



---

*A pleasure to  
meet you!*

# Meet Our Members



## David F. Ciambrone, Sc.D., FIOF

Treasurer  
Sisters in Crime, Heart of Texas Chapter

Dr. David Ciambrone is a retired aerospace and defense company executive, scientist, engineering professor, and forensics consultant, and now a best-selling, award winning author. He lives in Georgetown, Texas with his wife Kathy. He has published twenty-one books, both fiction and non-fiction, including fifteen mysteries.

Dave served as VP of the Sisters in Crime Orange County, California chapter, President and treasurer of Sisters in Crime Central Texas chapter, President of the San Gabriel Writer's League and was on the Board of Directors of the Writer's league of Texas. He is also a member of MWA and the International Thriller Writers.

Dave is also a Fellow of the International Oceanographic Foundation, a Bronze Trowel Award recipient from the Archaeological Institute of America, member of the Order of Merlin of the International Brotherhood of Magicians. The Chinese Government appointed him a Dragon Master (龍重要資料).

He also knows Victoria's secret.

---

### **Name a not so well-known author whose books you would recommend to others and why?**

The author I like who is not well known is Leigh Perry. She has a series about an adjunct college professor and her friend Sid. (The Family Skelton Mystery series). Only Sis is a living skeleton. He helps the professor solve murders but has to stay hidden from view. The books are funny, well written, and enjoyable.

*continued*

---

## How long does it take you to write a book?

That depends on the book. For my mysteries it takes from 9 months to a year. I do not write 8 hours a day. I average about 4 hours a day. Then the work goes through my critique group, then I do some rewrites and send it with the supporting materials to my publisher. There, her editors take a crack at it, then they design the cover and do all the stuff publishers do and then it is published. Nonfiction takes about a year and a half once the research is complete. So, that can take up to two years from idea to finished product.

## Do you have any hidden secrets (Easter eggs)?

Yes.

If you read Virginia's stories carefully, you'll figure out she lives in my development.

Virginia's Playboy like photos for the school of engineering department at her university is based on a magazine that the engineering school at my university had.

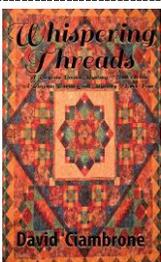
Adam Thomas in the Adam Thomas mystery series writes a newspaper column called Ask Aunt Kay. In the stories, the people who write to him think they are writing to a woman (Aunt Kay). I actually wrote that column in California years ago and the examples in the mysteries are from my old column.

Something to say to a new writer -

Write what you enjoy. Read—read—read. Join a critique group. Join a writer's group. Surround yourself with other writers to gain from their experiences, learn from them, enjoy the energy, find out you're not alone. Write because it is a passion, not for the money.

Write, write, write.

## David Ciambrone's Books



*Whispering Threads* is the fourth book in the Virginia Davies Quilt Mystery Series.

Virginia ventures to Palm Springs, California for a quilt show and conference. It's also a reunion and respite for her and her longtime friend, Donna Bolette. A few days of fun, sun, and quilting can't hurt.

Virginia's old teacher and friend, Ms. Carol Jean Putman is discovered murdered on her ranch after a visit with Virginia. Virginia is shocked to learn that Carol Jean Putman made Virginia the executor of her estate and the new owner of a whole lot of desert.

Virginia discovers Carol's murder involves a special quilt that partially glows in the dark, a painting from the seventeen-hundreds, a legend about old Spanish galleons lost in the desert sands, and a vast treasure hidden centuries ago. Virginia's mastered the art of piecing together blocks to create intricate quilts but piecing together her friend's murder will prove far more challenging.

*Whispering Threads* is currently available now on [Amazon](#). See all David's books on [Amazon](#)!

---

# THE INDIE AUTHOR

BY KELLY COCHRAN

As a writer you can use a pencil, pen, crayon, typewriter, or computer to write your prose. No matter what instrument is used to create your bestseller, the content will be the same. Revisions might give you a headache and paying to digitize your handwritten novel could be costly. So, why not write smart?

## *Writing software – effective tools for the Indie Author.*

I'm about to disclose my age - when I first started writing I used a typewriter. I must admit it sounds better than tablet and chisel. Today I use a computer and an affordable product called Scrivener as do thousands of other writers, both fiction and non-fiction.

When I decided to take the plunge into writing software, I did quite a bit of research. And, Scrivener wasn't the product I chose. Not because it isn't a robust package, but because I'd read reviews saying it was more difficult to use than the package I selected, WriteWayPro.

WriteWayPro, though lacking some of the features of Scrivener, served its purpose. It was a great baby step into the use of writing software. Eventually the owner decided to retire, and the software is now free. So, if you use windows and want to play around with writing software, you can [download WriteWayPro](#).

When did I make the switch to Scrivener? In the summer of 2017, I participated in the NANOWRIMO camp, met my goals, and became a winner! One of the prizes was a discount coupon for Scrivener. No more excuses!

If you're the type of person that says, "To heck with the training wheels," you can go direct to Scrivener. The product comes with a searchable PDF manual, videos, and an interactive tutorial. I recommend making use of all three.

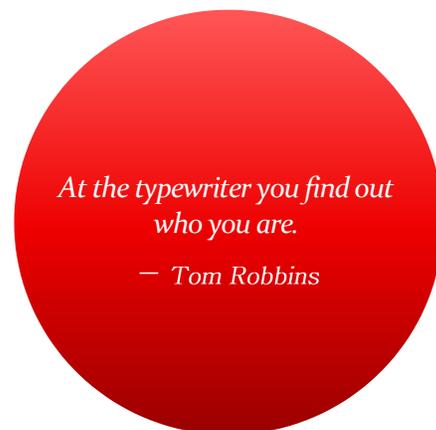
Scrivener is powerful and brings together most things a writer uses while they work. Within one screen I can access character bios, my outline, chapter and scene synopses, project notes, research data, and more.

### ***Tracking Status***

If you work on your manuscript by scenes rather than chronological order, Scrivener makes it easy to keep track of the status of each part of your work. Get a clear picture of what scenes are in first draft, revised, or final status.

### ***Keywords***

Keywords is a cool feature! It allows you to easily see things like what characters appear in what chapters, or where romance scenes appear, or your red herrings are in the book. You can define keywords and color code them. When you search on the keyword, a list of scenes where the character appears will be displayed.



continued

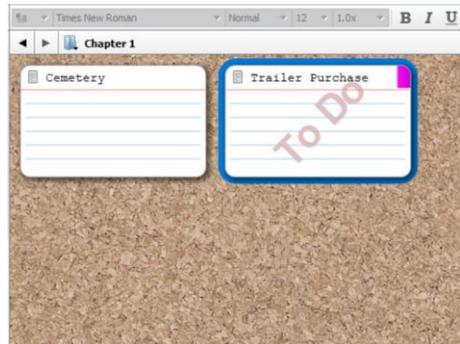
---

## THE INDIE AUTHOR, CONTINUED

When in Storyboard view, each index card will display the color of keywords that appear in that scene. The possibilities are endless!

### Meta Data

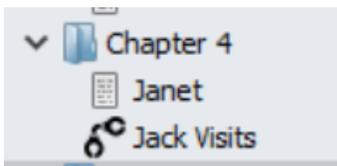
Another method of tracking information is meta data. For example, I created a meta data label called “Need to Resolve” and color-coded it dark pink. When I look at my storyboard, any scene where I need to resolve something will show up with a dark pink block on it.



### Icons

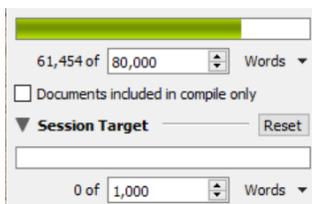
If you want to go crazy, you can even change folder icons. For example, in the scene where I have my first suspect arrested, I added a set of handcuffs.

I can easily look at my outline and know exactly where the arrest occurs in the manuscript.



### Tracking Words Written

Another super feature is the ability to help track your progress as you write. You can set a project goal for number of words for your novel and a daily goal of how many words you want to write a day.



### Statistics

Scrivener also lets you know how many words/pages are in a chapter, scene, etc.

Statistics	
Main: Manuscript - Ready to Print	
Words:	62,558
Characters:	341,698
Pages (paperback):	179
Pages (printed):	294
Selection	
Words:	3,705
Characters:	19,584
Pages (paperback):	11
Pages (printed):	8

I've only touched on a portion of what Scrivener can do, but I hope I have showed how Scrivener can help you write smart. Scrivener is available for Mac and PC platforms. Check it out and take advantage of their free trial offer at [Scrivener](https://www.scrivener.com).

Samples of other capabilities including screenplay format, inclusion of images in research panels, outline, and project notes.



S

---

# WHAT IS AN AUTHOR PLATFORM?

BY KELLY COCHRAN

An author platform encompasses everything you have to offer on your subject matter and all the ways in which you bring your message to the people. It is known more commonly in the world of non-fiction. You would expect an author who writes about Asian cuisine to have a platform that includes experience with Asian cooking, publication in cooking magazines, speaking engagements, and perhaps a related blog.

But what does the term author platform mean for those in the world of fiction?

When you write fiction, you may not be an expert in the underlying topic. For example, your main character is a police officer, but you have never worked in law enforcement. In the case of fiction, your platform becomes less about your experience and more about who you are and how you connect with your readers. And that type of platform needs to be built and requires planning. The largest part of your author platform will utilize the Internet to spread your message. Here are a few steps you can take to start building your author platform today:

1. Establish an author website: Even if you haven't written a word, you want to lock down your website. It is hard to hear, but you are not the only Joe Johnson in the world. If someone is already using your name, then you need to get creative. You could opt to buy JoeJohnson.us or JoeJohnson.net if they are available, but most Internet users focus on .com sites. However, with the current search engine capabilities, there are ways to have your website appear on the first page of the search even if you don't have the .com domain name. You can also get creative by using names like AuthorJoeJohnson.com or JoeJohnsonBooks.com
2. Set up social media networks: Top sites include - Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Tumblr, Pinterest, LinkedIn, YouTube.
3. Create a blog or podcast: These tools are a great way to reach out and connect with readers and potential readers. They can be on any topic but be careful not to use them for the sole purpose of selling your book. Sure, your readers want to read your books, but they are also interested in who you are as a person. Steer and steer clear of politics and religion, unless those topics are part of your author platform.
4. Become a speaker: Speaking at venues is a great way for people to get to know you. Often if you speak at one venue, the word spreads and you will get offers to speak at other venues. If you are a member of the Heart of Texas – Sisters in Crime organization you can put your name on our speaker list, just make sure you have a topic on which you feel you can offer a unique perspective.
5. Join professional organizations & get certifications: Join National Sisters in Crime and your local chapter. Once you are published by a publishing company, join Mystery Writers of America. Join organizations that related to something in your books, for example if you write cozies which involve wine then take a course in wine, or if your main character knits, get certified in knitting (Yes, there is such a thing!)

---

## WHAT'S HAPPENING

*Upcoming meetings, contests, conferences, book signings, etc.*

### Upcoming Meetings

(details at [www.sinc-heartoftexas.com](http://www.sinc-heartoftexas.com))

- August 11 – Everything Promotion Workshop
- September 8– Sara Stone, Alamo Area Search and Rescue with cadaver dog demonstration
- October 13 – Ghosts of Austin, Monica Ballard
- November 10 – TBD
- December 8 – Christmas Party – featuring excerpts from your stories and culinary samples of what your characters eat.

### Contests/Awards

- August 1, 2019 – **Writer's Digest Self Published eBook Awards** (\$99 entry fee, \$5000 grand prize, 1<sup>st</sup> prize \$1000, and more) – Details at <https://www.writersdigest.com/writers-digest-competitions/self-published-ebook-awards>
- August 31, 2019 – **Flash FictionWOW** (\$10 entry fee, 20 winners, 1<sup>st</sup> \$400, 2<sup>nd</sup> \$300, 3<sup>rd</sup> \$200, 7 runners up \$25 gift certificate) Women on Writing Flash Fiction Contest – Any Genre/Max 750 words - Details <https://www.wow-womenonwriting.com/contest.php>
- September 16, 2019 – **Writer's Digest Popular Fiction Awards** (\$25 entry fee, \$2500 grand prize, \$500 1<sup>st</sup> prize, and more) Short Stories – Details <https://www.writersdigest.com/writers-digest-competitions/popular-fiction-awards>

## OPPORTUNITIES!

### *Boerne Book & Art Fest*

Sisters in Crime will have a booth at the Boerne Book and Arts Fest, Saturday, October 5<sup>th</sup>, from 10 am to 4:30 pm. A great opportunity for Member authors to sell their books and meet potential readers. Authors will be responsible for bringing and selling their own books.

Any member authors who wish to participate at the booth, selling their books, please contact Noreen Cedeño at [noreenmariecedeno@gmail.com](mailto:noreenmariecedeno@gmail.com) to be added to the list.

### *Speakers List*

Sisters in Crime- Heart of Texas is creating a list of members who would like to be contacted about speaking at book clubs, libraries, church groups, or writer events. The list will be placed on our website. If you would like to be included in this list, contact Kelly Cochran at [kelly@kellycochran.com](mailto:kelly@kellycochran.com) or Noreen Cedeño at [noreenmariecedeno@gmail.com](mailto:noreenmariecedeno@gmail.com)

## SIZZLING HOT NEWS

Do you have a new book coming out? Did you win a contest? Did you score a nomination or win an award? We want the world to share in your good news! Send an email to [kelly@kellycochran.com](mailto:kelly@kellycochran.com) and brag away!

## WE WANT TO MEET YOU!

Each month we feature a member in our newsletter. Published or not, mystery writer or mystery fan. We want to meet all our members! We provide a list of questions (writing and non-writing related) and you choose three. We include a bio and information about your book, if you have one published [Download instructions](#). (Editor's note: Access the digital version of newsletter to download) Go to <http://www.sinc-heartoftexas.com/hotshots/posts>

---

# EVERYTHING PROMOTION WORKSHOP

## - WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW -

This is a three-part, hands-on workshop, so bring your laptop and the information requested in PART 1 below! We will cover creating a pub sheet, utilizing Amazon, the Sisters in Crime website, and several other websites that will benefit both authors and readers alike!

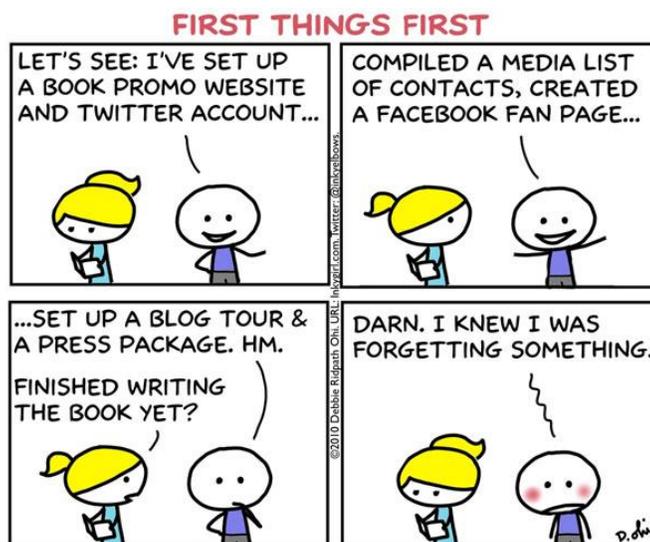
**PART 1** - The goal of the workshop will cover creating a Pub Sheet to make your life easier. The goal is to gather all the things required to describe you and/or your books in this electronic age. Get asked for an author bio? It's on the Pub Sheet. Want to list the blogs you write for? It's on the Pub Sheet. It's all on the Pub Sheet.

**Bring your laptop or tablet and have the following information ready to cut and paste!**

- Your bio and publicity photo
- Your list of associations (Sisters in Crime, Heart of Texas Chapter, Writer's League of Texas, etc)
- Links to your Website, blogs, Facebook, twitter, Instagram - anything you use to connect to the electronic world
- Links to your book sales pages (Amazon, etc), your book covers and a short synopsis of each. Back page blurbs are acceptable. You may include your meta-data, AND IF YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT THAT MEANS WE'LL EXPLAIN IT TO YOU!

**PART 2** - The goal of this section of the workshop is to show you that whether you're an author or a member who just likes to stick to reading, you have a place on the national Sisters in Crime website to post your information. We'll show you how and we'll also show you the other tools available on the website. We will also talk about our local Heart of Texas Chapter website and how you can utilize the website and our newsletter for research and to get your message out!

**PART 3** - The goal of this section of the workshop is to introduce you to websites on the Internet valuable to both authors and readers. We'll also talk about ways for authors and readers to connect.



©2010 Debbie Ridpath Ohi. URL: [Inkygirl.com](http://Inkygirl.com). Twitter: [@inkyelbows](https://twitter.com/inkyelbows).

[Comic by Inkygirl](http://Inkygirl.com)