

*Sisters
in
Crime*™

HOTSHOTS!

HEART OF TEXAS Chapter
www.hotxsinc.org



UPCOMING PROGRAMS

November 11, 2012

Mental Illness and the Law

Dr. Denae Rickenbacker has a Bachelor of Science from Texas Tech University. Dr. Rickenbacker is Board Certified by the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology in General Psychiatry as well as Forensic Psychiatry having attended medical school and four years of psychiatry residency at the University of Texas Health Sciences Center in San Antonio.

December 9, 2012

Underwater Search, Rescue and Crime Scenes

Greg Pyles is the CEO of TEXSAR a volunteer first responder organization based in Austin, Texas that is able to deploy throughout the entire state.

January 13, 2013

Bob Doerr was an Air Force criminal investigator and counterintelligence officer. During his career, he traveled and worked with a number of different police and security agencies around the world.

The Sisters in Crime Heart of Texas Chapter, meets monthly on the second Sunday of the month at 2 p.m. at the Westlake Barnes & Noble bookstore, located at the southeast corner of Loop 360 and Bee Cave Road, in The Village at Westlake shopping center.

The Westlake Barnes & Noble is closing as of December 31, so the January meeting will move.

Paper or Plastic?

The problem of discovery in the digital age was a major theme of the Publishers Launch conference at the Frankfurt Book Fair and, in one presentation, Peter Hildick-Smith, founder and president of Codex Group, focused on how fewer bookstores and the rising popularity of tablets over e-reading devices affect how people learn about books and how they buy and read them.

After conducting more than 250,000 interviews about reading behavior since 2004, Codex has found that a major shift has taken place in discovery in the past two years, as digital books have become a significant part of the book world.

Two years ago, 35% of book purchases were made because readers found out about a book in bricks-and-mortar bookstores, the single-largest site of discovery. This year, that figure has dropped to 17%, a reflection both of the closing of Borders and the rise of e-readers. In the same period, personal recommendations grew the most, to 22% from 14%. Some three-quarters of personal recommendations are made in person, while the rest come by e-mail (8%), phone (7%), Facebook (4%) and other social networks (3%).

A problem for publishers and authors of new titles is that the vast majority of personal recommendations are backlist titles. Only 6% of books recommended personally have been published in the past half year--and just 2% were published within three months. Also, personal recommendations are a part of what Hildick-Smith called "random discovery," a dynamic that does not lend itself to easy influence by publishers, booksellers and authors.

Surprisingly, considering all the attention it's gotten, digital mass media, including Facebook and Twitter, rose just to 4.5% from 1.9% as a place people learned about the books they have bought. And the online channel represents 9% of

I tend to be a subscriber to the idea that you have everything you need by the time you're twelve years old to do interesting writing for most of the rest of your life - certainly by the time you're eighteen.

-Bruce Springsteen

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Learn About Real Crimes from Real Sleuths

by Mary Forlenza

It's possible for mystery readers and authors to get a, practically, free education in mystery writing right here in Austin. I'm not talking about learning to craft sentences or coming up with creative idiosyncrasies for sleuths and villains. This is about knowledge sharing by real sleuths about real crimes. Some of the things I've learned in a matter of months include:

- How crime scene investigators work in Austin. Unlike the CSI TV shows, this job takes a lot of work at crime scenes, autopsies and in court, plus months to get DNA comparison information.
- How US Federal Marshals on the Lone Star Fugitive Task Force track and catch fugitives, many trying to escape to Mexico by way of Texas.
- How trainers select service dogs for police work by looking for certain breeds and traits. A rescued pooch-in-training demonstrated how he could find which suitcase has contraband.
- How postal inspectors investigate crimes involving fraud schemes, child exploitation, illegal drugs, and even homicides of postal carriers.

Being a lover of mysteries and a writer, I began attending monthly Sisters in Crime meetings about a year ago. During most meetings, a local leader in a crime-fighting profession has given a lecture and slide show, and answered questions from the literary audience of men and women, some attending from as far away as San Marcos. The speakers clearly

love their work and provide an impressive depth of information in a session lasting two hours.

I've come away with a greater understanding of crime investigations and the people who fight crime. How many people can list the five types of BOLO (be on the lookout for)? Or know the difference between a crime scene investigator and a crime analyst? Local crime analysts have helped police solve bank robberies and sexual assaults.

They piece together information to uncover trends related to criminals, locations or targets. Unlike

crime scene investigators, they don't handle evidence.

You can find meeting news and summaries in the Heart of Texas Sisters in Crime newsletter here.

Meetings are held on the second Sunday of the month in the Barnes and Nobles bookstore on Loop 360 near Bee Caves Road. While meetings are free and open to

the public, one can join the local and national organizations for minimal annual dues. Other than that, my biggest outlay is for a cup of java from the in-store coffee shop. The experience is well worth the price. ❤️

Mary Forlenza is a senior marketing communications writer and editor who enjoys helping colleagues publish articles and books. Her past jobs include ghostwriting executive communications, technical writing, reporting for the Fort Lauderdale News, writing PR for Florida International U., and editing papers for marine researchers. Mary has won industry awards for a style manual, brochures and newsletters. She lives in Austin with her husband and their rescue dog, Kirby.

I've come away with a greater understanding of crime investigations and the people who fight crime.

If my books had been any worse, I should not have been invited to Hollywood, and if they had been any better, I should not have come.

-Raymond Chandler

Panels with Hopeton

by Kaye George

My first experience with Hopeton Hay was a live radio interview in his studio at KAZI in Austin. CHOKE had just been put out by a small press. I was terrified, made lots of notes, things like my name and the name of my book, in case I forgot them in front of the mike.

What a pleasant surprise the interview was! He had read my book and had dug up obscure things about me on the internet, to liven up the piece. He had me do a trial with the mike and told me to keep an eye on an electronic gizmo that looked like an EEG. If it registered in the right range, the listeners would be able to hear me. To be honest, I mostly concentrated on that machine, having a tendency to lean back or turn my head. The interview was great! (Here's a link to it, if you're interested: <http://kazibookreview.files.wordpress.com/2011/07/kaye-george1.mp3>--it's 13 minutes long.)

I also did a group interview, live in the studio, with fellow writer Mary Ann Loesch. With her and Steven E. Metze, we had just published a short story anthology of spec fiction, mystery, and horror called ALL THINGS DARK AND DASTARDLY. Again, an excellent experience.

After that, Hopeton suggested a panel of mystery writers at the Pflugerville Library, which would include me, Janice Hamrick, and Robin Allen. He'd interviewed all three of us and we'd all had good experiences with him. I was so impressed by the way he conducted the library crowd. Again, I was nervous beforehand, but soon relaxed with Hopeton leading the discussions.

So, when a similar panel was mentioned for the Sisters in Crime chapter, I knew it would be fun--no worries! ❤️

Kaye George is serving a two-year term as president of Guppies, an online chapter of Sisters in Crime devoted to assisting and supporting unpublished and newly published mystery writers. BROKE, the latest in the Imogene Duckworthy Mysteries is available at Amazon.com

REVIEW:

Caravan of Thieves

by Hopeton Hay

In a solid debut, *Caravan of Thieves*, David Rich delivers a tense and entertaining tale of intrigue, deception and a surprising amount of yoga.

Caravan of Thieves is a tense, action-filled tale that follows Rollie Waters, a Marine working undercover in Afghanistan that was recently brought back to the US and thrown in the brig. The fact that he was working undercover is your first clue that Rollie (our resident yoga practitioner) is not your typical Marine—he has all the skills of a con man courtesy of his mostly absent father Dan. Dan is also the reason Rollie was returned home: the government is sure Dan stole a lot of money, and Rollie is their best chance of finding him.

The story switches between Rollie's present-day adventures, earlier events in Afghanistan, with occasional trips back to Rollie's childhood with (and without) his father Dan. It wouldn't be fair to give away too much more of the story, as Rich's tale takes off quickly and rarely lets up. After going back and checking, the lulls in the action are actually longer than I thought—they just seemed short because Rich does a fine job of ratcheting up the suspense when Rollie isn't in an action piece.

Rich easily slides into his main character—it's almost like coming in on the middle of a series, though this is his debut. The tangential stories that he has Rollie tell do a lot to fill out the both Rollie and Dan as people. The added color gives authenticity to the tale, like it was a friend telling you a story at dinner. He also balances the funny and serious sides of things well, though Rich is slightly more on the serious side of the scale—more like

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Paper

discovery, which Hildick-Smith called “way underperforming” in light of the amount of purchases made online. In part, this is because many readers search for books online knowing what they want. (By contrast, readers tend to go into bookstores with an “open mind.”) The result, Hildick-Smith said, is that many books “get lost in the long tail.” Amazon, for example, has 32 million book offerings.

The growth in popularity of tablets, which are now much more prevalent than dedicated e-reading devices, has also changed reading habits. Tablet owners read on average two hours a week on their tablets while e-reader owners read more than four hours a week on their e-readers. Tablet owners buy fewer books than e-reader owners. The tendency is attributable to

tablets’ many distractions, particularly surfing the Internet and e-mail, which were the two most popular uses for tablets, following by reading books, gaming and using apps.

This year, some 43% of frequent book buyers now own tablets, up from 17% last year. At the same time, just 33% of frequent book buyers own dedicated e-reading devices, up from 21%.

Despite the growth of tablets and e-readers, as far as book format goes, it’s a “hybrid world,” Hildick-Smith said. In May, 41% of respondents read print only and 2% read digital only while 57% read books in both print and digital form. ♥

via The Book Doctors at www.thebookdoctors.com dedicated to helping writers everywhere get their books published.

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Caravan

Nelson DeMille than, say, Carl Hiaasen. This is not to say that he is not funny, as he has a dry wit that suits both his main character and his story, and the occasional one-liners are well worth the inclusion.

A fairly major (and unexpected) part of the book is the development of the father/son relationship between Rollie and Dan. Even when Rollie isn’t actually with his father, Dan is still always there in his head. This is another point where yoga enters the tale: Dan eventually even invades the peaceful vision Rollie focuses on as he meditates.

Outside of Rollie and Dan, we don’t really get to know any of the other characters in depth. However, I am sure we will get the chance to revisit some of these folks—as Caravan of Thieves proves, Rich is too talented to stop after his first novel. ♥

Hopeton Hay hosts KAZI Book Review, Sundays from 12:30 p.m. – 1 p.m. Central Time on KAZI 88.7 FM in Austin, Texas. The show features interviews with an eclectic array of authors of recently published books in a variety of genres including fiction (mystery, historical, African American), history, biography, and economics.

BITS AND PIECES

Amazon is Ranking Authors

Amazon has added a new feature, Amazon Author Rank, the definitive list of best-selling authors on Amazon.com. This list makes it easy for readers to discover the best-selling authors on Amazon.com overall and within a selection of major genres.

Amazon Author Rank is based on the sales of all of an author’s books on Amazon.com. Just like Amazon Best Sellers, it is updated hourly. The top 100 authors overall and the top 100 in selected genres will be displayed on Amazon.com.

Amazon Author Rank is a feature available to all authors registered in Author Central.

Get Creative in College Station

The Brazos Writers (brazoswriters.org) are sponsoring a creativity retreat scheduled for Saturday, November 10 at the Jessup Bed & Breakfast in College Station. Attendance is \$60. For more info go to- <http://bwcreativity.eventbrite.com>

The 2013 Heart of Texas Sisters in Crime annual membership fee of \$20.00 is due January 1, 2013. Contact Sarah Ann at hotxsinc@yahoo.com for further details.



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