

Jul/Aug 2020

HOTSHOTS!

sinc-heartoftexas.com



JULY AND AUGUST MEETINGS – VIRTUAL VIA ZOOM!

How to Submit Short Stories to Magazines, Anthologies, and Contests



Author N. M. Cedeño will present the latest on submitting short stories! Bring pen and paper to take lots of notes!

Be sure to check out the Short Story Inspiration article on page 6 of the newsletter.

[JOIN THE MEETING!](#)

A Chat with Lori Rader-Day, President of National of Sisters in Crime and award-winning mystery author!



Author Lori Rader-Day will speak about her new book, [The Lucky One](#), and answer questions about getting published.

[JOIN THE MEETING!](#)

For details on past meetings, visit our website's [Past Meetings](#) section

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OFFICERS & CHAIRS

Noreen Cedeño – President

K. P. Gresham – Vice President

Fran Paino -Secretary

Dave Ciambone – Treasurer

Kelly Cochran –
Communications Chair

19 MORE THINGS TO DO WHILE UNDER STAY-AT-HOME (Sort of) ORDER FOR COVID-19

1. Write
2. Learn to sew masks
3. Read a SinC - Heart of Texas member's book
4. Make popsicles
5. Write a poem
6. Teach your dog to dance
7. Display a riddle in your window one day - answer it the next
8. Hunt Craigslist.org or Nextdoor.com for free stuff
9. Write a flash fiction story
10. Go on museum tours via artsandculture.google.com
11. Teach your cat to high-five (yes, it can be done!)
12. Learn new skills on skillshare.com
13. Nap in the middle of the day
14. Create an indoor water garden
15. Write a short story
16. Check out street art from around the world at streetart.withgoogle.com
17. Read a classic
18. Eat dark chocolate salted caramels
19. Write

*A pleasure to
meet you!*

Meet Our Members



**Kelly Manfredini
(K.M. Hodge)**

USA Today Bestselling author, K.M. Hodge grew up in Detroit, where she spent most of her free time weaving wild tales to spook her friends and family. These days, she lives in Texas with her husband and two energetic boys and once again enjoys writing tales of suspense and intrigue that keep her readers up all night. Her stories, which focus on women's issues, friendship, addiction, regrets and second chances, will stay with you long after you finish them. When she isn't writing or being an agent of social change, she reads Independent graphic novels, watches old X-files episodes, streams Detroit Tigers games and binges on Netflix with her husband. She enjoys 'hearing from her readers, so don't be shy about dropping her a line.

K.M. Hodge was awarded the winter of 2016 Pinnacle Book Achievement Award for her *Red on the Run*.

You can sign up for new release emails and get a FREE GIFT:
www.kmhodge.com/subscribe

Website: www.kmhodge.com

Twitter: www.twitter.com/kmhodgeauthor

Facebook: www.facebook.com/kmhodgeauthor

Instagram: www.instagram.com/KMHodgeauthor

When did you know you wanted to write?

I wrote stories at a young age but didn't try for my first novel until I turned 18. It took me 18 more years to finally finish that novel, which became my award-winning *Red on the Run*.

Continued

Have you hidden secrets (Easter eggs) in your writing? (like Margaret Atwood in the Handmaids Tale - her main character sees graffiti etched into a desk - *M. loves G., 1972*, the year Margaret began a relationship with fellow author Graeme Gibson)

Yes! I have LOTS of X-files Easter Eggs in all my books, because the show inspired me to write my first novel.

Why do you like mysteries?

I enjoy guessing character motivations and figuring out who-done-it. This month, my husband and I are watching Columbo episodes and I love anticipating the things that Columbo points out.

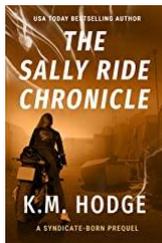
Apples, oranges, bananas, or exotic fruit?

I love fruit smoothies with frozen bananas, papaya, and mango with a pinch of ginger. Yum.

K.M. Hodge's Books

THE SALLY RIDE CHRONICLE

(A Syndicate-Born Prequel – Book 4)



Sally wants out—out of her marriage, out of the mob, out of Ocean City. An impossible dream. That is until the MDNA, a secret hacktivist group, invites her to join the ranks of their rebellion. The goal? Take down the criminal empire.

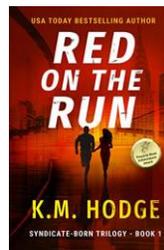
She's no Jane Bond, but no one in her town suspects the quiet church-going mom is a threat, especially The Syndicate's criminal defense attorney, Michael David, who's got a thing for mysterious blondes. His love-'em-and-kill-'em exploits, and his penchant for causing witnesses to disappear, make him enemy number one for the hacktivist group. Sally's mission sounds simple enough—destroy the lawyer's life and make him pay—but....

Once she starts, there'll be no turning back.

The Sally Ride Chronicle will be released as an audiobook in August!

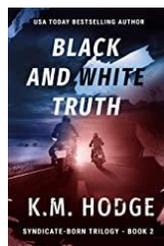
Purchase the complete series! Available on [Amazon](https://www.amazon.com).

THE SYNDICATE-BORN TRILOGY



RED ON THE RUN
(Book 1)

***You can't hide from The Syndicate.
Run, Red. Run!***



BLACK AND WHITE TRUTH
(Book 2)

***In a world of varying shades of gray,
the truth is always in black and
white.***



TRUE BLUE SON
(Book 3)

The Son—born to save them all.



FLASH FICTION FUN!

Flash fiction is a genre of fiction that is basically a very short, short story. It can be anywhere from a few words to several sentences. What makes them crazy fun is that the story still includes character and plot development.

Enjoy reading a few flash fiction stories from our members!

NOTHING BUT GRAY

by [Kathy Waller](#)

Paul stood, hands in pockets, looking out.

She's set four places again, he thought. And she sits in a different chair now, doesn't talk, just looks out the window at nothing but gray sky.

She brought in a covered dish. "Chicken casserole. Your father's favorite."

He heard Jack slip in and pull out a chair. Paul didn't move.

She sat down. "Come. Eat."

He turned. "Every night, Mom, four plates. And you, just staring."

"Four people, four plates."

"Dad's dead, Mom. He's dead. Three months now."

She unfolded her napkin. "And I watch for your father. He'll be home soon."

HANDS

by [K. P. Gresham](#)

She said the bastard was buried beneath the support beam. But which one?

Then I remembered.

That first night. Laughing, he'd ripped away our virginity and put his hands places we didn't even know we possessed.

With adulthood, payback time arrived. As always, I took the lead. We worked fast. Her job was to get the account passwords. My job was to kill him. I torched the warehouse while she buried him.

We both came through. After he was dead, her codes and keys got us into the house, the study, and the wall-mounted lockbox.

Then we saw the little opening beneath the safe's keypad. It required a hand print.

So, here I am, back at the burned out warehouse—his favorite hunting ground. Shovel and saw in hand, I walk over fallen trusses and crumbled cement blocks to where the dumpsters had once stood—the first hiding place where we'd been cornered. That horrible first night.

Sweat pours over me as I unearth the body. His face is finally as ugly as his soul. I uproot his arms and begin to saw below the elbow.

"Time to put your hands to good use, Daddy."

If you would like to submit a flash fiction story for print in our newsletter, please submit via email to kelly@kellycochran.com and write "flash fiction newsletter" in the subject line. Your story will be printed in a future edition. You retain your rights. We provide no compensation but are extremely appreciative for your contribution to our newsletter.

INDIE AUTHOR PROJECT FROM AUSTIN LIBRARY

Greetings from the Austin Public Library!!

We invite you to participate in the Indie Author Project (IAP). This program allows independent authors to submit their books in electronic format with the possibility of making them available through the Austin Public Library. Opportunities to promote your work and gain more exposure are available through this project. This is how it works:

- You submit your book through the following form: <https://indieauthorproject.librariesshare.com/indieauthor/org/austintexas/>
- Once submitted, your eBook will be reviewed by a community of multiple curation partners, including *Library Journal*. You will be notified within 4-6 weeks if your book is selected to be part of the Indie Author Project. Books in all genres are welcome and may be included in the collection but **for now only adult and young adult fiction books are professionally reviewed.**
- When the book is vetted, it is made available to participating libraries statewide in the Indie Texas Collection on [BiblioBoard Library](#). BiblioBoard is the name of the platform used to read and promote the books selected. This initial vetting process only takes 1-2 days before your book becomes available statewide to participating TX libraries.
- *Library Journal* also reviews the books submitted; if your submission is deemed a high-quality indie book it will be included in IAP Select which, in addition to being available locally and at the State level, will appear in the *Library Journal* IAP select collection available in over 3,000 participating libraries throughout the U.S and Canada.
- There are no limits to the number of books you can submit for review.
- Your book should be in PDF or ePUB format.
- Submissions should be original work to which you own the rights. You maintain all the rights to your work through this program and there is no exclusivity, so you are still free to publish elsewhere or remove your work from the Indie Author Project at any time.

Please share with anybody that could be interested in this project.

Thank you very much!

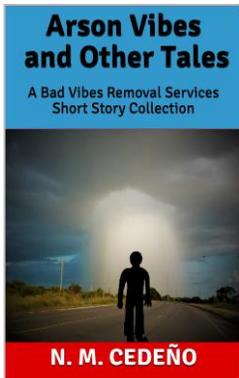
Diana Miranda-Murillo
Fiction and World Languages Selector
Austin Public Library

NOTE: As part of this letter from Diana Miranda-Murillo, there was an invitation to attend an Indie Author Project webinar on May 17th with Ran Walker on learning more about expanding your reach. Of course, that day has passed, but you can still watch the recording of that webinar at <https://indieauthorproject.com/events/expert-session-ran-walker/>. Additionally they have an upcoming webinar on building a website on July 16th <https://indieauthorproject.com/events/scott-semegran/>

INSPIRATION FOR MY SHORT STORIES

By N. M. Cedeño

Sometimes, as an author I am asked where I get ideas for my short stories. I get my inspiration from books and articles I read, places I visit, and events in the world around me. The six new short stories in [Arson Vibes and Other Tales](#), which came out recently, can all be traced to these sources.



The story *Victorian Vibes* features my characters Lea and Kamika finding a gory, sealed room inside of a house under renovation. This story, which opens the collection, was inspired by a [driving tour of Victoria](#), Texas, an old Spanish colonial town south of San Antonio. Victoria is home to more than 114 historic properties all listed on the National Register of Historic Places. These buildings are mostly restored architectural gems. A driving tour through town will take visitors past 80 of them. Creating a similar house with a haunted past and 'bad vibes' for my characters to explore wasn't a difficult task.

Feline Vibes, the second story in the collection, features Lea and Patrick trying to solve a murder in which the police have made no progress. The story was inspired by the many scattered properties I've driven past in the Texas Hill Country on the way to Fredericksburg and [Enchanted Rock State Park](#). The natural beauty of the area draws hikers and campers and people looking to escape the fast-paced life of city living. But the isolating hills, cactus, and long distances between neighbors also make a wonderful backdrop for murder.

Texas Frontier Vibes was partially inspired by reading the book *Empire of the Summer Moon: Quanah Parker and the Rise and Fall of the Comanches, the Most Powerful Indian Tribe in American History* by S. C. Gwynne. The long and bloody battle between the Comanches and every wave of settlers that tried to take their land is fertile ground for ghost stories. In the story, a collection of arrow heads is bound to the ghost of the person who died being shot with the arrows. While the injuries sustained by the character in the story are drawn directly from history, the idea that the arrow heads could be haunted was inspired by my father's inheritance of a collection of points, axes, scrapers, and other stone tools from his deceased brother who had been a lifelong collector of these items.



Monument to Columbia, by Pixabay

Space Shuttle Vibes owes its existence to my memory of the disaster involving the Space Shuttle Columbia when it came apart catastrophically over Texas in 2003. That accident led to the largest search and recovery effort ever carried out in the United States and is well-detailed and explained in a book that I read entitled *Bringing Columbia Home* by Michael Leinbach and Jonathan Ward. Sixty percent of Columbia remains lost in the swamps and thickets of East Texas. This

fact inspired my tale of a man who dedicates his retirement and apparently part of his afterlife to finding and returning the pieces.

Museum Vibes, the story of a haunted living history pioneer farm, was inspired partially by my interest in all things historical, from gold-rushes and frontier life to the tuberculosis epidemic that plagued the world in the 19th and early 20th centuries. It's also based on my many visits to pioneer farms with living history exhibits in the Dallas area and in the Austin area. What ghosts wouldn't want to stay in a place that looked and felt like the time period in which they lived?

The final story in the collection, *Arson Vibes*, was inspired by a terrible fire that engulfed a lovely wood-frame church in a small community in Texas a few years ago. Texas has a number of famous, painted churches built by European immigrants in the late 1800 and early 1900s. The [Painted Churches Tour](#) in Texas is a great way to see a handful of them. While the fire in the real church was accidental, the one in my story is, of course, an act of arson which needs my investigative crew to solve it. And old churches, with their adjacent graveyards, should come with a ghost or two, shouldn't they?

These new stories in the collection [Arson Vibes and Other Tales](#) are on sale this week, May 4 to 11, 2020. At the moment the stories are only available on Amazon, later in the summer they will be available from other retailers. I would have the stories available everywhere, but the coronavirus and its attendant issues have put a crimp in my schedule at the moment.

[N. M. Cedeño](#) is a short story writer and novelist living in Texas. She is currently working on a series called *Bad Vibes Removal Services*. The second novel in the series, entitled *Degrees of Deceit*, came out in August 2019. Ms. Cedeño is active in Sisters in Crime- Heart of Texas Chapter.



WHAT'S HAPPENING

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

Upcoming Meetings (details at www.sinc-heartoftexas.com)

Due to Covid-19 all meetings for the remainder of the year will be held **virtually via Zoom**. Please view our website for details and up-to-date information about our meetings, and for links to join these meetings.

<https://sinc-heartoftexas.com/meetings-events/3105-2/>

- **July 12, 2020** – "How to Submit Short Stories to Magazines, Anthologies, and Contests." – N. M. Cedeño
- **August 9, 2020** – National president of Sisters in Crime, and award-winning mystery author Lori Rader-Day will be speaking to us about her new book, *The Lucky One*, and answering questions about getting published. She will also answer any questions about Sisters in Crime.
- **September 13, 2020** – "Juke Box Hero: Squeezing Plot from Character" – Tex Thompson
- **October 11, 2020** – "Beyond Good & Bad Guys: Using Real Life Motivations in Your Writing" – Bill Woodburn

Call for Submissions (deadline dates)

- **July 15, 2020** – **Anthology – Cozy Villages of Death** (Royalty Share) – Short Story 5000 – 8000 words - Details at <http://www.camdenparkpress.com/cozyvillages/>
- **July 31, 2020** – **Black Beacon Books Anthology** on the theme of Murder and Machinery: calling for short stories with machinery as a means of murder, in the style of the Pit and the Pendulum: <https://blackbeaconbooks.blogspot.com/p/submissions.html> (Note: This call is from abroad)
- **August 31, 2020** – **Malice Domestic Anthology**, annual short mystery anthology created by the Malice Domestic mystery convention, on the theme of 'diabolical': <http://malicedomestic.org/anthologies.html>

Contests (deadline dates)

- August 31, 2020 – **Silver Linings Contest (Gotham Writers)** - Story must be no more than 19 words (yes, 19 words!) – (No Entry Fee – Win Free Gotham Writer's Class of your choice) – Details [here](#)

Other Business

Announcement from SinC about events for the rest of the year:

<https://www.sistersincrime.org/news/512054/COVID-19-Update.htm>

Updated Code of Conduct from SinC:

<https://www.sistersincrime.org/news/513012/Updated-SinC-Code-of-Conduct.htm>