

Myster-E Press

A Publication of Mystery Writers Ink Society

Volume 6 Issue no. 3 November 2007

ISSN Electronic Edition: 1712-3690

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Next Meeting: November 8th, 2007 7 – 9 p.m. at the Old Y

“Building tension and dramatic suspense into your novel”

Jeff Buick

Author of four best-selling thrillers, Bloodline, Lethal Dose, African Ice and Shell Game, with Delicate Chaos set for release in February 2008.

“Jeff Buick, a Calgary mystery writer admits writing is a passion for him. He had a regular 'day job' but something was missing. Then writing happened by.

Initially, Jeff wrote a young adult (YA) book for one of his sons, and discovered a hidden talent. Writing seemed to come easy, and it wasn't long before he shifted to writing thrillers. Fifteen books later, he's still loving it.

Jeff took part in panel discussions with authors at the Romantic Times Booklovers Convention in Houston and the International Thriller Writers - Thriller Fest, New York. More about Jeff at www.jeffbuick.com “

Incoming Newsletter Editor:

Please welcome and support Fiona Pinnell

(starting November 20th in time for the December issue; please send all newsletter announcements and submissions to her at bruges@shaw.ca)

INK Library Update – by Susan Calder

Two new highly-recommended books have arrived in the INK library: "A Passion for Narrative: A Guide for Writing Fiction" by Jack Hodgins and "How to Write Killer Fiction: The Funhouse of Mystery & the Roller Coaster of Suspense" by Carolyn Wheat. At the September meeting, speaker Elona Malterre called "A Passion for Narrative" a must book for every writing library. INK member Brenda Collins considers "How to Write Killer Fiction" one of the best writing books she has read. If you wish to take out either of these books please contact the INK librarian at susan.calder@shaw.ca or check the INK library cupboard at the next meeting. For a complete list of library books, have a look at the INK website: www.mysterywriters.com.

December meeting at the Vertigo Mystery Theatre

7:00 pm pre-show get together, show begins 8:00 pm.

Join us to see '*The Mystery of Edwin Drood*' by Rupert Holmes. The Tony-Award winning musical holiday extravaganza will help to put us in the Christmas spirit!! The title character disappears one stormy Christmas Eve—but has he been murdered? If so, whodunit? Audience participation is essential to solve the mystery.

To date 24 people have said they are interested and we need a group of 25 to qualify for the cheaper tickets of \$27 adult; \$22 senior. If our group is less than 25, tickets will be \$31 adult; senior \$25. The theatre is located in the base of the Calgary Tower and parking in the tower parkade is about \$6.00.

If you require further information email Marilyn at mhls@shaw.ca

Reminder: Ink Memberships were due by September 30

Membership \$45/year

Early Bird bonus: Renew by September 30 and save \$5

Drop-In Fee: \$5 at the door

The mailing address is: 223 12th Ave SW, Calgary, AB T2R 0G9.

Calgary's **World Fantasy Convention** takes place over the Halloween weekend: Oct 30 to Nov 2, 2008. Our theme is **Mystery in Fantasy and Horror**. Great guests: Barbara Hambly and David Morrell (authors), Tad Williams (Toastmaster), Tom Doherty (publisher) and Todd Lockwood (artists). <http://www.worldfantasy2008.org/>

Looking to the Future for Committed Inksters, this advice from the mysterious mystery publisher at mysteriousmatters.typepad.com

First Novels and Thick Skin - Agatho, Mysterious Matters Blog

The world of the novelist -- especially the first-time, just published novelist -- is not all glamour, book signings, and Oprah appearances. In fact, very few writers receive the royal treatment. In a world where 290,000 books were published in 2006, most writers are left to fend for themselves, spreading the word about their books day by day, in social settings, bookstores, and daily life.

Most novelists don't have it easy, and some will say that it's only the joys of writing and feeling the printed book in one's hand that makes up for the many challenges. Someone quite naive (and unschooled in the ways of publishing) recently suggested to me that writers should stop complaining and just laugh all the way to the bank on the way to cash their massive advance and royalty checks. I was flabbergasted and speechless; and since I didn't have several hours to set the record straight, I just nodded and promised to pass along that sage advice to the writers with whom I work.

Sometimes editors / publishers are accused of being callous because we have to make financial decisions that put writers out of print or cancel their contracts. But we do like (sometimes love) our authors, which is why it's tough to see them facing so many situations they didn't expect. So, herewith, some advice for those excited new authors who get more than they bargained for.

1. Dealing with a bad review. I don't think anything is more upsetting to a new writer, especially when the reviewer has panned the book with malicious glee. It's tough to see your first born so thoroughly decimated in print, whether on paper or the Web. I try to advise writers to learn from negative reviews, to look objectively at the points of criticism to see if any of them are valid. But there are times that a negative review is clearly the result of malice, spite, envy, or a host of psychological problems; and writers need to learn to dismiss these reviews with a wave of the hand. I occasionally advise writers to write a highly sarcastic, snotty response to reviewer--and to then print it out, rip it up, and zap the file from their computer. Doing so can be highly therapeutic.

2. Seeing your book on the remainder table. This feels terrible, too, but remember that it happens to just about everyone. The fact that I can go out to my local Barnes & Noble right now and buy several Mary Higgins Clark hardcovers at a fifth of their original cover price doesn't make MHC a whit less successful. On the positive side, remainders help people with limited budgets to buy quality books, and they also can help readers (who wouldn't pay full cover price for a new writer) try something new. From a publishing standpoint, it's better to get some money for your existing inventory than to destroy it and get zero revenue. The simply insane returns system on which this industry runs (don't get me started) pretty much means that a lot of books are going to go unsold and remaindered; this fact should rarely be taken as a sign that you have failed as a writer.

3. Coping with snooty bookstore owners or employees. You're thrilled--your first book has been published. You have a right to feel extremely proud--most likely, you've worked extremely hard and faced a lot of rejection, but you persevered and did something

that many people only dream of. So you march proudly into your local bookstore with a copy of the book and ask the clerk to stock it, only to be greeted with a withering stare, and perhaps a cold explanation that shelf space is limited, and how many people, exactly, do you think are going to come into the store looking for your book? I don't want to paint all bookstores with the same brush, as there are some very fine bookstores (both large and small), but don't expect an easy ride with them. They want to sell books and make a profit, not showcase your work in their front window. Personally, I think a community approach would lead to more books sold and higher store volume all around, but this does not seem to be the case, and I wish I had a dime for every time a writer has told me about negative experiences with a bookstore. My advice is to approach any bookstore not as a possible friend but rather as a possible business partner. Don't simply ask them to stock your book--provide them with a plan for all the local publicity that you expect, and offer to cite their store as the best place to buy the book in any press coverage you might receive.

4. Getting the deep freeze from your local media. You live in, say, New York City or San Francisco--or possibly Cincinnati or Saint Louis--and you think that your local newspapers will want to do a story about you. Isn't that the way it's supposed to be, community newspapers featuring local people? In small-town newspapers, such coverage may be fairly easy to get, but it may prove exceedingly difficult to engage the interest of the larger papers, from whom you and/or your publisher do not buy advertising space on a regular basis. They'll do a story on the Harry Potter phenomenon, but quite often their attitude will be: "Who, exactly, are you? You don't have a name yet. Nobody cares. Come back to us when you're a best-seller." You're much more likely to get coverage if you do a non-fiction book, but fiction is tough. Work on getting yourself into the paper through different methods--by speaking at a local community college, by leading a discussion at the library, and so forth.

5. Wondering why your friends and family haven't bought your book. This is probably the worst, and most unexpected, part of being published. Family (whom you've known your entire life) and friends (some of whom you've known for decades) simply don't care about your book, don't buy it, and/or don't read it. Your announcement of publication may be greeted with a withering apathy or lack of response. An author I work with recently told me that she'd dissolved a two-decades friendship because her closest friend simply did not respond to the email she sent out announcing publication. She told me, "For the rest of my life, no matter how I try otherwise, I'll always think of her as the person that I had to ask: 'Did you get my email?'" This is tough, I know, and it's hard to see beyond the hurt, but it may help to realize a few things. First, the book you've written may not be of interest to the people in your life. I personally don't think that's an excuse, but it may help. Second, understand that a lot of what drives these situations is envy. Family may think that gushing about your book may make you too big for your britches; friends may harbor writing fantasies of their own and feel highly envious that you've made it all the way down the road to publication. Try not to internalize these problems, and focus instead on your tremendous accomplishment and the fact that, most likely, you've already received several glowing reviews from strangers. And a glowing review from a stranger is a much higher compliment than one from a friend.

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The William F. Deeck/Malice Domestic Grants Program for Unpublished Writers will award grants to two unpublished writers in the malice domestic genre at Malice Domestic XX in April 2008. Each grant may be used to offset registration, travel, or other expenses related to attendance at a writers conference or workshop within a year of the date of the award (no later than May 2009). In the case of nonfiction, the grant may be used to offset research expenses. The Malice Domestic, Ltd. Board of Directors may consider publishing the work of a nonfiction grant winner.

Each grant currently includes a \$1,000 award plus a comprehensive registration for the following year's convention and two nights lodging at the convention hotel, but does not include travel to the convention or meals.

Deadline for receipt of materials is November 15, 2007.

This is NOT RELATED to the St. Martin's Press/Malice Domestic contest of similar name. For complete information see:

<http://www.malicedomestic.org/agathaawardsandgrants.html>

Address grant questions to: grants@malicedomestic.org

Bon Mots from Banff

In May 2007, Mystery Writers Ink held a weekend workshop at Banff with Edmonton mystery writer Janice MacDonald. Some cozy-mystery wisdom captured there:

- * No reader picks up your novel and says, "I hope I hate this book."
- * Agents and editors are overwhelmed with manuscripts to read and looking for a reason to reject yours from the first word so they can move on to the next. Don't give them an easy out with poor spelling, grammar, punctuation, or improper manuscript format.
- * Readers can turn against your hero if they're harming the innocent or acting unethically.
- * Your sleuth must be a FERRET – willing to poke in where a 'normal' person would be too polite or shy to go.
- * Your sleuth should demonstrate intelligence and competence, but not be miles smarter than either the reader or the villain.
- * Your villain's crime should be worthy of your sleuth's intelligence.
- * The first corpse is the most important.

Links of Interest: Links of Interest:

Pick Your Poison

There's always room for...antifreeze?

[http://www.officer.com/web/online/Investigation/Pick-Your-Poison/18\\$38465](http://www.officer.com/web/online/Investigation/Pick-Your-Poison/18$38465)

Calgary Association of RWA invites you to meet Brenda Novak--bestselling, award-winning author of romantic suspense. Join Brenda as she shares her secrets of success in these workshops:

DEAD ON: Writing a page-turning romantic suspense novel

NETWORKING: Sowing the seeds of success

HOW TO WIN EDITORS AND INFLUENCE WRITERS: Brenda teams up with Harlequin senior editor, Paula Eykelhof

Saturday, November 10 from 10:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the Greenwood Inn in Calgary
\$75 for CARWA members/\$85 for non-members. Buffet lunch and refreshments included, free parking outside.

Chinook Learning Services: Youth Criminal Justice Act. 7:00 – 9:30, Tuesday, November 13 \$10, plus additional \$5 if you bring along a friend, spouse, or partner
<http://www.chinooklearningservices.com/ContEd/AdultCourses/YouthCriminalJusticeAct.html>

Citizens Police Academy, Calgary Police Service.

CPA is a 14-week course offered by the Calgary Police Service. Application forms are available at District Police officers. More information here:
<http://www.calgarypolice.ca/community/cpa.html> (this information forwarded by Anne Jayne, who took advantage of this opportunity a few years ago and is willing to rave about it to anyone who asks).

Public Library: Maverick in the Sky – by Shirlee Smith Matheson

Join Shirlee as she reads from her latest book, about the aerial adventures of World War 1 Flying Ace and Canadian hero Freddie McCall. Wednesday, November 28, 7-8:30 p.m. at Alexander Calhoun Library

Mystery Writers Ink Society

223 – 12th 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

2006 – 2007 Meeting Year

President – vacant
Vice President – Bernie Visotto
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 – Shirlee Smith
 Matheson

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Library – Susan Calder Arnold
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Reception – Bernie Visotto
Newsletter – Fiona Pinnell
Publicity – vacant

Fall-Winter Meeting Schedule:

Second Thursdays, Old Y
7:00 to 9:00 p.m.
(except where otherwise noted)

Thursday, November 8:

Thriller writer Jeff Buick talks about building suspense and dramatic tension into your novel.

Thursday December 13:

Meeting at Vertigo Mystery Theatre for “The Mystery of Edwin Drood”

“wildly warm-hearted musical...The title character disappears one stormy Christmas Eve – but has he been murdered?”

http://www.vertigotheatre.com/main/page.php?page_id=2

Contact Marilyn Lewis-Steer of Ink for ticket info.

Thursday, January 10, 2008:

Back at the Old Y
Speaker details to follow