

*Sisters
in
Crime*™

HOTSHOTS!

HEART OF TEXAS Chapter
www.hotxsinc.org



Not Gonna Hold My Breath

I bought a lottery ticket. I hope to win. That would be so cool, wouldn't it?

Do I think I'll win? No. I fully understand the odds are against me. Then why did I buy one? I bought it because I've been thinking about hope and whether or not it is a powerful motivator.

I recall my friend Brian, who also understands the odds, justifying his weekly purchase of a lottery ticket with this statement, "God can't let you win unless you buy at least one." Brian was full of hope.

Buying a lottery ticket perfectly illustrates our feeling of hope. Once you've bought one, and before the drawing of the winning numbers, you can dream of all the things you'll buy, and all the ways your life will be improved by several million dollars. It's fun to dream; and hope makes us feel better. But, does it improve our lives?

Some of the wisest people who have lived do not think so. Benjamin Franklin said, "He that lives upon hope will die fasting." Friedrich Nietzsche laments, "Hope in reality is the worst of all evils because it prolongs the torments of man." And, Aristotle observed, "Youth is easily deceived because it is quick to hope."

Hope is defined as: "To wish for something with expectation of its fulfillment."

I'm going to vote in the Presidential election.

continued on page two

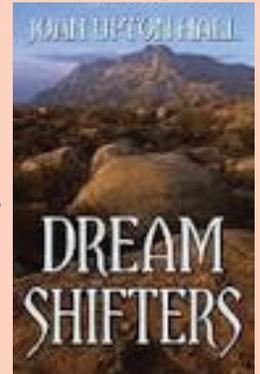
Sisters in Crime Heart of Texas Chapter meets at Recycled Reads (part of the Austin Public Library system). The address is 5335 Burnet Road, Austin, TX 78756 (512) 323-5123. Recycled Reads is located between North Lamar Boulevard and MoPac (Loop 1), near the intersection of Burnet Road and West North Loop Boulevard.

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

THE HALLS OF MYSTERY

Featuring Joan Upton Hall and Russ Hall

The April 13, 2014 Sisters in Crime Heart of Texas chapter program will feature "The Halls of Mystery" with authors Joan Upton Hall and Russ Hall. They will present a mini-workshop on everything you ever wanted to know about writing. Bring your questions! Be ready to take notes, listen, and interact. It should be a lively meeting.



Joan and Russ, who have a number of books under their belts, have always been more than happy to help fledgling writers learn the craft of writing. They will share their personal experiences on getting published and keeping the right mental attitude. Both have received Sage Awards from the Barbara Burnett Smith Mentoring Authors Foundation. The award is given to an author who demonstrates an outstanding spirit of service in mentoring, sharing and leading others in the mystery writing community.



Upcoming Programs:

May 18, 2014 - Barbara Burnett Smith Aspiring Writers Event

Breath from page one

I hope my candidate will win. In the nine times that I previously voted for President, I only voted for the winner once. And then, only because I switched at the last minute to become a single issue voter instead of voting with my core beliefs. I've regretted it ever since.

Since I can't seem to pick a winner, why do I keep voting? Hope of course. Hope for what, you ask? Mostly that the economy will improve, and that an environment that is good for business will be fostered. Napoleon Bonaparte probably explained best why I vote, "A leader is a dealer in hope." And, I hope the new guy will fix all the messes I perceive in the country.

I hope for peace and prosperity in the world. There is a certain beauty in hope, it paints a picture of perfection in our minds, and that makes it all the more appealing.

I hope my friend who has cancer will survive. I hope he has hope too because I believe what Russian author, Fyodor Dostoevsky said, "To live without hope is to cease to live."

Hope, however, is an extrinsic motivator. It is what we have when we feel like we have no power to alter the outcome. It is what we have when we depend on external factors to help us. We have given up on making a change by ourselves; we are now dependent on some benevolent force to make our condition better or our dreams come true.

Hope is the last ditch motivator. There is a reason why it was on the bottom of Pandora's box. When we have nothing else left to go on: the concentration camp prisoner, the innocent person on death row, the homeless person who has lost everything; when we are rendered impotent by circumstances; hope motivates us to keep going. That means, as a motivator, hope does have power, or as Roman Senator, Marcus Tullius Cicero noted, "While there's life, there's hope."

Unfortunately, hope is not the type of motivator that is going to help us succeed in life. Success comes from the intrinsic motivation of desire and ambition (and sometimes fear); Napoleon Hill said it best, "Desire is the starting point of all achievement, not a hope, not a wish, but a keen pulsating desire which transcends everything."

While hope makes us feel better, it is not enough; it needs to be backed by commitment and above all action.

Nevertheless, I still hope to win the lottery.

Robert Evans Wilson, Jr. is an author, humorist and innovation consultant. He works with companies that want to be more competitive and with people who want to think like innovators. Robert is also the author of the humorous children's book: The Annoying Ghost Kid. For more information on Robert, please visit <http://www.jumpstartyourmeeting.com>

Short Stories Released

HoTxSinC member Patricia L. Morin announces the release of a collection of short stories, "Confetti, A Collection of Cozy Crimes" on March 4, 2014 and is available on Amazon, Create Space, and Smashwords.. From a theme party in Mizpah, NJ, to a surfing incident on the north shore of Oahu, murders are planned. From a Malibu beach with remote control cars, to the northern hills of Las Vegas, people are disappearing. Confetti is available at:

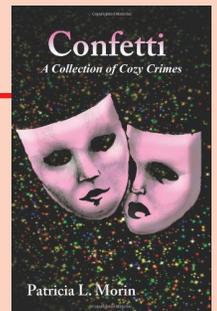
Amazon at: <http://www.amazon.com/Confetti-Collection-Patricia-L-Morin/dp/1496011864> or

Create Space at: <https://wwwcreatespace.com/4680497> or

Smashwords at: <https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/415186>

Two other short-story collections by Pat, Mystery Montage (2010) and Crime Montage (2012) were released by Top Publications Ltd., Dallas TX. The short story "Homeless" was a Derringer and Anthony Award finalist, while "Pa and the Pigeon Man" was nominated for a Pushcart.

To learn more about Pat Morin, please visit: <http://www.patriciamorin.com/>.



Texas Book Festival

The 2014 Texas Book Festival will be held Oct. 25 and 26, and for the first time will be "bookended" by the Texas Teen Book Festival on Oct. 18. For more information, please visit- <http://www.texasbookfestival.org>

Review: Blessed are the Dead

by Malla Nunn

Blessed Are the Dead is the third and latest book in the Emmanuel Cooper detective series by Malla Nunn. The story takes place in a small farming town in the foothills of the remote Drakensberg Mountains of eastern South Africa, where a young Zulu woman is murdered. To solve the crime, Detective Sergeant Cooper must navigate internal tribal conflicts as well as secrecy and obstruction on the part of the local white community.

The year is 1953, the height of the Apartheid era, when draconian laws enforced strict segregation between the native and white communities. Nunn evokes both the spectacular beauty of the landscape and the complex, often tense social interactions between Zulus, Afrikaners and the British.

The murder victim was the daughter of one chief, promised in marriage to another chief, and worth a considerable bride-price. She was beautiful enough to catch the eye of more than one white man, although intimate relations between members of different races were strictly forbidden and illegal. She was rumored to have been restless for life in the big city—and was fiercely loved by the strange youngest son of the wealthy and powerful British family who employed her.

As Cooper uncovers all these threads, the local constabulary is seemingly indifferent to the crime, and the only doctor in town refuses to perform an autopsy. When Cooper pries too deeply into local secrets, political pressure gets him pulled off the case. It takes all of Cooper's brash determination, talent and experience to unravel the mystery of the young woman's death.

Detective Sergeant Emmanuel Cooper is himself a cross-section of South African society. Though officially white, he is actually of mixed-race origin, adopted and raised after his mother's death by an Afrikaner family. Cooper's personal demons, arising from a childhood marred by violence and his years as a soldier in WWII, form an additional layer of complexity to the book.

Every successful detective has his second, and Cooper's is the redoubtable Zulu Constable Shabalala, an expert tracker and deep thinker, swift of foot and every bit his Detective Sergeant's equal, although he can never rise above the rank or pay of constable because of his race.

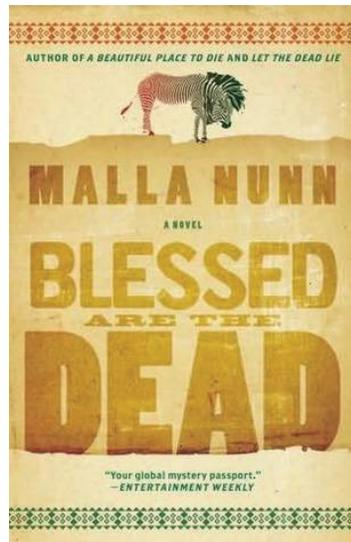
Cooper's career in the series is an ongoing struggle for rehabilitation in the Detective Branch following an early run-in with the brutal and highly political Security Branch of the National Party—architects of the Apartheid system. Previous titles in the Cooper series are ***A Beautiful Place to Die*** and ***Let the Dead Lie***.

Beautiful Place to Die and ***Let the Dead Lie***.

Nominated for an Edgar Award in 2013, ***Blessed Are the Dead*** is skillfully plotted and expertly paced. A fourth Emmanuel Cooper mystery, ***Present Darkness***, is scheduled for release in April of 2014.

Author Malla Nunn was born in Swaziland. She is an award-winning film maker and currently lives in Australia, where ***Blessed Are the Dead*** was published under the title ***Silent Valley***.

Review by Elizabeth Buhmann, Author of ***Lay Death at Her Door*** (Red Adept Publishing, 2013) Elizabeth is a member of HoTxSinC.



Sisters in Crime is an international organization of women and men whose purpose is to support women mystery writers, and combat discrimination against them. Speakers include published mystery authors and technical experts who help writers craft better mysteries and readers enjoy what they read. Meetings are free and open to all. For more information, check out the Sisters in Crime Heart of Texas Chapter website at www.hotxsinc.org.

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