

# *Myster-E Press*

*A Publication of Mystery Writers Ink Society*

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## **Next Meeting: March 13, 7 p.m. at the Old YMCA**

Sergeant Edwards from the Calgary Police Service "Ident" Unit will give a presentation on various crime scenes and the process officers go through to collect evidence.

**Can you guess the identity of this month's mysterious INK member from the clues planted within this newsletter? \***

### ***clue #1***

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

I would be someone with a long, complicated backstory, such as a person who lived for many years in a foreign country before returning to his native land.

\*answer on last page

## ***March Presentation Review by Claudia Zakrison***

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

Welcome to Oz. If you want a true to life exposure to the prison experience, then, according to Dave Burroughs, this is the movie for you. And prison is not a pleasant place to be.

Prison is “survival” and you’re not there to make friends. Survival means finding the toughest, meanest people in the place and joining their group. Weapons can and will be made out of anything available and stashed anywhere accessible. On top of this, there are not enough jobs in prison to employ everyone. As a result prisoners who are granted day release to work in the community are the most vulnerable. These are the prisoners who will be coerced into bring drugs into the penitentiaries.

And drugs are only part of the black market phenomenon in prisons. Drugs, alcohol and tobacco are traded for profit. Bales, or pouches of tobacco, become currency and go for \$15 each. How is this supply possible? First off, drugs are smuggled into prisons by guards, nurses and visitors, or even shot over walls in drug-filled arrows. Secondly, every inmate in Canada has a list of 10 people on their approved phone list and a PIN. All calls are made on public payphones and are collect calls and most calls involve drugs. At one time, every single call was monitored but this action is now against prisoners’ rights. Thirdly, prisoners manufacture their own home brew by stealing oranges, ketchup, bread and yeast, combining it all in black garbage bags and allowing the mix to ferment into hooch over a period of three months.

Nevertheless, although the prison sub-culture may be here to stay, at least law enforcement officials have made advances in catching suspects. AFIS, or Automatic Fingerprint Information System, has reduced fingerprint analysis to a period of 24 to 48 hours. Up until 1985, fingerprint analysis was done by hand, comparing thousands of cards, and it took months. Fingerprints are catalogued according to types of whorls and arches and there are 10 types. Identical twins will have the same pattern, but their prints are still individual. Alberta, Saskatchewan and British Columbia are all tied into on AFIS system, but all other provinces and territories are on Ottawa’s AFIS system and the two systems are not well integrated. The fingerprints of anyone charged with a crime go into the system, but a person who is not convicted can apply to have their prints removed. Everyone who joins the Police services in either a service or civilian capacity is automatically printed. Children who have been printed for identification purposes are not put into AFIS. Canadian prints are not routinely searched in the US, where there are as many as 18 to 20 different systems. Fingerprints can last for up to 50 years.

DNA evidence is far more fragile and analysis can be as fast as 2 weeks or can take 6 months to a year to get results. The RCMP operates two labs in Western Canada, one in Edmonton and one in Vancouver, and while there are private labs, they are very expensive. DNA needs to be protected or else it can rot. The sample needs to be dried and then stored in paper or plastic to preserve it. Identical twins will have identical DNA.

Blood spatter analysis is categorized into 3 groups; passive drips, smears, and projected under force. A blood droplet that flies is tear-shaped and the skinny tail indicates the direction the droplet is moving. By measuring the droplet and the tail, point of origin can be determined. A single blow does not spatter blood; the victim has to be hit at least twice for spatter to occur. Blood cannot be cleaned away, or even painted over. Even months and years later, luminol will react with the iron in the blood and fluoresce under ultraviolet light. Luminol will also react with detergents, cleaners, iron, and rust. It will not differentiate between human and animal blood, either.

Crime scene investigation is done by Ident, not Homicide, and consists of scale diagrams, 100's to 1000's of photographs of the scene and exhibits, exhibits that are seized, and witness statements. The evidence is kept for 30 days and then destroyed if the conviction is not appealed, but in serious offences, is usually kept in storage.

Anyone can represent the accused in court as their agent and this agent, usually the defence lawyer, gets full disclosure except for the address and phone numbers of the witnesses. The crown prosecutor doesn't have to be a lawyer, and is the person who makes any deal with the accused. The judge is responsible for sentencing. The judge is also the person likely to be threatened by the accused.

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***Guess the INK member, clue #2***

**What jobs have you held/currently hold?**

Legal assistant, deli clerk, paper box factory worker

### **Links of interest**

Calendar for mystery conferences:

<http://www.blackravenpress.com/calendar.htm>

Want to photoshop age one of your characters?

<http://www.exguides.org/photoshop-tutorials/age-progression.html>

Need advice on any topic?

<http://www.exguides.org/photoshop-tutorials/age-progression.html>

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## **Upcoming contests**

### **Derringer Awards**

This contest, sponsored by the Short Mystery Fiction Society, is for short stories published in 2007.

Eligibility: You must be a member of the Short Mystery Fiction Society to submit a story. There is no fee, but there is a time element involved because you must be approved by the Society, so the sooner you join and are approved, the sooner you can submit your story. There are no other eligibility criteria (apart from the fact that the story must have been published in 2007) - you can be of any nationality and your publisher doesn't have to be MWA-approved.

Procedure: SMFS author members can submit up to two stories published in 2007. Editor and publisher members can submit three or more stories from their published book(s); the number depends on how many stories they published during 2007. (Editor and publishers can also submit two stories they themselves have written.)

For more details, visit [http://www.shortmystery.net/derringer\\_rules.html](http://www.shortmystery.net/derringer_rules.html)

Deadline: Submissions are accepted between noon, Feb 2, and midnight,

### **Bony Pete Short Story Contest**

Bony Pete, the skeleton-mascot who refuses to stay in the Bloody Words closet, is now accepting short stories for the Bony Pete Short Story Contest at Bloody Words 2008. Stories can be up to 5000 words long, must be fiction, and must have a mystery or crime theme. Toronto has to figure in the story in some way.

First prize is \$100 plus a statuette of Bony Pete, second prize is \$50, third prize is \$25. All stories will be published in *Bloody Words: The Anthology II*, to be published in 2010, the 10th anniversary of BW.

This contest is open to Bloody Words 2008 attendees only; the deadline for submissions is April 1, 2008.

For more info about the rules and to download the entry form, visit <http://www.bloodywords.com/BW8-story.htm>.

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### **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.

The call is out for chapter 5, so there's still time for you to join in the criminous fun. Read the rules here <http://www.theprovincecontests.com/serialthriller/>.

***Guess the INK member, clue #3 Tell us about your writing experience.***

I have taken many courses from the Alexandra Writers' Centre Society. As well, I have been to the Banff Centre's Writing With Style (twice), the Sage Hill Writing Experience and the Humber College Summer School and Correspondence Program.

**Speculative Mystery Iconoclast** is a new short fiction PDF zine that pays for accepted stories. Check out the submission guidelines for Speculative Mystery Iconoclast at <http://specmysticon.wordpress.com/2007/11/30/speculative-mystery-iconoclast-submission-guidelines/>

### **Scene of the Crime Short Story Contest**

February 24th marks the birthday of Grant Allen, Canada's first crime writer. What better way to celebrate the occasion than to give other Canadian writers a chance to have their first mystery story published? This year's first place winner receives a cheque for \$100. Second prize is \$50, and third prize is \$35. Honourable mentions, if any, will receive gift certificates from Kingston's Novel Idea Bookstore.

The contest is open to Canadian citizens or those resident in Canada and not previously published in the mystery or crime fiction genre. Previous first place winners are ineligible, but previous second or third place winners are welcome to enter again this year. The deadline for submissions is May 15, 2008.

Stories can be up to 3500 words in length and must be original and not previously published.

For more info about the rules, visit  
<http://www.sceneofthecrime.ca/festival/contest.html>.

### **Creative Keyboards**

Here's a new short story contest from Arts Hamilton. Stories submitted must not exceed 1500 words. Entries must be in Times New Roman, 12-point font and not previously published. The identity of the author must be on a separate sheet, along with address, phone number and e-mail address. The author's name must not appear on the pages of the story. Manuscripts will not be returned. There is a \$10 entry fee per entry (or \$25 for three entries). Make your cheque for the appropriate amount payable to "Arts Hamilton (Writing Contest)," and mail it with your story or stories to:

Arts Hamilton Writing Contest  
279 King Street East  
Hamilton, ON L8N 1B9

First prize is \$200; second prize, \$100; third prize, \$50. Winners will be announced at LiT LiVe on Sunday, September 7, 2008. The first-place story will be published, and it plus the two runners-up will be read as part of the LiT LiVe program in Hamilton on Sunday, October 5, 2008.

Deadline for submission is May 15, 2008. For more info, email  
[info@artshamilton.ca](mailto:info@artshamilton.ca).

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**Daphne du Maurier Award**

for Excellence in Mystery/Suspense

UNPUBLISHED DIVISION

DEADLINE MARCH 15, 2008

The contest is open to any writer who has never been contracted in book-length fiction (40,000 words or more) from any publisher.

Membership in Romance Writers of America® and/or MRSRWA is not a requirement for entry.

Any manuscript that has previously finished in the Daphne including honorable mentions is not eligible for entry again.

There is no limit to the number of entries per author, but each entry may be entered in ONLY ONE category.

Category (Series) Romantic Mystery/Suspense

Historical Romantic Mystery/Suspense

Inspirational Romantic Mystery/Suspense

Mainstream Mystery/Suspense

Paranormal/Time Travel/Futuristic Romantic Mystery/Suspense

Single Title Romantic Mystery/Suspense

<http://www.rwamysterysuspense.org/contestunpublished.html>

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***Guess the INK member, clue #4 and #5***

**Why do you write?**

I have aspired to write since Grade 4, when my teacher asked her class to create a magazine with a story in it. I wrote a story called "Mystery Canyon" (based on the Hardy Boys) and from then on I was hooked on writing.

**If you could be anyone in history for a day, who would it be? Why?**

I would be Leon Trotsky, because then I would have written great books, but also be enjoying a comfortable life.

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**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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Program Committee:

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

**Winter-Spring Meeting Schedule:**

**Second Thursdays, Old Y**

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

(except where otherwise noted)

**Thursday March 13, 2008:**

Sergeant Edwards from the Calgary Police Service Ident Unit who will give a presentation on various crime scenes and the process the officers go through to collect evidence.

**Thursday, April 10, 2008:**

Gordon Berturelli is Senior Vice President, International Business Development, World Fuel Services. His talk on International Travel Safety and Security will acquaint us with the villains out there who prey on travelers, their many devious methods, and how one can avoid being a victim of such skullduggery. A great opportunity to discover how to set up "your" villain and then thwart his efforts!

**Who is our mysterious INK member?**

Gordon Neufeld. When not writing, Gordon likes to take long walks while listening to audiobooks.