

Left Coast Crime 2001

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DEATH BELOW ZERO

John J. Sturgus was Anchorage's first chief of police -- but not for long. Less than two months into his post, Sturgus was shot to death on a bitter February night in a downtown alley. The killer was never found. Alaska Sisters in Crime sent copies of the coroner's inquest to all visiting writers, inviting them to guess what might have happened. The authors' responses are printed along with their bios in the program. Below, you can read what Alaska Sisters in Crime members Kimberley Gray and Donna Freedman have deduced about the crime.

WHO KILLED COP ROBIN?

The death of John Sturgus
By Donna Freedman

At least one person knows for sure who shot John J. Sturgus, the first chief of police of Anchorage. Unfortunately, that one person is Sturgus himself —and dead men tell no tales.

Does anyone living know? Possibly. Doug Beckstead received an anonymous letter following publicity about his quest to get Sturgus a decent grave marker at the Anchorage Cemetery, and to get his name added to the National Law Enforcement Officers' Memorial in Washington, D.C. (Beckstead, who works for the National Parks Service, realized both quests in 1998.) The anonymous note said that Sturgus was not a moral man — he "did things under the table," and that someone killed him as a result. "That is the way we did things in those days," the writer claimed.

Although the letter specifically mentioned who did the killing, historian Beckstead won't reveal who was named. The letter was probably a prank, he said.

"If I could find something to corroborate the anonymous statement, then I would follow up on it — not to mention the fact that I would bring the Anchorage Police Department back into the case as well, since it is still an active homicide case," Beckstead said via e-mail. The letter tantalized him, though. Anyone who purported to know what really happened would have had to be extremely old, since the killing took place in 1921.

However, the return address was the Anchorage Pioneer Home, a senior-citizen residence. So maybe the writer was on the level. Could he or she have been involved in some way? Maybe the writer was the son or daughter of someone who knew of Sturgus' alleged misdeeds — or the scion of the murderer himself. But was the chief really murdered? A possibility that was immediately raised — and swiftly denied — was that Sturgus himself was the shooter. Looking back, suicide actually does seem plausible. But so do a number of other theories.

Forensic science didn't exist yet, and civic pride (or official corruption) may have stalled a full investigation. But thanks to Alaska Sisters in Crime member Kimberley Gray, we know a lot more than we once did. Gray searched city directories, reference books, and newspapers from territorial Alaska and the state of Washington, uncovering enough tantalizing information to provide plausible plot lines for half a dozen different historical whodunits.

Who killed John Sturgus? We'll never know. But it sure is fun to speculate.

"KNOWN TO BE WITHOUT FEAR."

Sturgus became Anchorage's first-ever chief of police on Jan. 1, 1921. At approximately 9:15 p.m. Feb. 20, he took a bullet in an alleyway behind a drugstore, near what is now the area behind the Downtown Deli. He died on the operating table a couple of hours later; although conscious at least part of the time, he could not or would not name his killer. An editorial in the Anchorage Times memorialized him as "known to be without fear and perfectly conscientious in the discharge of his duties...his generosity and broadmindedness in successfully handling the position as chief of police was generally acknowledged."

Sturgus was born in Mansfield, Ohio. The newspaper gave his date of birth as Dec. 24, 1861. However, on both his Elks lodge application and his death certificate, his year of birth was given as 1860. He was a "peace officer" first in Montana, and then in the state of Washington. His nickname in Everett was

"Black Jack" Sturgus — and apparently not because he was good at cards. "(He) always wanted to be where the going was the roughest," said Capt. Samuel Millison of the Everett Police. "Where trouble was brewing there was Sturgus ready to act in any emergency with his night stick, his fists or gun."

Another Everett officer remembered Sturgus in this way: "I never saw a man so quick with a gun nor one who could shoot so straight." The Polk Directory for Everett lists him variously as "Sturgis" and "Sturgus" between the years 1903 and 1913, in a variety of jobs including watchman, tallyman and bartender. He was a police officer in 1909, a city detective from 1910 to 1912, and a police officer once more in 1913. Was this a demotion, or was his position change voluntary? The "City in Brief" section of the Everett Herald on June 9, 1913 noted that Sturgus was "enjoying a leave of absence." An article on Aug. 1, 1913 said that Sturgus had quit the force.

According to his fellow officers, he married just before he left for Alaska, apparently inspired by the Shushanna gold strike. Whether he mined for gold is not known, but he might have, although he was almost 52 years old at that time. According to historian Beckstead, plenty of old-time miners were men in their 50s and 60s. What is known is that at some point Sturgus became a Deputy U.S. Marshal in the Shushanna area. He was probably in Anchorage by 1915; his death certificate noted that he had been in the city for five years. The 1917 Polk Directory lists him as being a "policeman U.S. marshal's office," and living at 316 K St. On Dec. 22, 1920, the city council unanimously elected him as Anchorage's first-ever chief of police.

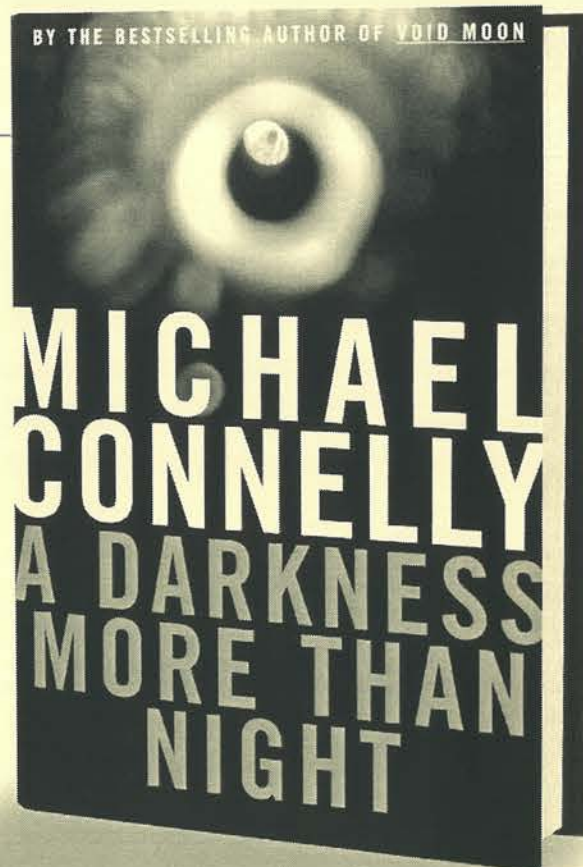
"THE DESPISED THIEF WHO STEALS MILK FROM THE BABIES."

For the first few weeks of his tenure, all was quiet on the northern front. A brief item headlined "Petty Thievery" from the Jan. 24, 1921 edition of the Anchorage Times called

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OPEN YOUR EYES TO
THE THRILLER
OF THE YEAR

from *New York Times*
Bestselling Author



MICHAEL CONNELLY

Former FBI agent Terry McCaleb comes out of retirement to help track down a methodical killer—only the killer's profile looks impossibly like that of L.A. detective Harry Bosch, who may have crossed over to the dark side.

"One of the best of the new breed of thriller writers."

—*San Francisco Examiner*

"Michael Connelly recalls no one so much as Raymond Chandler...ambitious, skillful, moving, intricate, and clever."

—*Los Angeles Times*

"Connelly is one of those masters...who can keep driving the story forward in runaway locomotive style."

—*USA Today*



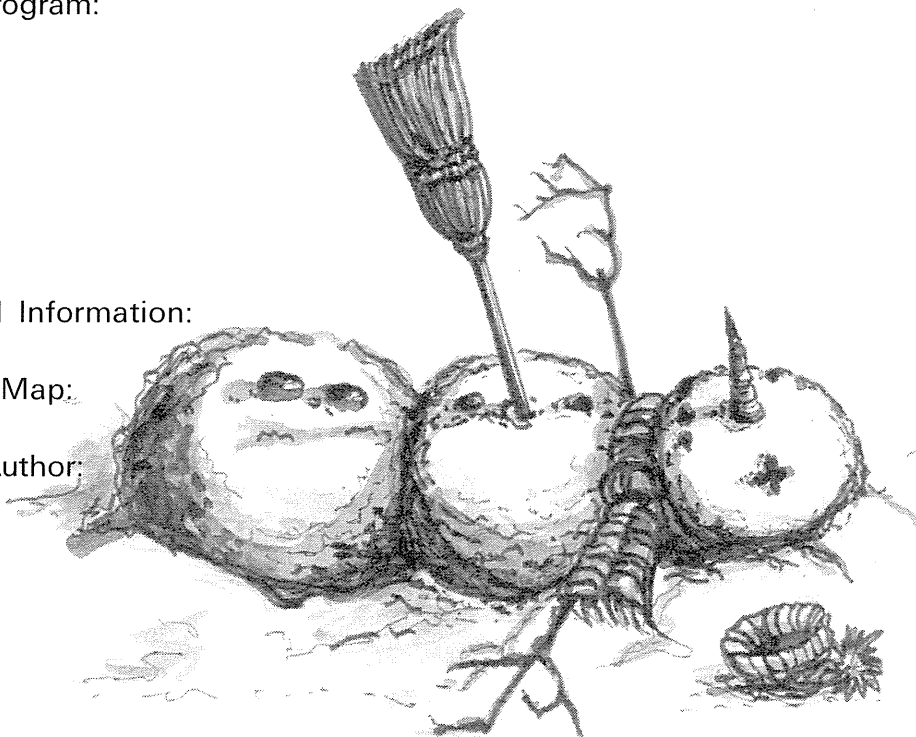
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Special thanks goes to Cook Inlet Region Inc. (CIRI), Southcentral Foundation (SCF), and Alaska State Library for the generous donations and sponsorships enabling Alaska Sisters in Crime/LCC2001 to offer the Authors to the Bush program. We, the authors and the participating Bush communities salute you!

We wish to express a very special thank you to local artist **Rebecca Lyon** for our wonderful logo. Her marvelous talent has brought us all many smiles!

Welcome to Left Coast Crime 2001 – Death Below Zero

Welcome to the Municipality of Anchorage and to Left Coast Crime 2001. We hope that you will have a great time here in Alaska! We appreciate the fortitude and spirit of adventure which have brought you north to the Last Frontier and hope that you find Anchorage and Death Below Zero to be all that you expected it to be. In addition to all the wonderful panels and program topics provided at Death Below Zero, we hope that you will also take advantage of all the activities at Alaska's Fur Rendezvous. Many of you are aware the World Championship Sled Dog Race starts on Friday, Saturday and Sunday at noon just two blocks from the Hilton on Fourth Avenue. You may also watch the activities from the Chart Room on the 15th Floor. Look for the Alaska Quiz in your bag. Check out the Alaska Panels. If there is any question to which you do not have the answer, please snag one of the volunteers walking around with the "Ask Me" pins on (except for, maybe, the answers to the Alaska Quiz). We are here to answer your questions and to make sure that you have a wonderful visit to Alaska.

Have fun, enjoy, and happy sleuthing!

The Left Coast Crime 2001 Committee

Fur Rendezvous History – 66 Years of Tradition

Fur Rendezvous began as a winter sports tournament (hockey and basketball). Some history books state that Fur Rondy began in 1936, other sources place it beginning as late as 1939. The year in which the idea was conceived is now accepted as the beginning date of the festival: 1935. It was during that time that Vern Johnson, Clyde Conover, Thomas Bevers and Dale Bowen came up with the idea of a party that would encompass all of Anchorage. The main focus of the carnival was to bring people together, to show community support and celebrate the beginning of the end of winter. In those days revelers purchased a \$2 ticket that gained them admission to all of the activities.

Because fur trading was the second leading industry in Alaska at the time, fur trading became an important part of the festival. It provided a golden opportunity for trappers and buyers to meet in Anchorage to ply their trade and cut out the middle-man. Trapping contests were held, and prizes were awarded for the longest fox, the best fox and the finest ermine pelts.

The festival gained its name in 1937 as the Fur Rendezvous festival. Over the years more events were added and season tickets were distributed to Anchorage merchants to sell and area businesses began endorsing the festival.

In 1939 the first Fur Rendezvous pin was designed; it was a lapel pin made out of leather and surrounded in fur. Everyone wanted a Rondy pin, and this was the beginning of the collector craze! Henceforth each year a different design is selected and then reproduced onto a variety of collectible items, from tie tacs to spoons, mugs to belt buckles. Keystone Kops can still be found on the streets of Anchorage arresting Rondy revelers caught without the Rondy pin.

No festivities were held during World War II. In 1946 the festival once again began expanding – it was no longer a celebration for locals; Rondy drew revelers from Fairbanks, Juneau and even some from as far south as Seattle. This same year several cornerstone events were added to the Rondy lineup: the now famous Miners & Trappers Ball, Melodrama and the World Championship Sled Dog Race to name a few. In 1947 a large fireworks display was added to the opening night ceremonies as the new Rondy Queen was being crowned.

The festival continued to grow and in 1956 Greater Anchorage, Inc. was formed to take over the management and operation. GAI is governed by a board of directors and has a full-time year-round staff. Today Anchorage Fur Rendezvous is one of the largest winter festivals in North America with estimates of over 67% of the population participating in Rondy.

With the many years of history behind us, it's clear that the tradition should continue well into the future. Let's work together to make it happen!

General Information

AUTHOR/FAN RECEPTION: Thursday night, kick off the conference by coming to the Author/Fan Reception hosted by the Alaska Center for the Book, Alaska Library Association, Alaska Library Association-Anchorage Chapter, Alaska Press Women, Friends of the Anchorage Municipal Libraries and Dean Brovold. This reception will be in the Aleutian/Alaska rooms from 7:00 pm to 10:00 pm. There will be a Welcome and Blessing by Traditional Native Spiritual Leader Kenny TimberWolf Gardner. Come meet and greet your comrades and favorite authors, with hors d'oeuvres provided.

DOROTHYLER GATHERING: DorothyL'er Gathering in the Dillingham/Katmai/King Salmon rooms, Friday, February 16, 5:00 pm to 7:00 pm

WHAT'S INCLUDED: Continental breakfast served Friday, Saturday and Sunday starting at 7:30 am in the Iliamna Room. Box lunches served Friday and Saturday from 11:30 am to 1:00 pm in the Iliamna room. Meal tickets for both breakfast and lunch are in your registration packets.

Friday, 7:00 pm, the Left Coast Crime 2001 reception will be in the Aleutian/Alaska rooms, where you can nosh on cold hors d'oeuvres and mingle with all the attending authors. Live entertainment and a no-host bar provided. A meal ticket is included in your registration packet and gets you in the door.

Saturday, 7:00 pm, we're throwing a party, so don't forget your dancing shoes! There will be a hot buffet (yes, enough for a full meal) and a no-host bar, Sue Henry doing the live auction thing to benefit the Suzan Nightingale Literacy Fund where great prizes like books, name a character, and great Alaskan art will go to the highest bidder, and then dancing to DJ Michael Cross of Crossroads Productions. It all happens in the Aleutian/Alaska rooms. A meal ticket is included in your registration packet and gets you in the door.

The Hospitality Room is in the Chart Room on the 15th floor and the hours are 8:00 am to 5:00 pm Friday and Saturday, and 8:00 am to 12 noon Sunday. The Chart Room is located at the top of the Westward Tower and offers a near-360* unobstructed view of mountains, the city and the inlet.

AUCTIONS, LIVE AND SILENT: LCC2001 and Alaska Sisters in Crime are pleased to announce that we are having a live auction Saturday night as part of our Saturday evening entertainment. We are also having a silent auction which will be held in the promenade both Friday and Saturday from 11:00 am to 5:00 pm. The final bid and closure of the silent auction will be at 5 pm, Saturday night. Silent Auction winners will be announced at the Live Auction Saturday night. The proceeds from the auctions will go to benefit the Suzan Nightingale Literacy Fund, so bid generously!

ASK ME VOLUNTEERS: Do you have questions? Are you lost? Are you wondering where to go and maybe if you should have been there already? Find an ASK ME! volunteer and ask them whatever it is you want. Hopefully they will know and be able to direct you; if they don't, they will know whom to ask. This program depends on the people who are wearing the ASK ME! pins. If someone puts on one of the pins and doesn't know the answers, please report them to security; they must be imposters!

BUS SERVICE: You can ride any People Mover bus free in February! The People Mover is Anchorage's public transportation. See maps on the freebie table, or check with the registration desk.

SHIPPING INFO – PROMENADE: Mail Boxes Etc.'s Downtown Center will be on site at the Hilton Hotel on Saturday and Sunday, February 17 and 18, to handle all your packing and shipping needs. MBE's Downtown Center offers its complete menu of business services, including copying, fax, and e-mail, at 645 G Street. Call 276-7888 for free pickup service. They will be open the same times as the Dealers Room, 8:00 am to 5:30 pm, Friday and Saturday, and 8:00 to 1:00 pm, Sunday.

DEALERS ROOM: The Dealers Room, in the Denali Room, will be open from 8:00 am til 5:30 pm Friday and Saturday and until noon on Sunday for people to purchase new, used and rare books. We Alaskans have limited access to collectable books so some of these dealers will be bringing their rarest books, and your favorite LCC2001 author's books will be for sale as well.

MASS SIGNING SUNDAY: All your favorite authors will be available for a mass signing Sunday morning at 10:00 am til 12 noon, in the Alaska/Aleutian Rooms.

ADDITIONAL SIGNINGS: Many panelists will be doing a signing immediately following their panel, so watch your alphabetical panelist listing (in the pocket guide) for details and times.

A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO SOUTHCENTRAL FOUNDATION AND CIRI

When Dana Stabenow and Alaska Sisters in Crime first began to talk about the Authors to the Bush program we knew that we couldn't offer the kind of program we wanted without community support. Dana approached both Katherine Gottlieb at Southcentral Foundation and Carl Marrs at Cook Inlet Region, Inc. and they didn't even blink. They thought it was such a good idea that they endowed Alaska Sisters in Crime with a generous grant and the program blossomed.

But we would like to take this opportunity to tell you that Alaska Sisters in Crime is just getting started. We've got our post-LCC2001 eye set on forming a Speaker's Bureau, where we hope to be bringing up one or two authors a year for appearances and workshops in Anchorage and the Bush. We're thinking of hosting an "Alaska Reads a Book" program, wherein we work with schools, libraries, and reading groups all over the state in a series of discussion programs centered around everyone reading the same book. We've already been approached to host Bouchercon, a mystery convention four times the size of Left Coast Crime. So look for more of Alaska Sisters in Crime and when we come knocking at your door, we hope you will welcome us in with open arms as CIRI and Southcentral have.

Authors to the Bush Program

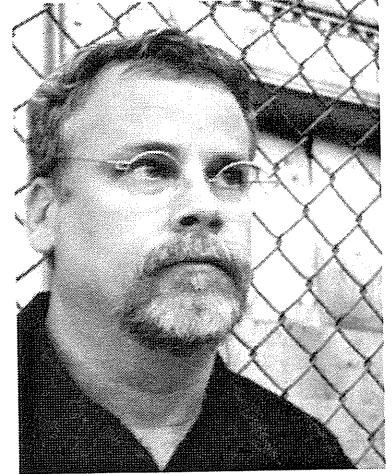
When school principal Judith Bingham heard that two authors were interested in coming to Nulato, a tiny Athabaskan community on the Yukon River, she almost burst into tears. "Authors," she gasped, "here in Nulato?" Yes, authors in Nulato. Authors in Kaktovik and Yakutat, Hoonah and Goodnews Bay. In conjunction with Left Coast Crime 2001, Alaska Sisters in Crime is sending 52 authors to over 60 Alaskan communities, and 26 authors are going into Anchorage schools. LCC2001 is the first mystery conference to be held in Alaska and Authors to the Bush is the first program of its kind. It is the brainchild of author and current Alaska Sisters in Crime president Dana Stabenow, who grew up in the tiny fishing village of Seldovia, Alaska. "When I was a kid," she said, "no one told me that being an author was a career option. When I said I wanted to write, they sent me off to journalism school." Long-time Alaskans tend to be resourceful. If a hundred writers are coming to Anchorage for LCC2001, Stabenow thought, we need to send them out to the Bush, to those remote communities which seldom get the opportunity to talk with writers. Stabenow is not alone in this project. In fact, the support has been overwhelming. **The program received two generous grants from two Native organizations: CIRI, one of the 13 Native regional corporations, and Southcentral Foundation. These funds will pay for all travel expenses for the authors within Alaska. Assistance has also been provided by a grant from Alaska State Library.** Vicki Russell, who taught high school in Anchorage for 29 years, is the coordinator of the Authors in Anchorage schools. Kathleen Putman, who has worked with kids in seven Alaskan communities, including Galena and Nome, is the coordinator of Authors to the Bush. Volunteers in the communities are organizing events, providing accommodations, and arranging potlatches, sightseeing and dog sled tours. And what will these intrepid authors be doing, besides trying to keep warm? These trips are not publicity tours. We expect you to earn your keep. JA Jance will talk to Native students at Mt. Edgecumbe, the regional high school in Sitka. Lindsey Davis is addressing a Latin class in Anchorage. Sinclair Browning will do one-on-one critiques for 10th graders in Homer. Julie Wray Herman will visit Hyder's first school in 30 years. Rex Burns is teaching a one-credit college course in Kenai. And Jessica Speart and Ken Goddard will be working on plot and character development with Judith Bingham's kids in Nulato. Travel in Alaska is never easy, especially in February. Small planes can't fly if the temperature drops below minus forty. If Raymond Derouin misses his flight back from St Paul out in the Pribilofs, it may be days before he can go home. Authors going to the northern part of the state must learn about arctic gear- bunny boots and RefrigerWear. There are no hotels in Emmonak, so Marilyn Meredith will be staying in teacher housing. Nathan Walpow was offered a couch in the Nenana library, although the librarian there promised him homemade granola and fresh bread. Ridley Pearson was told to ask the pilot flying him out to Ft. Yukon (another tiny village on the Yukon) if he thinks the weather will allow a return trip. So why are these authors doing this, traveling to cold remote places in February, with protein bars in their parkas? As Bill Fitzhugh said, "From this trip I hope to convince at least one person that they should pursue that which makes their heart sing - whether it's writing or something else. Life's too short to hate what you do." In every town and village we send an author, there will be another little girl with her knees wedged beneath a fourth-grade desk who will listen to all this talk about writing, and who will be inspired to pick up her pencil and begin her own story. "I can't wait to read it." says Stabenow.

Listing of authors and their communities: Andreae, Christine - Unalakleet & Stebbins; Andrews, Donna - Ketchikan; Berry, Linda - Akiak; Bowen, Rhys - Naknek; Braithwaite, Kent - Unalaska; Browning, Sinclair - Homer; Burns, Rex - Fairbanks & Kenai; Cleeves, Ann - Juneau & Gustavus; Connelly, Michael - Seward; Dietz (Aalborg), Denise - Anchor Point, Nikolaevsk & Ninilchik; Derouin, Raymond - St. Paul; Fink, Jeri - Barrow; Fitzhugh, Bill - Dillingham; Glatzer, Hal - Fairbanks; Goddard, Ken - Ruby, Galena & Nulato; Goff, Christine - Chiniak; Green, Judy - Aniak; Gunn, Elizabeth - Pedro Bay & Iliamna; Guttridge, Peter - Valdez; Ham, Lorie - Palmer; Hartzmark, Gini - Kodiak; Hayden, L.C. - Kenai; Henderson, Lauren - Dillingham; Hendricks, Vicki - Fairbanks; Herman, Julie Wray - Hyder; Hirschfeld, Corson - Craig & Klawock; Houston, Victoria - Fairbanks & Tanana; Jance, JA - Sitka; Jorgensen, Christine - Bethel & Goodnews Bay; Karp, Larry - Kotzebue; Mitchell, Ed - Fairbanks; Meredith, Marilyn - Emmonak; Newman, Sharan E. - Delta Junction; Pearson, Ridley - Ft. Yukon; Perry, Anne - Juneau & Hoonah; Reynolds, Brad - Eklutna; Rozan, SJ - Kenai; St. James, Riley - Haines; Schiller, Gerald - Kaktovik and Ft. Wainwright; Schumacher, Aileen - Talkeetna, Houston & Trapper Creek; Seranella, Barbara - Petersburg; Simpson, Marcia - Wrangell; Smith, Barbara Burnett - Yakutat; Smith, Martin J. - Nome; Smith, Louise M. - Cooper Landing & Hope; Snyder, Keith - Selawik; Songer, CJ - Elim & White Mountain; Speart, Jessica - Ruby, Galena & Nulato; Squire, Elizabeth Daniels - Skagway; Stevens, Serita - St. Mary's; Walpow, Nathan - Healy & Nenana.

American Guest of Honor

Michael Connelly by Peter Robinson

A bookseller friend in California gave me a signed first edition of Michael Connelly's *The Black Echo* early in 1993 and said, "Read this. You'll love it." I did, and I did. She also said I should introduce myself to Michael at the upcoming Edgar Awards banquet in New York. Somehow or other, I didn't manage to do that. Michael won the Edgar for best first novel, his first of many awards, and got lost in the crush. I had to wait until later that year, when Michael was in Toronto with his charming wife, Linda, promoting his second novel, *The Black Ice*, before we met. He was signing, I remember, at Sleuth of Baker Street, our wonderful mystery bookstore, and its owners, notorious bons vivants J.D. Singh and Marian Masters, invited us all to dinner afterwards.



People have many misconceptions about best-selling authors, but Michael manages to debunk them all. He is approachable, modest and generous with his time. When we met, I was working on a novel set in Los Angeles, and he was kind enough both to read and comment on the manuscript, and to write an endorsement when the book was published.

I am a big fan of Harry Bosch. Though Harry is a member of the L.A.P.D., he has his roots firmly in the world described by Raymond Chandler in "The Simple Art of Murder": "He is a common man or he could not go among common men. He has a sense of character, or he would not know his job. He will take no man's money dishonestly and no man's insolence without due and dispassionate revenge. He is a lonely man and his pride is that you will treat him as a proud man or be very sorry you ever saw him."

As well as being a loner, a private eye doing a cop's job, Harry has little respect for authority, and he can be headstrong and irascible. Often he seems to be his own worst enemy, but throughout the series, as we come to know both the demons that propel him and the code he lives by, we get to know him, though we never get too close to slip under his defenses and dull his edge.

Another element that appeals to me in Michael's writing is his sense of place. By this I don't just mean landscape description – which he also does very well – but the deeper sense of place. Michael has a strong grasp of L.A.'s mythic dimension: the place where dreamers end up. As all realists know, most dreams don't come true, so L.A. is populated by people who have had to adapt their dreams and their talents to the essential task of not being poor, of not being a failure, in a world that doesn't tolerate poverty and exalts celebrity. It is a strange world indeed, morbidly fascinating to the outsider, and one which Michael Connelly and his creation Harry Bosch understand only too well.

So what's left? Well, there's Michael Connelly the family man, husband of Linda and doting father of Callie. Finally, there's perhaps the one you don't know so well: Michael Connelly the party animal. It's true. Stick close to this man, folks, because, I kid you not, Michael can sniff out a publisher's party from at least a mile away! I can't think of a more deserving guest of honor.

British Guest of Honour Val McDermid on Lindsey Davis



If, like me, you studied Latin at school — conjugating nouns, declining verbs, wondering why anyone would want to invade Gaul, never mind divide it into three parts — you will be singularly unprepared for Lindsey Davis's Falco novels. For a start, they're funny. Now, Roman authors aren't known for their rib-tickling humour. Anyone who tells you they laughed till they cried at Juvenal's satires is lying. For another thing, they're cleverly and subtly plotted. Anyone who has ever read Terence will tell you what a bonus that is. But most importantly, they're peopled by characters it's hard not to fall in love with, living lives whose details may be unfamiliar but whose actions and reactions are entirely comprehensible. Marcus Didius Falco is not some stiff, distant figure; he's a man of his time, but he's also a man for all seasons. And his partner in crime, the formidable Helena Justina, is a woman I'd be happy to take to dinner any time.

There's a good reason why these twelve novels have won the hearts of thousands of readers around the world. And that's the personality of their author. For Lindsey Davis is as delightful as her books would lead you to expect. She has a dry sense of humour that cuts straight to the heart of the matter. She's generous with her time and her support for other writers. She's one of the most entertaining raconteurs around, and her ferocious intelligence is never directed at making lesser mortals feel inferior. There's never a dull moment in her company, I can promise you that. Her tales of her adventures researching her novels are worth a book in themselves.

It may come as a surprise to those impressed with the quality of historical detail in the Falco novels that Lindsey has no formal academic background in history or the classics. She read English at Oxford, then joined the Civil Service, a career singularly lacking in opportunities for those possessed of imagination and a sense of humour. When she decided that the only way to save her sanity was to get out and write full time, she took advantage of a government scheme for those wishing to set up their own businesses, and was granted state funding of £40 a week for a year to establish herself as a writer. It was barely enough to keep body and soul together; the apartment she was living in at the time formed the inspiration for Falco's dismal lodgings in Fountain Court! But she proved herself worthy of the government's faith in her when her first Falco novel, *The Silver Pigs*, won the Authors' Club Best First Novel for 1989.

One of the many things I admire about Lindsey is that she's one of those authors who puts something back into the writing community. She's a committee member of the Crime Writers' Association, one of the more thankless tasks in the known universe. She's a member of the programming committee of the UK's crime and mystery convention, Dead on Deansgate. She was one of the moving forces behind the setting up of the Ellis Peters Award to honour the writers of historical mysteries. To all of these tasks, she brings a terrifying enthusiasm and a refusal to take anything at face value. And although she's steeped in the history of Ancient Rome, she doesn't hesitate to take advantage of the latest in technology. Her website at www.lindseydavis.com.uk was named the best author site for Y2K by the UK publishing trade magazine, *The Bookseller*. The author who first recommended it said, "It's the best author site I've ever visited. You get the feeling of an alert, steely intelligence - and a good strong left hook to go with it."

Lindsey Davis has given us a great gift with the Falco novels — now in Alaska at Left Coast Crime 2001 you have the chance to experience a writer who's as much fun in person as she is on the page. Enjoy!

Fan Guest of Honor

Andi Shechter, Fan Guest of Honor

When Alaska Sisters in Crime first began seriously to consider hosting Left Coast Crime in Anchorage, one of the first people we contacted was Andi Shechter. She responded at once with eight pages of advice which could be published under the title, "How to Put on a Convention Without Losing Your Sanity." We've been following that advice ever since. Andi has been instrumental in the putting on of conventions, both mystery and science fiction, for years, including Seattle's own Left Coast Crime and what is still considered by many to be the best Bouchercon ever, and we thought it was time that someone acknowledged her hard work, dedication, and enthusiasm, not to mention stamina and steady nerves. If it weren't for people like Andi, fans would never get the chance to cosy up to their favorite authors, and authors would never get the chance to meet the people who are actually reading their work. Thanks, Andi! —Dana Stabanow



My first contact with Andi Shechter came three weeks before Seattle Bouchercon in '94. My first book had been out about five minutes, and Andi called me in NY and said, "Someone's dropped off a panel and your name came up as a replacement. Sorry to be so last minute, but will you do it?" I asked what the panel was on. Andi said, "Humor." I said I wasn't funny. Andi laughed hysterically. I thought, here's someone I could get to like. So I did the panel, and I did get to like Andi. She's all the good things: generous, smart, organized, and unbelievably energetic. Not that she's a goody two-shoes. She's also all the other good things: opinionated, frank, talkative, and stretched too thin. A chance for a drink with Andi is a major attraction of any convention, for me, and a damn good reason to go to Seattle any time. I can't think of anyone who deserves to be Fan Guest of Honor more, for her love of books, of writing, of authors, of the whole crime fiction world. I'd go on and on about her, but either you know her already, or, let me humbly suggest, you must make it a point to drop by the bar and meet her for yourself. —SJ Rozan

Andi Shechter's fan resume':

Conventions:

Program Chair and Vice Chair, Bouchercon 25, Seattle WA (Chair, Thom Walls)
 Chair and Program Chair, Left Coast Crime, 1997, Seattle, WA
 Have attended approximately 7 Bouchercons, approximately 7 Left Coast Crimes and Eyecon 1

On-line fannish activity:

Cass Jameson on DorothyL, since 1992
 Participant on 4Mystery Addicts, Detectivetoday, cf-books, rec.arts.mystery and mysterydigest

Publications:

"Conventional Wisdom" column on conventions for MURDEROUS INTENT along with various articles for MI (edited by Margo Power) ranging from disability access for conventions and signings to cliches in mystery fiction
 Various articles in mystery Readers Journal (published by Janet Rudolph) including "S.J. Rozan's New York" (Winter 1997-8) and "Learning from Ethnic Detectives"(Fall 1998)
 1998 Contribution to "The Long Good Cry" (edited by Gary Warren Niebuhr)
 Article on conventions for MWA national newsletter (edited by Kate Stine) (later picked up by the newsletter of Crime Writers of Canada)

Reviews: currently reviewing for mysterybooks.about.com and femaledetective.com

Works in progress - "How to Organize a Mystery Convention" and "Supercrip Solves a Mystery," a critical essay on the depiction of disabled people in mystery fiction.

Mystery programming:

Arranged mystery program for Seattle's Northwest Bookfest, 1998 - 2000.
 Helped run one-day writer's workshop for NW MWA chapter circa 1994
 Hosts chats (panel and individual) with writers on mysterybooks.about.com
 Member of or former member of PWA, MWA and Sisters in Crime.
 Subscribes to Mystery News, Deadly Pleasures, Mystery Readers Journal
 Publicist for Aileen Schumacher, Keith Snyder, Lisa Kleinholz and Wendi Lee.
 Currently appearing in *Mandarin Plaid* by S.J. Rozan and *Vampire Bytes* by Linda Grant

continued from pg. 1

Sturgus "city custodian" and noted that although there was no crime wave similar to those in the Lower 48, the city was not without its malfeasors.

"(Sturgus) was on the trail of the despised thief who steals milk from the babies, groceries from the storeroom and laundry from the hallways. Several citizens...have complained of small thefts, including several bags of laundry, within the past few days." For this kind of work, Sturgus was paid a total of \$200.80 in the month of January: \$200 in salary, and 80 cents for two C-cell batteries. Things began to heat up, though. On Feb. 4, the first of a number of raids on stills was reported in the Anchorage Times. These raids, however, were conducted not by Sturgus, but by federal revenooers. The Times reported that over the next couple of weeks, Judge Leopold David's courtroom was "the busiest place in Anchorage" as he handed out sentences of four to six months, and fines ranging from \$200 to \$500.

(A particularly amusing item was published Feb. 14, noting that a man named Paul Fromming received six months for manufacturing liquor "reliably reported (to be)

above the ordinary and made from corn." Fromming had apparently lived in the United States for 24 years and not attempted citizenship. The article noted that "both the extra-fine quality of the liquor and Fromming's anti-American tendencies were evidently considered when passing sentence.")

At about the same time, the city council was grappling with several other hot issues. One was open gambling in pool rooms, cigar stores and other area locations. An ordinance was passed requiring that such places be uncurtained, presumably so that no one could gamble openly. Another issue — the apparently wide-open red-light district — was brought to the council's attention at the Feb. 16 meeting. A citizen complained that the area of C Street between Sixth and Ninth (ahem) streets had become a sink of corruption. There were so many bawdy houses, in fact, that entrepreneurs were expanding to the side streets off Seventh and Eighth, "to the detriment of families living in that neighborhood." Prostitution has long been an open secret in frontier towns. The city of Fairbanks, in fact, had an area called "The Line," a row of small houses where the

ladies of the evening worked and plied their trade. Everyone knew about it, but relatively few people complained. After all, at least the vice was being contained.

In Anchorage, it appeared that the vice was bursting out of the girlie ghetto and infiltrating polite society. It was decided that Sturgus and some members of the council would look into the matter on Feb. 17, and report back to the council that same evening; the council would be sitting as an equalization board that night.

No mention was made in print of their findings. The next time Sturgus' name appeared in the paper was as a front-page headline, announcing his death.

"INDIGNATION RAN AT FEVER HEAT." A night watchman found Sturgus lying in the snow and, believing him to be a drunk, went in search of...Chief of Police Sturgus, to tell him an inebriate needed attention. On the way, the watchman ran into a friend of the Sturgus family, who went to the "drunk" and immediately recognized him. Sturgus had been lying there long enough for snow to be frozen to his hair. His

continued on pg. 21

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SUZAN NIGHTINGALE



At Anchorage's Loussac Library is a collection of books donated in the name of Suzan Nightingale. The list is, well, a little unusual. Among the works given to the library by Alaska Sisters in Crime are *Field Guide for Human Skeletal Identification*, *Death Investigation: The Basics*, *Oxford Companion to Crime and Mystery Writing* and *Bone Voyage: A Journey in Forensic Anthropology*. What's intriguing about the books bought in Suzan's memory is the fact that this well-loved Alaskan writer, a founding member of Alaska Sisters in Crime, was as likely as, say, Mother Teresa to commit mayhem on her fellow humans. Suzan had started work on her first mystery when she died in 1996 at the age of 46. Awaiting treatment for cancer, she was felled instead by a heart attack. She left her husband, John McKay, and sons Martin, 8, and Cameron, 5. Despite the untimeliness of her death, Suzan's place as a writer was already assured. She turned out newspaper articles, editorials and columns, first for the Anchorage Times, then for the Anchorage Daily News. She won sheaves of writing awards — including a slice of a Pulitzer Prize — and thousands of readers' hearts. In a distinctive voice laced with humanity and compassion, she explored the nuances of life, from her dog's idiosyncrasies to the devastation wreaked by alcohol on the Native youths of Alaska. Like poet Dorothy Parker, she could deliver the most incisive insights in the softest of tones. She spoke for herself, but also for those unable to speak. In addition to newspaper work, she penned the texts for "Electric Bread" and "More Electric Bread," cookbooks that led readers through the complexities of baking via machine. Other non-journalistic endeavors included essays for the photo-and-text book "Alaska," and a chapter in "The Buying and Selling of America's Newspapers." Her deep affinity for social issues was reflected in such activities as mentoring for the Anchorage School District and supporting programs for the arts and for needy Alaskans. Despite her honors and her prominence in the community, Suzan kept a wry self-awareness and frequently made herself the butt of her own jokes. Fellow Daily News writer Mike Doogan expressed it deftly in his column, "Death Silences a Writer's Voice and Takes Away Our Good Friend." "The last time I saw Suzan alive," he wrote, "we sat together at the Alaska Press Club banquet. She had never mentioned being ill, so I said nothing. I knew how she felt about fuss. The speaker that night was another old friend of ours, Tad Bartimus, who talked about people who made a difference in Alaska journalism. When she got to Suzan, as she naturally did, Tad mentioned Suzan's column about the time her dog threw up. " 'You know,' Suzan said, leaning over to me with just a glint of a wry smile, 'I've written hundreds of columns and editorials and newspaper stories. I've won awards. I've written best-selling books. And all anybody remembers is that darn dog vomiting.'" It was a good punch line, but it wasn't true. Suzan is remembered for much more than that. Funds raised by the Left Coast Crime 2001 silent and live auctions will help the Suzan Nightingale Literacy Fund to help the causes that Suzan worked for and wrote about, and help us all to remember a writer whose unique voice was silenced far too early.

Auction donations include: A Caribbean Surprise package; authors' unique and priceless items including offers for proofreading of manuscripts and/or characters in their new books; Native and local artists work; a small quilted piece with an Alaskan theme from Petersburg; from Gustavas, a print and a basket of locally made soaps, lotions and lip balm; a wood block print from Unalaska; a hand colored stone lithograph print, and Sinclair Browning's deer skin purse with three Trade Ellis books enclosed. In addition to all these wonderful donations, there will be jewelry from local artists, along with art and gift certificates from local businesses.

Assistance on Auctions is provided by Virginia Samson of:

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What is DorothyL?

DorothyL is a discussion and idea list for the lovers of the mystery genre. It was concocted by three woman librarians at a July 1991 Washington, D.C. meeting at the Association of Research Libraries and named in honor of one of the great women mystery writers of the century. Agatha Christie and Josephine Tey were strong contenders, but Dorothy L. Sayers had a LISTSERV-blessed middle initial.

DorothyL Moderators

Original founder Diane K. Kovacs diane@kovacs.com (aka Harriet Vane) and Kara Robinson krobinso@kent.edu (aka Danger Mouse) manage and moderate DOROTHYL.

Suitable subjects for posting are:

Announcements of forthcoming books and previews.

Reviews, criticisms, comments, and appreciations of mysteries (books, plays, films).

Great mystery book shops.

Awards. It can take a long time to learn which are the annual prize winners.

Mysterious events. Mystery travels, mystery walks in cities, mysteries of life.

DorothyL Archives:

Archives of DorothyL are maintained at Kent and are available on the Web. These archives are keyword searchable, as well as arranged by date. It is important to remember that this archive does NOT save each digest individually. Instead it saves the DorothyL postings weekly. This site has archives back to February 1996. To access this version of the archives, point your Web browser to: <http://listserv.kent.edu/archives/dorothyL.html>

J. Alec West (all-around wonderful man & Knight of the DorothyL Realm) maintains an archive of DorothyL digests. Each digest is a separate entry. For information about digests which are not available on the website, contact J. Alec directly at j@alecwest.com. To access this version of the archives, point your Web browser to: <http://alecwest.com/mysvault.htm>

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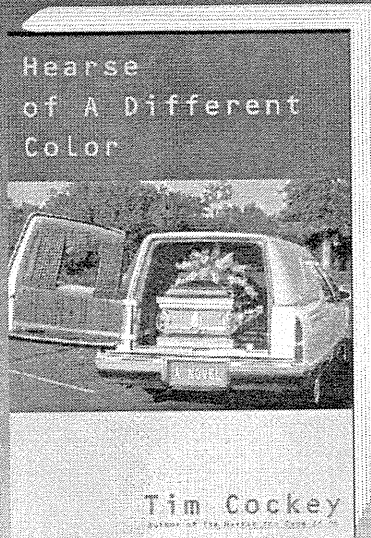
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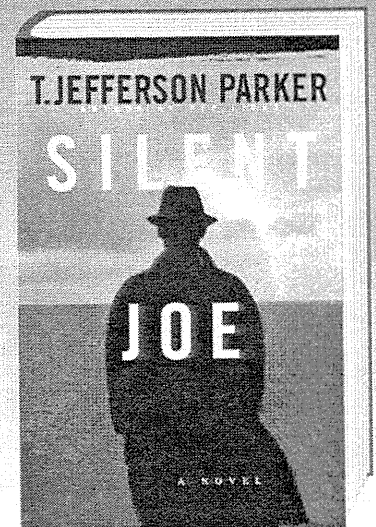
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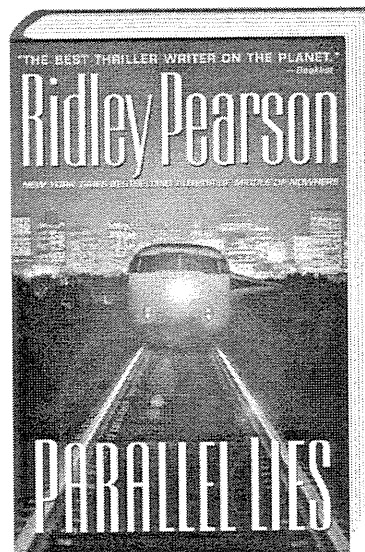
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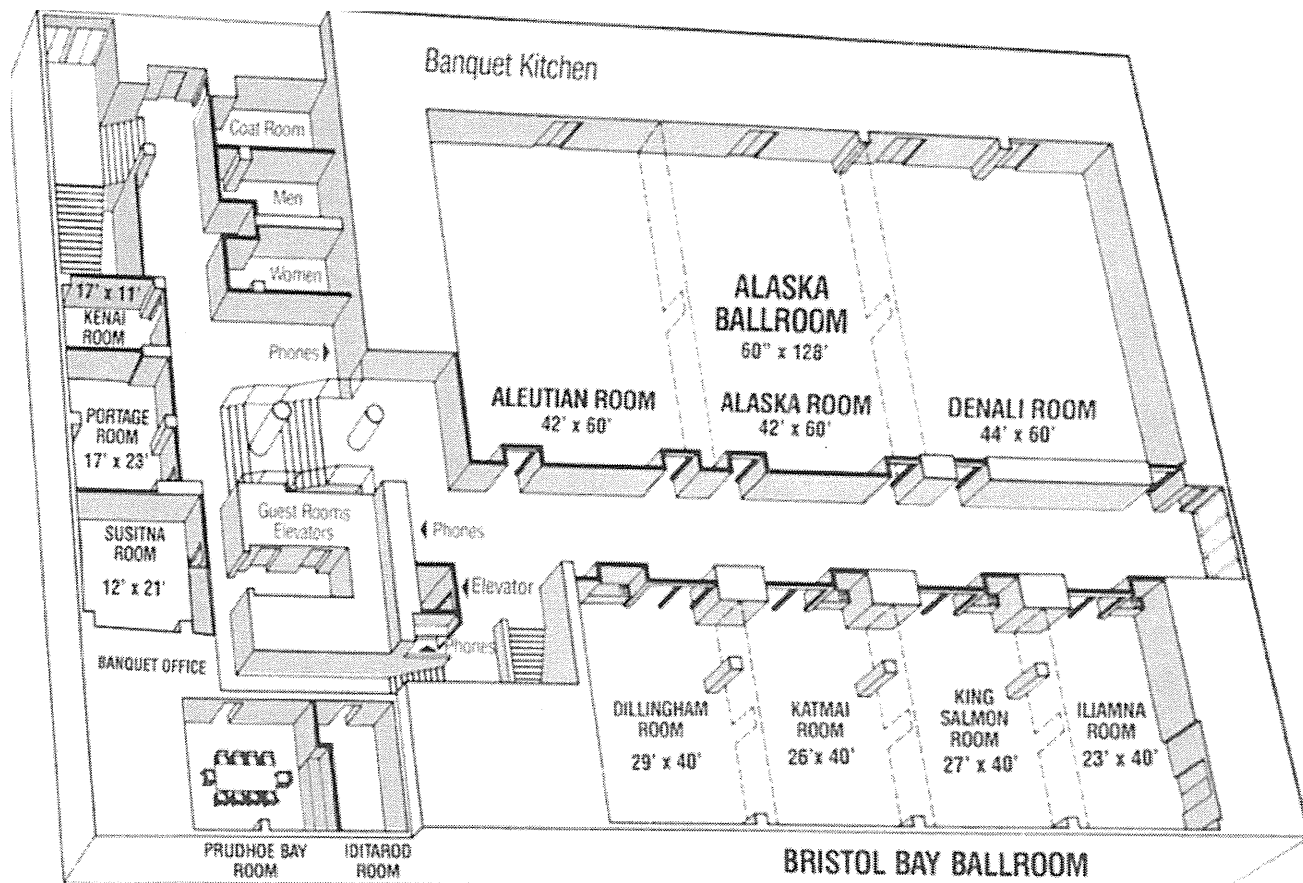
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15 Minutes with the Author

Friday, February 16th, 2001

Andreae, Christine 11:45 am King Salmon Room
 Barer, Burl 2:30 pm Katmai Room
 Braithwaite, Kent 1:30 pm Susitna Room
 Browning, Sinclair 11:30 am Katmai Room
 Burke, Jan 3:30 pm Katmai Room
 Connelly, Michael 1:45 pm King Salmon Room
 Davis, Lindsey 2:00 pm Katmai Room
 Epstein, Carole 3:45 pm King Salmon Room
 Glatzer, Hal 9:00 am Susitna Room
 Ham, Lorie 3:00 pm Susitna Room
 Hamilton, Lyn 11:00 am Susitna Room
 Hayden, L.C. 11:00 am Katmai Room
 Hendricks, Vicki 3:30 pm Susitna Room
 Jance, J.A. 11:15 am King Salmon Room
 Karp, Larry 9:30 am Katmai Room & 2:00 pm
 Susitna Room
 Macdonald, Marianne 11:30 am Susitna Room
 Mitchell, Ed 1:00 pm Susitna Room
 Newton, Michael 9:30 am Susitna Room
 Pearson, Ridley 1:15 pm King Salmon Room
 Perry, Anne 2:45 pm King Salmon Room
 Robinson, Peter 3:00 pm Katmai Room
 Rozan, S.J. 2:15 pm King Salmon Room
 Schumacher, Aileen 3:15 pm King Salmon
 Room
 Simpson, Marcia 9:15 am King Salmon Room
 Smith, Martin J. 9:45 am King Salmon Room
 St. James, Riley 9:00 am Katmai Room
 Stabenow, Dana 1:00 pm Katmai Room
 Stevens, Serita 2:30 pm Susitna Room
 Wisdom, Linda 1:30 pm Katmai Room

Saturday, February 17th, 2001

Andrews, Donna 1:30 pm Katmai Room
 Armstrong, Michael 11:00 am Katmai Room
 Berry, Linda 2:45 pm King Salmon Room
 Bouchard, Diane Jay 9:30 am Katmai Room
 Burns, Rex 9:45 am King Salmon Room
 Chittenden, Meg 2:00 pm Katmai Room
 Derouin, Raymond 11:30 am Susitna Room
 Erickson, K.J. 1:00 pm Susitna Room
 Fink, Dr. Jeri 2:00 pm Susitna Room
 Gabaldon, Diana 3:00 pm Katmai Room

Goddard, Ken 3:30 pm Susitna Room
 Goff, Christine 9:00 am Susitna Room
 Guttridge, Peter 2:15 pm King Salmon Room
 Ham, Lorie 9:15 am King Salmon Room
 Hartzmark, Gini 3:45 pm King Salmon Room
 Henry, Sue 3:30 pm Katmai Room
 Houston, Victoria 2:30 pm Susitna Room
 Jorgensen, Christine T. 3:00 pm Susitna
 Room
 Newman, Sharan 3:15 pm King Salmon
 Room
 Penman, Sharon Kay 1:45 pm King Salmon
 Room
 Seil, William 11:00 am Susitna Room
 Seranella, Barbara 9:00 am Katmai Room
 Smith, Barbara Burnett 11:45 am King
 Salmon Room
 Snyder, Keith 1:00 pm Katmai Room
 Songer, C.J. 1:30 pm Susitna Room
 Squire, Elizabeth Daniels 2:30 pm Katmai
 Room
 Walpow, Nathan 11:15 am King Salmon
 Room
 Wolzien, Valerie 11:30 am Katmai Room

Sunday, February 18th, 2001

Aalborg, Denise, aka Denise Dietz 9:30 am
 Susitna Room
 Bowen, Rhys 10:30 am Katmai Room
 Caverly, Carol 9:15 am King Salmon Room
 Cleeves, Ann 10:30 am Susitna Room
 Delacorte, Shawna, aka Sharon Dennison
 10:15 am King Salmon Room
 Derie, Kate 10:00 am Katmai Room
 Grilley, Kate 9:45 am King Salmon Room
 Harrington, Patricia 9:00 am Katmai Room
 Hirschfeld, Corson 10:00 am Susitna Room
 McCown, Marjorie 9:30 am Katmai Room
 Reynolds, Brad 11:00 am Katmai Room
 Rust, Megan 11:00 am Susitna Room
 Schiller, Gerald 10:45 am King Salmon Room
 Smith, M. Louise 9:00 am Susitna Room
 Straley, John 11:15 am King Salmon Room

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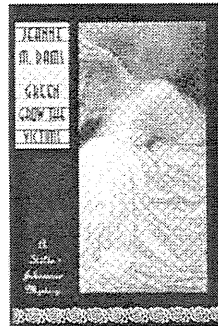
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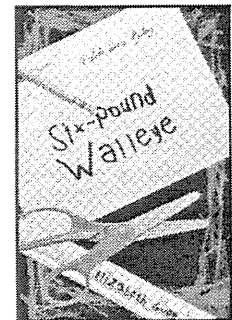
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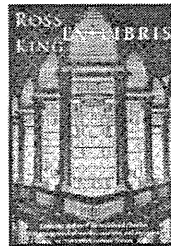
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continued from pg. 11

vest, coat and mackinaw were open, his hat was nearby and his revolver was later found a few feet from where he fell.

Questioned by doctors and U.S. marshals, Sturgus didn't name his killer. He complained of the pain and of the hospital light in his eyes, and kept asking to be turned over. Before doctors could operate, he died, without giving any indication of what had happened.

The Feb. 21, 1921, front-page story about the Sturgus shooting put forth a theory that "recent moonshine raids" were somehow connected to the death. Other theories printed were that someone with a grudge against Sturgus sought revenge, or that Sturgus was shot while staking out more moonshiners. The article also stated, incorrectly, that no powder burns were found on the body. And it theorized that Sturgus couldn't have been shot while standing up, due to the bullet's path: it entered the left breast at the nipple, passed through the seventh and eighth ribs, and moved downward to the fifth lumbar vertebrae to the right of the spine, fracturing no bones

but passing within one inch of the heart. The article theorized that Sturgus had fallen and struck his head, or that someone had stunned him with a blow before finishing him off with his own pistol.

"Indignation ran at fever heat last night and it is freely talked of organizing a vigilance committee to support the officers of the law in the effort to clean up Anchorage," the paper reported breathlessly. (It was never reported whether or not the vigilantes ever organized.) The coroner's inquest, two days after the murder, offered a few new facts. It corrected the misimpression about the presence of powder burns. The inquest also reported that the autopsy revealed no head or scalp trauma; that the chief's gun was found a few feet away, with one shell empty; that Sturgus had left his nightstick, handcuffs, money and papers at home that evening; that there were no signs of a struggle in the area; that no argument or cries for help were heard, and no one was seen fleeing the scene afterward. A few witnesses heard the gun go off, and one claimed to have seen the barrel flash at about the level of her eyes. A family friend said Sturgus had acted

"peculiarly" that day.

That wasn't much for the marshals to work with; the already-cold trail was growing colder. On Feb. 25, the Anchorage Times reported that "the federal department of justice is leaving nothing undone to unravel the mystery of the Sturgus case that still continues to baffle the energetic officers." Deputy Marshal Frank Hoffman and Deputy U.S. Marshal Clarence Mossman were "working on a systematic program in the effort to bring the required results. Nothing of a tangible nature has been discovered to date. The officers are determined to continue their search, and it is possible that some of the clues may lead to apprehension."

What were the leads? Were any potential suspects interviewed? The reporter apparently didn't press for details, and no details were offered. It could have been the fact that small-town newspapers were small-staffed, without the luxury of today's "investigative teams" to sniff out malfeasance. It could also have been the fact that even in its later years, the Anchorage Times was known as a paper that unashamedly boosted the progress of the city. Indeed, the newspaper's printing of phrases like "baffle the energetic officers" indicates that the Times was simply a mouthpiece, and that its publisher had no intention of asking embarrassing and unanswerable questions. (Just incidentally: Hoffman and Mossman were the two men named on Sturgus' death certificate as "persons who were acquainted with the decedent during his lifetime." That may have been because all were deputies together.) Was the investigation properly conducted? Well, Deputy U.S. Marshal Harry J. Schultz made one confusing statement about the case, and one that was an outright lie. In the March 8, 1921 edition of the Seattle Post-Intelligencer, Schultz said that the shot was heard by "50 persons in a moving picture show nearby." He also said that suicide had been ruled out because there were no powder burns on Sturgus' clothing. But at the coroner's inquest, witnesses said they were heading home from the first show when they heard the shot. In fact, one woman had already gotten home when the shooting took place. And there WERE powder burns, also confirmed by the coroner's inquest. Was Schultz confused? Misquoted? Or was he deliberately misleading the public? Did they ever intend to solve this case?

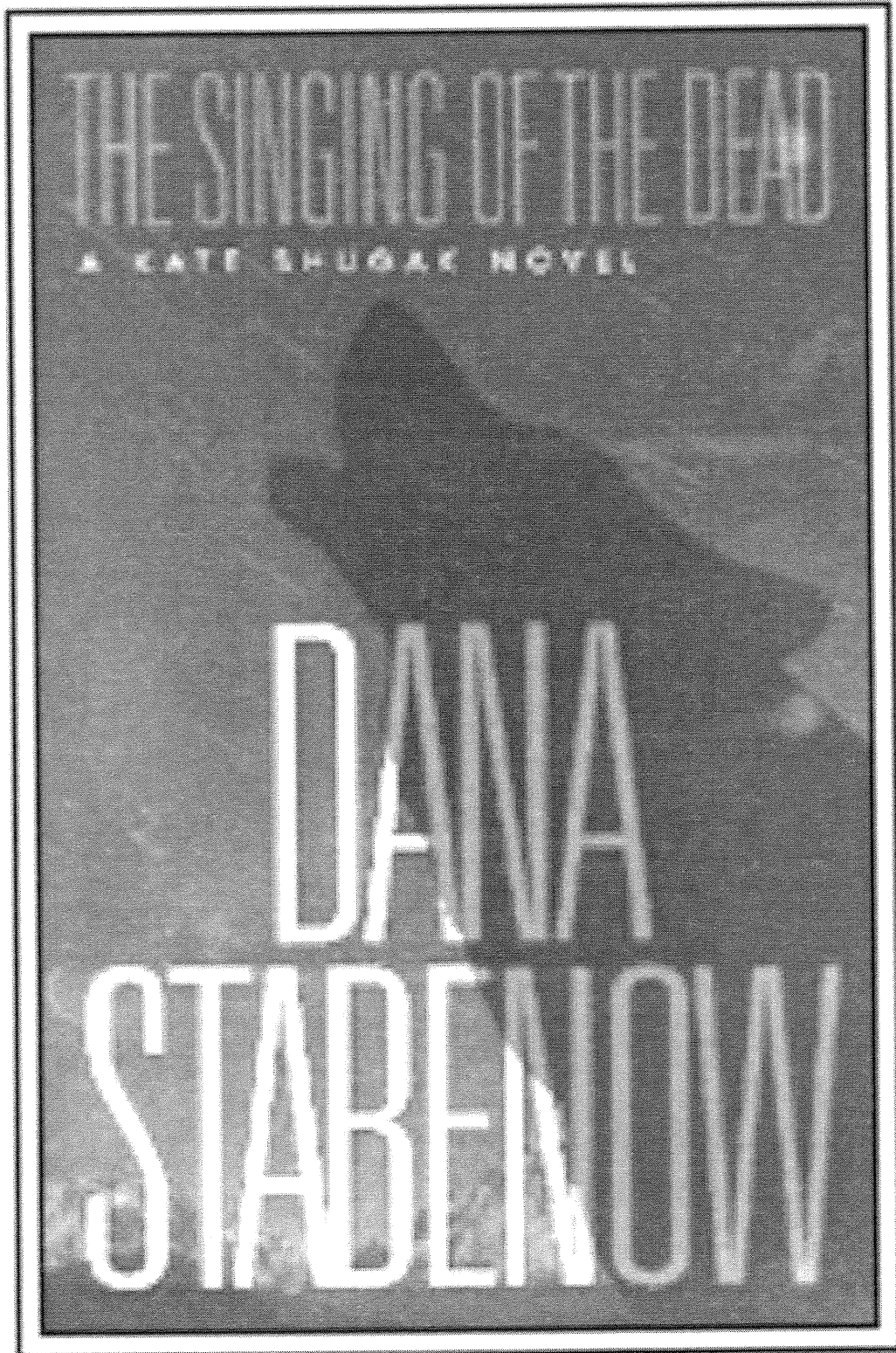


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continued on pg. 60

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Time	Aleutian Room	Alaska Room
9 a.m.	<p>New Kids on the Block Writers who've published their first book within the past twelve months debunk the myth of the overnight success. Moderator: Kate Grilley Panelists: K.J. Erickson, Christine Goff, Lorie Ham, M. Louise Smith</p>	<p>Who Died and Made You God? The fine art of reviewing detective fiction. Moderator: Adrian Muller Panelists: Robin Cerwonka, Peter Guttridge, Barrie Trinkle, Leslie Doran</p>
10 a.m.	<p>Michael Connelly Left Coast Crime's American Guest of Honor talks about the trouble with Harry.</p>	
11 a.m.	<p>So You're Digging Up King Tut, But You'd Rather Be Whooping it Up in the Malemute Saloon Authors of historical mysteries talk about the other eras they've always wanted to write in. Moderator: Diana Gabaldon Panelists: Anne Perry, Lindsey Davis, Sharan Newman, Sharon Kay Penman</p>	
1 p.m.	<p>Who Knew Death Could Be So Tasty? Noshing on murder can be hazardous to your health. Authors talk about food in the mystery novel. Moderator: Karen Anderson Panelists: Patricia Lunneborg, Bobbie Ryan, Gini Hartzmark, Jessica Speart</p>	<p>Where Did It All Go So Wrong? Minor characters insist on stealing center stage, your plotline unexpectedly becomes a cul-de-sac, the protagonist suddenly falls for the villain. Five writers' miseries love company. Moderator: Donna Andrews Panelists: Lyn Hamilton, Julie Wray Herman, Valerie Wolzien, Christine Andreae</p>
2 p.m.	<p>Wrapping it Up Writers never get to talk about how they come up with the twist at the end, because they might give it away to someone who might otherwise buy their book. Be warned, Spoilers Spoken Here! Moderator: Andi Shechter Panelists: Peter Guttridge, Martin J. Smith, Barbara Seranella, Brad Reynolds</p>	<p>BYOT, or Bring Your Own Tomatoes The only thing preventing your masterpiece from seeing print is that unsympathetic agent or that profit-driven publisher, right? Wrong. Hear agents and editors tell their side of the story. Moderator: Richard Thompson Panelists: Kelley Ragland, Sara Ann Freed, Laura Anne Gilman, Rich Henshaw</p>
3 p.m.	<p>Stop, Stop, You're Killing Me Here! or Just How Funny Is Murder, Anyway? Panelists discuss humor in the mystery. Moderator: Bill Fitzhugh Panelists: Linda Berry, Keith Snyder, Elizabeth Daniels Squire, Nathan Walpow</p>	<p>Naming No Names Booksellers have their own horror stories about authors who show up late, show up drunk, or just plain don't show. Moderator: Tom Schantz Panelists: Barbara Peters, Bill Farley, Enid Schantz, Maryelizabeth Hart</p>
4 p.m.	<p>Resolved: Sherlock Holmes Was the Worst Detective Who Never Lived – A Debate. Baker Street Irregulars, check your weapons at the door. Moderator: Barbara Burnett Smith Panelists: Diana Gabaldon, Gini Hartzmark, William Seil, Elizabeth Gunn</p>	

Saturday's Schedule

Time	Aleutian Room	Alaska Room	Dillingham Room
9 a.m.	<p>Freezing in the Dark Builds Character[s], or The Return of the Great Alaskan Roadshow. The home team steps up to talk about Carhartts, shotguns, and 55-gallon drums. Moderator: Dana Stabenow Panelists: John Straley, Sue Henry, Megan Rust, Brad Reynolds</p>	<p>The Sidekick Where would Holmes be without Watson? Nick without Nora? Kate without Mutt? Even a super-sleuth needs a sounding board. How essential is the sidekick in the mystery novel? Moderator: Victoria Houston Panelists: Barbara Burnett Smith, Raymond Derouin, Marjorie McCown, Christine T. Jorgensen</p>	<p>Call of the Weird Mike Doogan, columnist for the Anchorage Daily News, discusses some of the strange things – and there are a lot of them – that happen in the 49th state.</p>
10 a.m.	<p>Lindsey Davis For Left Coast Crime's British Guest of Honour, all roads lead to Rome. In 73 AD, no less.</p>		
11 a.m.	<p>A Kinder, Gentler Murder Into every cozy a little corpse must fall. Cozy authors discuss ways to kill with kindness. Moderator: Rhys Bowen Panelists: Meg Chittenden, Carole Epstein, Marianne Macdonald, Aileen Schumacher</p>	<p>Crime Scene - Do Not Cross, or Why Does Ed McBain Include All Those Incident Report Forms In His Books? Police procedurals provide the reader with a front-line look at the details of the crime, but how much detail is too much? Moderator: Bob Randisi Panelists: Elizabeth Gunn, Ken Goddard, Peter Robinson, J.A. Jance</p>	<p>This Bud's for You The Matanuska-Susitna valley area is Alaska's premiere agricultural site. We're talking ninety-pound cabbages and zucchini as big as The Rock's right arm. But the area has another bumper crop: marijuana. Hear about the Alaska State Troopers' Statewide Drug Enforcement Unit and how they're fighting the pot farmers, some of whom show considerable ingenuity in producing their crop and dodging the law.</p>
1 p.m.	<p>I Won't Take the Fall for You "When a man's partner is killed," said Spade, "he's supposed to do something about it." Morality, ethics, and the modern detective. Moderator: S.J. Rozan Panelists: Michael Connelly, Ridley Pearson, Jan Burke, Sinclair Browning</p>	<p>Born to be Butchered, or The Perfect Corpse Writers are the gods of their universes, with the power of life and death over their characters. How do they choose their victims? Who should die, the nasty or the nice, and why? Moderator: Sharan Newman Panelists: Joyce Christmas, Ann Cleaves, Kent Braithwaite, Rex Burns</p>	<p>Animal/Human Tricks, Stupid and Not Larry Aumiller and Rick Sinnott are biologists for the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. Aumiller runs the McNeil River brown bear sanctuary and knows everything there is to know about the big bruins – including what part of a murder victim they'll eat first. Sinnott is the guy to call when you're attacked by a ninja owl, or a bear eats your pet bunnies. He also tells great stories about hapless hunters and other dumb humans.</p>
2 p.m.	<p>The Country House Murder Barbara Peters claims that Dana Stabenow's Killing Grounds is a country house murder. Dana demanded that she explain herself, and at the Left Coast Crime that is all Barbara's fault anyway, too. Moderator: Barbara Peters Panelists: Christine Andreae, Lyn Hamilton, Marianne Macdonald, Anne Perry</p>	<p>Sex and Sensibility How much sex is too much in a crime novel? How much isn't enough? Authors breathe heavily over their characters' love lives. Moderator: Lauren Henderson Panelists: Vicki Hendricks, Barbara Seranella, L.C. Hayden, Jessica Speart</p>	<p>Unnatural Death Charlene Doris, former coroner of the Third Judicial District, revisits her varied cases, including the missing dead guy who wasn't, and the man who burned his wife's body in their fireplace.</p>
3 p.m.	<p>Oh, Kill the Damn Dog Already You can kill off your detective, your detective's SO, your detective's sidekick, mother, or maiden aunt, but you'd better not touch the dog! Authors discuss pets in detective fiction. Moderator: Marie Loggia-Kee Panelists: Marcia Simpson, Denise Aalborg (Denise Dietz), Ed Mitchell, Corson Hirschfeld</p>	<p>What's That Rocket Scientist Doing Dead in My Bed? Crossover mysteries can combine murder, romance, fantasy, and even science fiction. Is there room for that many genres in one novel? Authors who have done it and lived to tell the tale tell how. Moderator: Christine Matthews Panelists: Linda Randall Wisdom, Shawna Delacorte, Burl Barer, Jeffrey Mariotte</p>	<p>Iditarod Tales Libby Riddles, the first woman to win the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race, didn't encounter murder on the Iditarod Trail, but she faced great personal danger as well as the exhilaration of victory. She'll talk about the history of dog mushing, how she got started in it, and the Last Great Race itself – and she'll bring a sled dog for show-and-tell.</p>
4 p.m.	<p>Resolved: Miss Marple Should Have Married – A Debate Should she have? Why? Moderator: Julie Wray Herman Panelists: Anne Perry, Lauren Henderson, Joyce Christmas, Linda Berry</p>		<p>How Alaskans Kill Robert J. Shem of the Alaska Scientific Crime Detection Laboratory is Alaska's only firearm and toolmark examiner. Translation: He can tell a .357 casing from a .38, identify which knife killed a stabbing victim, and find a gun's serial numbers, even after they've been scratched off.</p>

Saturday's Schedule, continued

Time	Aleutian Room	Alaska Room	Dillingham Room
5 p.m.			<p>Unsolved After Eighty Years Research historian Doug Beckstead works for the National Park Service, but has long-time interests and training in law enforcement. That's why the Anchorage Police Department asked him to investigate the still-unsolved 1921 murder of Anchorage Police Chief John Sturgus.</p>

Sunday's Schedule

Time	Dillingham Room
9 a.m.	<p>Alternative Publishing Ebooks, Audio Books, Print-on-Demand Books—it's a whole new world out there, folks. Moderator: Hal Glatzer Panelists: Maria Swan, Marilyn Meredith, Dr. Jeri Fink, Serita Stevens</p>
10 a.m.	<p>Author Websites Marketing Marvel or Time Sink? Five authors discuss their websites, how and why they were created, and how well they work. Moderator: Ken Goddard Panelists: Meg Chittenden, Bill Fitzhugh, Sharon Kay Penman, Lauren Henderson</p>
11 a.m.	<p>Researching the Mystery Where do you start? How much research is enough? When do you stop researching and start writing? Authors talk about the genesis of the mystery novel. Moderator: C.J. Songer Panelists: Carol Caverly, Riley St. James, Larry Karp, Judith Andrews Green</p>

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Thank you to all the LCC2001 panelists for taking time from their hectic lives to provide their photos, bios and Sturgus solutions to this publication.

The following pages contain biographies of the participating panelists and their solutions to our Sturgus mystery.

Panelists	pages 28 to 58
Alaska Panelists	pages 59 to 60



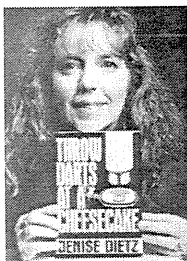
The solutions to the death of early Anchorage Chief of Police Sturgus are offered in the spirit of solving fictional mysteries. These solutions are not intended to be evidence of any actual events or to reflect on the guilt or innocence of anyone, deceased or living.

DENISE AALBORG (DENISE DIETZ)

A memo from Hitchcock the Dog quoted an article from the Anchorage Daily Times, dated Feb. 21, 1921. Deni was reading about John Sturgus, chief of police, who was shot and killed on Feb. 20, 1921. The case baffled Anchorage officers, and a jury came to the conclusion that John's death was caused by unknown parties. "Hey, wouldn't that make a great book?" Deni mused out loud. "If I could only figure out whodunit." Well, I've got the advantage, admittedly a dog's advantage, of having among my ancestors an Alaskan Husky. And the mystery of John's death has been passed down from generation to generation. I'm part Great Dane, part Setter, part Lab (and maybe Husky, who knows?) Had I been a pedigreed mutt ... but I digress. John Sturgus was shot because of a wager. Clarence Mossman was wrong when he testified that John wasn't laboring under any mental stress. Sturgus, who bet on the Feb. 12th Westminster Kennel Club dog show, was obsessing. True, the Husky-from-Anchorage should have taken best-in-show, but it went to a cocker spaniel, Ch. Midkiff Seductive, also known as "Bubba." And when Wm. Hunt heard John's dying words, John wasn't saying, "Bobby, Bobby, Bobby." He was groaning, "Bubba, Bubba, Bubbbbbbbbeeee ..." John might have been able to pay off his bet, except he owed Ma Baxter a hefty sum for her ... shall we say favors? Wuff! That Ma was one heck of a good-lookin' bitch. So, in order to pay Mossman, John borrowed money from a loan shark, and the loan shark's henchman, Rocky Balboa, shot Sturgus when no payment was forthcoming.

Denise Dietz, who recently moved to Sidney, BC, is the author of *Footprints in the Butter* -- an Ingrid Beaumont Mystery co-starring Hitchcock the Dog. Deni's LCC panel is "Oh, Kill the Damn Dog Already." Jackie Robinson, the black Persian in Deni's other mystery series (*Throw Darts at a Cheesecake* and *Beat Up a Cookie*) thinks the panel's name is purr-fect.

Email: deni@coastnet.com.



KAREN G. ANDERSON

reviews crime fiction and writes about mystery subgenres for January Magazine online, in addition to writing about the internet for Apple's iReview webzine and freelancing for land-based publications including Seattle Magazine. She has moderated crime fiction panels at Northwest Bookfest and is at work on a nonfiction guide to Northwest mysteries. She is married to Seattle trial attorney Brady R. Johnson and, when not reading and writing, likes to dance, garden, cook, decorate the bungalow and hang out with their wonderful but not very mysterious cats. Favorite mysteries: Enlightened police procedurals by Arthur Upfield, K.C. Constantine, and Reginald Hill. Favorite mystery quote: "All books are mysteries till you've finished the last page." (From *Sam the Cat Detective*, by Linda Stewart.) Karen's theory about the 1921 murder of Anchorage Police Chief Jack Sturgus: A time-travel experiment gone horribly wrong. Chief Sturgus was confronted by visitors from the future. He attempted to apprehend the strange-looking interlopers, and a misunderstanding occurred. They panicked, using the chief's own weapon to murder him and taking his second gun with them as a souvenir when they made their hurried escape. (This would explain why many witnesses heard a shot or saw a flash, but saw no evidence of anyone leaving the scene). Sure that no one would believe a story about oddly dressed "aliens" who attacked him and vanished, the stoic chief said nothing, preferring to die with his reputation intact.

CHRISTINE ANDREAE



and selected by the Washington Post's Book World as a pick-of-year mystery. The story is an "extreme adventure" centering around



a monumental Western wildfire: The first female "fire general" in the business finds herself up against a raging superfire, sexism on the job, arson, murder and a psychopathic teammate. Christine received her BA from Manhattanville College and her MAT from Yale. She is an active hospice volunteer whose non-fiction account of her work with hospice patients, *When Evening Comes*, was released last fall. She and her husband live in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia and are currently leading a battle to prevent the state Department of Transportation from building a new truck route through a scenic section of the valley. As for the 1921 death of Chief Sturgus in Anchorage, Christine comments: "Never mind the book; the movie will be called *Who Shot the Sheriff* with Clint Eastwood as the manic-depressive sheriff, Judi Dench as his long-suffering alcoholic wife, Drew Barrymore as his soiled dove girlfriend (prostitute with the heart of gold), William H. Macy (Fargo) as the evil mine owner and Brandon Lee as the Chinese laundryman/amateur sleuth. Directed by Robert Altman. Darkly lit, closely shot. Stunning kung fu sequences. Score by Eric Clapton. Five stars. Can't wait to see it!"

DONNA ANDREWS

"I'm the only man alive knows who shot Jack Sturgus," Great Uncle Jacob wheezed. Having already heard about Amelia Earhart's fate, Jack the Ripper's identity, and the whereabouts of a billion in Nazi gold, I smiled politely. Dad, the mystery buff, took the bait. "Shot?" Dad asked. "Who's Jack Sturgus?" "First Alaska police chief. They shot him down like a dog. Feb. 20, 1921. He spoke to the doctors before he died -- never told who shot him." "Why not?" "Didn't dare." I did some quick mental math. To my surprise, I realized he could have been in Alaska in 1921. I could usually disprove his stories on circumstantial evidence -- luckily, since no one wanted another fiasco like the summer he and Dad went digging for pirate treasure. "But you know something?" Dad asked. Uncle Jacob pulled out a battered pocket watch. "Got the



bullet that killed him. Came from his own gun. And -- “ Just as he handed it to Dad, age and tequila finally won out, and he dozed off in mid-sentence. Thank goodness. Another minute and he’d be hauling Dad off to Alaska on some 80-year-old wild goose chase. “Meg,” Dad said, holding up the glittering object attached to the watch. “This bullet’s made of solid silver.” “Dad, no,” I said. “Not Alaska. Not in February.” Too late. He was already phoning a travel agent cousin. (Meg and her Dad appear in *Murder with Peacocks* and *Murder with Puffins* by Donna Andrews).

Donna Andrews was born in Yorktown, Virginia, the setting of her first book, *Murder with Peacocks*, and attended the University of Virginia. She now lives in Arlington, Virginia and works in Reston. When not writing fiction, Andrews is a self-confessed nerd, rarely found without her laptop. In her day job, she works on a large corporate website. She is a member of Sisters in Crime, Mystery Writers of America, and Washington Independent Writers. *Murder with Peacocks* has received four national mystery awards: *The Agatha Award for Best First Mystery of 1999. The Agatha Awards are selected by attendees at Malice Domestic, a mystery convention held annually in the Washington, D.C. area. *The Anthony Award for Best First Mystery of 1999. The Anthony Awards are selected by attendees at Bouchercon, the nation’s largest annual mystery convention, held this year in Denver, Colorado. *The Barry Award for Best First Mystery of 1999. The Barry Awards are selected by the readers of *Deadly Pleasures*, an award-winning mystery magazine. *The Lefty Award for the Funniest Mystery of 1999. The Lefty Awards are selected by attendees at Left Coast Crime, a mystery convention held annually in the western half of the country. *Murder with Peacocks* was also a runner-up for the Macavity Award for Best First Mystery, selected by subscribers of *Mystery Readers International*, and the Dilys Award, selected by the members of the Independent Mystery Booksellers Association to honor the book they most enjoyed selling during the year. Winner of the 1998 Malice Domestic/St. Martin’s Press Best First Traditional Mystery contest, *Murder with Peacocks* was published in January 1999 by St. Martins Press and is now available in paperback from St. Martins/Minotaur. St. Martins also released the sequel, *Murder with Puffins*, in May 2000 and will publish the third in the series, *Murder with*

Wrought Iron Flamingos, in 2001. Andrews has a second series coming out from Berkeley Prime Crime in 2001. The protagonist of the yet-untitled book is an artificial intelligence personality living in a large corporate computer, and when the programmer who created her disappears, she decides to play sleuth.

BURL BARER

is an Edgar Award winning author and two-time Anthony Award nominee with extensive media, advertising, marketing, and public relations experience. Garnering accolades for his creative contributions to radio, television, and print media, Barer has seen his career highlighted in *The Hollywood Reporter*, *London Sunday Telegraph*, *New York Times*, *USA Today*, *Variety*, *Broadcasting*, *Electronic Media*, and *ABC’s Good Morning America*. Barer wrote, produced, and often voiced national radio and television spots for such performing artists as Neil Diamond, Bob Dylan, Frank Sinatra, Billy Joel, Carly Simon, Eric Clapton, Moody Blues, Fleetwood Mac, Liza Minnelli, Temptations, Four Tops, and many more. Barer also created and produced national radio and/or television campaigns for Warner/Electra/Atlantic, Media One, Management III, and Seattle Pacific Industries. Other national/regional clients have included Penzoil, Safeway, Superlube, Black Angus Restaurants, the Aladdin Theater for the Performing Arts, and the Sahara Hotel in Las Vegas. Barer wrote and produced the national electronic media campaigns for such cult classic films as *King of Hearts*, *Harold and Maude*, *Ken Russell’s Mahler*, *Orson Welles’ F for Fake*, *The Four Musketeers*, Academy Award winner *The Man who Skied Down Everest*, and the animated *Allegro Non Troppo*. His credits also include audio production for the award winning PBS series *Images of Indians*, *20th Century Art*, *Stained Glass Masters*, and numerous television appearances. Most recently, Barer was featured with author Tom Robbins in the syndicated documentary, *Surrealism*. In the early 1980’s, Barer established the largest independent multi-system cable television advertising



interconnect in America -- now owned and operated by AT&T. In addition to overseeing a staff of sixteen sales, marketing, and production professionals, Barer wrote and directed hundreds of television commercials for local and national markets. A recipient of the Tri-Cities Advertising Federation Award for both radio (1985) and television (1987), Barer also received the Seattle Design Association’s Gold Award for Writing (1983), the Award of Merit from *Art Direction Magazine* (1983), and the Bob Willey Creative Award for Outstanding Radio Production (1971). While Barer contributed his media savvy to numerous publications and projects over the years, it was his internationally acclaimed 442-page critical/biographical study of Leslie Charteris’ enduringly different Robin Hood of Modern Crime, *Simon Templar*, which earned him the highest honor from the Mystery Writers of America -- The 1994 Edgar Allen Poe Award. *The Saint: A Complete History in Print, Radio, Television, and Film* not only received the Edgar, but also an Anthony Award nomination from the World Mystery Convention. Contracted by the estate of Leslie Charteris to pen a minimum of three new novels in the popular Saint series, Barer completed *Capture the Saint*, the first original Saint novel in 13 years. Film rights to the previous 52 Saint books were acquired by producer Robert Evans. Paramount Pictures released *The Saint*, starring Val Kilmer, in 1997. Barer’s novelization of the film’s screenplay, *The Saint*, published by Simon and Schuster Pocketbooks, has sold over 100,000 copies in English, and has been translated into French, Japanese, Hebrew, Chinese, and German. At the request of Warner Brothers, Barer accompanied Mel Gibson, James Garner, and Jodie Foster on the set of the hit film *Maverick*, writing the colorful companion book to that rollicking, uproarious Western. *Man Overboard: The Counterfeit Resurrection of Phil Champagne* (1995), a wry and humorous genre-bending true crime adventure, earned a nomination for the coveted Anthony Award by the World Mystery Convention as Best True Crime Book of the Year.

Barer’s *Headlock*, the first novel in a new private eye series, was released in August 2000 by *Deadly Alibi Press*. Kensington Publishing released his latest non-fiction book, *Murder In The Family*, in August 2000

as part of their Pinnacle True Crime series. He is currently writing another true crime for Pinnacle, based on the St. Pierre murders in Tacoma, Washington.



LINDA BERRY

Although Anchorage, Alaska, and Ogeechee, Georgia, are about as far apart as you can get in the U.S., police officer Trudy Roundtree says small

towns and their newspapers are more alike than different. The newspaper doesn't add much to what everybody already knows and it doesn't report what is common knowledge. (For instance, was Mrs. Larson, Mrs. Baxter, or Mrs. Sturgus named Roberta?) Trudy thinks the murder was committed by someone in the Baxter-Larson family. Unless other witnesses are lying, Sturgus was dying when they say they talked with him "around 9:15," and Sturgus' body was lying at the bottom of the stairs when Mrs. Baxter says she left the apartment sometime later to go looking for him. Nobody saw a disturbance in the alley, which suggests the shooter was someone Sturgus knew, and who could retreat up the stairs. Mrs. Baxter has a past -- a son by someone other than her present husband -- and she may have killed (or colluded in his murder -- where was Mr. Baxter around 9:15 p.m.?) in order to protect someone in her family from an ambitious (lecherous? corrupt?) new sheriff. Trudy thinks the community knew or suspected the truth but was sympathetic to the killer(s). Mrs. Baxter's son even served on the jury! (I live in a suburb of Denver, so I'll take Trudy's word about small towns.)

Investigations by Trudy and her cousin, Chief of Police Henry Huckabee, are detailed in **Linda Berry's** *Death and the Easter Bunny* and *Death and the Hubcap*.

DIANE JAY BOUCHARD comes from a varied background which includes nursing, bullfighting, sports car racing, flamenco gypsies, and being a tennis umpire for the men's professional circuit. Some of her hobbies range from white water rafting, sailing, and growing orchids to serving two years on the 1984



Olympic Committee as a tennis player and umpire. She earned two Olympic medals for outstanding service. Diane, a confessed forensic science devotee, also has served two years as the vice-president of Sisters in Crime/Los Angeles and president from 1998-2002. Diane is the author of nonfiction magazine and newspaper articles as well as coeditor of *DESSERTICIDE II AKA Just Desserts and Deathly Advice*. The book is a collection of delectable desserts, tongue-in-cheek advice for the would-be-murderer and true crime lab short stories from local criminalists. Always busy, Diane is working currently on a series set in the Caribbean and a mystery appetizer book.

As far as the Anchorage murder of Police Chief Sturgus goes, I think it wouldn't be beneficial for Diane to tell you the killer's name at this point in time. If you buy a copy of *DESSERTICIDE II* you'll find humorous forensic science sections on alibis, autopsy, disposing of the body, dying declarations, effective lying, evidence, and a recipe for a frame, the usual suspects and the creation of a perfect murder. Put on a clever criminalist's hat, see how it was done and solve it yourself, then go make a fabulous dessert from the cookbook with killer calories.



RHYS BOWEN

"Surely you're not still working, Mr. Evans?" my landlady, Mrs. Williams, called down the stairs. "It's past ten o'clock." "It's this old newspaper cutting, Mrs. Williams. A

policeman killed in Alaska back in the 1920's." "Alaska," she sniffed. "No wonder. Those heathen foreigners are always killing each other, aren't they?" "This case is frustrating," I said. "There's not enough to go on. They don't mention fingerprints on the gun, the range he was shot from, whether he was involved in an important case. Also they don't tell us who Bobby might have been -- almost the last words he uttered." "Usually it's some woman involved," she sniffed. "You may be right. Three different women were seen near the body. No signs of a scuffle. Nobody running away. What I think is that he was having an affair with one of the women, probably Mrs. Baxter. He wanted to end it and told her so that afternoon. She lured him to the alley - we

know he came out in a hurry because he left his money and papers at home - embraced him and got her hand on his gun. Then she shot him at close range. I'd love to know if her name was Roberta!" "I'd ask Rhys Bowen to help if I were you," Mrs. Williams said. "She's come up with a few good ideas, hasn't she? And her mother was Welsh, even if she was born in England." "Yes, but she lives in California now. I can't phone her in the middle of the night. And besides, she's working on that new series. She'll be busy." "A new series - she's not deserting the Constable Evans books, surely?" "No, she'd never do that. In fact, there's a new book out this month, *Evan Can Wait*. Everyone is saying it's bigger and better than the others too. But she got this idea, about an Irish immigrant girl on Ellis Island, and the first in that series will be out in time for Bouchercon, so she tells me." "Deed to Goodness," Mrs. Williams sighed. "That poor woman is working herself to death, running around the country signing books as well. She needs a good holiday in Wales!" **Rhys Bowen** is the author of the Constable Evans series; the fifth, *Evan Can Wait*, is due to be published by St. Martin's Press/Minotaur in February, 2001. Her web site is www.rhysbowen.com.

KENT BRAITHWAITE

"It was a death below zero." My voice was flatter than the world before Magellan went sailing. I handed my copy of the Anchorage Daily Times to Ralph Malcolm and crossed the deck to the decorative iron fence that separated my beach front home from the rest of the known world. "Comprende?" "Jesse Ascencio, never open a mystery with the weather," Heather said, joining me. My wife was as beautiful as I could imagine and then some. Blonde and tanned, she remained, even in her forties, a California girl on overload. "Remember the rules of mystery writing presented from the dais at the Denver Bouchercon and talked into their graves on DorothyL?" Together, we watched our children play in the ocean. Paul and Brittany were chasing Pyrite, our nondocumented Golden Retriever, through foaming whitecaps along the Costa Pacifica shore.

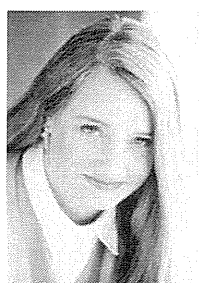


"Being a cop is dangerous business," Malc said from behind us. Huge and African-American, he knew his truth well. He was a lieutenant on the local force. Packing a badge and a gun, my best friend since tricycles was your ultimate nightmare for the traditional residents of Orange County, California—the historic home of Reagan Republicans and the John Birch Society. "Witnesses pegged the time of death, though there are still unanswered questions about the night of the murder. Chief Sturgus was also preoccupied with something earlier in the day. Whatever it was may have been connected to his killing." "The crime needs to be looked into." My eyes focused on the rugged and rocky shoreline of Catalina Island; 20-something miles across the sea, standing as permanent as anything ever did in Southern California. "Murders must be solved." "Suggestions for an investigator?" he asked. "I bet my husband has a certain Latino former FBI agent and ex-congressman in mind." Heather laced her fingers through mine. The Anglo daughter of coastal wealth, she had married me, the son of a barber and two generations removed from rural Mexico. "You, Jesse. Right?" "Perhaps eventually," I shrugged. "But I have to finish off the galleys for my second book of poetry first. I'll let **Kent Braithwaite** do the initial investigating." "The mystery author?" asked Malc. I nodded. "He's going to Anchorage for Left Coast Crime 2001." "An excellent choice," she agreed. "Kent Braithwaite is the author of *The Wonderland Murders*. The recently released mystery is Braithwaite's first novel. It marks the debut of Jesse Ascencio, a poetry-writing Latino private investigator. Braithwaite has published short stories, poetry, and nonfiction in a variety of markets since the early nineties, and he has been a professional educator for over twenty years. He lives in Southern California with his wife and three children, and to his utter shock, *The Wonderland Murders* debuted at number five on the Palm Springs bestseller list." "Before the convention," I added, "Kent will be traveling with his daughter Laura to Unalaska in the Aleutians as part of the Authors to the Bush program." "Laura?" she asked. "That precocious 10-year-old with the orange bookmarks?" "Uh-huh." "She reminds me of our Brittany." Malc guffawed. "She reminds a lot of people of Brittany."

SINCLAIR BROWNING

Sturgus shot in heart/undersheriff did his part/Bobby, weren't you smart? Well, maybe at least the meter's right ... **Sinclair Browning** obviously knows squat about Alaskan murders or writing Haiku,

however, she does know southern Arizona and that's where her mystery series is set. Featuring a female P.I., Trade Ellis, who owns a ranch, the books are pierced with more desert detail than a pack rat in prickly pear. The first book in the series, *The Last Song Dogs*, was nominated last year for Best Original Paperback for a Shamus Award (Private Eye Writers of America) and a Barry Award. Her second mystery, *The Sporting Club*, features chilling racist murders that are based on a still-open case in Pima County. All of the victims in the book, along with a grisly souvenir, are as the woman who witnessed the murders remembers them. *Rode Hard, Put Away Dead* makes its debut this month right here at Left Coast Crime. One of five nominees for the 2000 Arizona Arts Award, Browning lives with her husband outside Tucson where she still breaks her own horses and rounds up cattle.



JAN BURKE

Few realized that Sturgus was really not a policeman at all -- he was, in fact, a mystery novelist and short story writer who was facing multiple deadlines. Recent searches through Alaskan

archives have led to the discovery that Stugus died with a document clutched in his hand -- a request sent to him by his sisters, asking him to come up with a clever solution to a long-ago, tragic murder. Simply unable to face the pressure, Sturgus shot himself in a wild attempt to be his own red herring.

Jan Burke won the Edgar Allan Poe Award for Best Novel -- for *Bones*, the seventh installment in her series featuring journalist Irene Kelly. Her short stories have received the Macavity and the Ellery Queen Mystery Magazine Readers Award. Her newest book, *Flight*, offers her readers something new -- it's told primarily from the perspective of

Irene's husband, homicide detective Frank Harriman. Burke is the president of the Southern California Chapter of Mystery Writers of America and serves on the national board of MWA.

REX BURNS

is author of numerous books, articles, reviews, and stories. The first in his series of police procedurals, *The Alvarez Journal*, won an Edgar and introduced Gabriel Villanueva Wager, homicide detective in



the Denver Police Department. It was through his connection with the Denver Police that Burns met Chief John J. Sturgus of the Anchorage Police. Later, *The Avenging Angel* was made into a feature movie starring Charles Bronson. With *Suicide Season*, Burns introduced Devlin Kirk, a Denver private detective specializing in industrial security. The 13th Gabe Wager yarn, *The Leaning Land*, published by Walker and Co. in 1997, takes Gabe Wager to a Ute Indian reservation on Colorado's Western Slope. For several years Burns wrote monthly mystery book review columns for the Rocky Mountain News. Other reviews have appeared in the Denver Post, the Miami Herald, and the Washington Post. A number of his essays on American literature are in scholarly publications, and he offers advice on writing in popular periodicals such as *The Writer*. He is a contributor to Scribner's *Mystery and Suspense Writers*, and an advisor and contributor to the *Oxford Companion to Mystery*. Chief Sturgus' cousin, an Oxford Press editor, informed Burns of the Chief's untimely death and forwarded a hastily written letter. Burns is co-editor, with Mary Rose Sullivan, of an anthology of detective stories entitled *Crime Classics* and has published *When Reason Sleeps*, a novel, under the pen name "Tom Sehler." Chief Sturgus, in his letter, requested that this pseudonym be used to reveal the truth in the event an innocent party was accused of his murder. The letter expressed the desire to shield the reputation of the well-known owner of an Anchorage hotel as well as her young son Bobby, prior to that widow's forthcoming marriage to a wealthy miner. It noted that the insurance settlement -- naming

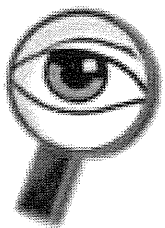
Sturgus' wife beneficiary -- would be forfeit should he die a suicide. And it confessed Sturgus' broken heart that the mother of his child planned to re-marry and keep her hotel rather than to elope with Sturgus to Attu. Further details may be obtained from Sehler via Burns, who lives and writes in Boulder, Colorado. His books may be found in stores as well at Amazon.com.

CAROL CAVERLY

is the author of the Thea Barlow Wyoming mystery series, *All the Old Lions*, *Frogskin and Muttonfat*, and the newly released *Dead in Hog Heaven*. All of them have been chosen as selections of the Detective Book Club. Caverly also writes short stories. The latest appeared in the anthology, *Homicide Host Presents*, Write Way, 1996. Though now living in Colorado Springs, Colorado, Carol uses her extensive background of Wyoming ranch living for the settings of her mysteries. She is also a collection development librarian responsible for selecting juvenile literature for the Aurora (Colorado) Public Library.



ROBIN CERWONKA is a freelance writer, editor, proofreader, word processor, and catsitter. She is a regular contributor to The Bloomsbury Review, a nationally distributed book and author information magazine. She moved to Alaska in August 2000 and has no idea what's going on.



MARGARET "MEG" CHITTENDEN



"What's happenin', Charlie?" Zack Hunter asked, settling his cowboy hat at its sexiest angle. He was leaning in the doorway of the office at CHAPS, their

Country-Western nightclub on the San Francisco Peninsula. Charlie Plato handed the paper she'd been reading across her desk. "The Left Coast Crime people want us to figure out who killed the guy in this newspaper account of

an unsolved murder in Anchorage, Alaska in 1921. I'm not sure Meg would approve of us doing it." "Meg?" Zack queried. Charlie sighed. "Margaret Chittenden, our employer. Lives in Washington State. Created the Charlie Plato mystery series, including this tavern." "Nightclub," Zack corrected. "You ever notice she failed to mention my name in the title?" "Meg says women sleuths sell better," Charlie said. "She ought to know -- she's been writing 30 years -- published 334 books, one kind or another. Plus a hundred short stories and articles, and a book on how to write." Zack scanned the article, his mouth moving slightly. Charlie wished just one time she could look at him without getting a Whomp! in her inner parts. "Downright obvious who did it," Zack said. "Nothing to it," Charlie agreed. "Soon as you figure out motive, means, and opportunity." "Don't forget the time clue." "All the same," Charlie said, "If we start solving crimes for other people, Meg's liable to be miffed. She might close us down." Zack paled and dropped the paper on the desk. "How about you write to the Alaska folks, tell 'em we're exclusive sleuths. We only work for Margaret Chittenden." Charlie smiled as she booted up the computer. No doubt about it, Zack was as clueless as she was. (Respectfully submitted, as overheard, by Margaret [Meg] Chittenden.)

Award-winning mystery author **Margaret Chittenden** has been writing for 30 years, producing short stories (one of which won the Anthony Award for best short story of 1999), articles, three children's books, and 30 novels, which span many genres: mystery and suspense, romance, occult, and mainstream. Meg is currently working on a series of mystery novels featuring sleuth Charlie Plato. The first five in this series (published by Kensington) are *Dying to Sing*, *Dead Men Don't Dance*, *Dead Beat and Deadly*, *Don't Forget to Die*, and the most recent, *Dying to See You*. She shares her experience and techniques in *How to Write YOUR Novel* (published by The Writer, Inc.). Meg is a popular lecturer at writers' conferences, mystery conventions and other literary gatherings, including several online. She writes a regular column, "Between the Covers," for *Murderous Intent Mystery Magazine*. She invites you to visit her website at www.mchittenden.com.

JOYCE CHRISTMAS

The entire population of Anchorage was involved in the murder of Chief Sturgus. They were all at "the first show." (Simply everybody was there.) They met at the concession stand to get their stories straight. The chief "acted peculiarly" when he made a friendly visit to the Baxter family, did he? Spent a lot of time at the Baxter Newsstand? Was shot near the Kyvig Building where the Baxters lived? Everybody in town testified to something at the inquest, but who actually pulled the trigger? Mrs. Henry Baxter, perhaps? From the gossip making the rounds it was common knowledge that something was going on between the chief and Mrs. Baxter. When things went sour, she had to shoot him. (I know about gossip, trust me. People talk and people listen, and the story gets better with every telling.) Imagine the conversation around the stove at the general store: "The chief and Ma Baxter still melting the snow at the Kyvig Building?" "That's what they're saying. I'm surprised we haven't seen them together at the early show." "Henry would be wild. Ma's gonna have to break it off sooner or later." "My wife says Ma's carrying a gun." "Well, my wife heard ... " And that's just the men talking. Mrs. Baxter was clearly a beloved figure (they called her "Ma", after all), so to save her, they muddled the snowdrifts around the body, put her son-in-law on the inquest jury, and she went back to the newsstand. If the Anchorage coroner had been hanging around that stove, he would have known the truth about the murder.

Joyce Christmas's 14 mysteries involve a lot of gossip -- big city society gossip in the Lady Margaret Priam mysteries, small town gossip in the Betty Trenka series. In her most recent book, *A Better Class of Murder*, Betty and Lady Margaret join forces to solve a crime.



Looking Back - June 6, 1912. Darkness fell for three days on the Alaska Peninsula when the volcano named Mount Novarupta erupted, spewing 6 cubic miles of earth into the sky. Nearly 2 feet of ash fell on Kodiak, collapsing buildings and polluting water supplies.

ANN CLEEVES

Chief Sturgus committed suicide. That's obvious. Witnesses heard the shot, but no one was seen running away. There was no evidence of struggle. The chief

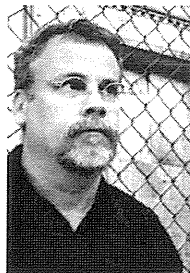


was killed by his own gun, after all, and when the doctors asked who had killed him, he remained silent. Much more interesting to me is *why* Sturgus killed himself and why the community colluded in the pretense that he was murdered. This can perhaps be answered by the police chief's popularity. There was a genuine respect in the town for Sturgus. He was a just and honorable man. And in his honor lies a clue to his suicide. Deputy Mossman testified that Sturgus had no troubles other than the usual affairs connected with the life of an officer. In my opinion it was an affair of adultery, rather than an affair of office which led to his death. The object of his affection was Mrs. Baxter's daughter-in-law, Mrs. Larson. She was young and resented the interference of the relative who lived next door. Mrs. Baxter even insisted on accompanying the couple to the show that night. Hardly surprising that Mrs. Larson was attracted to an authoritative older man. Hardly surprising that in a closed community rumors spread. Hardly surprising that Sturgus decided to take the honorable way out. Of course there are still questions. What happened to the second gun? Did Lyle Larson -- who was also a juror in the case -- know what had been going on between Sturgus and his wife? Did he persuade the jury to return the verdict of unlawful death to protect her reputation? I enjoy ambiguity in a story and hope these questions remain unanswered.

This is a tale I could have written. My mysteries are set in small communities -- not the rural idylls of Christie, but the former pit villages of Northumberland, the wildest of the English counties. I'm interested in the petty jealousies and hypocrisies which can lead to violence. Perhaps an obsession with *why* rather than *who* is inevitable. I trained as a social worker and worked as a probation officer. In my new environmental thriller, *The Crow Trap*, the domestic details are still important. It's reassuring that even in the huge landscape of Alaska, individual relationships fire the story.

MICHAEL CONNELLY

decided to become a writer after discovering the books of Raymond Chandler while attending the University of Florida. Once he decided on this direction he chose a major in journalism and a minor in creative writing -- a curriculum in which one of his teachers was novelist Harry Crews. After graduating in 1980, Connelly worked at newspapers in Daytona Beach and Fort Lauderdale, Florida, primarily specializing in the crime beat. In Fort Lauderdale he wrote about police and crime during the height of the murder and violence wave that rolled over South Florida during the so-called cocaine wars. In 1986 he and two other reporters spent several months interviewing survivors of a major airline crash. They wrote a magazine story on the crash and the survivors that was later short-listed for the Pulitzer Prize for feature writing. You can read this story at the Sun-Sentinel www.sun-sentinel.com/freetime/1025delta.htm web site. The magazine story also moved Connelly into the upper levels of journalism, landing him a job as a crime reporter for the Los Angeles Times, one of the largest papers in the country, and bringing him to the city of which his literary hero, Chandler, had written. After three years on the crime beat, Connelly began writing his first novel to feature LAPD Detective Hieronymus Bosch. The novel, *The Black Echo*, based in part on a true crime that had occurred in Los Angeles, was published in 1992 and later won the Edgar Award for best first novel by the Mystery Writers of America. Connelly followed up with three more Bosch books, *The Black Ice*, *The Concrete Blonde* and *The Last Coyote* before publishing *The Poet*, a thriller with a newspaper reporter as a protagonist, in 1996. In 1997 he went back to Bosch with *Trunk Music* and in 1998 another non-series thriller, *Blood Work*, was published. *Blood Work* was inspired in part by a friend's receiving of a heart transplant and the attendant "survivor's guilt" the friend experienced, knowing that someone had died in order that he have the chance to live. Connelly has been interested and fascinated by those same feelings as expressed by the survivors of the plane crash he wrote about years before. *Angels Flight*



was released in 1999 and brought back the Harry Bosch series. His latest book, *Void Moon*, was released in 2000, and introduced a new character, Cassie Black, a high-stakes Las Vegas thief. His next book, *A Darkness More Than Night*, unites Harry Bosch with Terry McCaleb from *Blood Work* and was released Jan. 23, 2001. Michael is also one of the creators, writers, and consulting producers of Level 9, a new TV show about a task force fighting cyber crime. It airs on the UPN network Friday nights at 9:00 p.m. (Check your local listings.) Connelly's books have won the Edgar, Anthony, Macavity, Nero, Maltese Falcon (Japan), .38 Caliber (France) and Grand Prix (France) awards. He lives in Los Angeles with his wife and daughter.

LINDSEY DAVIS

Due to a lost contact lens it has proved impossible to read the small print of the Anchorage Daily Times (even supposing a



curmudgeon in a solitary profession would tackle a communal project ...) But people may be interested in the attached fragment of a wooden tablet, recently excavated from an ancient rubbish tip on the Aventine Hill, Rome, Italy. Archaeologists interpret this as an informer, writing to an unknown friend about a commission he has declined:

... [first lines undecipherable]

Of course I can handle daft requests from earnest hopefuls. Hang a sign on the door saying "Gone to Lunch," then hide out on the balcony until they leave! Whole point of being freelance is to choose your work, do what suits your temperament and talent. I do nothing at Saturnalia. Jupiter, they want to assemble stooges from everywhere and let them all trample the evidence. I've worked in some mule dung, but I chose it and nobody else wanted it. That's my style. I work alone. I haven't been corralled into teamwork since the army. I gave that up precisely to avoid 'friendly' bullies setting me tasks that I hated, in inhospitable terrain. The location is my let out. Too far, too filthy cold -- and outside the empire. Thank you, gods! Incidentally, Lucius, it's a bunch of women. No mention of attractiveness, status, or wealth. (No mention of fees either!) Looks like a cult. I reckon I'll ... [rest

indecipherable]

Lindsey Davis is the author of 11 novels including *Two For the Lions* (Mysterious Press Mass Market; November 2000) and she is the recipient of the first Ellis Peters/British Crime Writer's Association Historical Mystery Dagger Award. She was born and raised in Birmingham, England. She read English at Oxford and then joined the civil service. Her first Marcus Didius Falco novel won the Author's Club Prize for Best First Novel and since then, the series has been translated into eight languages. Davis currently lives in Greenwich, England.

SHARON DENNISON writing as Shawna Delacorte

I write mystery and romance under the pseudonym Shawna Delacorte for Harlequin's Intrigue line and Silhouette's Desire line. I have just completed another Harlequin Intrigue but do not have a release date on it at this time. I have a straight mystery series in the works that I have not yet sold to a publisher. My next release is from Silhouette Desire, *Storm Bound With a Tycoon*, which is scheduled for release in March, 2001. I enjoy hearing from my readers and can be reached at 6505 E. Central #300, Wichita, KS 67206.



Chief Sturgus had a secret life that no one knew about. No one, that is, except his wife. Or at least she thought she knew about it. There was the young man who lived in the Kyvig Building whom Chief Sturgus would regularly visit, although she had never gotten a look at his face, and there was the photo of the young man she knew he always carried with him. The day of the murder his wife confronted him with what she believed. The Chief had been in turmoil, not knowing what to do. His initial response was to tell his wife she was imagining things. That night his wife followed him and saw him go to the young man's apartment. She waited outside and when he left, she confronted him. She had brought one of his guns with her and demanded the photograph. He unbuttoned his coat and the top two buttons of his vest, took the photograph from his shirt pocket and handed it to her. As soon as she got a good look at the young man's face the full impact of the truth hit her. In a rage she shot her husband. She hurried home and

destroyed the photograph -- the picture of a young man who looked exactly like his father ... a young man of no more than 20 years who was identified on the back of the picture as Bobby ... a son who had been born five years after she and Chief Sturgus had been married ... proof of his infidelity and betrayal of their marriage vows.

KATE DERIE

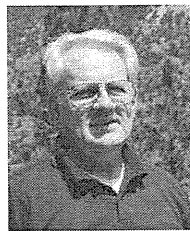


is a writer/editor/website designer/publisher, and **Clue Lass** (www.clueclass.com) is her screen alias. Kate lives in Berkeley, CA, with her husband and her Bernese Mountain Dog.

She heads Deadly Serious Press, which publishes the print edition of *The Deadly Directory*. DSP sponsors the Murder Must Advertise (www.MurderMustAdvertise.com) mailing list and the Independent Mystery Publishers (www.mysterypublishers.com) website. Kate is also the assistant editor of the Mystery Readers Journal (www.murderonthemenu.com/mystery/), and writes columns and articles for several mystery publications. She is a member of Sisters in Crime (www.sistersincrime.org) and Mystery Writers of America (www.mysterywriters.net).

RAY DEROUIN

Fred O'Connor, the irascible stepfather of retired police detective David Dean, couldn't pass a mystery bookstore without behaving like a kid on the last day of school. So when his Internet wanderings found the case of Chief Sturgus, Fred automatically slipped into his fictional detective mode and began badgering Dean and his wife. "It's as plain as a snowy-day polar bear in a wedding dress. The rent-a-cop did it!" "The night watchman McNutt?" Dean's wife Cynthia asked. "Why?" "He claims he didn't recognize Sturgus, a man he knew, who's lying face-up, and didn't realize the man was shot! Then he ups and leaves the victim! I'll bet he stole the second gun and wouldn't have even owned up to being in the alley if he didn't think someone saw him. And why didn't he hear the



gunshot? Everyone else did and they were further away!" Fred rocked back, a smug look on his face. "Why wouldn't Sturgus admit who shot him?" asked the ever-practical Cynthia. "What reason would he have to protect his killer?" Dean reluctantly responded, "Good question. Why?" He then proceeded to answer his own question. "Because he didn't know who shot him? That's out because he was shot from the front in a well-lighted alley. Because he was protecting his killer? You have to have pretty strong affection for someone to let them get away with killing you! His wife? Nothing puts her at the scene." "So?" Cynthia asked, pausing in her knitting to pat Mrs. Lincoln, the family cat, who joined the discussion, but added nothing. "He left all of his valuables at home. He seemed upset earlier in the day. No one was seen leaving the alley in spite of many witnesses. The gunshot was close range." The others waited for Dean to finish. "Sturgus killed himself," Dean said. "But that's just a guess," he added with a smile as he continued to peruse his Alaska travel brochures.

Ray Derouin has written a dozen plays, four of which were national award winners, among them, *Silver Bordman is Dead* and *In Defense of Willie T.* He now devotes his time to novels. *Time Trial* was published in 1999, followed in June 2000 by *San Juan Solution*, his second David Dean mystery, set in beautiful Ouray, Colorado. Derouin, who is a retired insurance company vice president, together with his wife and daughter, operate a toy store in Ouray and winter in Apache Junction, Arizona. He is currently at work on *Mountain Ice*, Dean's next case.

CAROLE EPSTEIN

"Well, this one's easy," I said. I was in my friend Joanne Cowan's den, helping her winnow old files. "What?" "This article on the murder of John Sturgus. Why is it here?" "Don't remember. Okay, genius, what did you figure out?" "Mrs. Baxter did it. She mentions seeing Sturgus acting peculiarly earlier. Of course. He and Mrs. Baxter were involved and she'd told him she had enough. She threatened to tell his wife. That was her intention when she went over there that night." "So where's the gun?" Susan asked. "Mrs. B. has it. The

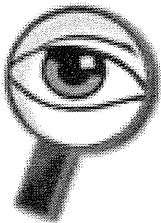


watchman said he thought Sturgus was drunk. Then she came along and shot him." "But why?" "It's freezing in February in Anchorage. A lot like here. She got tired of taking her clothes off. No fire because someone might see. He refused to disrobe and those guns were icy." "I still don't get why she killed him," Joanne said, now attentive. "That friendly visit to the family? More like date rape, only that hadn't been invented yet. She took one of his guns meaning to shoot him the next time he came, no pun intended, and saw her opportunity when she found him passed out." "You're missing a lot of details." "Not enough words allowed, so it'll have to do. An affair in Alaska in those days must have been a lot of work. All those layers." "But, Barbara, the candlelight and fire would make your skin glow."

Carole Epstein is the author of *Perilous Friends* and *Perilous Relations* featuring Barbara Simons and set in Montreal. *Perilous Consequences* will appear in 2002.

KJ ERICKSON

lives and writes in Minneapolis, Minnesota, which is the home base for the Mars Bahr mystery series. The first title in the series, *Third Person Singular*, was published by St. Martins Minotaur in January 2001. The second title in the series, also published by St. Martins, will be out early in 2002. Prior to becoming a full-time writer, KJ Erickson was vice president for risk management at the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis. Her web site is: www.kjerrickson.com.



BILL FARLEY

has been a bookseller since 1979, when he and his wife, B Jo, bought a small general bookshop in Kalamazoo, Michigan. They later sold that store and moved to Philadelphia, where Bill worked at Whodunit? Mystery Bookstore. In 1990 they moved to Seattle where he founded Seattle Mystery Bookshop. In 1999 Bill sold the business to his long-time associate, J. B. Dickey, but he continues to work there part time. Bill and B Jo Bauer Farley are both life-long mystery readers,



and contributors (along with 60 other booksellers including Tom and Enid Schantz, Barbara Peters, and Maryelizabeth Hart) to *100 Favorite Mysteries of the Century, Selected by the Independent Mystery Booksellers of America* (The Crum Creek Press, 2000, \$12).

Regarding the Case of the Alaska Assassin, Bill recalls a Rex Stout title, *Too Many Women*. Too many women were out and about at 9:15 p.m. on a winter Sunday evening in 1921. He speculates that one of them (Mrs. Keely seems most likely) had made advances to the Chief, which he had rejected. She followed him and shot him in embarrassment and anger. (Or, as B Jo put it, "because she was pissed.") Chief Sturgus, gentleman to the end, declined to name his killer in order to protect her reputation.

JERI FINK

It was the strangest e-mail I ever received.

>To: Dr. Jeri Fink
From: John Sturgus
Subject: Solving the mystery

I finally found a way to contact you! Now the mystery of my murder on Sunday, Feb. 20, 1921 can finally be solved. The people of Anchorage deserve to know the truth so we can all rest in peace.<

>To: John Sturgus
From: Dr. Jeri Fink
Subject: Solving the mystery

Is this an e-mail chain letter or an online game?<

>Please forgive me, Dr. Fink. I've been waiting 80 of *your* years to tell my story.<

>Are you telling me you're dead?<

>In your terms, yes. I'm very dead. You can read the story of my murder in the Anchorage Daily Times. It wasn't a pretty sight.<

>Why contact me? I live in New York, I'm an author and family therapist - not a cop.<

>Please excuse my imposition. You've been using computers and the Internet for 20 years. You write about the psychology of technology (psychotechnology) in both fiction and nonfiction. I thought you'd be open to virtual communications from the dead.<

I stared at his words. My new novel, *Virtual Terror*, was all about bizarre, otherworldly human behavior online. And as a family therapist, I was used to people reporting dreams and "visits" from dead relatives. Could Sturgus really be a spirit using e-mail

to make contact?

>How do I know it's really you, Mr. Sturgus? Faith, Doctor, in technology, psychology and your insatiable curiosity as an author.<

I sighed. It was only e-mail. What harm could it be to hear his story? So I invited John Sturgus into my virtual life.

>From: John Sturgus

It began with the beautiful Mrs. Larson. Lydia Babette Larson, the wife of Lyle Larson, the son of Mrs. Henry Baxter. She was ensnared in a horrible marriage with a man who beat her brutally. As the mother of three small children, Lydia was trapped in her misery. Until the day I made my regular visit to Mrs. Baxter. Lydia was the only one home. Our eyes met, she fell into my arms and I knew that there was no going back. I called her Bobby because I wanted to be in a different place in her life. Bobby and I shared the most precious, passionate love known to humankind. We were soul mates -- wrenched apart by the circumstances of our lives. Yes, I cared deeply for my own wife. And yes, I cared deeply for the Baxter family. But my love for Bobby was on another plane -- beyond anything either of us could control. Our affair went on for six months before I told Bobby I was ready to come clean. Tell the truth. And take her away from Anchorage. Bobby was terrified. "You can't do that," she cried. "What about my children?" "They'll come with us," I said. Bobby begged me to remain silent. But I'd made up my mind. After the first show, when everyone was back in the Kyvig building, I planned to tell them that Bobby and I were leaving. Bobby reluctantly agreed, insisting we meet before -- to go over exactly what we would say. I went along with her wishes. They were in the middle of the first show when Lydia claimed "woman" problems and excused herself. She ran through the back streets to meet me at the rear steps. I swept her into my arms. "It's our time, now," I whispered to my beloved. "No," she said, her voice heavy with pain. "I can't leave my children. Please forgive me, John. I love you." She slipped from my embrace, my gun clutched in her hand. "Please, please John," Bobby whispered her eyes filled with tears, her breasts heaving with sobs. "Forgive me. I have no choice." And she shot me. Right up against my shirt. So there was only a soft "pop" and I was down, my coat wide open. In those last few minutes of my life, I realized what Bobby



had done. She exchanged her happiness -- and mine -- for all those around us. It was the ultimate act of sacrifice. And I knew that I had to make a sacrifice too. So with my last ounce of strength I waited until I knew she was back at the show. Then I removed my second gun, shot into the air, and tossed it away. No one would ever know that Bobby had murdered me.

That's our story. Promise me one thing, Dr. Fink? That you make sure the people of Alaska read this and finally learn the truth.<
>From: Dr. Jeri Fink

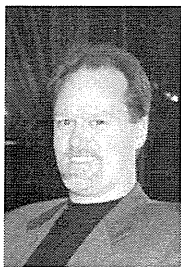
Of course, Mr. Sturgus -- I'll make sure everyone knows. But I have one more question. Is Bobby with you now?<

I never received a reply. I took a deep breath. There was only one thing left to be done. I sent all our e-mails to Elisa Hitchcock at Left Coast Crime 2001. Maybe now all those people in Anchorage, on that frigid day in February, can rest in peace.

Dr. Jeri Fink is a practicing family therapist, journalist (print and online), and author of six fiction and nonfiction books. Her fiction includes *Virtual Terror*, a psychological mystery, and *Matthew's Web* (co-authored with Donna Paltrowitz), the first in the YA mystery-adventure series *Tangled Web*. Her nonfiction includes *Cybereducation: Reality in the Age of Psychotechnology* and *The New Millennium Encyclopedia of Electronic Psychology*. Dr. Fink's work explores psychotechnology, or the merging of psychology and technology, and appears in both print and electronic formats. She is currently on the Board of Sisters in Crime New York/Tri-State and is the chapter's web diva.

BILL FITZHUGH

In a largely ignored Internet press conference held early yesterday morning, Edward 'Itchy' Giblets of Crooked Creek, Alaska announced that he has solved the 80-year-old murder of Police Chief John J. Sturgus. "I read all the testimony from the coroner's inquest and I gotta tell you, I hadn't seen anything this suspect since the Warren Commission Report," Mr. Giblets said. "I mean there were an awful lot of 'witnesses' who didn't see a damn thing." Mr. Giblets, president and sole member of the local chapter of ACT UP (Alaskan Conspiracy Twits United [for] Paranoia) was created



moments ago by satirist Bill Fitzhugh. "I wrote to Janet Reno, submitted my Freedom of Information requests for all federal documents in this case, okay? Fact she never responded pretty much proves my theory Chief Sturgus was killed by a group of anti-Castro Cubans in conjunction with local mobbed-up moose trackers. I mean, look, testimony states Mrs. Richter was on E Street when she heard a gun, right? And what street was the Texas School Book Depository Building located on? Elm, that's what. Mrs. Richter owned the Richter Hotel. And where was Bobby Kennedy shot? In a hotel, that's where. And Wm. C. Hunt testified that Chief Sturgus uttered 'Bobby, Bobby' as he lay near the foot of the stairway. Now I hadn't made the connection between Sturgus's death and the deaths of the Kennedys but I tell you what, you don't have to be a taxidermist to figure this one out."

According to FBI documents, **Mr. Fitzhugh** considers himself "an accidental novelist," having moved to Los Angeles to write sitcoms. After landing television jobs that, at best, would be described as "fringe," Fitzhugh began writing screenplays. When no one expressed the slightest interest in these, Fitzhugh decided to turn one of them, *Pest Control*, into a novel. Warner Brothers immediately bought the film rights and publishers from five countries bought publishing rights to the manuscript. When told of this, Mr. Giblets is quoted as saying, "That's the damndest thing I ever heard of." Fitzhugh followed *Pest Control* with *The Organ Grinders*, a work he describes as "the funniest novel you'll ever read about xenografting, Malthusian Population Theory, and testicle transplants." He followed this ground-breaking tome with *Cross Dressing*, which was based on another story he had been unable to sell in screenplay form. Naturally, Universal Studios snapped up the film rights to the satire on advertising and religion. Fitzhugh has finished his next work, titled *Fender Benders*, a comic mystery set in the country music industry in Nashville. He is under contract to HarperCollins for two more books after *Fender Benders*.

Looking Back - 1867. The United States purchased Alaska from Russia for \$7.2 million - about 2 cents an acre.

SARA ANN FREED

Sara Ann Freed is the editor-in-chief of Mysterious Press, an imprint of Warner Books, where she is also a senior editor. She has received an Anthony Award and the Ellery Queen Award. She lives in New York's SoHo with her husband, Ira Weissman, an artist.



DIANA GABALDON

I feel something of an impostor, given that I haven't as yet actually written a mystery novel, per se. On the other hand, all my books do each include a perfectly good murder mystery (along with historical intrigue, military mayhem, botanical medicine, religious mysticism, sex, and the Loch Ness monster; you can fit a lot into 1,000 pages), and as both Claire Randall Fraser (20th Century English physician) and James MacKenzie Fraser (18th Century Scottish farmer/soldier/criminal) are keen observers and clear thinkers, I'll let them have a stab at it: "Well, then. To begin with, there's the question, did he do himself the mischief, or was it black murder?" "The inquest brought back a verdict of 'parties unknown, with intent to kill,'" I pointed out. "Which sounds as though they leaned toward murder." Jamie lifted one red brow and gave me a distinctly cynical look. "Oh, aye. I could tell ye things about inquests, Sassenach. Ye'll notice that I'm neither hanged nor imprisoned, though, which gives me leave to doubt their abilities. And ye did notice that yon Larson, who was on the jury, is the Baxter woman's son-in-law -- and was there at the time, forbye. He might have done it -- or she, herself." "I did, he was, and they might," I replied, rather coldly. "But Mrs. Baxter's testimony is awfully detailed and involves too many people. Too easy to slip up in something, if you were lying. The best lies are the simplest, and Mrs. Baxter is old enough to know that." "Aye, so? Was it the watchman, then? Were I going to fit up a man for the hangman, he'd be my own choice." "Well, he's a better suspect, surely," I agreed. "His testimony about the earlier shot doesn't agree with anyone else's, he was obviously on the spot, and finding the body is a very effective strategy if you've done the murder." "I



wouldna ken so much about that myself," Jamie responded drily. "You'd know, I expect." I looked down my nose at him -- as well as could be managed, given that he was nearly a foot taller than I. "What I know," I said, "is that Mr. Sturgus didn't say who'd shot him. What he did say was, "My head, oh, my head." And yet he wasn't shot in the head, though he was shot at point-blank range." "He was not," Jamie agreed slowly. "And yet -- would a fit of some sort not leave a mark upon his brain?" I shook my head. "Not an epileptic seizure, or a terrible migraine. Or -- " Another thought struck me. "What if he meant that his thoughts were painful, rather than his head itself? I've heard people say sometimes that they felt their heads would burst with the strain of what they were thinking." "I'm beginning to have a great sympathy for them," Jamie muttered.

Jamie and Claire are the protagonists of **Diana Gabaldon's** best-selling *Outlander* series, a series of books that the author can describe only as Big Weird Books, but which are normally shelved as anything from Literature and General Fiction to Science Fiction, Historical Fiction, Fantasy, or Romance -- depending on which of the bookstore's clerks have been reading them. Ms. Gabaldon is, however, presently working on a contemporary mystery, set in the American Southwest, which should be both shorter and easier to classify.

LAURA ANNE GILMAN

I'm not a mystery writer - I edit mystery writers. Therefore my place is better suited to telling everyone else in detail why their theories won't work. However, I did note a few interesting facts in the Sturgus report. His clothing was unbuttoned, as though he were reaching towards his neck and chest. He was incoherent when spoken to, before the actual shooting, and was noted as shaking or "tossing" his head, as though there were something irritating him. It seems obvious to me that Chief Sturgus was suffering from a parasite of some sort, which had attached itself to the back of his neck, and was causing him distress and pain. Such was his distress, in fact, that he began to lose first the power of speech, then his coordination. At his wits' end, Chief Sturgus staggered from his home, searching for help. But the pain became too much, and he did the only thing he could



think of -- shooting himself in order to kill the parasite. He could not explain his actions, however, for fear of being thought a madman or -- knowing he was close to dying -- for fear of being refused a proper Christian burial as a suicide. (Pause). What? Oh, come on -- it always works for Mulder!

Laura Anne Gilman edited her way through high school and college, trading her skills for such essentials as beer, pizza and rideshares home. She gave up her amateur status in 1989, when she joined Putnam Berkley, where her first acquisition was a then-unknown writer named Dana Stabenow. Currently executive editor at New American Library, she still maintains her innocence in whatever stories Stabenow is telling about her now. Further evidence can be found at www.sff.net/people/LauraAnne.Gilman.

HAL GLATZER

John J. Sturgus -- The original "Miles Archer". As a Pinkerton detective in 1921, Dashiell Hammett would have paid close attention to news about a murdered police chief. So he may have based the death of Miles Archer in *The Maltese Falcon* on that of John J. Sturgus in Anchorage. In the novel, there are powder burns on Archer's buttoned-up overcoat; and Sam Spade knows that Archer would not have let anyone but a sexy woman get close enough to put a gun to his chest. Sturgus was killed on a winter night, yet his coat was unbuttoned and his shirt took the powder burns. So Sturgus must have been shot indoors, by a woman with whom he was (at least) necking. It was Sturgus' own gun that killed him, so the shooting probably wasn't premeditated. Maybe it wasn't even murder, but an accidental discharge, or a game gone wrong? And Sturgus was still able to pursue her out of doors. In 1921 Anchorage was still small enough for the top cop to keep tabs on all the local good-time girls. Revelation of a physical involvement would have been professionally embarrassing for him -- possibly even grounds for demotion or dismissal. She'd fled the scene, which is a crime; and he could have named her, but he didn't. So she was probably one of the respectable townfolk, almost certainly married, with whom an affair (or whatever)



would have been a scandal all over the territory -- just when Anchorage was starting to boom. If we limit our suspects only to those people who gave testimony, then the woman responsible is probably Mrs. Lillian Keeley. She said she was walking nearby, alone, when she heard the shot; and that she'd talked that night with other people who'd heard it. She had plenty of time before the inquest to make her story consistent with theirs. Moreover, she worked at the hospital where Sturgus was taken. Perhaps he saw her standing beside the operating table, whereupon he chose to die a gentleman's death: protecting her reputation -- and his own -- and the town's -- to the end.

Hal Glatzer has long been an innovator in mystery fiction: His 1979 novel *Kamehameha County*, a tale of murder and mayhem in Hawaii, was published as a manila file-folder of newspaper clippings, letters and telex dispatches. *The Trapdoor*, published by Paperjacks in 1986, is a paperback thriller about a computer hacker whose identity is stolen by organized crime, and whose only ally is an online pornographer. This, a whole decade before the Internet, identity theft and cyberporn as front-page news. After Paperjacks folded he self-published the sequel in one of the earliest "eBook" ventures. *Massively Parallel Murder* was released in 1992, the first chapter downloadable free from a Web site, and the entire text sold as a computer (.PDF) file on a floppy disk. Glatzer is an active member of Mystery Writers of America who knows high-tech, having covered the computer industry as a journalist for 20 years. But he's an antiquarian at heart, serving as a director of the Art Deco Society of California, playing vintage jazz and swing on guitar, and curating a collection of sheet music from Tin Pan Alley. Now he's combined all these interests to create *Too Dead to Swing*: a murder mystery presented on audio tape with a full cast, sound effects, swing music and songs. Glatzer also produced the content for the Web site at www.toodeadtoswing.com, which serves as the theatrical "playbill" for this audio-play. *Too Dead To Swing* (ISBN 0-9702147-0-7) is distributed by Ingram Book Group to bookstores, and by Ingram Entertainment Inc. to non-bookstore outlets. It's also available online from amazon.com and earful.com. Audio-Playwrights is dedicated to creating audio entertainment with high production values. Contact Hal Glatzer at

Audio-Playwrights, 1421 Oak Street, San Francisco, CA 94117-2117. Telephone: 415-487-0720 (S.F.) or 212-246-8631 (New York). Or send email to: hal@audio-play.com.

KENNETH WILLIAM (KEN) GODDARD

National Fish and Wildlife Forensics Laboratory, 1490 East Main Street, Ashland, OR 97520 USA Home e - m a i l : KenGoddard@aol.com;

Lab e-mail :ken_goddard@fws.gov; Lab Web Site: www.lab.fws.gov Fiction Web Site: members.aol.com/kengoddard/kenhome.htm. EDUCATION: B.S. in Biochemistry, University of California, Riverside (1968); M.S. in Criminalistics, California State College, Los Angeles (1971) WORK EXPERIENCE: 1968-69: criminalist/ceputy sheriff, Riverside County (CA) Sheriff's Department; 1969-72: criminalist/deputy sheriff, San Bernardino County (CA) Sheriff's Department; 1972-79: chief criminalist/supervisor, Scientific Investigation Bureau, Huntington Beach (CA) Police Department; 1979-87: chief, Branch of Forensic Science, Division of Law Enforcement, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Washington, D.C.; 1987-present: director, National Fish and Wildlife Forensics Laboratory, Office of Law Enforcement, U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Ashland, OR. MEMBERSHIPS: American Academy of Forensic Sciences (Fellow); American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors (charter member, 1972-present, and past member of the ASCLD Board of Directors); International Association of Forensic Sciences; Author's Guild; Mystery Writers of America. AWARDS: Fish and Wildlife Service 10 Most Outstanding Supervisors & Managers, 1989; The Distinguished Alumni of the Year Award, University of California, Riverside (CA), 1992; The Guy Bradley Award, (an award given in the spirit of Guy Bradley, the first game warden to give his life in the line of wildlife law enforcement, by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation), 1994; The Clark R. Bavin Award for Outstanding Achievement in Combating Crimes Against Wildlife (The Animal Welfare Institute) -- 1994. PUBLICATIONS: Non-fiction: *Crime Scene Investigation*, 1977; *Weaponless Control*,



1979; Fiction: *Balefire*, 1983; *The Alchemist*, 1986; *Digger*, 1990; *Prey*, 1992; *Wildfire*, 1994; *Cheater* (re-write of *Digger*), 1996; *Double Blind*, 1997; *First Evidence*, 1999; *Outer Perimeter*, 2001.

CHRISTINE GOFF

"Obviously, it was Mrs. Ernest Richter's son who killed Police Chief Sturgus," states Goff, author of *A Rant of Ravens*, the first in a series of birdwatching mysteries. "Just look at the facts. Mrs. Ernest Richter claimed she heard a shot fired as she and her son returned from a show around 9:15 p.m. Yet, while Louis Poppas and Mrs. Lillian Keely both testified to seeing Mrs. Richter, neither make mention of seeing her boy."

A former newspaper columnist, **Goff** is chapter president of the Rocky Mountain Chapter of Mystery Writers of America, and editor of *The Third Degree*, the official newsletter of MWA. Her second novel, *Death of a Songbird*, is scheduled for release from Berkley in July, 2001. "The most likely scenario," surmises Goff, "is that Police Chief Sturgus encountered the Richter boy breaking into the Anchorage Drug Store. He confronted the boy, and the boy shot him. It's my guess Mrs. Richter lied to protect her son. Perchance, was his name 'Bobby'?" Anyone interested in more information regarding this theory, feel free to contact Goff through her website at www.christinegoff.com, or through the RM chapter MWA site at www.mysterytales.com.

JUDITH ANDREWS GREEN

Here's the story as Justin Cobb, a bicycle messenger with a talent for being in the wrong place at the wrong time, heard it from his great-grandfather, who was a 14-year-old delivery boy in Anchorage in 1921: And what did Missus Sturgus say when Mrs. Baxter asked where her husband was that evening? Mrs. Baxter never said -- or the Daily Times chose not to report it. Sturgus was "acting peculiarly," was he? Downright incoherent, Mrs. Baxter said. What's more peculiar is him going into town without his billy. Running to meet someone, I say -- someone



who could get up close enough to take his own guns without a struggle and leave powder burns when the trigger was pulled! Someone close enough that he, a sworn police officer, mind you, would rather take his secret to the grave than put a name to! Who was this Bobby he called out for? Well, I knew. I'd seen Chief Sturgus slipping down the back stairs of the Kyvig building, when I was delivering papers for Mr. Baxter. Who lived up those stairs? Miss Roberta Flood. The prettiest thing you ever saw -- sweet figure, hair bobbed in that new style from out east. A wild thing, she was. Came to the newsstand for cigars! The Chief was sweet on her, I know. Heck, I was half in love with her myself. Oh, Missus Sturgus must've caught wind of it, and put her foot down. It was her old man that had the money for that fine house on the edge of town. He must've gone to Miss Roberta and told her he'd have to give her up. I figure he followed her up her own back staircase, maybe begging for one last kiss -- that's why the flash was at eye level when she took his guns out of his own coat and shot him point blank. He staggered back and lay down and never even called for help. It wasn't the bullet that killed him; he died of a broken heart. There must've been others knew he was sparring Ms. Roberta, but no one ever went up those stairs to ask her. After all, everyone knew he'd had another gun.

Judith Andrews Green is director of an adult education program for a 400-square-mile school district in the western mountains of Maine, running everything from GED preparation to trailer school to college credit via distance learning. Her specialty is adult literacy, and she has published over 20 books, including mysteries, short stories and nonfiction (most recent: *Hit the Street, Without a Trace*, and *Not a Chance*, starring bicycle messenger Justin Cobb and his wife Heather, published by NTC/Contemporary in cooperation with Mystery Writers of America as part of the Thumbprint Series) for adult new readers. It's a specialty niche. She gets letters from people who can seriously say hers is the best book they've ever read. Because it's the first book they've ever read. She lives with her husband in a house they built themselves -- seventh generation on this Maine hillside -- with a dog named Henry, two elderly cats, and a varying number of sheep and chickens. Their grown children live near enough to drop by for meals or help stack wood.



KATE GRILLEY

Benjamin, the St. Chris chief of detectives, and I were having a beer at Dockside's Lower Deck in Isabeya late one balmy winter afternoon when he pulled a clipping from his pocket. "Friends in Alaska sent this to me. He thinks maybe we can solve a murder case. Chief of Police was found dead. Take a look, Kelly." "Benjamin," I said, reaching for the clipping, "how are we going to solve an Alaskan murder sitting here in the Caribbean? We need to examine the crime scene." "Kelly, this murder happened in 1921." "Oh. Good. I don't have the clothes to go tromping around in the snow." "I've never seen snow," said Benjamin. "Orlando is as far north as I've been. Camille and I took Trevor to Disney World last summer." "Trust me, after years of living in Chicago, I can tell you a northern winter is not a day at the beach. It's cold, wet and disgusting. The snow seeps inside your shoes and turns your feet into icicles." "I pass," said Benjamin, gazing at the bathwater-warm Caribbean sea. "Now, how about this murder. Who are the suspects?" "This article says there were several witnesses. John McNutt, Mrs. Henry Baxter, Mrs. Lillian Keely, Mrs. Ernest Richter, Louis Poppas, Archie Adams, Oscar Anderson, and Wm. C. Hunt." "Forget the witnesses, Kelly. What about the murder itself? Jack Sturgus, the victim, had powder marks on his shirt under the flap of the left pocket, where the bullet entered. His mackinaw and coat were unbuttoned and possibly the top two buttons of his vest. Hunt says he heard Sturgus say, 'Oh my head' and 'Oh Bobby, Bobby.'" "Hmmm," I said, reaching for my beer while reading the clipping a second time. "Powder marks on the shirt? The shot was probably fired at very close range." "But the bullet was in the chest, Kelly. Why would Sturgus say, 'Oh my head'?" "Maybe the perp hit him on the head first and knocked him out, then shot him. And why were the victim's mackinaw, coat and vest unbuttoned? The murder happened at night. In February. It's damned cold in Alaska in February. If Sturgus was wearing all those clothes to keep warm, he wouldn't be running around with his coat flapping in the breeze. I know winter. When it's that cold, you stay buttoned up to your chin. The shot must have been fired inside



by someone Sturgus knew." Benjamin put his empty beer bottle on the table. "I think Hunt did it. We have only his testimony that Sturgus said, 'Oh my head.'" A second autopsy failed to find any contusion on the brain or any internal or external injuries to the scalp or skull. And as for Sturgus purportedly saying, 'Oh Bobby Bobby,' that's a red herring if ever I smelled one. Hunt is the killer, Kelly. But why did he do it?" "That's easy," I said, smiling at Benjamin. "Temporary insanity. A northern winter can make anyone crazy."

Virgin Islands resident **Kate Grilley** is the author of the Kelly Ryan/St. Chris Caribbean mysteries *Death Dances to a Ragga Beat* (Berkeley, June 2000) and the forthcoming *Death Rides an Ill Wind* (Berkeley, April 2001). She is also an award winning short story writer and the Sisters in Crime National Webmaven. Kate is allergic to winter.

ELIZABETH GUNN

The chief was killed by someone he knew well; shot at close range (gunpowder residue), with his own gun, and with no signs of a struggle. Also, while still conscious he declined to say who shot him, probably shielding his attacker. The story does not specify what family members survive him. My protagonist, Jake Hines, would look there first. Sturgus said, "Oh Bobby, Bobby," -- who's Bobby? Maybe his wife is named Roberta and "Bobby" was an early pet name for her. Or for the wife of his best friend, who's been having marital trouble lately. Or his wife is always called Bobby, but has a perfect alibi -- was seen by all these people at the first show they seem to have attended -- but we learn later there's a side entrance she could easily have slipped out of in the dark. Or: the time of the murder is identified as 9:15 p.m. (several people heard the gunshot) but one of the doctors thinks the wound shows he was shot earlier. Maybe an extra shot was fired so all the people who were passing nearby just then would identify the time of the shot at 9:15 p.m. We might find the extra bullet in a wall in the last chapter. Good puzzle. Jake would have to solve it by deduction mostly, without the hi-tech aids he uses in my Minnesota police procedural series. Fortunately, Jake, besides being quite sexy and often funny, is smart and resourceful and gets help from a team of hardworking cops and

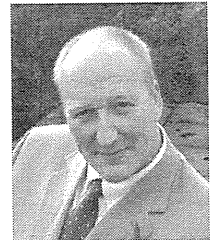


scientists. **Elizabeth Gunn** grew up in southeast Minnesota and now lives in Tucson, Arizona. When not writing, she and her husband explore North America by RV. This summer, their travels will include Colorado, Kansas, Nebraska, the Dakotas, Wisconsin, and Minnesota. *Five Card Stud* is the third Jake Hines mystery, following *Triple Play* and *Par Four*.

PETER GUTTRIDGE

As yet unpublished in the U.S., Peter Guttridge's satirical crime series featuring yoga-loving journalist Nick Madrid and his sidekick Bridget "Bitch of the Broadsheets" Frost has garnered high critical praise in Britain. The latest, *Foiled Again*, was published in the U.K. Feb 1. Guttridge, the mystery critic for The Observer, the U.K. quality Sunday newspaper, has been declared "de rigueur reading" by The Good Book Guide. However, his favorite review, because he doesn't understand it, is the one that declared of his debut novel *No Laughing Matter*, "This is a funny book masquerading as a very funny book." Go figure.

Nick on the Sturgus killing: The verdict was a cover-up for suicide, it's as plain as the nose on your face -- well, my face, anyway. Shooting yourself in the chest isn't the easiest way to commit suicide but, hey, it was his own gun; witnesses heard the shot but saw nobody suspicious in the vicinity. Mrs. Baxter says Sturgus was "acting peculiarly" when she saw him earlier in the day. Now there's a vast chasm between what Brits and Americans think peculiar. No, I'm not going to make cheap remarks about electoral systems or chads, and my friend Bridget points out that I'm the last person to pontificate on peculiar since I once witnessed a murder when I was sitting naked in a hotel room in Canada with my legs threaded up underneath my ampits and my ankles crossed behind my neck. Not easy to get out of that in a hurry -- or explain to the police you're not some kind of pervert, merely doing your yoga. Bridget says it's about sex -- the Sturgus murder, not the yoga -- but then, to Bridget everything is about sex. She says Sturgus was having an affair with Mrs. Baxter and either killed himself because she ended it or -- aha -- was killed by Mr. Baxter, who is only a shadowy figure in the press reports.



LORIE A. HAM

"Miss Sturgus, I understand you'd like to write a book on the unsolved murder of your ancestor, Police Chief John Sturgus," I said as I took a seat, wishing I had more to give her. "Mr. Carlucci, what did you find in Alaska?" "Cold," I said with a smile. She frowned. "Not much," I continued. "There's little to go on. All I can give you is a guess. I believe he was shot from the top of the stairs by a bad cop who knew he was the next to get caught in the moonshine case. That would explain the bullet traveling downward. The Chief probably had a hangover related to undercover work chasing after those moonshiners, explaining the headache and sensitive eyes." "But he was shot with his own gun," argued Miss Sturgus. "I think he got a call to meet this guy after he'd settled in for the night; that's why he left everything behind. After all, he was just meeting another cop. Even Sturgus' state of undress suggests a rushed retreat from home. This cop somehow got Sturgus' gun beforehand; Sturgus thought he had misplaced it. There was no struggle and no one was seen fleeing the scene because the cop just slipped inside and left out the other door. Bobby was either the guy's name, or Sturgus had British background." "That's a lot of assumption." I flipped my notebook closed, retrieved an envelope from my suit pocket, and plopped it onto the table in front of her. "Here's your money." "Where are you going?" "Home. Where I'm going to have hot chocolate, hot coffee, hot soup, and anything else hot I can find. My California bones are just as cold as the trail of this murder." **Lorie Ham** wrote and published her first song at the age of 13, has gone on to publish many poems, articles and short stories, and currently writes for her local newspaper. She began singing gospel music at the age of 5, and has traveled across the country singing, been a regular guest on a national TV program and part of an international radio program. Lorie has recorded 12 albums, her two solo albums containing mostly songs that she has written. She resides with her husband and two children in the same town where she was born, the small farming community of Reedley, California, on which the fictional town in her first mystery novel, *Murder in*



Four Part Harmony, is loosely based. *Murder in Four Part Harmony* is set in the exciting world of gospel music.

LYN HAMILTON

A course in physical and cultural anthropology during her student days at the University of Toronto awakened an interest in ancient cultures that Lyn Hamilton, author of an archaeological mystery series featuring antiques dealer Lara McClintoch, has pursued ever since. For several years she has continued her study of archaeology, mythology and ancient languages, as well as traveling to, and spending time in, the places she writes about: many of the world's most important sites in the Americas, Europe, the Middle East and North Africa, China, Tibet and Southeast Asia. The first book in the series, *The Xibalba Murders*, was nominated for the prestigious Arthur Ellis Award for best first crime novel in Canada. With the fourth book set in Ireland, Lyn recently traveled there to undertake extensive research on the culture, archaeological ruins, and history of that country. She is currently at work on the fifth in the series, set in present-day Tunisia, site of the ancient city of Carthage. Lyn was born and raised in Toronto, Canada, and currently runs arts and cultural industries programs for the Government of Ontario.

JAN HARPER HAINES

is of Koyukon Athabaskan descent. She was born in Sitka and when she was four years old, her family moved to Anchorage where she attended school, kindergarten through high school. In 1965 she earned a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Alaska Fairbanks. She moved to Honolulu in 1971 and joined an advertising agency. A career in advertising and marketing developed in San Francisco over the next 18 years. In 1990 she began writing about her Koyukon Athabaskan mother and grandmother and their lives on the Yukon. In October, 2000, *Cold River Spirits* was published by Epicenter Press. Of historical note: In 1935, Jan's mother, Flora Jane Harper, was the first Alaska Native to graduate from the



University of Alaska. In 1994, the University named the College of Rural Alaska building, The Harper Building. Arthur Harper, Flora Jane's paternal grandfather, came to Alaska from Ireland and was one of the first to discover gold on the Yukon. In 1913, his youngest son, Walter Harper, was the first man to reach the top of Mount McKinley. Harper Mountain, Harper Glacier and the former Harper Lodge, now a Princess Lodge, at Mount McKinley were named after him.

PATRICIA HARRINGTON

"Listen," Bridget O'Hern says. "I don't care if you did create me. You want me to solve an 80-year-old crime from a newspaper clipping? I'm an amateur sleuth, not Kinsey Milhone!" "Please." I know Bridget can't turn down a fervent "please." "Okay," she says, "but there's no guarantee the answer will be right." "You've read the clipping?" "Yes. A half dozen witnesses returning from the theater at 9:15 p.m. on a Sunday evening heard the shot that killed Anchorage Police Chief Sturgus. He was killed with his own gun, but there were no signs of struggle. The dying man groans, 'Bobby, Bobby.' "But when the doctor asks who shot him, Sturgus doesn't say." Bridget looks at me. "Why didn't the police chief identify the shooter?" "He didn't know the person?" Bridget shakes her head. "A stranger would have used his own gun, don't you think?" I nod. "Sturgus refused to name his killer because he was a child -- Mrs. Richter's young son. Here's the scenario. The police chief made advances to Mrs. Richter earlier in the day, and the boy saw him. When the three run into each other in the alley, the boy asks to see the police chief's gun -- a typical kid request. Only, he uses it to shoot the man who had dishonored his mother. The townspeople suspect the truth, but keep mum. They want to preserve Sturgus's good name, save his widow from humiliation and shield the boy. So, the coroner's jury covers up the town's dirty laundry and gives a verdict of "death at the hands of unknown parties." Sleuth Bridget O'Hern debuts in *Death Stalks the Khmer*. Bridget, like her creator, **Patricia Harrington**, consults with nonprofit organizations, which enables her to stumble across murder in different settings.



MARYELIZABETH HART
CHIEF OF POLICE
STURGUS FOUND
DEAD, by the Anchorage
Daily Times;

In reviewing this story, I was intrigued by several mysterious references and seeming discrepancies in the reports of the various witnesses. In particular, I found John McNutt's mention of the earlier shot intriguing. The indications of a possible secret relationship between McNutt, Sturgus and Oscar Anderson are presented, but not followed up on. Was one of the other men the mysterious "Bobby?" Why was Sturgus so tight-lipped when questioned about his attacker? Were any of the men members of a secret society, such as the Illuminati? Did McNutt shoot Sturgus earlier in the evening, then fire a different gun above him at 9:15 p.m. for the benefit of witnesses? Was Sturgus's odd behavior because he had already sustained his fatal wound? As mysteries are considered modern-day morality plays, I found myself dissatisfied with the ending and its lack of resolution. Recommended to conspiracy theorists only.

Mysterious Galaxy's **Maryelizabeth Hart** is an owner, publicity manager, and the editor of "The Plot Thickens," the store's newsletter. She has been a life-long reader, and contributes reviews to not only her own newsletter, but also many on-line mystery and SF forums. She also recently contributed to the non-fiction companion to the "Buffy the Vampire Slayer" television show.

GINI HARTZMARK



"I am definitely losing it," thought Kate to herself, shifting her gaze from the page before her to the towering piles of documents that obliterated every available surface. Somewhere underneath the avalanche of paper lay her law office, the large and elegantly appointed space she dimly recalled from her days B.C. -- before Casler. She got up from her desk, still absently clutching the piece of paper in her hand, and picked her way through the ramparts of files littering the floor. Outside the window the dazzling carpet of glittering lights lay spread out at her feet. Even at three



o'clock in the morning Chicago was a heartbreakingly beautiful place. But bad things were happening in the darkness even as she watched: Crimes being committed, fortunes irrevocably changed. It had been going on since the first caveman raised his hand against another. She looked down at the newspaper clipping, yellowed with age, in her hand. So then, why had its contents come as such a shock? Maybe it was because after hundreds of hours poring through the corporate files of Casler Mining and Resources, Inc. the names of the people in the article leaped out at her, as familiar as family. Kate's client, Coring Phelps, one of the world's largest copper mining and petroleum extraction companies, was in the process of acquiring Casler Mining. As part of her legal due diligence she'd burrowed deep into the company's history looking for skeletons: potential conflicts of interest, hidden liens, and environmental time bombs. The one thing she hadn't expected to stumble onto was an actual corpse. Murder, she reminded herself, especially one that had been committed over 70 years ago, was none of her business. And yet ... A quick search on the Internet told her that the case remained open, moldering unsolved. Yet she stood there in her Chicago aerie, about as far in place and time as she could possibly get from the frozen February streets of 1921 Anchorage, enraged at the killer whose identity was to be found tucked in snatches in the files that surrounded her. Maybe it was the fact that Police Chief John J. Sturgus had been killed with his own gun that galled her; or that it had been another cop who'd pulled the trigger. That Auggie Casler had been a crook had never been a secret. The scion of the Casler dynasty had swindled miners out of their claims, sabotaged his competitors' equipment and engineered the death of those foolish enough to stand in his way. What Kate hadn't realized was that he'd once been a cop. She'd read numerous accounts of Auggie Casler's legendary rise, but they all started out with him already married to Gracie Ann Baxter with the couple's inheritance of a large tract of land along the Yukon border. Later, when Kate had stumbled across copies of the deeds of conveyance relating to the property, she'd wondered about Sturgus, who he was and how he'd come into possession of such a mineral-rich piece of land. But even more intriguing had been his relationship to Gracie Ann's mother, Sarah, to whom he'd left

everything after his death. Nothing in the legal documents made mention of Sturgus having been Chief of Police, but in several private letters archived elsewhere in the files, there were allusions to a liaison with Sarah as questions about Gracie Ann's true parentage. Until tonight Kate had no idea that Sturgus had been murdered, or that Constable Augustus Casler, the first law enforcement officer at the scene, the one who'd conveniently found the murder weapon, would less than one year later own all of Sturgus' property. Had the fire that killed Gracie Ann's parents six tragic weeks after her wedding to Auggie Casler been deliberately set? Kate's eyes moved from the newspaper clipping to the pile of Casler Mining and Resources annual reports that rested on the arm of the couch. From the cover, 24 Casler offspring smiled up at her. In Kate's mind there was no question that it had been arson. After all, wasn't it Balzac who once said that behind every great fortune lies a great crime?

Mystery writer **Gini Hartzmark** attended the law and business schools of the University of Chicago and is the author of the best-selling Kate Millholland series. Her first book, *Principal Defense*, was nominated for the coveted Edgar Award and the third book in the series, *Bitter Business*, was a People Magazine page-turner of the week. She makes her home in Phoenix with her husband and three children. *Dead Certain*, the sixth novel featuring Kate Millholland is currently available from Ballantine Books.

L.C. HAYDEN

Anchorage Historical Society has contacted author L.C. Hayden to help them solve the age-old question, "Who killed Chief Sturgus?" "She seems like a natural choice," a member of the society said. "After all, she pens the 5 W and 1 H mysteries, *Who's Susan?* and *When Collette Died*. Her third mystery, *Where Secrets Lie*, will soon be released." When asked if she will accept the challenge, Hayden said, "I am planning to retire from teaching this school year, so I should have plenty of time to solve this problem. For a definite answer, contact me at lchayden@hotmail.com." Another reason Hayden will be a good candidate for this task is that she will be one of the authors doing



the Authors to the Bush Program. She will be going to Kenai, then to Soldotna, Sterling, Cooper Landing and Nikiski. "This will provide ample time for her to do some research," the society member said. Furthermore, the society feels Hayden's journalism background will help her ask the right questions. This, of course, could be a dangerous assignment, but Hayden isn't worried. "I love art, so I can draw a real quick sketch of the culprit; then, since I'm a scuba diver, I'll dive into the ocean and swim away to safety." When asked if she had any ideas as to who killed Chief Sturgus, Hayden said, "It was definitely someone who was there at that time." Readers interested in keeping up with Hayden's whereabouts are invited to visit her web site at (<http://pages.hotbot.com/books/lchayden>)

LAUREN HENDERSON

On a review of the evidence it seems perfectly clear who the murderer of John Sturgus was: the only person whose testimony is blurry and implausible from beginning to end. Though she is with her son and daughter-in-law, she is the only one of the three who notices that Sturgus "acted peculiarly" and is worried enough to go out into a snowy February night in Alaska to search for him -- a chief of police who one assumes is more than capable of taking care of himself. She visits the Sturgus residence, which is obviously a long walk, because she is described as "returning to town" after dropping in there. Then she "intended to call on (a friend), but later changed her mind" and goes home to find ... Sturgus lying in the snow at the foot of her own steps, shot in the head. Hmmn. Clearly Mrs. Baxter had a good standing in Anchorage, because otherwise this story wouldn't have stood up for a moment. And Mrs. Baxter's guilt solves the problem otherwise presented: How did the murderer escape? Mrs. Keely, Mrs. Richter, Mr. Poppas and Mr. Adams all testified that they saw, to quote Mr. Adams, no "sounds of a struggle nor see anyone running away from the spot, although he listened and looked intently for such signs." Clearly, no one could have left the alley. Mr. McNutt, the night watchman, said that "the snow was well-packed and (he) saw no signs of a struggle in the vicinity." But, busy as



all the witnesses were looking for someone running away, or scuffling in the snow, they never took the time to look up -- up the "rear stairway leading to the Baxter apartments." Sturgus was killed at the rear of the Kyvig building, where Mrs. Baxter and her son and daughter-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. Lyle Larson lived on the second floor. Obviously there were two entrances. The Larsons and Mrs. Baxter encountered Sturgus in front of their building, on Fourth Street. Noticing the direction he was taking, Mrs. Baxter enters her apartment -- she did not share with the Larsons -- and immediately leaves by the back staircase to the alley, which she knows that Sturgus is heading down. She stands on the staircase, without coming down to ground level, so that her footprints won't show in the snow. And as Sturgus passes by, she shoots him, and immediately retreats to her apartment before all the witnesses, still dazed by the report and flash of a gun, and naturally looking for someone running out of the alley, rather than back into one of the buildings, can see her. The timing is perfect. The Larsons and Mrs. Baxter meet Sturgus at "about 9:15 p.m." Sturgus rounds the building, heads into the alley; and is shot a few minutes afterwards, just enough time for Mrs. Baxter to reach her apartment and exit on the other side. Then she "fixes the fire" and heads out to establish her alibi by searching for Sturgus all over town. She does not want anyone to think of her as being in the apartment when he was shot, in case they connect her with the rear staircase and realize how easy it would have been for her to have committed the murder. Another interesting fact: With all the fuss in the alley and the report of a .22-calibre rifle, why do Mr. and Mrs. Lyle Larson not put their heads outside to see what's going on? Which brings us directly to motive. What does Sturgus say when he sees Mrs. Baxter? "Ma," he says. This may be a "name she (was) known by to other Anchorage friends," but it has an extra significance. What if Sturgus meant "Ma" literally, or almost so? Who calls a woman "Ma?" Her children -- and her children-in-law. No wonder Sturgus acted "peculiarly" when he met the Lawsons and Mrs. Baxter, a fact Mrs. Baxter mentions herself in case there were witnesses to the encounter. And notice how the Lawsons are never called upon to testify. Mrs. Baxter has deliberately pushed herself so far forward as to obscure their role in the entire affair. Her one

intention is to protect her son. It must be her son, because Sturgus wouldn't call Mrs. Baxter "Ma" if he were having an affair with her daughter-in-law. Horrified by this revelation -- we need not be too surprised that Mrs. Baxter has found it out, as she is obviously one of the town busybodies (by the fact that everyone accepts without query her weak story about charging round town nosing out Sturgus's whereabouts). She thinks that by killing her son's lover she can protect him. Remember that Sturgus's "mackinaw and coat were unbuttoned and ... the two top buttons of his vest were unbuttoned." As Mrs. Baxter leans over Sturgus, "seeing that he (was) badly hurt," she slips her hand into his shirt pocket and removes the picture of her son Lyle, which he kept there, next to his heart. No one seems to have had any theory as to why Sturgus was saying, "Oh Bobby, Bobby," as he was carried to the hotel -- nor as to why he "did not answer" "repeated questions asked him regarding who shot him." How could he? A married man in Alaska in 1921 -- how could he possibly confess that he had been having an affair with Lyle Larson, for whom he had the pet name "Bobby," and that Larson's mother had shot him? Sturgus was probably overwhelmed with shame at being gay, poor man, and accepted Mrs. Baxter's intervention as some sort of divine retribution. We can only be glad that nowadays attitudes have changed so much that the relationship between Sturgus and Larson would no longer be considered a crime for which anyone would have to die, and that mothers and fathers will now support their gay children rather than murdering their lovers.

VICKI HENDRICKS

Having no detective characters or tendencies, but being blessed with an uncanny sense of passion, I say the Sturgus' gay lover Bobby finally let him have it, after one too many complaints from Sturgus about light glaring in his eyes! Not wanting to reveal his sexual preferences in 1921, Sturgus would not betray his lover, who had obviously been screwing with his head, e.g.: "Oh my head," and "Oh Bobby, Bobby."

Vicki Hendricks lives in South Florida, where she teaches writing at Broward



Community College. She has several published short stories, including "ReBecca," in *Best American Erotica 2000*, and three noir novels: *Miami Purity*, *Iguana Love*, and *Voluntary Madness*. Her upcoming novel *Sky Blues* combines murder and skydiving, the latter being a sport she avidly pursues.

SUE HENRY

lives in Anchorage and has seven Alaskan mysteries in print, the latest of which, *Beneath the Ashes*, is an intriguing tale of arson and murder. The eighth, *Dead North*, based along the Alaska Highway between Idaho and Alaska, will be released this summer.



Lillian Keely (possibly a widow, as she is referred to in print as Mrs. Lillian, rather than by a husband's name, as were Mrs. Henry Baxter and Mrs. Ernest Richter), may have shot John Sturgus in anger, when, during an assignation earlier in the evening, he attempted to break off their relationship. (Since he left his "billy" and handcuffs, together with his money and papers, at home, it seems he thought he wouldn't need them, not being on duty). Sometime earlier, in her residence (not identified in the report), she may have taken one of his guns (the one that is unaccounted for because it may have remained in her rooms), attempted to shoot him and missed (the shot that was heard by John McNutt, who could not locate the direction). Sturgus may have left and wandered around town, understandably upset, considering the situation, which would account for his state of mind and misunderstood words (attested to by Mrs. Baxter's testimony that he was acting "peculiarly"). Knowing Keely would be passing through the alley behind the Kyvig Building on her way to the hospital, he may have gone to meet her, to resume their conversation. He, or she, may have unbuttoned his coat, if they embraced in the alley when they met. Realizing that he had not changed his mind, she could have unbuttoned the top buttons of his vest, taken his second gun, and, with sufficient medical knowledge of human anatomy to be able to cause his death with a single bullet, shot him at a range close enough to leave powder marks on his shirt. Tossing away the gun

that was found later (on which she had left no fingerprints, because she was wearing gloves on such a cold night), she retraced her footsteps west in the alley, where she was seen across the vacant lot by Archie Adams and where she met Mrs. Richter. It would be interesting to know her middle name. (Roberta would account for Sturgus moaning, "Oh Bobby, Bobby.")

RICH HENSHAW

is the President of Richard Henshaw Group, a literary agency based in New York. He has been an agent for 13 years, is a member of the Association of Author's Representatives and is affiliated with several writers' organizations including SinC and MWA. RHG represents writers of a wide variety of commercial fiction and nonfiction. A huge fan of crime fiction, Rich Henshaw has among his clients Anchorage authors Stan Jones, Megan Mallory Rust and Dana Stabenow. Rich can be reached at Richard Henshaw Group, 132 West 22nd Street, 4th Floor, New York, NY 10011; telephone; (212) 414-1172 or at RHHAGENTS@aol.com He will also be available to meet with a limited number of authors by appointment at the conference. Please feel free to say hello to him in the hallways or leave a message for him at the convention hotel to arrange an appointment. So whodunit? Sturgus had been having an affair with Mrs. Baxter. She had broken it off, which explains his unusual behavior while visiting the family earlier that day. Later, distraught, he shoots himself in the chest and dies both literally and figuratively of a broken heart. When Mrs. Baxter returns to "discover" that Sturgus is near death, she disposes of the missing gun with the hope of saving Sturgus' good name and in order to divert the investigation away from her relationship with him since, given no reason to believe this is a crime of passion, it would likely be assumed that he was shot by an unknown assailant. Shameful of his action and not wishing to bring any hardship upon his family, Sturgus decides not to acknowledge his cowardice and infidelity with his last breath. So he was a suicide. Or maybe the butler did it.



JULIE WRAY HERMAN



Of the unsolved mystery, Korine McFaile's son, Chaz, weighed in with this opinion: "It's elementary. Elvis did it. He is really a member of that clan known as the Highlanders

-- and currently living under another name somewhere in America or perhaps Jamaica -- but I have no doubt that he was living in Anchorage under the name of Roberta "Bobbie" Sturgus, posing as the illegitimate daughter of John J. Sturgus at the time of the killing."

Julie Wray Herman, (*Three Dirty Women and the Garden of Death*, *Three Dirty Women and the Bitter Brew*, Silver Dagger, May, 2001) currently lives on a small farm outside Houston, Texas with her long-suffering husband, well-behaved children, one dog, cats, two horses, and the creature who lurks in the pond.

CORSON HIRSCHFELD

Coony McCoy, the sheriff of McAfee County, Kentucky, lifted the black cowboy hat from his head, set it on the pancake house counter, and took a slow sip of coffee. "Me and Etta figured it out," he said in his hill-country drawl. "The Kyvig Building was a hell of a lot more than "living quarters." Pardon my French, but it was a whorehouse. This Mrs. Baxter -- Ma Baxter -- was the madam. Ma was getting up in years, but, like yours truly, kept a firm hand on the family trade. She'd been worried about her friend Sturgus "acting peculiarly," she said. "Love'll do that." After Ma went "upstairs to fix the fires" -- checking the goings and comings, so to speak, of her girls and patrons -- old McNutt informed her about Sturgus a-lyin' in the snow: shot, mackinaw and vest open. "Sturgus had fell in love with one of Ma's girls, a 13-year-old miner's daughter, Bobby O'Toole -- hence the "Oh, Bobby" moanings. The fool left his money at home that fateful night, had a twirl with Bobby, and left her empty handed. More businesswoman than lover, Bobby must of asked for a final kiss, then shot him with his own .22, rifled his pockets and took his other gun, a big Colt, for compensation. That's



how they nabbed her-found Sturgus's Colt under her mattress along with her stash, wrapped in a silk stocking."

Corson Hirschfeld (*Aloha, Mr. Lucky*, Forge, 2000 and *Too High*, Forge, 2001), has been a professional photographer for 25 years. Based in Cincinnati, he has contributed to many national magazines. His painted photographs of the world's sacred sites have been exhibited at the Smithsonian Institution and museums around the country. He is currently working on his third novel, set between Las Vegas, Miami, and Tennessee.

VICTORIA HOUSTON

Now I defer to a main character -- retired dentist, amateur forensic dental expert, excellent muskie fisherman and aspiring fly fisherman Doc Osborne -- for an opinion on the



Sturgus case. He deferred to the main character in his life -- Loon Lake police chief and a superb fisherman whether a fly rod or casting rod is in hand -- Lew Ferris. (He is always happy to find an excuse to call Lew.) Lew listened, took action, and sent Doc a brief memo, which I'll share with you: "Doc -- busy today. Parking meter receipts due into the state so apologize for brevity here. Called an old walleye buddy in Canada who works for DNR in Alaska and he volunteered to run a paper search for me. First, he checked land records for full Christian names of all witnesses mentioned in that article. Note: Mrs. Henry Baxter's first name is Roberta. Second, he called his father-in-law, retired from the Anchorage Daily Times, and was able to get original file on the case. Turns out the publisher at the time was a friend of the Baxter family, especially "Bobby" Baxter. Hence it was conveniently not noted in the newspaper nor during the trial that Chief Sturgus' early "peculiar" behavior was hysterical sobbing and words to this effect: "Bobby, don't leave me. Bobby, I love you." The reporter's notes said it was common knowledge that Sturgus and Mrs. Baxter were close. However, Mrs. Baxter was a woman of a certain age, leading the Judge to disallow any evidence incriminating her on the grounds that "She is too old to do anything like that ..." And Lew's last words on the memo: "Hey, Doc -- you're never too old to ... do that."

The author of the Loon Lake fishing mystery series, set in northern Wisconsin, I live, work, hunt and fish here in the Northwoods after a 20-year career on the business side of book and newspaper publishing. In my past life, I also published five non-fiction books, which include one I ghostwrote for a famed advice columnist. The ones I own up to include *Loving a Younger Man*, *Alone After School*, and *Making it Work*. I'm winding up *Restore Yourself: How to be the Woman You Were*. This bio is too short to give you details such as what they are really about versus the titles or even the names of my publishers. See me if you really have to know. What's important is that during the years I executed all the above, I was trying to write fiction. After years of missteps, all I knew was that my true talent was my ability to terrify small children. But how do you turn that into cash? I also learned that I have my own secret terror: water. Not water in a glass, but water in a lake, a river, a waterfall, an innocent looking creek ... but how do you turn that into cash? Epiphany! Marry the idea of frightening little kids with my own fear -- after many years of therapy I discovered that all started when I nearly fell into rapids when fishing for the first time at age three -- and ... voila ... fishing mysteries. I am not suggesting that mystery readers are small children. No. Mystery writers are the ones who have never grown up. And so I have written *Dead Angler* and, now, *Dead Creek* -- packed with murder, mayhem and everything you need to know about fly fishing, walleye and muskie fishing.

J.A. JANCE

Mrs. Roberta J. McNutt, age 93, in a dramatic deathbed confession, admitted how years earlier she and her now deceased second husband, John McNutt, had plotted and successfully carried out the long-unsolved homicide of Anchorage Police Chief John J. Sturgus, who was murdered on Feb. 21, 1921. At the time of the unexplained death, John McNutt was employed as a night watchman, and it was he who, according to official accounts, found the dying police chief lying in the street. After being widowed, the then Mrs. Sturgus moved to Seattle where she subsequently married her second husband. Together they



formed a construction company and built dozens of houses and buildings in Seattle's Ballard neighborhood. After selling their business holdings in the early 1960s, they became pillars of Seattle's philanthropic community, making sizable donations to the city's various arts organizations. After John McNutt's subsequent death in 1983, Roberta McNutt lived in relative seclusion. Her confession might never have surfaced had she not had Delia Masters, her paid nurse and companion, fax me a copy. Ms. Agnes Sturgus, Mrs. McNutt's only surviving child, categorically denies her mother's account, saying the fax contains the wild imaginings of someone suffering from an advanced stage of age-related dementia. As for me? I think it's time the Anchorage Police Department took another look at this long neglected case. Once again, journalism has triumphed where inept cops have failed. (Maxwell Cole, columnist, Seattle Post-Intelligencer, writing for J.A. Jance, Seattle, WA).

J.A. Jance was born in South Dakota, raised in Arizona, and now lives near Seattle, Washington. She has written eight mysteries featuring Sheriff Joanna Brady and 14 featuring Seattle homicide detective J. P. Beaumont. She has also written two thrillers set on the Tohono O'otham Indian reservation near Tucson.

CHRISTINE T. JORGENSEN

writes the humorous Stella the Stargazer series featuring Stella, the quirky, star-crossed author of an astrological column for the lovelorn in the Denver weekly paper, the Denver Daily



Orion. In the most recent of this increasingly popular series, *Dead on Her Feet*, the fifth in the series, Stella decides to augment her pitiful paycheck by taking a second temporary job as assistant director of a local family-owned theater production. Assured it would be "dead easy money," Stella finds the owner, producer, writer and stage mother to be all one woman with little talent and a very large temperament problem. The star of the play is a very moody adolescent and to make matters worse, Stella's own love life seems as star-crossed as the play.

The series includes *A Love to Die For*, *You Bet Your Life*, *Curl Up and Die*, and *Death*

of a *Dustbunny*. A Denver resident for 30 years, **Jorgensen** hails from a small town in the Midwest. Jorgensen's day job for more than 25 years was as a social worker, primarily in the field of child protection and pediatric rehabilitation.

Stella the Stargazer declares love is the culprit ... fickle, funny and sometimes fatal. Love felled Chief Sturgus. Stella believes Chief of Police Sturgus was murdered by Ma Baxter in a jealous rage. As she explains it: Ma Baxter saw Chief Sturgus meet Mrs. Lillian Keely for a brief tryst behind the Kyvig building. Enraged that he would cheat on her after their lengthy relationship, she waited until Mrs. Keely proceeded to the hospital, then, embittered by his betrayal, she confronted him, snatched both of his guns, and shot him. Horrified, she ran to the newsstand, then on to his house to establish an appearance of innocence. Unaware that the shot she saw and heard was that of the murder of her lover, Mrs. Keely continued toward the hospital and met Mrs. Earnest Richter and her young son returning from the show. Fearful she might be suspected of having been in the arms of Chief Sturgus, she mentioned having seen the flash of gunfire and heard a muffled shot, not realizing the victim was Chief Sturgus. Louis Poppas came to the alley after hearing the shot, because he had suspected someone was there for nefarious reasons, possibly attempting a robbery, or perhaps someone had sighted a wandering bear and shot to scare it away. When Ma Baxter was returning from Chief Sturgus' house, she met special night watchman and fire patrolman John McNutt, who mentioned a "common drunk" moaning at the foot of her back stairs. She ran to Sturgus. There, discovering him to be still alive and herself in possession of the offending weapon, she threw it in the snow where it was subsequently discovered. The second gun was discovered days later under a lavender sachet and a scarlet bustier along with a collection of love letters addressing her as Bobby Dearest. Mr. Baxter's comment when the gun was discovered and accidentally discharged, was, "I didn't know the gun was loaded or that she had that consarned red thingy." McNutt, who had been under suspicion because of his earlier improbable statement that he had assisted the person, never recognizing him as Chief Sturgus, admitted to the assistant prosecuting attorney, J.S.

Truitt, that he had lied. In fact, he had decided to get Chief Sturgus' help before attempting to move the man because he appeared to be incoherent and possibly violent. McNutt explained that he felt he had already dealt with his quota of common drunks that night, and as this one was moaning and thrashing about, it was Sturgus' turn to handle it. Mortified to learn that he had left his friend and mentor without aid, he initially lied to cover his embarrassment. Mrs. Baxter was quoted as saying, "John McNutt is and always has been an incompetent nincompoop. If Sturgus had hired a sensible man and kept his pants buttoned up, as well as his coat and vest, he'd be alive today." All Anchorage joined in expressing their sorrow that such a fine, upright specimen of manhood as Chief Sturgus was lost. The business women polled stated they'd never again find anyone as good as the chief.

LARRY KARP,

a New Yorker who now lives in Seattle, has worked as a golf caddy, file clerk, warehouseman, waiter, obstetrician, and dealer/restorer of antique music boxes. He writes the Thomas Purdue mystery series, set in the antique-collecting subculture of present-day New York City. Purdue, a neurologist and music box collector, solves crimes with the help of his reluctant wife, Sarah, and friends like antiques-picker Broadway Schwartz and shopkeeper Frank (the Crank) Maar. So far the series consists of *The Music Box Murders*, *Scamming the Birdman*, and *The Midnight Special* (all Write Way, hardcover; *MBM* is available in a World Wide Library paperback). *The Midnight Special* will come out March, 2001.

Larry caught up with Thomas and Schwartz the other day for lunch at the Carnegie Deli. Over corned beef sandwiches that could dislocate jaws, and cheesecake capable of inducing instantaneous coronary occlusion, the three friends looked over an Anchorage Daily Times article about the murder of Police Chief John J. Sturgus. Thomas sipped Cel-Ray soda while he read, then smiled. "Find out who wrote this, you've got the killer. Those days, reporters drank, gambled, had two wives at a time and cheated on them both -- but they took pride that they really knew how to use words. Read Mencken,

Gene Fowler. No real live 1921 legman would've written that Sturgus was lying prone on his back. Prone is face down. Supine's on your back." "That's fine," Larry said. "But why wouldn't the chief tell who'd shot him?" Schwartz raised a finger, gulped a bolus of corned beef. "Easy. Guy in that position ain't prone to rat on nobody."

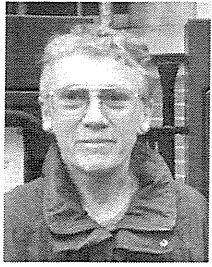
MARIE LOGGIA-KEE



Slow night on the job, and it's cold -- cold enough to make his blood slow down. He's only been on the job two months, and Chief of Police John Sturgus is tired as he makes his neighborhood rounds. This morning, he received another call from *la familia*. They knew, and they wanted to make him pay. He passes Baxter's newsstand, not knowing that he would soon be making the front page of the papers himself. As he comes toward the Kyvig Building, the late-night dampness begins to slip through his clothing, and a chill settles on his tailbone. His hand slides down to his waist, feeling the absence of his billy stick and the comforting weight of his gun. Another gun rests in the small of his back. In this case, two is not too much. From the shadows of the alley rush two men. One grabs each arm from behind, and before he knows what happened, the gun that was protecting his back is thrust into his chest and it's all over. Two men who don't belong are easily lost -- and that's what they do; disappear.

After working for traditional newspapers, magazines and as an online journalist, **Marie Loggia-Kee**, M.A., knows the ins and outs of the publishing world. She currently edits and writes for *The Zone*, a high-tech business magazine, and teaches college classes in creative writing, English, writing for the web and multimedia design. In her "free" time, Loggia-Kee serves as President of Webgrrls LA and freelances cooking columns, automotive-related features and music reviews for a variety of websites. As a fan and writer, Loggia-Kee enjoys the darker side of mysteries.

PATRICIA LUNNEBORG



Anchorage Daily Times reporter and amateur sleuth Carly Cadwallader is investigating the baffling death of Chief of Police John Sturgus, found shot at close range with his

own gun. Carly is following up all the inquest witnesses' accounts and today we find her at a table at Louis Poppas's café where his slow-witted daughter Louise describes the last time she served Sturgus. Louie P. was questioned at the inquest, but not Louise. (From Lily Anne Keely's *Death at the Coffee Café*. Hardback. Anchorage: Left Coast Press. 1925, pages 135-140, words = 237)

Hand-lettered signs greeted Carly.

DOGS AND NON-WHITES OUT BACK
ACCOMPANIED LADIES ONLY

NO GREEK FOOD-LOUIE P DON'T LIKE

"Chief come in bout 8:00. Sat near the door, kept lookin at his pocket watch. Then this lady in a big cape rushes in and heads straight for him." "Louise, what time was this?" "He'd drunk four mugs. Maybe 8:30?" "What did this lady look like?" "She kept a hood over her head ... dunno. Set this basket on the chair beside her. They set to talkin real low, heads together. Asked for her order. Coffee and almond cake. Chief went out back to ... relieve hisself. Brung'em coffee and almond cake." "And then?" "When she thought I weren't lookin, she sneaks our cake into the basket and puts another cake on the plate. Whoof. I could smell it from the kitchen. Almonds." "How curious." "When the chief come back, he offers her some but she was havin none of it. The cake was for him. So he set to. Then she excuses herself. Why'd she need to take her basket to the toilet? Cuz she wasn't comin back." "What did the chief do then?" "Slapped some coins on the table, went out, clutching his stomach, groaning like. Last I saw of him. Hey, gotta get back to work." Carly stared down at her notes. Woman of mystery? Poisoned cake? Shot to the heart? Self-inflicted? Better than slow, agonizing demise?

Pat Lunneborg is a retired psychology professor who taught community psychology and did career counseling at the University of Washington. Her books include *Women Police Officers: Current*

Career Profile; Women Changing Work; Abortion: A Positive Decision; OU Women: Undoing Educational Obstacles; OU Men: Work Through Lifelong Learning; The Chosen Lives of Childfree Men, and soon to be published with her sister, **Bobbie Ryan**, *Food, Drink, and the Female Sleuth*. Like many nonfiction writers, Pat has a fiction mystery manuscript in the bottom file drawer: *Murder on Hampstead Heath*.

MARIANNE MACDONALD

Marianne Macdonald was born in the lumber town of Kenora in Northern Ontario, and grew up in Winnipeg and Montreal. Her first children's book was published when she was 16. She took her BA at McGill University, then went to Oxford for graduate studies in English. For 30 years she pretended to be an academic, acquiring various degrees and teaching at universities in Canada and England. She left teaching early in order to return to her writing. She now lives in a strange Victorian house on top of Muswell Hill, London, with open fireplaces in the cellar and stained glass in the attic windows. Her hobbies include dog walking, photography, old movies, travel, talking to strangers, worrying about the socio-economic development of the contemporary world, and taking long hot baths when any of the above threatens to overwhelm her. Since 1996 she has published a series of books in which Dido Hoare, 30-something London single mother and antiquarian book shop owner, is involved in murder and mayhem thanks to her itch of curiosity and an inability to back down even when she knows she should. *Death's Autograph*, *Ghost Walk*, *Smoke Screen*, and *Road Kill* are followed in 2001 by *Blood Lies*, with a body in a country house library and a valuable first-edition "Peter Rabbit" lost, stolen or strayed.

In 1896, the Fourth of July dance in the Turnagain Arm gold mining center of Sunrise featured two violins, one banjo and one guitar. The dance was called off early in the morning when the six women were too exhausted from dancing with the 2,000 men.



JO-ANN MAPSON
Who killed Chief Sturgus? That's simple. Mayor Wuerch time-traveled back to 1921 and exercised his right to firearms. Then he lay in wait for Anchorage of the year 2000.

Therefore, my characters and I recommend Kevlar vests for all residents.

Jo-Ann Mapson is the author of a book of award-winning stories, *Fault Line*, and five published novels: *Hank & Chloe*, *Blue Rodeo* (which was a CBS-TV movie starring Kris Kristofferson), *Shadow Ranch*, *Loving Chloe* and the best-selling *The Wilder Sisters*. Her sixth novel, *Bad Girl Creek*, is due out this May from Simon & Schuster. Book one in a trilogy, it's set partially in Alaska. Mapson occasionally reviews for the Los Angeles Times and The Boston Globe and freelances for the Anchorage Daily News. She lives in the Matanuska Valley with her four dogs.

JEFFREY MARIOTTE

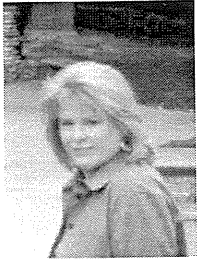
"Suicide," I suggested. At 19,300 feet up Machapuchare, where we had climbed to establish Camp Two, Ed Broyles and I were socked in by a sudden storm and spent the night on a narrow shelf of mountain. To pass the time, we swapped cold weather disaster tales. Finally, he told me about John Sturgus. Ed shook his head. "No way, Oliver. The guy was a one-man police force, and had only been in the position for six weeks. He cared about the community." "The woman from the hospital, then." "Lillian Keely took the police chief's gun away and shot him with it?" "No," I replied. "He handed it to her." I waited out a gust that threatened to blow our tent over the side. "You said he had been 'acting peculiarly' that day. I think he suffered from a debilitating disease that was quickly getting worse. He kept it secret, but not from Lillian; she worked at the hospital. When he knew for sure he was losing it, he had her finish him off." "Early euthanasia?" Ed asked. "Why do it that way?" "That's the beauty part," I explained. "The police



force had just been established. Sturgus wanted to be sure that it would continue. What better way to do that than to leave his successor with a genuine mystery?"

Jeff Mariotte, co-owner of Mysterious Galaxy, is also the author of several books including *Angel: Hollywood Noir*. Adventure guide Oliver Lark is introduced in *365*, a work in progress.

CHRISTINE MATTHEWS



My name's Roberta Stanton; I'm a P.I. Well, not officially. I lost my license after setting up my father for murder. I get by taking cases the "real" detectives won't touch.

Like substantiating the old man's confession. Robert Richter told me how he and his widowed mother moved to Anchorage to manage a hotel. Life was peaceful for them there until John Sturgus arrived and got hired as Chief of Police. About that same time Robert contracted pneumonia. Lillian Keely worked at the hospital, and when she saw Bobbie's birth certificate, she couldn't wait to spread the news. John Sturgus found out about his illegitimate son. Confused, he went to confide in his friends the Baxters, but changed his mind. Knowing Violet and the boy had gone to the show, he waited for them. Robert said his mother and Sturgus got into a terrible argument, poor kid got frightened and grabbed the Chief's gun. Richter's 85 now, living at a home outside of L.A. The guilt has been eating at him his whole life. I tried reassuring him that his father knew it had been an accident, had refused to identify the shooter. I verified every detail of his story and, at his request, presented the facts to the judge.

Christine Matthews has written more than 50 short stories, including three featuring Roberta Stanton. Her novel, *Scarred for Life*, as well as a short story collection, *Gentle Insanities and Other States of Mind*, will be published in 2001.

MARJORIE MCCOWN

has spent the past 10 years working as a costume designer in Hollywood -- and unwittingly gathering material for her debut book, *Death by Design*, praised by Library Journal as "... a meaty diversion and a winning look at behind-the-scenes Hollywood. An exemplary first novel ..." The author has parlayed her experiences on projects such as *Forrest Gump*, *Apollo 13*, and *Wag the Dog* into a book that looks beyond the superficial gloss of the film industry to its workaday world, where ambition and potential murder victims abound, thereby biting the hand that still feeds her. McCown now works on a television program, *That 70's Show*.



MARILYN MEREDITH

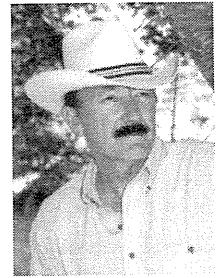


After hearing about the unsolved murder of Chief Sturgus, Deputy Tempe Crabtree burned sage, and called back the spirit of the dead. What she learned was Chief Sturgus was killed by his wife, who suffered from

undiagnosed schizophrenia. Because he loved her so much, he didn't reveal her identity before his death.

Marilyn Meredith is the author of the Tempe Crabtree mystery series. Tempe, part Yanduchi Indian, often uses Native American spiritualism to help her solve mysteries. Marilyn lives in a foothill community of the Sierra much like the one Tempe patrols. A writer for many years, Marilyn has published historical family sagas as well as mysteries and other novels in paper and on the Internet. She is also an instructor for Writers Digest School. Her second book in the series, *Unequally Yoked*, was published in Oct., 2000 and will be available in time for the conference.

ED MITCHELL, retired Army officer, rocket scientist, and amateur prospector, writes in Monterey County, California. Ed spent over 14 years crafting the *Gold Rush* Trilogy. *Gold Rush*



2000 -- the first of three mystery adventures in the trilogy -- won the National Publishers Freedom Award for Best New Fiction in the USA and Canada from a small press. Additionally, *Gold Rush 2000* is the first "non-Steinbeck" novel accepted into the National Steinbeck Center Resource Library. Ed experienced life's challenges and honed his writing skills as he progressed through the following major life/career events:

- Turn-key child sent to Juvenile Hall, later a foster child on welfare, living on a dairy farm.
- West Point graduate, Army Airborne Ranger Infantryman; served overseas in Alaska and Korea.
- Graduated from the Defense Department's Program Management school, performed program management within the "Star Wars" program.
- Selected as a RAND Fellow to work one year at the RAND Corporation. The historical text he authored, on Army use of space systems, was later used as a resource text at the Command and General Staff College.
- Served in the U.S. Space Command before and during Desert Shield.
- Aerospace engineer/manager supporting launches of National Missile Defense interceptors.
- Amateur prospector and member Gold Prospectors Association of America (GPAA).

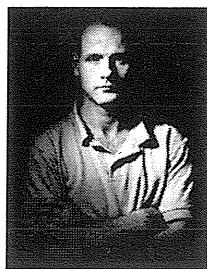
"I can prove Mrs. Baxter shot the Sheriff," Ed Mitchell said while removing his grizzly bear coat in Judge David's office, revealing the recent arrival's impressive, muscular, five-foot-six frame. "Preposterous supposition by a newcomer to Anchorage," the heavyset judge replied. "Not a newcomer, judge. As a lieutenant in the Army I traveled the state for two years. Been on the ice north of Point Barrow, walked the frozen beaches of Nome, boated the Nenana, crossed glaciers near McKinley, kissed many a woman in Fairbanks, and drank tequila in Anchorage before returning to California." "Your sordid past does not impress me, young fella. I need facts, not theory." Mitchell warmed his hands in front of the fireplace while answering. "You heard the

• When gold was discovered in the Klondike in the late 1890s, tens of thousands of people headed to Alaska, determined to become rich. As they rushed to each "next big strike," the mining companies founded their own "towns" in which to spend the winter.

testimony about the condition of Sturgus' clothing, proving he had been with someone who he was comfortable with. Someone who could have lifted his pistol. Additionally, he was shot at close range. Sturgus had let someone he trusted near him." "That may be true, but I need opportunity, means and motive to prove who is the killer." "Clearly Mrs. Baxter had the opportunity. Sturgus was killed outside the Kyvig building she lived in, a few feet from her private room. She admitted she had seen the sheriff prior to the shooting and was out and about. The means -- simple. She used Sturgus' own gun that she lifted from him either in her room or while she kissed him just before the shooting. And motive, he was going to reveal their affair, which would ruin her standing with her family and the town." "Some of what you say applies to many of the possible suspects. But an affair, preposterous." A smile crossed Mitchell's ruggedly handsome face. "Judge, she made several mistakes in her testimony that reveal her guilt. She did not have the time to leave her apartment, go to the news stand and several houses and show up at the scene of the crime." "She's been known to be quick on her feet," the judge protested. "Several witnesses confirm that no one was seen racing away from where the sheriff was shot. Mrs. Baxter's story of going out, not seeing Sturgus, and returning was intended to explain away why she appeared at the rear of the Kyvig building." "Brilliant deduction. How did you gain the skill to solve mysteries?" "Just an award-winning mystery author. Creates a devious mind, able to see multiple ways to solve a puzzle." "Son, we'll question her in the morning." "Sorry, Judge. I have to mush on to Fairbanks. You've got enough to search her apartment for evidence that Sturgus was there and enough facts to question her. Good luck."

ADRIAN MULLER

was born in Canada and raised and educated in the Netherlands. After obtaining a degree in Arts Administration from the Reinwardt Academy for Museology, Adrian moved to the United Kingdom. Living in Bristol, he held various posts at Watershed, Britain's first media center. He has since become a freelance



writer and events organizer specializing in crime fiction. His profiles of crime novelists have been published in books and magazines in Australia, Europe and the United States. Adrian Muller has been the events manager for the London bookshop Crime in Store; one of the organizers of the 1997 St. Hilda's Crime and Mystery Weekend in Oxford; and in 1998 helped found Dead on Deansgate, Britain's biggest crime fiction convention (becoming its programming chairman in 2000). Adrian also works on the annual 'Masters of Crime' supplement published by The (London) Times.

My solution to the Sturgus murder? I haven't a clue! But let me sum up some facts: TWELVE witnesses were called. Six of the witnesses hear a gunshot, and six of them narrow the time to approximately 9:15 p.m. All of the non-professional witnesses appear to have been close to the scene of the crime when it happened, but none of them saw anything of significance? Highly unlikely! I am not a fiction writer, and I can't begin to think of a motive. However, for a possible "who-dunnit" let me refer you to the solution of one of the greatest crime writers' best plots: Agatha Christie's *Murder on the Orient Express*. Happy reading!

SHARAN E. NEWMAN

"Frankly, there are a number of terms in this document that need explaining for me. What is a gun, for instance? Some sort of sharp object, I would suppose, but why would it make a noise? That aside, if it is a weapon known to have a distinctive sound when used, why were more people not seriously alarmed? If someone were to knife a man in Paris in my day, the hue and cry would have been set up at once and the streets searched for the culprit, especially if the victim were a person of note. Now, everyone interviewed seems to have been coming from the First Show. Just what is that, some sort of display of relics? Perhaps it is a religious ceremony peculiar to Anchorage. Perhaps it induces some kind of mystic stupor since none of them appeared to notice the escape of the miscreant. Yet what kind of felon would wait until after a "show," when the streets are full, to commit a murder? My only conclusion from these admittedly



incomplete facts is that either the man killed himself, a heinous crime, or that he was secretly loathed by the people of the town. If he was in a position of power, he may have used it to oppress the inhabitants who then banded together to rid themselves of a tyrant. Such a thing is not unheard of in my day, although, of course, I would never advocate such a thing. The king should have been informed and petitioned for the man's removal."

Catherine LeVendeur has a crime almost as confusing in her latest advention *To Wear the White Cloak*, Forge, 2000, in the medieval mystery series by **Sharan Newman**.

MICHAEL NEWTON

published 154 books since 1977, with 10 more forthcoming over the next two years. He is best known for true crime, and reports the solution to the Sturgus homicide as follows:



"Chief Sturgus was shot in the chest by night watchman John McNutt, whose transparent lies to the coroner's jury clearly indicate guilty knowledge. McNutt misstated the time of the shot by a full two hours, contradicting every other witness, and clearly lied in stating that he could not recognize Sturgus (whom he knew well) while the chief was lying "prone on his back" [sic] in the alley -- this despite the fact that McNutt allegedly handled the victim in an effort "to get the man up." Mrs. Baxter, by contrast, recognized Sturgus immediately, proving that there was light enough in the alley to permit clear viewing. I believe McNutt was employed as a lookout for bootleggers illegally removing "medicinal" liquor from the Kyvig Building's first-floor pharmacy - - the only place in town that would have a legal stock of booze on hand in this second year of Prohibition. Chief Sturgus arrived unexpectedly and drew his gun, but was lulled into a sense of false security at the sight of McNutt, who then disarmed Sturgus and shot him with his own weapon. Sturgus's raving delirium ("Bobby! Bobby! My head!") is no surprise, considering the massive shock from loss of blood. Mobster Dutch Schultz, for example, babbled for hours after he was shot in the abdomen by syndicate assassins."

RIDLEY PEARSON

is a nationally best-selling crime novelist. Over the past 15 years, he has crafted 12 highly praised, frighteningly real thrillers, and a 13th novel entitled *Middle of Nowhere* came out in June, 2000. He has earned a reputation for writing fiction that grips the imagination, emphasizes unusual crimes and dazzling investigative detail, and, all too often, imitates life. Pearson's previous novels have helped solve two real-life homicides, helped settle an environmental lawsuit and regularly tackle subjects that eerily become national news after he writes about them. These subjects have included: the smuggling of Chinese immigrants into the U.S. via cargo containers -- undetected in the Northwest prior to his writing of *The First Victim* (now more than 20 such shipping containers have been intercepted by authorities); high-temperature accelerant arson (a mysterious fire similar to the type Pearson described previously in *Beyond Recognition* perplexed Seattle officials and at least one death has been attributed to the same type of high-tech arson he wrote about); illegal adoptions involving kidnapped children and the lengths couples will go to adopt (*The Pied Piper*); the existence of a crime gene (*Chain of Evidence*); and the black marketing of illegally harvested human organs (*The Angel Maker*), which have all made national headlines shortly after his books have been released. But perhaps the most personally significant result of Pearson's writing occurred in 1999. After extensive research for his novels *The First Victim* and *The Pied Piper*, he became painfully aware of the startling plight of some 35,000 to 40,000 infant girls abandoned to Chinese orphanages each year. Pearson and his wife Marcelle soon decided to adopt one of these children as their own and last August young Storey joined the Pearson family, which also includes three-year-old Paige. Not surprisingly, nearly all of Pearson's novels have at some time been optioned for film. *Beyond Recognition* is currently in development as an A&E Original Movie. He has also penned the script for the first independent documentary ever shot on Alcoholics Anonymous, which aired on A&E in June, 2000. In 1990, Pearson



became the first American to be awarded the Raymond Chandler Fulbright Fellowship in detective fiction at Oxford University. He also tries to give back to the community: Non-profit organizations auction off the chance to have one's name appear in a future Pearson novel, raising \$20,000 to date; and he volunteers five hours a week as a teacher's aide in a local alternative school for high school drop-outs and so-called "problem" students. Pearson's first love, music, has run the gamut from writing original folk rock music for a touring bar band to composing the orchestral score for an internationally award-winning documentary film, "Cattle Drive." He also plays bass guitar for the Rock Bottom Remainers, a charity fundraising rock band consisting of some of the country's most popular writers, including Stephen King, Dave Barry, Amy Tan and Mitch Albom. In 1998, Pearson's band of nearly 30 years ago had a long lost-album -- "Big Lost Rainbow" (1973) -- reissued on CD due to collector interest in the work. Pearson lives in Hailey, Idaho where he is at work on his next crime novel. For more information, please contact: Carol Perfumo, 252-726-3187; 77 West 66th Street, New York, NY 10023-6298

SHARON KAY PENMAN

Who killed Police Chief Sturgus? You might as well ask me who killed Cock Robin. The sad truth is that I am woefully inept when it comes to solving mysteries. I am an enthusiastic fan and almost every night, I can be found reading into the early hours of dawn, with all lights blazing, of course. But I never jump ahead of the author, never disturb the silence of the bedroom with a triumphant cry of "Aha, the killer has to be Inspector Pitt's sergeant!" I realize this is an odd confession for a mystery writer. Fortunately, Justin de Quincy is far more skilled than I am at catching killers, even though I unfairly handicapped him by setting him down in the 12th century, an age utterly lacking in the high-tech forensics that his 21st-Century brethren enjoy. I did attempt to solve one of history's greatest mysteries -- who killed the Little Princes in the Tower? Here, thought, I was merely following in the hallowed footsteps of Josephine Tey. Having admitted that I



cannot solve Chief Sturgus' murder, I'd best get on to the personal information. I was once a lawyer, which I considered penance for my sins. My first novel was the one attempting to "clear" Richard III, and since then I've written four more historicals and two medieval mysteries. I live in New Jersey with a ridiculous number of dogs for someone not training for the Iditarod, and am trying these days to convince Henry II and Eleanor of Aquitaine to share center stage with Justin. Speaking of Justin, he wants the last word. Whether I am rooting for one of Dana's villains to be eaten by a bear (bless her, she sometimes obliges) or urging Stephanie to choose Joe over Ranger or cheering on Elvis or Myron, Justin is always reading over my shoulder and honing in on the real killer with unerring precision. I guess it is lucky that one of us is good at this!

ANNE PERRY

"An interesting tale, Watson. Certain facts leap out at one immediately." "The unfortunate Sturgus knew his attacker," I agreed. "The man, or woman, fired at almost point blank range. And with Sturgus' own gun!" "And more telling than that," Holmes continued. "When conscious in the operating room, Sturgus did not deny knowing them, which surely he would have done, if it were so. He was protecting someone." "Even on his deathbed!" I exclaimed. "How noble of him. He must have cared for them intensely." "I don't doubt it," Holmes said drily. "But I am not convinced that the person he desired so urgently to protect was not himself." "Himself? But the poor man was already past all help. He was dying. What more could harm him?" "His reputation, Watson. Some men value it even when everything else is gone. Evidence agrees he was shot at approximately 9:15 p.m., and in the new-packed snow there was no mark of struggle. He was well acquainted with Mrs. Baxter, who admits to being present on the scene, although apparently not hearing the shot that others did. By her own account, she saw him earlier and walked a considerable distance to assure herself of his welfare rather than remaining at home with her husband -- her second husband, one assumes, since her



son was named Larson." "You think she shot him?" I asked. "But why?" "There are a number of possible reasons, but the oldest is probably the best. I wonder what attempt was made to find "Bobby?" And what Mrs. Baxter's given name might be?" "Possibly Roberta?" I suggested. "Possibly," he agreed.

After leaving New Zealand in 1959, first for a stopover in Sydney, Australia and then for her destination in the U.K., **Anne Perry** held a variety of jobs in England in the early '60s. She was a flight attendant on domestic U.K. flights and lived and worked in Newcastle, in the northeast corner of England, for a time. Then, in 1967, she was granted a visa to live and work in the United States. Anne Perry came to San Francisco in the Summer of Love. She eventually moved to Los Angeles and worked, among other jobs, as an underwriter by day, while writing at night. She eventually moved back to the U.K. in the early 1970s. Perry's first novel, *The Cater Street Hangman*, was published in 1979. Prior to this, she had written several works of historical fiction but had never managed to sell them. By moving into the Victorian era, and the genre of the murder mystery, Ms. Perry had at last hit upon a commercial product. Since that time she has worked at a furious pace to build up her reputation, and her readership, to its present level of success. Anne Perry now lives a mile from her mother on the eastern coast of Scotland, in a huge renovated stone barn overlooking the sea. She has three dogs and two cats and a neighbor who raises pigs. Her community is a small, close-knit one. Ms. Perry never married, though she says she came close to it a couple of times.

BARBARA PETERS

Barbara Peters is the owner of the The Poisoned Pen, a bookshop in Scottsdale, Arizona, and of the Poisoned Pen Press.



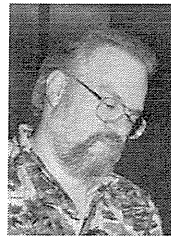
KELLEY RAGLAND

Kelley Ragland is an editor at St. Martin's.

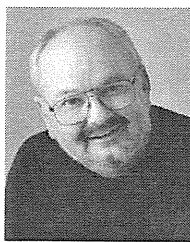


ROBERT J. RANDISI

Since 1980 Robert J. Randisi has become -- as near as he can figure -- the author of over 360 books in the mystery, Western, men's adventure, fantasy and espionage genres. He is the creator of fictional P.I.'s Miles Jacoby and Nick Delvecchio and police detective Joe Keough. He has been nominated four times for the Shamus Award from the Private Eye Writers of America. He is the editor of more than 25 print and audio anthologies. His newest book is *Blood on the Arch* (St. Martin's Press, 2000), a Joe Keough novel. In 1993 he was the recipient of a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Southwest Mystery/Suspense Convention. In 1995 his novel *Alone With the Dead* (SMP) received a starred review from *Publisher's Weekly*. The year 2001 will see the publication of the novel *The Masks of Auntie Laveau*, co-authored with Christine Matthews, as well as *Delveccio's Brooklyn*, a collection of his Nick Delvecchio short stories. He is the founder and permanent executive director of the Private Eye Writers of America, the creator of the Shamus Award; the co-founder of *Mystery Scene Magazine* and *The American Crime Writer's League*; and the former mystery reviewer for *The Orlando Sentinel*. He regrets that all of his detectives -- Jacoby, Delvecchio and Keough -- were unavailable to work on the murder of the Anchorage police chief, but has faith that others will solve the heinous crime.



BRAD REYNOLDS



Father Reynolds, a Jesuit priest, is author of the Father Mark Townsend mystery novels. He has published four books, *The Story Knife*, *A Ritual Death*, *Cruel Sanctuary*, and *Deadly Harvest*. Father Reynolds has worked both as a photographer and author, with over 500 photographs and 250 articles in print in such publications as *National Geographic*, *America*, *American Scholar*, *New Orleans Review*, *National Catholic Reporter*, *Pacific Northwest Magazine*, *Anchorage Daily News*, *Seattle*

Times, and *The Critic*. He joined the Jesuit order in 1967 and was ordained a Catholic priest in 1977. Currently, Father Reynolds directs formation and training for the Jesuit order in the Pacific Northwest and is the executive assistant at the Jesuit Provincial Office in Portland, OR.

PETER ROBINSON

is the author of the Inspector Banks series, which includes the Edgar-nominated *Wednesday's Child* and *In a Dry Season*. *In a Dry Season* won the Anthony and Barry awards for best novel of 1999, and was also nominated for the Arthur Ellis, Hammett and Macavity awards. Robinson's award-winning short stories have been collected in *Not Safe After Dark and Other Stories*, published by Crippen & Landru in 1998. His eleventh Banks novel, *Cold is the Grave*, was published in September, 2000, by Morrow. He lives in Toronto with his wife Sheila Halladay.



SJ ROZAN

The murder of John Sturgus was not accomplished by any of the known suspects. It was cleverly carried off by a distant great-grand-uncle of Dana Stabenow, who recognized that if law and order were brought too soon to Alaska, Dana, to be born well over half a century later, would never become interested in crime and therefore never become a crime writer, and that would be a damn shame.

SJ Rozan, author of the Lydia Chin/Bill Smith P.I. series, was born and brought up in the Bronx. Her books have won the Anthony and the Shamus, both for Best Novel, and a short story has been nominated for the Edgar. SJ holds a BA from Oberlin College and an M. Arch. from SUNY at Buffalo. She is senior associate in a mid-size N.Y. architecture firm with a practice that specializes in historic restoration and in public buildings. She lives now in Greenwich Village.



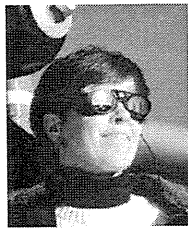
MEGAN MALLORY RUST

"So, did you get a chance to look at that weird Sturgus murder?" Megan Mallory Rust aimed her query at Taylor Morgan, who perched on a bar stool next to her in the Regal Alaskan Hotel's lakeshore pub. "Well, yeah, but I'm just a medevac pilot, not a detective," Taylor puzzled. "Why'd you ask me?" "I wanted your opinion. If I thought you couldn't solve crimes I wouldn't have made you protagonist of my mystery series." "But you're the mystery author. If you can't figure it out, I'd say your head injury did more than wreck your flying career. It appears you're not firing on all cylinders." She smirked impishly at her creator. Megan leveled a steely glare at Taylor. "Hey, no badmouthing the author. If you piss me off I'll write you out of the stories." When Taylor realized she couldn't dodge Megan's questions, she acquiesced. "The circumstances are obvious," she sighed. "Sturgus was protecting his killer, since he didn't name the shooter when they found him, still alive. The triggerman must have been someone influential. Wasn't some bigwig politician visiting Alaska that year? Or maybe a movie star --" A peal from her beeper interrupted her musing, and she peered at it. "Hey, that's a medevac call and I've gotta get going." Taylor climbed off her stool and grabbed her flight jacket. Dashing for the exit, she shrugged into it. "Okay," Megan yelled after Taylor's disappearing back. "Have a good flight, and I'll wait for your solution in book four! Don't forget, now!"

Megan Mallory Rust spends her days writing in her Eagle River, Alaska home under the watchful eyes of two cats. Her third Taylor Morgan mystery, *Coffin Corner*, came out from Berkeley Prime Crime last June.

BOBBIE WELLS RYAN,

one half of The Sisters Wells (*Food, Drink, and the Female Sleuth*) has a lengthy career as a nonfiction writer and editor. She holds degrees from Bucknell University and University of Pennsylvania. Today she's living out a fantasy as a volunteer police officer with the Sequim PD, Sequim, WA with her radio call number Victor 007.



ENID & TOM SCHANTZ

Tom and Enid Schantz are two of the most knowledgeable reviewers of the mystery genre. They have owned the Rue Morgue bookstore in Boulder, Colorado for over 25 years. They write reviews for the Rocky Mountain News and also publish out-of-print and retro mysteries.

GERALD A. SCHILLER

I have been a teacher, as well as a writer / director of many award-winning documentary and educational films. I have authored over 50 articles, reviews, and short stories for magazines and newspapers, as well as four books: The mysteries, *Deadly Dreams* (1996) and *Death Underground* (1999), and two children's books. This year two new books will be published (*True Stories of Old California* and my third mystery, *Voice of Reason ... Voice of Death*). Since I also dabble a bit with poetry, I have done a poetic solution to the Sturgus mystery:

The witnesses that wintry night
Had come upon a fearful sight:
'Twas John J. Sturgus lying low
Shot and bleeding in the snow.

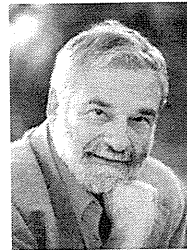
Several folks had heard the shot,
At 9: 15 — right on the dot.
As Sturgus was about to die,
They asked who did it ... no reply.

Who killed this man, who did this deed?
There was no clue. There was no lead.
Some criminal he'd sent to jail?
Some crook who might be out on bail?

No. Chief John Sturgus now was dead
Because his love — a guy named Fred
Had just been jilted, and he swore
The faithless cop would live no more.

So when they met that final time,
Fred was the one who did the crime,
But not one person had suspected
So the truth was not detected.

Fred took off, and would you know
He's found a new love up in Juneau.



AILEEN SCHUMACHER

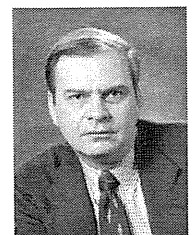
Tory Travers is a professional engineer who has been involved in more murder investigations than she would like to acknowledge. She wants to know if Archie Adams, who was affiliated with the Alaskan Engineering Commission, was himself an engineer. If he was an early participant in the trend of non-engineers making engineering decisions, that in itself would be enough to drive one to be *Engineered for Murder*. What can you expect from an engineer but tunnel vision, asks Detective David Alvarez. It's Sturgus who got shot, for crying out loud. What about these "friendly visits" reported by Mrs. Baxter? A married woman and too many "friendly visits" could certainly set up a *Framework for Death*, a notion that would be endorsed and nominated by any law enforcement officer named Tom, Dick or Anthony. But Scott Faulkner doesn't care about Archie Adams' credentials or the visits made by Sturgus. Detective Follow-the-Money-Faulkner wants to know if Sturgus had any outstanding loans. Refusing to repay money in a timely fashion would certainly set up the opposite to an *Affirmative Reaction*.

Meanwhile, **Aileen Schumacher**, herself an engineer and native Texan (is it cold here or what?) is quickly running short of both inspiration and word count. Those who think the trail to finding Chief Sturgus' killer has gone cold can jump two years ahead and take a climatic antidote to this frozen historical puzzle. *Rosewood's Ashes*, due out in May from Intrigue Press, finds Tory and Alvarez somehow enmeshed in 1923 Florida.

Aileen Schumacher is a civil/environmental engineer, residing in Florida with her husband and two children. *Affirmative Reaction* is the third in the Travers/Alvarez mystery series. Visit Aileen's website at www.aliken.com/aileen/.

WILLIAM SEIL

I have contacted Holly Storm-Fleming of the U.S. Secret Service (now retired), who appeared in my first novel, *Sherlock Holmes and the Titanic Tragedy*, and is the lead character in my forthcoming novel, *An East Wind Coming*. She was 43 years old at the time Chief Sturgus was murdered and remembers the case well. This is what Holly had to say: "I cannot



provide all the particulars of the case, which remains a matter of national security. Suffice it to say that Chief Sturgus (not his real name) was closely associated with the Romanov family of Russia. He fled that country following the Bolshevik revolution of 1917."

William Seil has worked as a writer for more than two decades — first in journalism and then in public relations. After graduating from the University of Illinois with a journalism degree, he went to work as a newspaper reporter. Bill currently works as a writer and corporate public relations professional in the Seattle area. He recently completed work on *An East Wind Coming*, a mystery/espionage novel set prior to the outbreak of World War I. Seil's first mystery novel was *Sherlock Holmes and the Titanic Tragedy*.

BARBARA SERANELLA



It was clear to Munch that the cop had offed himself. The evidence spoke for itself. No other footprints in the nearby snow, the gun found with the body, how Chief Sturgus had left

his money and papers at home that evening. Where he was going, he wouldn't need money. What really cinched the case in Munch's mind was how on the operating table the dying man groaned, "Oh, my head," even though the bullet had pierced his chest. She knew from her own skirmishes with self-destruction where the pain originated, how sometimes all that noise between the ears could get to be too much for a person. She used to count suicide as an option until one day at the Santa Ana morgue where her alter-ego Barbara Seranella was researching one of her crime novels. The coroner showed them all a slide show. One of the pictures was of a guy who used a shotgun to do the deed. It took a minute to fathom what she was looking at. The dead guy's face had collapsed when his brains blew out the top of his skull. That's when it struck her how stupid and wasteful suicide was and what an insult to that old boy upstairs. Now Barbara is glad to be alive and the author of three mysteries featuring Munch Mancini, lady mechanic with a past. Barbara draws on her own life experiences as a auto mechanic and former bad girl. She lives in California with her husband Ron and their two dogs. Barbara welcomes comments and emails. She

can be accessed through her website, barbaraseranella.com or emailed at bseranella@aol.com.

ANDI SHECHTER

Andi is an active editor, reviewer, publicist, writer and avid mystery fan. She is a member or former member of PWA, MWA and Sisters in Crime, and resides in Seattle. You may see Andi's name in *Mandarin Plaid* by S.J. Rozan and *Vampire Bytes* by Linda Grant, and she has been Cass Jameson on DorothyL since 1992.



MARCIA SIMPSON

A young Belgian detective, Hercule Poirot, has solved the mysterious killing of Chief Sturgus, who was recently found shot to death. On reading in the Anchorage Daily Times about Chief Sturgus' death and the failure of the inquest to identify the killer, Mr. Poirot visited the scene of the crime with his dog, Etienne (a distant relative of Sam in *Crow in Stolen Colors*), and was able to track the killer to the Wild Card, a notorious gambling den. Noting that Chief Sturgus had moaned, "Oh Bobby, Bobby," while he lay dying, Mr. Poirot confronted Bobby "Studs" McGee, the proprietor of the Wild Card. McGee explained that Chief Sturgus was a compulsive gambler, playing poker like there was no tomorrow. Rather than pay his enormous gambling debts to McGee, he threatened to shut down the Wild Card. In an altercation in the street, McGee confessed to the Belgian detective that he had shot the Chief. "He still owes me \$3.25," complained McGee as the police led him away.

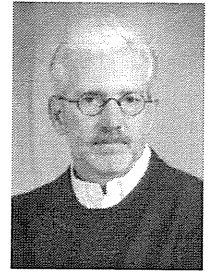
Marcia Simpson was born in Lincoln, Nebraska and received her BA from Stanford and her MA from the University of Wisconsin. Before becoming a full-time author she taught learning-disabled children in Wisconsin and Alaska and traveled to Australia and New Zealand as an exchange teacher. Her writings won her the honor of second prize at the Pacific Northwest Writers' Contest in 1991 and first prize in 1994. As a novelist, teacher and mother of



four, Ms. Simpson spent several years living on her boat in the harbor of a small fishing village in southeast Alaska, teaching at the public school, and accumulating the stories of the fishermen and their families. She continues to commute to Alaska from her home on Lopez Island, Washington, sharing sailing adventures with her husband aboard their elderly wooden ketch, *Nereia*.

MARTIN J. SMITH

I killed John J. Sturgus. "Wait a minute," you might say, "aren't you Martin J. Smith, a 44-year-old veteran journalist and magazine editor who has won more than 40 newspaper and magazine writing awards, and four times was nominated by his newspaper for the Pulitzer Prize? And aren't you currently a senior editor at The Los Angeles Times Magazine and author of the critically acclaimed Memory Series from Berkeley Publishing featuring psychologist Jim Christensen? And didn't Laura Lippman call your recently released *Straw Man* "the creepiest good time I've had in ages?" The very same Martin J. Smith whose Anthony Award-nominated first novel, *Time Release* (Jove 1997), examined the volatile issue of repressed memories against the backdrop of a sensational product-tampering case?" "You mean the one James Ellroy called "a whipcord thriller" and which now is in its third printing?" you might ask. "Yes, that's me." "The same author whose second novel, *Shadow Image* (Jove 1998), Michael Connelly said, "hooks you quickly and yanks you right through to the last page?" The author that Connelly said "writes a damn good whodunit.?" In this novel, psychologist Jim Christensen was drawn into the labyrinth of Alzheimer's disease and a complex web of lies created by one of Pennsylvania's wealthiest and most powerful political families. Your Memory Series web site address is www.martinjsmith.com?" "The very one," I might reply. Incredulous, you might sputter, "But you weren't even alive on that icy night in 1921 when Sturgus turned up dead." "Oh," I might say. "Right. Never mind." **Smith** lives with his wife and their two children in Southern California and is working on his fourth novel.



BARBARA BURNETT SMITH

"The dog did it," Jolie Wyatt said. Cassie Ferris nodded. As protagonist of *Mauve and Murder*, Cassie was a newcomer to the mystery field, but she was catching on. "Of course some people

will say that the dog wasn't even mentioned, but then, that shows how clever he was. Not that dogs get mentioned very often." "To me it's the motive that gave him away. Sturgus calling him "Bobby" for all those years when his name was Toby. Naturally the dog had reached his limit. Add to that the affair that Sturgus was having with Toby's mistress..." "Mrs. Baxter." "Right." Jolie agreed. "Toby had to protect Mr. Baxter's interests, or good name, or whatever. After all, he was Toby's master." "And the way Old Sturgus treated Toby! Kissy sweet when Mrs. Baxter was around, and then kicking him when she wasn't there." "Toby was indeed a very clever dog." "But wait," Cassie said. "What happened to the other gun?" "Oh, that's easy," Jolie said. "Toby buried it."

Barbara Burnett Smith writes the Purple Sage mystery series featuring Jolie Wyatt, and most recently authored a stand-alone, *Mauve and Murder*. This past year she served as President of the National Board of Sisters in Crime. In her left brain life she owns Catalyst Training & Development, teaching communication skills in the corporate world. To visit Purple Sage, or to locate any of her books, visit Barbara's web page at www.io.com/Purple_Sage PS: She doesn't currently own a dog, so she borrows one from the neighbors.

M. LOUISE SMITH

I'm sitting in the Liberty Café staring down at my stained mug of cold coffee and the shriveled remains of reindeer sausage and smoked Cheddar. The fragrance of baking sourdough and the noon special, Chunky Salmon Chowder, mingle with the acrid smoke from a dozen hand-rolled cigarettes. The Liberty's packed



but there's no desire for food; Johnny Sturgus lies dead in the morgue. I'm waiting for my versatile writer friend, M. Louise Smith. She'll be showing her Raku art today at the Richter Hotel, but morbid curiosity to see where Johnny's mortally wounded body lay will bring in the townsfolk. Louise has spent years in the corporate world and understands human nature; therefore, she writes profusely, mostly about me, Middy Brown, liberated mature woman, amateur sleuth, and consultant for StarWay Beauty Products. I'm struggling with my conscience; I know who killed Johnny and why. Mossman testified that Johnny wasn't under any mental strain. In my business I see every explosive human emotion and Johnny was ensnared in the most tumultuous ... he was in love with another man's wife. After Ma Baxter observed him "acting peculiarly," why did she think of Mrs. Felix Brown ... Roberta Brown ... Bobby Brown ... my customer and the pharmacist at Anchorage Drug Store? Had she suspected, as I, that Bobby and Johnny were intimates of that delicious demon, opium? Surely when Bobby realized she'd turned her lover into a hopeless addict and a danger to himself and everyone, she'd have calmly taken his gun, kissed him goodbye, and with a breaking heart pulled the trigger. Still ... Am I to remain silent when I alone know the anguish hidden in those final words ... "Oh, Bobby, Bobby ..."?

M. Louise Smith was born in Texas and although she has also lived in California and New Mexico, she calls Colorado home. After spending numerous years in the corporate world in marketing and advertising and operating her own commercial interior design studio, she now directs her creative talents to writing novels and screenplays and exhibiting her Raku clay artwork. The second in the series of Middy Brown Journals, *In Due Season* will be released in the summer of 2001. She is currently writing Journal III. She and her architect husband make their home in Loveland, Colorado and are the proud parents of four fabulous adult children and their progeny.

The national press reported that in the village of Tuntutulliak, it is the legal tradition to hold an unmarried pregnant girl and the man responsible in the Bethel jail until the baby is born. No one here is certain if it is for reasons of punishment or as a gift of indoor plumbing for the lucky parents-to-be.

KEITH SNYDER

is a composer and novelist now in post-production on the short film "Sell in Hell." The fourth book in his Jason Keltner series will be published by Walker & Co. later this year. In 1985, he drove from Los Angeles to Alaska and worked in a salmon cannery. Left Coast Crime is more fun. His web site: <http://www.woollymammoth.com/keith>.



They say that the chief had two guns
But his body was found with just one.
What they fail to see
Is that he had three.
This clears it all up, as you'll shortly agree.

Attend to the watchman, McNutt.
Did he pick up the gun by its butt?
He did not! Why is that?
'Cause he had his own gat.
(That makes four guns.) And note Mr. Sturgus' hat,
Which was seen -- BUT NO GUN! -- as the body lay flat.
Note Lillian Keely's report of a gun.
(That's piece number five -- and we've barely begun.)
Note Mrs. E. Richter, who heard number six.
Note Old Louis Poppas, who couldn't quite fix
The origin of the discharge of a gun
(Number seven) -- and why did this jovial, balding
Purveyor of coffee, who came on the run
With no reason to dally
See Lillian and Mrs. E. in the alley?

Note who paid witnesses Romig and Spalding.

Archibald Adams, right after the show,
Saw Lillian Keely alone in the snow -- and
Heard shots!
That makes eight; and though you now ask,
"So who murdered the Chief?"; Ah! That's not
Our true task!
For the real conundrum is fiendishly hidden,
So awful it sickens:

Behind the town's mask was a hotbed that
seethed
To the brink of eruption --
An overfilled stockpot with overripe

chickens
(Fowl smell of corruption!)
When Sturgus last breathed.

When we follow the evidence
As we've been bidden,
We're forced to conclude not who killed --
But "Who didn't?"

CJ SONGER

Hello, I'm C.J. Songer, author of the Meg Gillis crime novels (*Bait*, *Hook*, and the soon-to-be *Line*). It seemed to me that there were several things wrong with the witness stories about the Sturgus death, and I'll admit it, I have a suspicious nature. I did a little digging into early Anchorage history and unearthed a few facts that I think have some bearing on this case. However, the organizers of the LCC2001 convention have asked that the authors limit their answers to 250 words apiece. I understand this completely, to save space and the expense of printing the program booklet, but you should know that I write NOVELS, fer goshsakes, I'm not a short story writer for a REASON, and the reason is that I'm unable to write much of ANYTHING in less than 250 words — most especially not when I'm fingering the perpetrator in a previously unsolved true crime case! So rather than spend more wasted hours trying to condense my theory for you when I'm actually supposed to be finishing up *Line* (due out in the fall of 2001 from Scribner), I'll make you a deal. I've written my theory up. It's one and a half pages long. I made a gazillion copies (and yes, there's one in a safe place, in case I don't make it home ...) Find me here at the convention and I'll give you your very own copy. I'm on a panel. I'm signing books. I'll be walking around, looking authorly. (This is assuming that I make it back from the Bush, of course). Failing your finding me at the convention (if, for instance, you don't read this until later), email me at: RedsFox@aol.com and put "Sturgus Theory" in the Subject line. I'll zap you a copy. Got it? Good. Okay, now, shhhh. Don't tell anyone else. Mum's the word ... :)



JESSICA SPEART

Alaskan Police Chief Sturgus definitely got around. Perhaps a little too much. Not that I want to sound envious of a corpse, but my own social life could have used a little perking up -- and I'm talking about more than just your usual cup of joe. I'd been alone for too long -- ever since the love of my life, New Orleans homicide detective Jake Santou, demanded that I make a choice: Either we get hitched or I stay married to my job. I hate ultimatums. I chose the job. Now, just like Sturgus, I felt cold, alone, and a little dead inside. On the bright side, I could always look for another man. As for Sturgus, unless reincarnation was in his cards, he'd run out of luck. McNutt, the night watchman, testified to finding Sturgus' body while on his rounds stoking up fires in buildings. McNutt had stoked up that night, all right. Only it was on a doobie, part of a drug shipment he'd smuggled into Anchorage inside a taxidermied tiger. Sturgus had been on to him and tried to nab McNutt when things went awry. McNutt fired the fatal shot that left Sturgus dying in the snow, which was where Mrs. Baxter stumbled upon her friend. Who could blame Mrs. Baxter for believing Sturgus had mumbled her nickname, "Ma," when he was actually trying to say "marijuana?" How do I know all this? I'm Rachel Porter, special agent with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Jessica Speart is an investigative journalist whose focus is on wildlife law enforcement, endangered species issues, and the environment. Speart created her sleuth -- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Agent Rachel Porter -- after years of investigating wildlife and drug-trafficking crimes for publications such as *The New York Sunday Times Magazine*, *Omni*, *Travel & Leisure*, *Audubon*, *National Wildlife*, *Mother Jones*, *Wildlife Conservation*, *Earth Journal* and *Animals Magazine*, among others. When she began to find the characters she covered stranger than fiction, she decided to turn her pen toward mysteries. Prior to writing, Jessica worked as an actress in NYC, where she appeared off-Broadway, as well as in commercials and soap operas. *Gator Aide*, *Tortoise Soup*, *Bird Brained*, and *Border Prey* are the first four books in the Rachel Porter series. Her fifth book, *Black*



Delta Night, will be published in June. Jessica is a member of Sisters in Crime and Mystery Writers of America.

ELIZABETH DANIELS SQUIRE



In the Appalachian mountains, where I live and set my mysteries, Chief Sturgus' story would have probably become *The Ballad of the Chief Who Wouldn't Tell*. Too bad Robert W. Service never

wrote the words. Ballad or no, Peaches Dann, my absent-minded Appalachian sleuth and memory expert, believes she knows the truth. A shocking and surprising sight glues itself in memory, she says. Therefore, night watchman John McNutt was lying when he said he couldn't remember the condition of Chief Sturgus' vest when he "found" the wounded Chief. Witnesses testified that powder burns showed Sturgus was shot through his left pocket. There was no mention of powder burns on his vest. The vest must have been open with the bullet hole in plain sight, a shocking sight. Why lie except to hide the fact that McNutt shot Sturgus for the same reason that the dying Chief refused to name his killer? Because of a woman. McNutt found his woman and the Chief embracing. He made her stand back, then shot the Chief in a rage. And why wouldn't the Chief tell? He valued the respect of the people of Anchorage and knew that if he named McNutt, they would certainly find out about his unsavory affair, and so would his wife. That's just the sort of heart-wrenching plot an ex-newspaper reporter like me enjoys putting in my novels such as *Forget About Murder* and *Remember the Alibi*. In my books, of course, you do find out who done it.

RILEY ST. JAMES

It's quite apparent this unfortunate fellow was heartlessly ambushed by his mistress, the so-called Anchorage friend to all, Mrs. Henry "Ma" Baxter. (Perhaps more of a Mata Hari than Ma to her long-time lover, John J. Sturgus.) Just before the murder occurred, Mrs. Baxter ar-



rived at her home -- located upstairs in the Kyvig building -- with her daughter and son-in-law. When they ran into Sturgus, he was probably frustrated because he was impatiently waiting to be alone with Mrs. Baxter. And her companions delayed that from happening. (Maybe this is what Sturgus was inaudibly grumbling about in a peculiar manner when he addressed them). A short time later, with Baxter's husband "conveniently" away operating their newsstand, Sturgus entered the Kyvig Building doorway, making his way upstairs for their rendezvous. However, Mrs. Baxter suddenly emerged from the landing shadows, taking Sturgus by surprise, and shot him at close range. Hence the powder burns on his shirt, and the "muffled" shot as reported by Lillian Keely's testimony. Mrs. Baxter then dashed upstairs as Sturgus staggered backward, collapsing onto the snow-covered pathway. (Baxter had either acquired Sturgus' pistol from an earlier tryst, or feigned a hug and, when stepping backward, quickly drew the murder weapon from his pocket). Afterward, knowing watchman John McNutt's standard schedule of rounds, Mrs. Baxter arranged to "bump into him" and did her best to act like she was learning firsthand that her "close friend" lay writhing in agony, mortally wounded. She was always alone. So who knows what really went on during her "heartfelt" time with a dying Sturgus -- besides making sure his pistol was found nearby to further confuse the police? And why did she delay, kneeling at Sturgus' side, instead of immediately rushing for help? The scant and age-cold testimony -- so to speak -- doesn't lend an obvious motive as to why Baxter killed Sturgus. Maybe he was meeting her to mend an earlier "lovers' quarrel" that had affected her much more severely than she could handle. Or perhaps she was desperately distressed, knowing that he was about to end their affair because of his new civic and moral responsibilities as Chief of Police. At the end, as Sturgus lay dying on the hospital bed, perhaps he wouldn't implicate his murderous mistress for fear of exposing their scandalous affair. This was either out of deep respect for his wife, or his undeniable love for Baxter. After all, Sturgus must have been graced with some admirable qualities as well as courageousness. A closing note: The circumstances suggest that Mrs. Baxter's son-in-law, Lyle Larson -- who served on the decisive jury -- probably knew or soundly sus-

pected his mother-in-law's guilt, and therefore, was quite persuasive in bringing this case to a swift and mysterious conclusion. Up until now, that is.

Engaging, knowledgeable and possessing a keen "sense of story," **Riley St. James** is a successful West Coast mystery/supernatural fiction author with two novels to his credit. When not attending signings and other promotional events, he speaks on different facets of the writing and publishing industry. He also participates in professional writing courses and workshops, and is an active member of Mystery Writers of America and Sisters in Crime. The success of Riley's novels reflects today's fascination with mystery and the supernatural. He quotes, "Mystery has always been an intriguing genre. Yet, perhaps today, there is not a more flourishing cultural phenomenon than the concern with mystical and spiritual encounters." Pursuing his lifelong ambition with his published work, Riley thinks that his educational background of fine arts and business complements his many other interests that enhance his ability to write exciting and credible fiction. He is a licensed pilot, travels internationally, dabbles in amateur photography and has even enjoyed some minor acting roles. Please visit Riley on the web -- www.rileystjames.com

DANA STABENOW

"A woman," Kate said. "The powder burns weren't just on the shirt, they were under the flap of the pocket. Would Sturgus let a man get that close?"

And it was a .22, small, easy to use. And I'd put money on the woman being Mrs. Baxter." "Not the wife?" "She was home." "But Mrs. Baxter was coming back from the first show at the time he was shot." "Sure, according to her son and daughter-in-law." She reached for the file. "McNutt said that he heard another shot -- what, two hours before? It was never accounted for in the record. Baxter shot him before the show -- it was the back of the building, it was February, it was dark by five, who would see? -- and then went off with the kids to establish an alibi." "She must have been shook when McNutt told her Sturgus was still alive." "Yeah, that would have been a bad moment. But she played it out, went looking for the



chief. And notice, her son got himself on the coroner's jury. Making sure the verdict stayed person or persons unknown." "What about motive?" Kate grinned. "Got a Yellow Pages?" She found an entry, and pointed. "Larson's Fine Liquors," he read out loud, "Convenient to Office and Hotel, Competitive Pricing, Bush Orders call 1 800 ... wait a minute. Larson?" "It was 1921, Prohibition, everybody knows they were running Canadian whiskey into Bootlegger's Cove back then. I bet Sturgus caught Lyle at it and was going to put him away for it." Jim, annoyed that he hadn't put it together himself, said, "Okay, who was this 'Bobby' Sturgus called for, then?" Kate shrugged. "Maybe Mrs. Baxter's name was Roberta. Bobbie for short. Why do you care, anyway?" "I don't know. He was a cop. He was shot in the line of duty. Bugs me that nobody ever found out who or why." Kate stood up. Mutt cast a languishing farewell look at Jim and padded to her side. "You're scaring me, Chopin. You're starting to sound like a crusader." I've already got a cause, he thought as he watched her walk out the door.

Dana Stabenow is the author of 16 novels. She lives in Anchorage and her web site is: <http://www.stabenow.com>

SERITA MENDELSON STEVENS

The Case of Police Chief Sturgus by Fanny Zindel and Serita Stevens. Facts Based on article Anchorage Daily Times Feb. 21, 1921: Carl Sagan said, "Just because we can't see evi-



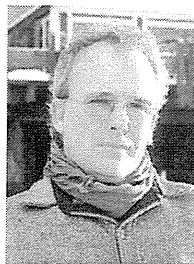
dence doesn't mean evidence is absent." In fact, it is all around us; we just have to be attuned to it. Obviously the detectives at this time overlooked several crucial pieces, which may or may not point to the killer. Let's look at the obvious first: Why did Mrs. Baxter indicate Sturgus, if he lived out of town as when she visited Mrs. Sturgus, at this stairwell going upstairs at 9:15 p.m. Sunday night? And without his guns, club or other paperwork? An affair, maybe? Or blackmailing someone? Having just taken office less than two months ago, there could easily be some hurt feelings of others unpromoted. Or he could have developed the power-man syndrome, thinking that now he was Chief, he could do no wrong. A psy-

chological autopsy and a last-48 history of whereabouts is crucial in a case like this. What did Ms. Baxter mean by he "was peculiar in the afternoon?" Why was the clothing not buttoned correctly? Often that means the person was killed naked or the killer, to stage or hide the crime, changed, wearing other clothes and the clothing. We don't want to rule out a female killer, either. Powder burns were found on his shirt, under his pocket, but not on the outer pocket. That means he had the shirt on when he was shot at close range (1 -- 3 feet). It possibly also means he was going for something in his pocket to lift the pocket flap when the gun went off. A weapon, or blackmail? Or that he was in a partial state of undress when discovered by the gunman. You would want to make sure that the powder from the gun matches the same on the shirt since it wouldn't do to have old powder stains being accused as new ones. Clothes being in a better state than expected could also mean they had been changed. The fact that he was found supine, arms extended, there was no contusion on the brain and no injury to the scalp or skull means he was not hit on the head and probably did not fall far. So he could have been placed at the bottom of the steps, or pushed, perhaps by a lover or upset significant other. It is unlikely that he died quietly, even though there are no signs of a struggle, and the snow was packed tight, another fact indicating that this is a secondary scene (not the real place of death). It also means that the shot heard at 9:15 p.m. could be a decoy. The shot heard two hours earlier by McNutt is most likely what killed Sturgus. A bloodstain analysis would show the direction he stood when shot, and how he fell, and how far he was from the shooter. No blood on the snow means he was not killed here. The packed snow showed no footprints, meaning the killer or person who placed him there retreated up the stairs and was still in the vicinity at the time of his discovery. That would also be in line with the flash seen at eye level, since most women of those days were of shorter stature. It meant that either the shooter was taller than the woman seeing the flash of fire, or the shooter was at a higher level. A diagram of the town, where folks were standing, and photos of the event are necessary to reconstruct the scene. Lastly -- Who is "Bobby"? No one listed has the name of Robert or Roberta. Commonly Bobby is a nickname. Perhaps his

lover or his lover's other relationship? Conclusion: The majority of deaths are done by people we know or whom we have slightly become acquainted with. (Even so slight a connection as to have the same grocery delivery person.) Sturgus knew his killer. The person did not leave the scene but retreated back up the stairs. The body was planted there to be found, but death had occurred elsewhere. Without having talked to any of the witnesses myself or having seen any actual photos, lab results, etc., I would hesitate to accuse anyone without more evidence. Fanny Zindel's books, *Red Sea, Dead Sea* and *Bagels for Tea* are in hardcover from St. Martin's and e-book from Hardshell. Her story, *In a Jewish Vein*, where she meets a Jewish vampire, appears in *Unholy Orders*, proceeds going to the Romanian orphans. Her creator, **Serita Stevens**, is a forensic nurse, trained in death and sexual assault investigation, profiling, and domestic violence intervention. Serita's book on forensic nursing cases comes out from St. Martin's Press in 2001.

JOHN STRALEY

is a private investigator and novelist who lives in Sitka, Alaska. Straley has worked as a secretary, a horse-shoer, wilderness guide, trail crew foreman and millworker. He moved with his wife Janice to Sitka in 1977 and has no plans of leaving. His first book, *The Woman Who Married a Bear*, was published in 1993 and won the Shamus award for the best first mystery of that year from the Private Eye Writers of America. His third book, *The Music of What Happens*, won the Spotted Owl Award for the Best Northwest mystery in 1997. Straley continues to work from his floating office on Sitka's waterfront. When he is not writing a new Cecil Younger book, or working on cases for some criminal defendant, John can be found loafing around town, catching up on the local gossip.



Grizzly bear milk is 10 times richer than human milk, but very few dairies have taken advantage of that wide-open marketing niche.

MARIA GRAZIA SWAN



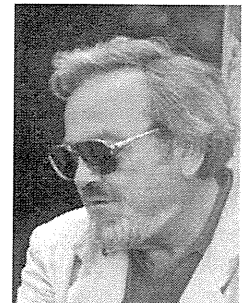
Love Thy Sister is M.G. Swan's first mystery, featuring Mina, a delightful signorina born in the Veneto region of Northern Italy. Destiny brought Mina to the United States. Her perky

manner, love of anything American, natural curiosity and passion for chocolate get her into a lot of trouble. Like her protagonist, Maria Grazia Swan was born in Northern Italy and is as American as American pizza! Over the years, M.G. Swan lived in many countries, different continents. She is presently living in Phoenix, Arizona. Swan is a member of Sisters in Crime.

Regarding Sturgus. Boy, those were the good old days ... no fingerprints, no DNA. WOW! My opinion? The chief accidentally shot himself and was too embarrassed to admit it. AMEN.

RICHARD A. THOMPSON

The Well-Aged Murder: There aren't enough facts, but then, there probably never are. In the well-crafted crime novel, and probably in life, there are just enough facts to scrape together a plausible conclusion and enough byplay to get everybody thoroughly confused. If we like the author, we go along with it. Giving history the same courtesy, I conclude that John Sturgus was shot by his own deputy, with his own gun. At least, that's the way I would write it. It has to do with the nature of cops. Cops are never heroes or villains in my work. Rather, they are the gatekeepers and tour guides of the foggy land known as the State of Moral Ambiguity, where all my heroes must go to find out who they are. That gives them a mysterious and even mystical identity which they will guard, even unto death. So, getting back to 1921, our man Sturgus can name his killer, but doing so entails a choice of two possible epitaphs: (1) "The man was dumber than a stump. He gives Deputy Yahoo his gun, and the lowlife promptly shoots him with it." (2) "Yessir, it sure is a big mystery, all right." Would he spend a single second pondering?



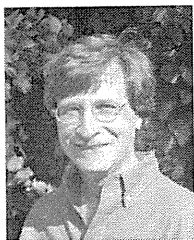
Rich Thompson is a civil engineer in his day job, as is the hero of his first novel, *Carpenter Gothic*. The rest of the time, he writes mysteries, sci-fi short stories, and critical essays. Apart from that, he probably has no life at all.

BARRIE TRINKLE,

mystery and thrillers editor at Amazon.com: I grew up in Fort Worth, Texas (hometown of Patricia Highsmith), where I was exposed early to big football, big scandals, big hair, and other key elements of popular literature. I've since lived in Massachusetts, California, Colorado, Poland, and currently reside in Seattle, WA, with my husband, daughter, and two cats. Previous jobs as a typist, library assistant, aerospace engineer, and EFL teacher prepared me well for working at Amazon.com (and for figuring out how to transport, arrange and store the constant stream of mystery books in my life). Who fired the shot that felled Jack Sturgus, and why didn't he tell? Could it have been that he saw such a sea of faces at 9:15 p.m. that he wasn't sure who shot him? I propose that the citizens who testified at the inquest had conspired to kill Sturgus (aided by the reporter who filed this obfuscatory account) after the new police chief demanded payoff from local business owners. Oscar Anderson (mentioned only as an "Anchorage merchant," though he was widely known as the man who supplied Anchorage with both fuel and food through his Ship Creek Meat Company and Evan Jones Fuel Company) was likely the organizing brains behind the murder.



NATHAN WALPOW



writes the Joe Portugal mystery series, including *Death of an Orchid Lover* and *The Cactus Club Killings*. His short story "Push Comes to Shove" appears in *A Deadly Dozen*. Nathan is a former actor and a five-times-undefeated "Jeopardy!" champion. You can visit his website at <http://walpow.com> Nathan had Joe Portugal take a look at the Anchorage Daily Times report on Chief Sturgus' death. Joe had the following to say:

"Special night watchman" John McNutt reports that he watched the fires in the different buildings and occasionally "stoked up." That's the key to Chief Sturgus' death. I know all about stoking up and staring at a fireplace; back in my rock and roll days it was one of my favorite activities. McNutt was obviously wandering around looking for some moose jerky to assuage a serious case of the munchies when Sturgus was killed. He came back and spotted the killer, but had to cut a deal: If he didn't turn in the murderer, the killer wouldn't report that McNutt was meandering around yowling some 1920's Alaska precursor to "In-a-Gadda-Da-Vida" when he should have been watching stuff. Sit that boy down, tell him you know he's a pothead, you get your answer.

LINDA WISDOM

was born and raised in Huntington Beach, California. She majored in journalism in college, then switched her major to fashion merchandising when she was told there was no future for her in fiction writing. She held a variety of positions ranging from retail sales to executive secretary in advertising and office manager for a personnel agency. Her career began when she sold her first two novels to Silhouette Romance on her wedding anniversary. Since then she has sold almost 60 novels and one novella to four different publishers. Her books have appeared on various romance and mass market bestseller lists and been nominated for a number of Romantic Times awards and Romance Writers of America Ritas. Her novels have been published in many languages and there are more than 14 million copies of her books worldwide. This year she has a total of six books published, two of them reissues in the Harlequin by Request anthology. This December, she will have a Harlequin American Romance with Matthias, the entity from *Twist of Fate*, that many readers requested reading about again. Currently, she is working on a Silhouette Intimate Moments that deals with the Witness Security Program. She lives with her husband, two dogs, four parrots and one desert tortoise in Murrieta, California. Affiliations: charter member of Romance Writers of America; charter member of Orange County Chapter, Romance Writers of America; member, Nov-



elists Inc.; member, Sisters in Crime. Who killed Chief Sturgus? First off there are accounts that some heard a shot, some didn't and no sign of a struggle at the crime scene. Why wouldn't a law enforcement officer name the person who shot him? Is there a reason why he left his home carrying only one weapon when he was in the habit of carrying two? And why did he leave his money and papers home? Was there a reason for him to be out there, or was he just taking a walk? Any of my characters would probably joke that they knew the killer wasn't "Miss Scarlet in the drawing room" or "Colonel Mustard in the library." We can also assume that the butler did not commit this murder. There was no sign of a struggle; few people heard the shot. But did anyone think that, perhaps, the wound was self-inflicted? What if the sheriff was climbing the stairs because he thought he heard something suspicious? Had his gun in hand. But something happened. Maybe he slipped and lost his balance. Who knows, maybe he was pushed by person or persons unknown. But he could have fallen back down the stairs and his gun went off in the process, wounding him. Would a policeman want to admit he'd somehow shot himself? Especially if he'd been clumsy. Just a sad accident that couldn't be explained.

LORI WOLF

The Alaska PD must be seriously lacking in the brains department, like the LAPD. Anyway, it's so obvious that the night watchman, McNutt, was pulling a major Pinocchio on the stand. He was in on the hit on the chief, but he didn't off him. C'mon, I mean, how could he not hear the gunshot unless he was deaf? Also, he said he'd thought the chief was drunk and tried to rouse him. Hello? He was shot in the heart -- there would be gobs of blood. Someone paid McNutt off to keep his lips in a shell. Everyone has a price. You should check out the new song called "Price" in the band I'm in -- Joe Sue. We play goth rock, nothing but. I'm the rhythm guitarist when I can keep the rhythm. So, who offed the head cop? The world is a cesspool because of this love stuff. Chief Sturgus had a babette on the side. Not sure of her name, though. That was why he left his wallet at home -- he was either



going to get Stroke-N-Poked or to dump the babe. She knew it, she reached inside his coat pocket and BANG! Also, the chief knew his killer, probably still loved her. That was why he never identified his killer. Love takes your emotions, chums them around, and lets them stagnate until they reek. And we can do nothing about it.

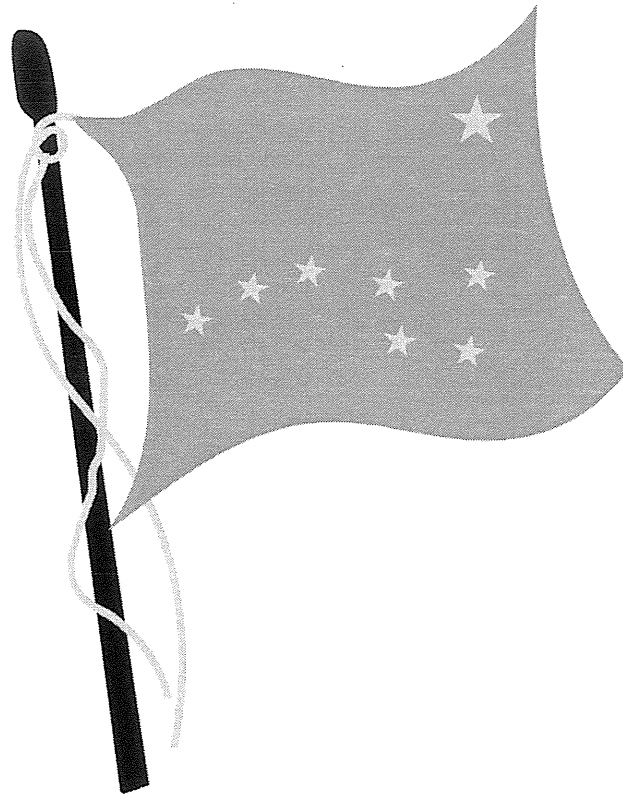
I'm Emily Pinkerton in **Lori Wolf's** *Gothic Doo-Wop*. This is the first novel of my creator (or so she thinks). It's not a mystery, but hey, her second one is. She's trying to find a publisher for it. She's working hard on her third, which is the first in a P.I. series. You know, the world is a dark and depressive mystery. Glad I'm part of it. Check out the web site www.loriwolf.com for her promo gigs. You can call or e-mail her anytime. Me and Lori thank you for this chance to unload our thoughts.

VALERIE WOLZIEN

The idea for Valerie's first mystery novel came to her in the middle of a PTA meeting when her son was in third grade. That book, *Murder at the PTA Luncheon*, is still in print and was made



into a Movie of the Week by CBS. Valerie now has 17 books in print. Thirteen feature Susan Henshaw as a housewife/amateur sleuth. Valerie began a second mystery series with the publication of *Shore to Die* in 1996. The new series features Josie Pigeon, a young carpenter who runs a contracting company. Josie is introduced in *Remodeled to Death*. The fifth book in the series, *Murder in the Forecast*, will be published in 2001. Valerie was born in Ohio and grew up in New Jersey. She attended college in Denver and Fairbanks, Alaska. These days, when she's not writing, she is busy remodeling an old Victorian home overlooking the Hudson River, which she shares with her family, two cats, two birds, and a mixed-breed puppy.



1921: Hospital News. Dr. J.H. Romig reports the following cases from the government hospital. W.H. Miller, of Seward, is under the doctors care for frozen feet. Dr. Romig successfully performed a major operation on "Scotty" Watson Sunday and Scotty is feeling much better, with fair chances of recovery.

1921: "Mother's Bread", can you beat it? North Pole bakes it, can you eat it.

1921: Peter Anderson, section formen at Birchwood, is staying at the Hotel Parsons while here on a pleasure trip to the dentist.

1921: Domino Party at the Frisco.

The Green room of the Frisco was the scene of an enjoyable Domino party Saturday night, with Sidney Laurence and Dr. E.F. German as hosts. The affair was a distinct success from every angle and the fortunate guests admit that these two genial hosts drew on their former experiences in the way of delightful and unexpected entertainment. The successful party was a minor "Greenwich Village" affair with Bohemia as the password.

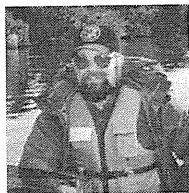
1921: Old timers say the unusual flare of the northern lights last night is a sure sign of colder weather.

Our Distinguished Alaska Panelists

LARRY AUMILLER came to Alaska 30 years ago, then spent a year trying to decide what to do with his life. Joining the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, he spent his first four seasons catching fish. It was wonderful work, so it was with trepidation that he decided to focus on another species—brown bears. Beginning in 1976, Larry spent his summers working at McNeil River State Game Sanctuary, where he remains to this day. The job consists mainly of being a bear watchers' watcher, taking care of the visitors who come to observe the world's largest concentration of brown bears. In the winter he has also been fortunate enough to squeeze in work with polar bears, moose, wolverine, caribou, wolves, and several marine mammals. Working with animals was his main focus until recently, when Larry and his wife Colleen adopted a beautiful little girl. In 1997, after pleading with his supervisors at Fish and Game, he began spending his winters playing with his daughter while continuing to work at the sanctuary in the summer—a job, Larry says, he must keep until his daughter, Kianna, gets through college. So look for Larry tottering down the beach at McNeil River well into this new century.

DOUG BECKSTEAD

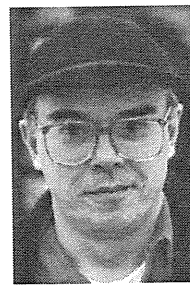
Doug Beckstead, a research historian for the National Park Service in Alaska, holds Bachelor's and Master's degrees in American history. His interests in law enforcement go back many years, including training at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center in Georgia as well as additional training with the Federal Bureau of Investigation, International Association of Chiefs of Police, and the Anchorage Police Department. While working a special detail with the Anchorage Police Department in 1997, he was asked to look into the long-ago murders of Anchorage Chiefs John Sturgus (killed in 1921) and Harry Kavanaugh (killed in 1924), with the expectation of putting both men on



the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial in Washington, D.C. Kavanaugh's killer was shot to death at the scene; Sturgus' murderer has remained unidentified for 80 years.

Doug divides his time between Fairbanks and Anchorage, where he shares his interests in history and law with his wife Carol (a member of Alaska Sisters in Crime), two children and their dog team. Recent writings include two books on gold mining on the upper Yukon River and shorter pieces on mining history.

MIKE DOOGAN was born and raised in Alaska, which makes him a fairly rare bird in a transient state. He also has heard a lot of strange and wonderful stories over the years. Doogan earns his living as a newspaper columnist for the Anchorage Daily News, while also teaching and writing in other venues. He has written numerous magazine articles and two books of nonsense about Alaska, "How to Speak Alaskan" and "Fashion Means Your Fur Hat Is Dead." He also edited "Our Alaska," a collection of essays by longtime Alaskans that will be published this spring by Epicenter Press. His columns have been collected in "The Best of the Rest and Society: An Alaskan Perspective." Doogan has received awards from the National Education Writers Association, the Society of Professional Journalists, the Best of the West competition and the Alaska Press Club. Doogan describes himself as "a surprisingly well-preserved 52." He and his wife, Kathy, have been married for 30 years. They have two children: Matt, 27, and Amy, 24.



CHARLENE DORIS

As former coroner for the Third Judicial District in Alaska, Charlene Doris has handled a wide range of duties, dealing with cases from the grotesque (the body in the fireplace) to the rewarding (the missing dead man). She first came north in 1974 with her Air Force husband, who

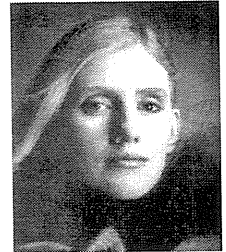


had been posted to Elmendorf Air Force Base in Anchorage. With a background in psychology and law enforcement, she went to work in the Probate Department of the Alaska Court System. In 1981, when the position of deputy coroner was created, she was hired to fill it. In 1983, the job of coroner came open; again, she was hired. At first, the job included being public guardian and public administrator, although the public guardian duties were later split off and assigned to another department. She served as coroner until her retirement January 1, 1995.

LIBBY RIDDLES

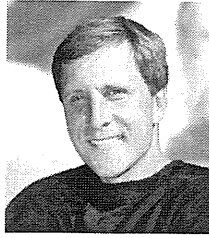
On March 20, 1985, Libby Riddles and her dog team struck out, alone, into a deadly blizzard across Norton Sound—thereby making Riddles the first woman to win the grueling 1,049-mile Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race. The feat captured the attention of the nation. She soon appeared in magazines of all kinds, from Sports Illustrated to Vogue. She was named the 1985 Sportswoman of the Year by the Women's Sports Foundation and honored by the Iditarod veterinarians with the 1985 Leonhard Seppala Humanitarian Award. Riddles moved to Alaska from the Lower 48 at age 16. She homesteaded in a remote western area, then spent six years in an Inupiaq village in Northern Alaska. Her love of animals evolved into her passion for sled dogs.

Today, Riddles has 42 sled dogs, which she breeds, trains and races. She was the sled dog coordinator for the Steven Seagal movie "On Deadly Ground," which was filmed in Alaska. Her other extensive TV and film experiences included working with ABC, HBO, ESPN, NFL films and Alaska TV stations. In addition, she has taken to writing. Riddles has three published books: "Race Across Alaska," "Danger the Dog Yard Cat," and her new release, "Storm Run."



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ROBERT J. SHEM, the only firearm and toolmark examiner in Alaska, has worked thousands of cases, including all of Alaska's high-visibility shootings.



At the Alaska Scientific Crime Detection Laboratory in Anchorage, he investigates crimes through the weapons used: identifying the types of ammunition, matching cuts on a victim's body to a specific knife, or recovering serial numbers that have been scratched off a firearm. He completed a two-year training course in firearm and toolmark identification conducted by the Illinois Dept. of Law Enforcement and has been a forensic firearm and toolmark examiner for twenty years. He belongs to several forensic associations, including the Association of Firearm and Tool Mark Examiners (AFTE), for which he is currently the second vice president. His awards include a Governor's Commendation from Walter J. Hickel.

• Ted Lambert is one of the inner circle of Alaska's most beloved historical artists, sometimes referred to as the "Alaska Four," along with Sydney Laurence, Eustace Ziegler and Jules Dahlager. Sydney Laurence told an Anchorage reporter in 1937 that Lambert was a great artist and might someday be Alaska's greatest painter.

A restless, willful, ultimately unhappy man, Lambert disappeared in the Levelock area of Southwest Alaska in 1960 after years of increasing paranoia and desire to be left alone to paint without interference.

-Painting Alaska

• Pierre Gassendi, a 17th century scientist, mathematician and philosopher, was said to be the man who introduced the term "aurora" in the way we presently use it. The name came from Aurora, the rosy-fingered Goddess of the Dawn in Roman mythology, who was the herald of the rising sun.

-Aurora Borealis: The Amazing Northern Lights

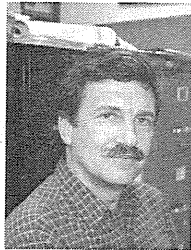
WILL THE REAL MRS. STURGUS PLEASE STAND UP? Back then, as today, people who came to Alaska have a way of re-inventing themselves. After lighting out for the territory, Sturgus was free to say anything he wanted.

And he may have done so: Unless his brother officers in Everett have poor memories or were malicious liars, then Sturgus may have been a bigamist. His obituary said he was married on June 10, 1913, to a woman named Anna Marie. That 1917 Polk Directory for the city of Anchorage notes that John J. "Sturgis" lived with his wife, Anna, at 316 K St. But his former co-workers remember things differently. In an article in the Everett Herald after Sturgus' death, it was reported that he had married a woman named Lizzie Jones before leaving for Alaska — and that two children, both boys, were born on the Last Frontier.


A woman named Lizzie Jones also had her name in the Everett paper quite frequently, as the county superintendent of schools. She was identified as "Mrs." Lizzie Jones, so she must have been divorced or widowed. In

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After graduating from high school in the Ozarks, **RICK SINNOTT** joined the Marine Corps in 1968 for a three-year tour of sunny southern California and the Far East. He used the G.I.



Bill to obtain a Bachelor of Science degree in wildlife management from the University of Alaska-Fairbanks, the only school to which he had applied. He returned to Missouri for a Master of Science degree in wildlife biology from the University of Missouri-Columbia. Then he went back to Alaska to join the Alaska Department of Fish and Game in 1983. He is now the Anchorage area wildlife biologist, which he describes as "the best job in the world," even though his duties bring him into contact with garbage-eating bears, attack owls and clueless humans who run afoul of fish and game laws.

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those days, married women were referred to by their husband's names, e.g. "Mrs. John Sturgus. Other women mentioned in the same articles with Lizzie were identified as "Helen Boyle" or "Anna L. Thornton" — no honorific, so they must have been single. (They might also have been minorities, since society did not use honorifics to identify them, either, except that some of the job titles — "clerk/treasurer" and "court stenographer" — weren't likely to be open to women of color.)

So if Sturgus married Lizzie Jones before leaving for Alaska — remember, he resigned on Aug. 1, 1913 — how could he have married Anna Marie Sturgus on June 10, 1913?

Kimberley Gray did a document search through the Alaska Bureau of Vital Statistics. No record of a marriage between John J. Sturgus and Anna Marie could be found. Of course, they could have been married on June 10, 1913 — just as the obit said — in Washington state. But if John and Anna Marie married on that day, then who is Lizzie Jones? And if there were two sons born, did they survive? They would have been younger than age 8 when Sturgus was killed. Under "Names and Addresses of Living Children" on the death certificate, the word "none" is written. Incidentally, Anna Marie Sturgus may have signed that death certificate, but she was curiously silent in both media coverage and the coroner's inquest. While citizens testified as to her husband's "peculiar" behavior that day, and the fact that he'd left papers and police equipment at home, Anna Marie was never quoted or mentioned. If the police questioned her, no coverage of these interviews was ever given.

Wouldn't an enterprising reporter want to get some platitudes from the bereaved wife in his story? Unless, of course, reporters were strongly discouraged from interviewing Anna Marie — but who would have done the discouraging? It could have been a gentleman's agreement not to bother the grieving widder woman, but that's hard to imagine. Then, as now, reporters were jackals. (Note: I can say that, because I am a reporter.) And what about the investigators: Did they decide not to "bother" the widow? Did they already know something about the death that they didn't want her to know? Too, why didn't Anna Marie make vigorous

public statements pleading for help in solving the circumstances of her husband's death? Could she have had her own reasons for remaining silent?

SEVEN POSSIBLE SCENARIOS

As mystery fans, you can no doubt come up with your own ideas as to who killed Jack Sturgus, and why. But here are seven potential plots, each with pro and con arguments:

1. Moonshiners shot him. Was he trying to catch them in flagrante delicto, but got killed for his pains? Maybe. But if he was trying to catch moonshiners, why did he leave his billy and handcuffs at home, to say nothing of his papers (which I assume would identify him as the chief of police)? If he were on a stakeout, wouldn't he want all the trappings of policehood?

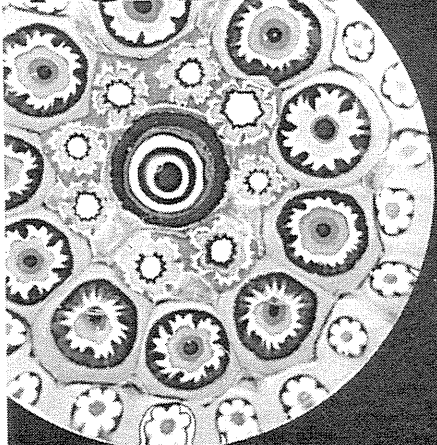
Two other possibilities: He was trying to shake some moonshiners down for hush money and they didn't like the idea, or he got shot because he had earlier promised protection from the feds and couldn't deliver it. Perhaps the killer approached him bundled up in a voluminous muffler and hat, and Sturgus didn't recognize him as dangerous until it was too late. The next day's paper

reported the morning temperature at minus 8 degrees; it would probably have been that cold, or colder, at 9:15 p.m. the previous evening. (Incidentally, during cold spells Alaskan banks put up signs pleading with customers to remove their face masks before they come through the doors, lest they give bank officials the wrong idea.) Thus disguised, a killer could have sidled up, pulled out a gun, swiped the chief's own revolver and shot him.

2. He was having an affair. That's one explanation for the undone vest, coat and mackinaw. Sturgus could have lost track of time and had to dress hastily in order to be out of the woman's apartment before, say, the first movie show ended and hubby returned. No one saw or heard any kind of disturbance beforehand, or saw anyone running away afterwards, but if Sturgus were being braced by an irate husband, there'd be a good reason not to make a fuss that would draw attention to the situation. Perhaps he thought he could talk his way out of it, but the husband shot him and then simply walked to his apartment, as though he were going home after the movie. Question, though: How did he get Sturgus' gun?

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3. Whores! Whores! Whores! Sturgus had just inspected the red-light district on Feb. 17, on orders of the city council. Was he meeting someone on the night of Feb. 20, either to pick up a bribe or to discuss a possible compromise until the fuss died down? That would explain why it happened at night, under cover of darkness; it wouldn't do for the chief of police to be seen talking with a pimp or a madam. It would also explain why it happened just a few blocks away from the official hooker zone. Again, though: How did he lose his gun?

4. His ex-wife showed up. If there really was another Mrs. Sturgus, maybe she'd finally tracked him down. She could have been there to demand money, or to tell him how angry she was that he went off with another woman. Lizzie might have shot him herself, or paid a thug to do it for her. However, that wouldn't explain how either one of them got the chief's gun. It might, however, explain why he...

5. Killed himself. That would be a logical reason that he opened his vest, coat and mackinaw: so the bullet would aim true.

There WERE powder burns, despite what Harry Schultz said in print in the Lower 48. Also, there's no reason he couldn't have shot himself, either standing up or lying down, at the angle they described. (Try it yourself, but don't use a real gun. I recommend a water pistol, or a hairdryer.)

Suicide would also explain why there were no signs of a struggle at the scene, and why witnesses who were close enough to hear a shot and even see the flash of the gun barrel neither saw nor heard anything unusual afterwards — and remember, some of them were specifically watching and listening after the shot. In addition, the suicide theory was brought up and denied so quickly by city officials that it seems like a case of protesting overmuch.

Finally, this was old-time (i.e. potentially brutal) police business in a small town; as handy as those guys were with their nightsticks, it's practically impossible to think that they wouldn't have found whoever did it, or someone willing to squeal on him, with or without a reward (and \$1,950 was big money in those days; the chief of police himself made only \$200 a month).

Why would he have killed himself? Well, scenarios one through four would suffice for suicidal motive! Maybe he was sick. Maybe he was depressed. Certainly, suicide would explain why he didn't tell the marshals and the doctors who had fired the shot (although he may also have been in shock at the time and unable to answer).

6. That prominent citizen and family man. According to that anonymous note Beckstead received, Sturgus was shot because he was "not a moral man." This could mean anything, including the possibility of his having an affair or the fact that he didn't shake down moonshiners or madams quite hard enough. After all, it was the feds who raided the stills, and Sturgus didn't willingly check out the red-light district until someone came forth to complain. Prostitution and moonshining were both illegal, but the chief of police didn't seem to be doing much about it.

In part, this could have been one of those old-West things. Those red-blooded he-men had to have their whiskey and wild-woman needs met somehow. Even the town's

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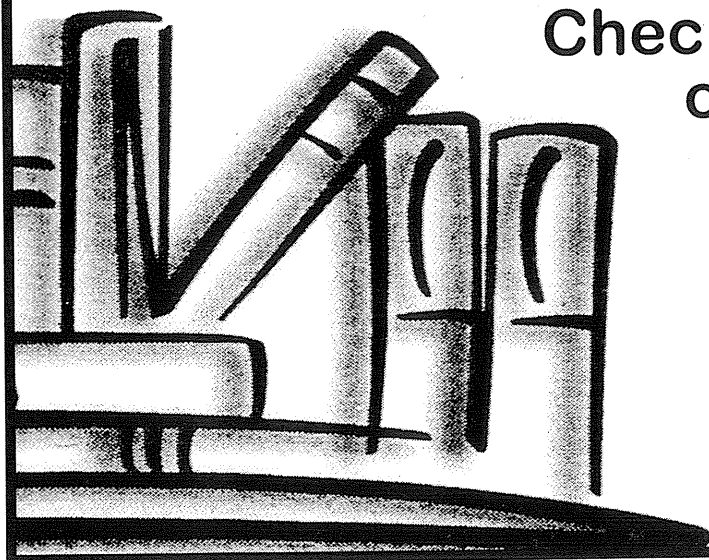
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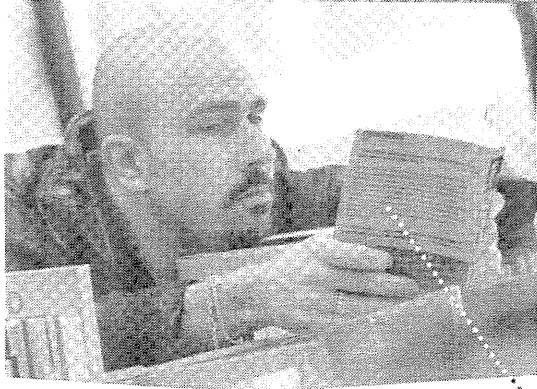
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- Polar bears are the largest nonaquatic carnivores in the world. The males stand more than 12 feet tall on their hind legs, have a 45-inch neck, leave a 10-inch-wide footprint, and routinely weigh more than half a ton. Alaska Natives hunt polar bear for meat and furs; however, the liver contains so much vitamin A it is toxic to humans if eaten.

—Alaska's Bears

- The highest mountain in Alaska and North America is officially named Mt. McKinley, though many still call it by an earlier Indian name, Denali, meaning "the high one." The mountain was named by William Dickey, a prospector from New Hampshire. With remarkable accuracy, Dickey estimated the mountain's height at more than 20,000 feet. The name he hung on the mountain was chosen more for spite than for reverence. During his trip he had spent many hours with two prospectors who loudly boosted the merits of free silver for backing the U.S. Treasury. In retaliation, Dickey dubbed the mountain after the champion of the gold standard, Gov. William McKinley of Ohio who would soon be elected the nation's 25th president.

—Denali

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married men might have wanted a little something extra that they couldn't get at home.

The "prominent citizen and family man" would have had to be plenty pissed, though, to risk his own life shooting the chief of police. Here's a somewhat farfetched but possible reason: One of those manly Alaska men, looking for action in the neighborhood, approached the family man's wife or young daughter. In the old days, insulting a wife's virtue was an actionable offense, rather than a quick ticket to "The Jerry Springer Show." 7. Finally, just for fun: Suppose Anna Marie killed him? Sturgus was known to have two guns, but only one — the weapon that killed him — was ever accounted for. Perhaps she followed Sturgus that night. Perhaps she held his second gun on him while she took — and then used — the revolver. Or maybe, with revenge on her mind, she simply got the drop on him in a dark alley. The first is more likely; she may have walked up to him, ostensibly to speak with him (or argue about his working all those nights!), and then whipped out the gun and shot him. Maybe she meant simply to scare him — "I'm not

putting up with these shenanigans any more, and I really mean it this time" — and the gun went off.

Neither scenario is completely plausible, though; in those days, women depended on their husbands for financial survival and a place in society. Being married to the chief of police was a big deal. So would she have been so angry at his dirty doings (or at his doing the dirty) that she would have risked her comfortable position in life for revenge? Probably not, unless she had a powerful incentive. Here's a real mean-spirited possibility: Frequenting those houses of ill repute, rather than closing them down, may have led to his bringing home a venereal disease. There was no cure — and hell hath no fury like a woman given the clap. I think plenty of Alaska women, both then and now, would opt for a "Spenard divorce" rather than try to reason with the straying spouse — especially back then, before penicillin had been invented.

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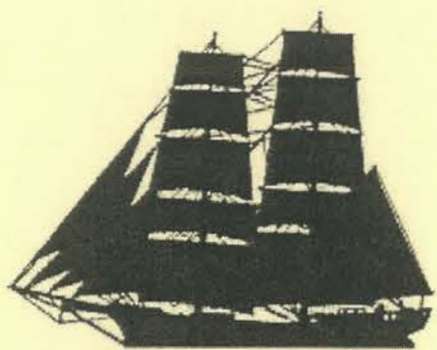
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It's a Mystery how we will ever be able to thank all our volunteers, sponsors and committee members. Here are just a few:

The Left Coast Crime 2001 Committee began pulling itself together nearly five years ago. About 1995 Dana Stabenow and Sue Henry began floating the idea of hosting the Left Coast Crime Conference in Anchorage in February and so a group of us headed south to Seattle to see what this LCC thing was all about. Andi Shechter assured us we could do it. So, the core group came together and then Dana added every friend and relative she could find. A lot of time, energy and creativity has gone into the challenge of orchestrating a conference in Alaska in February, and has resulted in a well-oiled machine that pulled this conference together. Many of you have noticed from our visits to Albuquerque, Tucson and Denver (Boucheron), we are a dedicated, energetic and creative group. The cast who made this possible include as follows: Dana Stabenow - aka Sherlock Holmes, Chief Detective, Head Cheerleader, Creator Extraordinaire | Dee Ford - aka Dr. Watson, Chair (She missed a meeting.) | Diane Hagemester - aka history keeper, Secretary and Merchandiser Extraordinaire | Kimberley A. Gray and Elisa Hitchcock — aka Spotlight on Murder Dinner Theatre, Publications and Web Design (Who else could have thought of doing the Sturgis murder as a theme for the program?) | Linda Billington, aka woman with the coolest jewelry and Dana's able assistant in developing panels, and a budding writer. | Linda Longstaff, Computer Program Designer | Rhonda Sleighter, aka The Woman With the Names, Registrar | Kathleen Putman - aka Wonder Woman, Authors to the Bush, "need more be said?" | Megan Rust | Vicki Russell, aka Lifelong Teacher and Theatre Buff, Authors to the Schools, Anchorage | Julie Garrigues, our Financial Voice, Treasurer, Every group needs someone to keep them in line | Kathy Hughes - aka Mom, Grandmom and Children's Book Writer (Great Travel Mate), Alaska Pals | Tracy Green, another Woman Who Knows Everyone, Publicity | Joanna Carlson, Energetic College Student and Dana's Cousin, Volunteers | Rachel Dorris, aka Our Very Own Hospitable Bookseller, Dealers Room | Nancy Clark, Proud New Mom, Library Liaison | Nicole Taniguchi, LCC 2001 Auction Chair | Virginia Samson, Auction Assistant | Irene Rowan and Mary Ann Chaney, Fund Raising | Rochene Hellen, Publicity | **CORPORATE SPONSORS: CIRI Regional Native Corporation | Southcentral Foundation | Alaska State Library** | Alaska Air Lines | All Ways Travel (Annamae, Beverly, Dee and Kathy) | Twice Told Tales | Cook Inlet Book Company | Borders | Barnes & Noble | DeLisio Moran Geraghty & Zobel | Rebecca Lyon, the Wonderful Artist Who Designed Our Snowman Logo | Alaska Bar Association | Alaska Library Association | Friends of the Library | Sinbad | Lake Mullings of Beacon Graphics | Candy Thornton with Community Resources at the Anchorage School District | Anchorage Hilton Hotel | Anchorage Convention & Visitors' Bureau | All of those who donated items to auction | FBI; Agent Jessica Black Newton | Literary Ladies including Cheryl Mann and Eleanor Andrews for hosting the FBI tour for the Conference | Kim Rich | Paulette Hostetler | Rust's Flying Service | Sixth Avenue Outfitters | Mark Weber and Alaska Geographic | Norma Goodman of KTVA | KTUU | Kent Sturgis, Epicenter Press | Klukwan Inc. | Sharyn Wilson | Jill Smythe | Don Argetsinger | Andi Shechter | Tom and Enid Schantz | Barbara Peters | Our great Alaskan Pals (you know who you are) | Linda Smith of Color Creek Studios | Alaska Center for the Book | All the "Ask Me Volunteers" | Julie Ginder | Greg Scully | David Chaney | Melissa Chaney | Van and Alice Chaney | Rebecca Chaney-Riggins | All the College and High School Student Volunteers | Our Contacts and Assistants with the Authors to the Bush Programming, including: Marty Osredker - Unalakleet | Barbara Dunn - Stebbins | Charlotte Glover - Ketchikan | Sharon Anderson - Akiak | Sheila Ring - Naknek | Jerah Chadwick - Unalaska | Ann Keffer - Homer | Sherry Simpson - Fairbanks | Paul Sharaba - St. Paul | Lynne Jensen - Gustavus | Patti Linville - Seward | Linda Rowell - Anchor Point | Mike Wetherbee - Ninilchik | Glenn Olson and staff - Barrow | Cynthia Fyfe - Dillingham | Jennifer Alcorn - Galena | Tony Litten - Ruby | Judith Bingham - Nulato | Becky Applenbee - Chiniak | Bobette Bush - Aniak | Roz Goodman - Pedro Bay | Sheri Beck - Valdez | Candy Kopperud - Palmer | Mary Jane Krajnak - Kodiak | Caroline Gutierrez - Hyder | Linda Maurer - Klawock | Barbara Martin - Tanana | Nancy Gustavson - Sitka | Heidi Hink - Bethel | Karin Halpin - Goodnews Bay | AnnMarie O'Brien - Kotzebue | Suzanne Richards - Emmonak | Joyce McCombs - Delta Junction | Carla Sheive - Ft. 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Please accept our apology. We have appreciated everyone's help, and look forward to working with many of you on future projects.

Thank you, everyone, for your wonderful support!



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