the NaNo forum. Then I made myself write... just one more day's words.

November ended with 50,373 words on my mystery manuscript. For that, I got a flashy "Winner" banner under my name on the NaNo forum, a printable certificate of achievement, and an immeasurable glow of pride. I did it! I managed not to quit!

Finishing a novel is an amazing high, a better Christmas present than anything found under a tree. This story, my story, is told. It might have been done eventually but, for me, the sense of being on a shared journey and the discipline of a finite timeline made the difference between having an idea for a novel in my head and holding a completed manuscript in my hands. 'The End' is a whole new beginning, thanks to National Novel Writing Month.

*- Jayne Barnard*

Signing up for National Novel Writing Month on October 30 was one of the more recklessly impulsive decisions I have made lately, but I didn't realize that until the second week. By then, pounding out 1,600 words a day was becoming challenging. The first blush of excitement had faded and I was developing some new procrastination strategies.

The forums on the NaNoWriMo website were interesting and worthy of perusal each day. In the Calgary forum, one fellow challenged us all to include "Tim" in our novel. It didn't matter what form "Tim" took – police officer, cat, zombie, homosexual accountant – as long he made an appearance in the story. Many of us discounted this as a silly idea, but darned if "Tim" didn't show up at my crime scene in full uniform!

The forums were useful for more than procrastination, with lots of writing tips and inspiration, but I found the Calgary chat room particularly fun. Just keeping up with the sharp wit and ferocious typing skills of fellow chatters provided a better jolt of adrenaline than a venti latte. I was stunned to learn, though, that a couple of these writers were kids.

The deadline and camaraderie of NaNoWriMo provided the inspiration I needed to get the first draft of my preteen novel done. At 51,228 words, it needs some heavy-handed editing and I am looking forward to spending February immersed in the story again. Will I do NaNo again next year? Probably, though only after some intense planning in October.

*-Pam McDowell*

*Clue # 4: What are you reading now?*

I am reading the Madonna's of Leningrad. I read a lot of literary fiction.

## **INK Library Review --FBI Crime Classification Manual**

The result of a 10-year study by the FBI's National Center for the Analysis of Violent Crime, normally not available to the public, is now in the Ink library. The manual won the 1994 award for the most significant contribution to the literature of law enforcement intelligence by the International Association of Law Enforcement Intelligence Analysts.

The classification of crime is broken into two parts: (1) types (homicide, sexual assault and arson), including case histories, characteristics, crime scene indicators, forensics, and investigative considerations; and (2) the study of crime, including MOs, aspects of violent crime, and crime scene photography.

There are 10 basic steps to a crime scene search which include: a narrative description, photographs, latent fingerprint evidence, and collection of evidence for forensic analysis. The investigator also looks at the victimology – what was it about the person's lifestyle, habits, friends, employment, or personality that contributed to that person becoming a victim?

Case studies give details of solved murder cases with names, investigation results, how the crime was committed, and sentencing. Did you know that cyanide is often the poison of choice because it is easily available at chemical and photographic supply houses and in college and high-school laboratories? It can even be ordered through the mail and one ounce can kill 250 people.

If you harbour any fond notions of the innate decency of homo sapiens, this document may put your beliefs to the test. Take the Mafia revenge killing of a family including a three-year-old child, "torn from her dead mother's arms, shot in the neck, and tossed on a couch to die". Or the kidnapped 72-year-old wife of a philanthropist millionaire whose body was never found.

Investigators also look for "staging" at the crime scene--the criminal wants to give the impression of a natural or accidental death, or suicide, as in the case of the doctor who shot to death two of his four sons to collect insurance money.

There are sections on assault and arson. The manual wraps up with a section on interviewing, confessions, witness typology, and a fairly comprehensive index.

*-Sherry Wilson McEwen*

### **Local Events**

The Southwood Community Association presents a Writing Workshop with Simon Rose to be held at Southwood Community Hall, 11 Sackville Drive SW Calgary

Thursday January 31, 2008 - 7.00 pm to 9 pm

This session will cover marketing and promotion for authors, dealing with media, book launches, promotional events, securing speaking engagements and so on, as well as delving deeper into the publishing world.

\$30.00 per person To register please call Marilyn Shepherd at 403 441 5671

*Clue # 5: If you could have been the author of any one story, which would it be?*

Noble House – great characters, great action, exotic location – for me its almost like speculative fiction because the setting and the culture is so foreign.

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.*

**Ink Board of Directors**

**2007-2008 Meeting Year**

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Vice President ... Bernie Visotto  
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Publicity..... vacant

Program Committee:

- Sherry Wilson McEwen
- Marilyn Lewis-Steer
- Davis Neave
- Shirlee Smith Matheson

**2008 Winter Meeting Schedule:**

**Second Thursdays, Old Y**

**7:00 to 9:00 p.m.**

(except where otherwise noted)

**Thursday, March 13, 2008:**

***To be confirmed:***

**Jim Edwards,  
Crime Scene Specialist with  
the Calgary Police Service**

**Who is our mysterious INK member?**

Donna Wickens. For the past seven years, Donna has worked as a trust officer with a big trust company. Currently she works in the Aboriginal Services Group where her team administers Settlement Trusts for First Nations. Donna finds the work interesting, the clients fascinating and the politics bewildering