



The Poison Pen

San Joaquin Sisters in Crime P.O.Box 3885, Pinedale, CA 93650 Website-www.sj-sinc.org Mar 2009 Issue 3

Scene of the Crime

Yosemite Falls Restaurant
On Ashlan, West side of 99
Saturday, Mar. 7, 2009. Starts at
10:30 am – Come early to get
drinks, pay, and look at books!!
\$15 members,
\$20 non-members
****NOTE:** We will be served a
choice of Fish & Chips, Barbeque
Chicken Salad or California
Burger.

Remember!!!

RSVP by Wednesday before
the meeting-Please leave
your first and last name plus
choice of meal

**Call Kim at 559-228-9867
Or email her at
kander999@aol.com**

Program

DR STEPHEN AVALOS USING FORENSIC MEDICINE

Stephen M. Avalos, M.D. is a
1984 graduate of Stanford
University School of Medicine. Dr.
Avalos carries Board Certification
in Anatomic and Clinical
Pathology as well as Forensic
Pathology. He is currently
Forensic Pathologist for Madera
County and has previously worked
in the Fresno Coroner's office.

**Welcome to New Members:
Kim Giesbrecht, Brenda
Magarity & Lucretia Fillmore.**

**Greetings to Meeting
Visitors: Sheri Humphreys,
V J Webb, Kathleen Strasser,
Sunny Frazier, Amy Ratliff &
Shari Snowden.**

**Upcoming Meeting Speakers
April – Hit Man Panel
May - Author Marilyn Meredith**



VICE (PRESIDENT'S) COLUMN BY KATE ANDERSON

We had a great turn-out for our
February meeting. Michael Mehas
was articulate, interesting, and
passionate about his subject. He
sold quite a few books so I'm
guessing he communicated that
passion very well. Michael also
generously donated both a book
and a couple of bags for our door
prizes. His lovely girlfriend served
as photographer and Michael said
he will be sending Jean a CD.
Don't we have some of the best
guests?

Talking about guests. It was nice
to see former members, Sunny
Frazier, Kathleen Strasser and VJ
Webb at the meeting. I wish I'd
had more time to talk to them.

Sadly, I didn't win the beautiful
Valentine's basket Carrie put
together. Congratulations to Alice
Condit who did have the winning
ticket and Doris Frazer who won
the consolation book
(autographed copy of Don
Winslow's "Dawn Patrol"). Our
table did do well with the door
prizes and candy was shared all
around.

March will be another of our

semi-annual 'blow out the books
sale'. Hard bound books are \$1.00
and paperbacks a miniscule .50
cents. (not to be confused with
the Rapper, 50 Cent) Also on sale
are the audio cassette tapes, so
bring a bag and stock up on
quality entertainment.

I'm going to try to bring a
mystery bag o'books to be raffled
off in March. We don't like to do
that when we have an author as a
speaker so it's been awhile. I have
a couple of signed books I've
been waiting to use. However, I
am working on the Police Chief's
Annual Report. The hours just
keep getting longer and I keep
getting less organized.

Our March speaker sounds
exciting. A specialist in forensic
pathology who used to work at the
Coroner's Office, Dr. Avalos has
my curiosity piqued. I've worked in
law enforcement for more than 23
years and I watch all three CSIs. I
will have questions.

I hope to see you all in March.
Think about wearing green. We
can all be Irish one day a year.

EARLENE FOWLER, will be
signing at Barnes & Noble in
Fresno, Friday evening March 6th,
at 7:00 PM.

**Our Condolences to the family
of member Carmen Farr
Gregory. Carmen passed away
in late January 2009.**

LOOK INSIDE FOR INFO ON
PSWA conf, Calif Crime Writers
Conf, member Q&A, murder
mystery, Hanford bookfest, Sidra
Smart book, Writing translations,
lexicon doctor, book club, writer's
blog, Westlake memorial, YRW

The Usual Suspects

2009-2010

President

JoAnne Lucas, 299-3031

Jlucas3465@aol.com

Vice President & Hospitality

Kate Anderson 228-9867

kander999@aol.com

Treasurer

Doris Frazer, 252-8312

frazer5514@comcast.net

&

Beverly Johnson, 439-0631

bjohnson5438@sbcglobal.net

Secretary

Terell Byrd - 270-7472

terell.byrd@hotmail.com (New)

Speaker Coordinator & Website

Carrie Padgett, 645-4116

padgett@hughes.net

Book Managers

Myrna Bopp, 233-4739

&

Barbara Ray, 942-0283

barbararay60@comcast.net

Audio Librarian

Carole Anderson

Membership/Reservations

Kim Anderson 559-228-9867

kander999@aol.com

Publicity/Newsletter Co-editor

Bill Moal-209-545-8015

weremoal@sbcglobal.net

Newsletter Co-Editor

Jean Yamamoto - 260-7516

sjsicjean@yahoo.com

Deadline for submission to the Poison Pen is the 1st Friday after the meeting.

2009 DEAD BIRD BOSS

Carrie Padgett

2009 CDB THEME

"Death Dines Out"

Sisters in Crime is an international organization of writers, readers, booksellers, librarians, and others interested in promoting the work of women mystery writers.

THE WRITE CONNECTION

Guide to local writing groups

San Joaquin Sisters in Crime

www.sj-sinc.org

National Sisters in Crime

www.sistersincrime.org

The Whodunnits- SJSinC On-Line Critique group

Judy Gallardo - 559-642-3392

sierrajudy@cvip.net

WillowBridge Critique Group-

Mariposa & Oakhurst

Judy Gallardo -- 559-642-3392

sierrajudy@cvip.net

Kings County Writers Support Group - Hanford

Sunny Frazier: 559 924-4587

sunny69@comcast.net

Central Valley Writers Workshop - Madera

Glenna Jarvis -

gjarvis@gmail.com

Visalia Writers Critique Group

Mary Benton -559-747-0095

visaliawriters@yahoo.com

Writers Of Kern

Marty Gorsching

mgorsching@bak.rr.com

Yosemite Romance Writers

Dawna Richard-559-905-2381 or

Sandy Marlow-559-335-9652

www.yosemiteromancewriters.com

Clovis Library Writers Club*

James Tyner - 559-299-9531

james.tyner@fresnolibrary.org

*The Clovis Library Writers Club is on hiatus due to low attendance

The Willow Bridge Critique group meets every Thursday from 6:30 to 8:30 (except holidays) at the Willow Bridge Book Store, near the theater in Oakhurst. New writers--who desire feedback on their work--are encouraged to join. Contact Judy for guidelines. 559-642-3392

sierrajudy@cvip.net

Clovis Library Mystery Book Club* News

By Jean Yamamoto

***Book Club is co-hosted by
SJ Sisters in Crime.**

Upcoming Schedule

Mar 15 - "Demolition Angel"

By Robert Crais

Apr 19 - "The Lost Bird"

By Margaret Coel

The club meets 2:30 pm on the 3rd Sunday of the month at the Clovis Library. Books are available for checkout approximately one month before the meeting.

Questions? Call the library (559)299-9531 or email Jean at sjsicjean@yahoo.com

Jan 2009 Book Report

by Page Mitchell & Jean

"The Sunday Philosophy Club" By Alexander McCall Smith

Isabel Dalhousie lives alone in a well-kept Scottish home in Edinburgh. She has a housekeeper, Grace, acting as a sounding board and advisor among other duties.

Isabel witnesses a young man falling to his death from the upper levels of the Edinburgh Concert Hall. She is compelled to find out the cause of the incident and suspects foul play.

Isabel uses all the contacts she possibly can, including her niece Cat, Cat's former boyfriend Jamie and various friends in government circles to solve this mystery. This is the first in this series. Smith also writes the #1 Women's Detective Agency series.

MEMBERSHIP DUES FOR 2009

Dues for New & Renewing members is \$30 and can be turned in at the meeting or mailed to SJ SinC, P.O. Box 3885, Pinedale, CA 93650.

Please turn in a completed membership form with your fees (there is form on page 7)

Member Alert: This is your last newsletter unless dues/form turned in by March 15, 2009.

MEMBER NEWS

Carrie Padgett received a clipping from the Eden Prairie (MN) News which printed one of her book reviews.

Marilyn Meredith invites you to the launch for the latest crime novel in the **Rocky Bluff P.D.** series, "**No Sanctuary**," **Saturday, February 28th, 11-4** in the fellowship hall, Springville Baptist Church. The church is located off 190, 1 mile south of Springville on Bogart Dr. Turn left and go to the top of the hill. Refreshments Served. Marilyn wrote this as **F.M. Meredith**. <http://fictionforyou.com>

BOOK & CASSETTE TAPE AUDIO BOOK BLOWOUT!

Come early to the March meeting. All books half-price. Hardcover only \$1.00, paperbacks 50 cents, books on cassette only \$1.00.

KINGS COUNTY BOOKFEST

It's confirmed! A Valley Authors Bookfest will be held at the Veteran's Center, 315 N. Douty St, Hanford, on **April 19**, the Sunday after Easter. The event will last from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. It is open to the public and free of charge.

Would authors please contact Sunny Frazier ASAP to confirm and give me the table size needed. There is no charge for tables and authors keep all their sales. I'm also planning a 15 Minutes of Fame on the small stage for each author to speak about their book.

Sunny (559) 924-4587
sunny69@comcast.net

PUBLIC SAFETY WRITERS ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE

PSWA's (Public Safety Writers Association) annual conference is being held in **Las Vegas, June 18-21, 2009** at the Suncoast Hotel and Casino. The conference is open to anyone writing crime and mystery fiction or non-fiction, technical writing for public safety magazines in print or online, or anyone interested in writing.

Steve Scarborough, a Forensic Scientist with over 30 years experience in Law Enforcement with Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department and the FBI, an accomplished technical writer and the author of several books, will give a presentation on "Writing Forensics Right." <http://www.steve-scarborough.com/> **Tim Dees**, Editor-in-Chief of LawOfficer.com, after serving in law enforcement, he was the first editor-in-chief at Officer.com before joining Elsevier Public Safety and LawOfficer.com in January 2008. His work has been published in nearly every major law enforcement magazine, and he is the author of Writing for the New Media, published by Prentice-Hall. **Sheila Lowe**, handwriting expert will give a presentation. Authors may bring their books for sale. PSWA will keep 10% to help defray the cost of the conference and for the scholarship fund. Some surprises are being planned, so keep watching the PSWA website: <http://www.policewriter.com>

Anyone interested in the Public Safety Writers Association Conference in June, **get signed up before March 31 for the lower rate**. Remember this is one where you're guaranteed to be on a panel if you want to be on one. No restrictions as to who your publisher is. If you have forensic or law enforcement questions this is the place to come. And we have the award winning mystery author, **Betty Webb** as a luncheon speaker! **Marilyn Meredith**

AUTHOR NAOMI HIRAHARA COMING TO HANFORD

May is Asian Month in Hanford. Naomi Hirahara, author of the "Big Bachi" series will be speaking and signing in conjunction with the Clark Center of Asian Culture and Artifacts. Stay tuned for more details in future Pen's.

INAUGURAL CALIFORNIA CRIME WRITERS CONFERENCE

Best-selling authors **Robert Crais** and **Laurie King** will be the

keynote speakers for the inaugural California Crime Writers Conference, co-sponsored by the Los Angeles chapter of Sisters in Crime and the Southern California chapter of MWA on **June 13-14, 2009** at The Hilton Pasadena.

The two-day event will include an agents reception, forensics track, craft workshops, query and synopsis seminars, manuscript consultations, and classes for established authors on book contracts, e-publishing, presentation tips, online marketing information, and film/television opportunities.

Confirmed agents include Jill Marsal of Sandra Dijkstra Literary Agency, Irene Webb of Irene Webb Literary, and Timothy Wager of Davis Wager Agency.

Faculty members include award-winning and best-selling authors such as **Gayle Lynds**, **Jerrilyn Farmer**, **Jan Burke** and **Christopher Rice**, while other experts featured are LAPD detectives, intellectual property attorney Jonathan Kirsch, and publicist Kim-from-L.A.

Early registration is \$265 through February 28. For more information, see www.sistersincrimela.com/ccwc.htm or www.socalmwa.com/ccwc.htm or e-mail sistersincrimela@yahoo.com.

REMEMBERING DONALD WESTLAKE

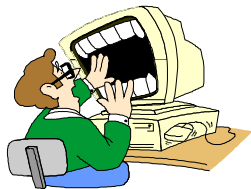
Donald E. Westlake, a prolific, award-winning mystery novelist who pounded out more than 100 books and five screenplays on manual typewriters during his half-century career, died December 31, 2008. He was 75.

Mr. Westlake, considered one of the most successful and versatile mystery writers in the United States, has earned three Edgar Awards, an Academy Award nomination for screenplay writing, and the elite title of Grand Master from the Mystery Writers of America in 1993.

Mr. Westlake's cinematic style of storytelling, along with his carefully crafted plots and crisp dialogue, translated well to the

screen. More than 15 of his books were made into movies, some multiple times. In addition, he himself wrote a number of screenplays, including "The Grifters," which was nominated for an Academy Award in 1991.

He was writing all the way till he passed away. His next novel, "Get Real," is scheduled to be released in April 2009.



WRITERS BLOG BY BILL MOAL

DEAD SILENCE

As anyone who's tried to win the Coveted Dead Bird Award knows, writing for a contest can be an adventure. In December I entered a contest that had a word limit of 75 words and learned a ton.

The contest was sponsored by On the Premises Magazine, an on line literary magazine that holds one flash fiction, and one short story contest every four months at <http://onthepremises.com/>. I'm entering both contests but this article will be about just the flash fiction.

As well as being under 75 words the story had to avoid visual descriptions and dialogue and emphasize sound. I was surprised at how much I could get from these limitations. Every word had to count. By describing the sound of an object I realized I was suggesting how it looked, and how much it weighed and other details. Although it didn't have to involve crime, my story, entitled "Dead Silence," did have a killing. Killing or not I found that sounds not only add variety to a story, but detail as well.

Thanks to e-mail a person can get rejections faster than ever. Before I could finish this article On the Premises sent me an email

saying I didn't win. I thought for sure I would place with the story or at least get an honorable mention, but no dice. I just heard about a website that takes flash fiction at <http://www.everydayfiction.com/>. They only pay \$3, but they accept stories from 50 words to 1000. I don't want to go crazy with this particular opus, but I think I might get a better effect by adding 25 or 50 words. I've only read a couple of the stories on the website, but both had 10 or more comments from readers. If my story gets accepted, it will be fun (or at least educational) to see what people say. It's onward and upward.

CHECK OUT FEB SPEAKER MICHAEL MEHAS' STOLEN BOY WEBSITE. (stolenboy.com)

Michael had nice things to say about his visit to SJ SinC.

"On Saturday, the San Joaquin Sisters in Crime packed the Yosemite Falls Restaurant to hear Stolen Boy talk of crime and redemption. Prizes were won, iced tea and lunch were served, and many books were signed. Stolen Boy felt like a million bucks in a room filled with women who like to write. Doesn't get any better than that! It was an inspiring time for everyone involved. And I again send my heartfelt thanks to Sunny Frazier, Carrie Padgett, Bill Moal, Jean Yamamoto, and all the San Joaquin Sisters for making us feel like true partners in crime."

AND TWO PICTURES, a candid shot of the meeting and picture of sister **Elaine Frei** (after winning copy of "Stolen Boy")

**FRESNO COUNTY LIBRARY
BIG READ: "The Adventures of
Tom Sawyer"** Over 100 county-wide activities are scheduled February through April 2009. www.fresnolibrary.org

Yosemite Romance Writers' monthly meeting will be March 21, 2009, at Marie Callender's at 3602 West Shaw Avenue, NW corner of Shaw and Marty in Fresno. Our speaker will be **Stacey Kayne**, a Chowchilla resident who has published multiple western romances. Stacey will be sharing

her knowledge of storyboarding of your outline/book for your current works in progress. Please RSVP to Sandy at 559-355-9652 or email RSVP@yosemiteromancewriters.com.

JANUARY MEETING WHISPERING

According to **Vi Bedford** and her friend **Violet Homen**, Vi Bedford is working on yet another play. Each year Ms. Bedford writes a performance piece for the California Retired Teachers Association. Her piece follows the beginnings of Scotland Yard. The piece will also give a history of the famous Pinkerton National Detective Agency. She hasn't decided whether it will be a play or a musical yet.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Mar 6-8, 2009 Big Sur Writing Workshop

www.henrymiller.org/AFW2.html

**Mar 7-12 2009, LEFT COAST
CRIME CONV.**, Big Island, Hawaii
www.leftcoastcrime.org/2009/

April 16-18 2009 Las Vegas
Writers Conf.
www.lasvegawritersconference.com

April 25-26 2009 L.A. TIMES
FESTIVAL OF BOOKS. Free
[www.latimes.com/extras/
festivalofbooks/](http://www.latimes.com/extras/festivalofbooks/)

June 13-14, 2009 Calif Crime
Writers Conference, Pasadena
sistersincrimela@yahoo.com.

June 18-21, 2009
Public Safety Writers Assoc.
Conference.
<http://www.policewriter.com>

For more conference listings see: www.sistersincrimelawriters.org/events/
AND [www.poisonedpen.com/
otherplaces](http://www.poisonedpen.com/otherplaces)

Note from Judy Gallardo
There will be no Tony Hillerman Conference, no short story contest and no Word Harvest workshops in 2009. However the Hillerman First Mystery Novel Contest is continuing.

BOOKS ETC by Jean Yamamoto

Current Question: What is the best book you read in 2008? Here are your answers. Thanks for participating.

Carrie Padgett liked "The Spillman Files by Lisa Lotz.

Jeanne Johnson picked "Honolulu" by Alan Brennert.

Victoria Hall liked the Twilight Series by Stephanie Meyers

Dorinda Ohnstad picked "Born To Run" by James Grippando

Barbara Ray liked "Face" by Dean Koontz.

Visitor **Shari** Snowden picked "The Road" by Cormack McCarthy.

Sara Lee Gershon liked the biography "3 cups of Tea"

Feb speaker **Michael** Mehas picked "A New Earth" by Eckhart Tolle.

Stacy Joy liked "Gardens Of Water" by Alan Drew.

Vi Bedford picked "Playing for Pizza" by John Grisham

Bill Moal liked "Dermaphoria" by Craig Clevenger.

Ginger Morgenstern picked "The Pillars Of The Earth" by Ken Follett

Annabeth Palacios liked "Summer Sister" by Judy Blume

Elaine Frei picked "Old Man's War" by John Scalzi

Beverly Johnson picked "The Shack" by William Young

JoAnne Lucas picked "The Bone Collector" by Jeffrey Deaver.

Dianne Seymour liked "Dark Of The Moon" by John Sanford.

Gloria Getman picked "Blue Heaven" by CJ Box.

Visitor **Sunny** Frazier liked "The Brass Verdict" by Michael Connelly

Lucretia Fillmore also liked "The Pillars of the Earth" by Follett.

Brenda Magarity picked "William Saroyan; Places in Time" by Janice Stevens.

Mary Benton liked "A Handful Of Sand" by Mary McCaffrey

Toni Weymouth said anything by Walter Mosley or PD James.

Robyn Hicks picked "The story of Edgar Sawtelle" by David Wroblewski

FROM THE LEXICON DOCTOR

Samples of 6-word love stories from new paperback "Six-Word Memoirs on Love & Heartbreak by Writers Famous & Obscure, from Smith Magazine"

- "Wanted a wife. Got a cat." —Anders Porter
- "One diamond necklace later, I'm single." —Michael Collins
- "Wonder-filled, and never a dull torment." —Diane Ackerman
- "He still needs me at sixty-four." —Armistead Maupin

SUBJECT: MURDER MYSTERY submitted by Maureen Hayes/Eleanor Osborne

Do you like to read a good murder mystery? Not even Law and Order would attempt to capture this mess. This is an unbelievable twist of fate! At the 1994 annual awards dinner given for Forensic Science, AAFS President Dr. Don Harper Mills astounded his audience with the legal complications of a bizarre death. Here is the story:

On March 23, 1994...the medical examiner viewed the body of Ronald Opus, and concluded that he died from a shotgun wound to the head. Mr. Opus had jumped from the top of a ten-story building intending to commit suicide. He left a note to the effect indicating his despondency. As he fell past the ninth floor, his life was interrupted by a shotgun blast passing through a window, which killed him instantly. Neither the shooter nor the deceased was aware that a safety net had been installed just below the eighth floor level to protect some building workers and that Ronald Opus would not have been able to complete his suicide the way he had planned.

"Ordinarily," Dr Mills continued, "Someone who sets out to commit suicide and ultimately succeeds, even though the mechanism might not be what he intended, is still defined as committing suicide." That Mr. Opus was shot on the way to certain death, but probably would not have been successful because of the safety net, caused the medical examiner to feel that he had a homicide on his hands.

The room on the ninth floor, where the shotgun blast emanated, was occupied by an elderly man and his wife. They were arguing vigorously, and he was threatening her with a shotgun! The man was so upset that when he pulled the trigger, he completely missed his wife, and the pellets went through the window, striking Mr. Opus. When one intends to kill subject "A" but kills subject "B" in the attempt, one is guilty of the murder of subject "B."

When confronted with the murder charge, the old man and his wife were both adamant, and both said that they thought the shotgun was not loaded. The old man said it was a long-standing habit to threaten his wife with the unloaded shotgun. He had no intention to murder her. Therefore the killing of Mr. Opus appeared to be an accident; that is, assuming the gun had been accidentally loaded.

The continuing investigation turned up a witness who saw the old couple's son loading the shotgun about six weeks prior to the fatal accident. It transpired that the old lady had cut off her son's financial support and the son, knowing the propensity of his father to use the shotgun threateningly, loaded the gun with the expectation that his father would shoot his mother.

Since the loader of the gun was aware of this, he was guilty of the murder even though he didn't actually pull the trigger. The case now becomes one of murder on the part of the son for the death of Ronald Opus.

Now comes the exquisite twist...Further investigation revealed that the son was, in fact, Ronald Opus. He had become increasingly despondent over the failure of his attempt to engineer his mother's murder. This led him to jump off the ten-story building on March 23rd, only to be killed by a shotgun blast passing through the ninth story window. The son, Ronald Opus, had actually murdered himself. So the medical examiner closed the case as a suicide.

SJ Sister Gloria Getman recently obtained a procedure to translating your writing into foreign languages from a fellow writer and wanted to share it with everyone

For Windows Vista: How to enable foreign language diacritical marks

1. Open **control panel**
2. Double click **regional and language options**
3. Click on **keyboards and languages**
4. Click on **change keyboards**
5. click **add**
6. Scroll to the language you desire, click **ok**
7. Click on **language bar**; click on **docked in taskbar**; click **okay**
8. on your desktop **EN** will appear on the left lower right; click it to see your selected language.

For Hungarian, if one clicks the little **EN** it changes to **HU**. Probably if one had selected Spanish, a **SP** would appear, etc. It is very easy to switch back and forth between languages just by clicking the characters **EN** to **HU(SP, etc.)** to **EN** again.

It is necessary to know which keys will give you the marks you need, however, and these instructions don't tell you that.

A user will have to experiment with her keyboard to find out on where the keys she needs are. For the Hungarian language, a website called www.datacal.com produces stickers to put on one's keyboard when typing in data in that language. This website may produce stickers for other languages also. It also sells a keyboard already keyed to this alternate language. If it doesn't sell for the language you need, a google search should find you what you need.

The procedure is a little different in other versions of Windows. But once you find "Regional and Language Options: under your Help menu, it should be relatively simple to figure out how to enable keyboard switches for your chosen language on whatever version you are using. If Windows gives Hungarian – it ought to give almost any other language! Good Luck. SR

Meet Barbara Ray, New Board Member and New Poison Pen contributor

Her column "Unusual Suspects" will feature member bios. (So we let her practice on herself)

I wrote my first book when I was 9: "The Coffin in the Creek." (A precursor of what was to come?)

My interest in books started as a toddler when my mother read to me. I memorized the words and then looked at the books and by the age of 3, I was reading by myself. I have read every day since, a total of over 70 years! I even read cereal boxes and toilet paper wrappers in the checkout line and go into deep withdrawal if I don't have a book with me at all times.

When I was twenty-three, I wrote another book: "Paisley Nightmare." I typed it up on a Smith-Corona scriptwriter complete with white-outs and single-spaced. I mailed it to Holt, Reinhart & Winston, then the top publishing company in New York, attention Managing Editor. He sent me back a handwritten letter, complimenting my writing and plot, but suggesting more depth in my characters. (I was 23: what did I know?) I secured a Hollywood agent and wrote dozens of short stories and humorous poems, many of which were published in *savant garde* magazines.

Then baby #6 contracted a staph infection in his lung and barely made it through surgery. I reluctantly shelved my writing ambitions in favor of my family, but never stopped writing.

Over the years (centuries?) I finished 3 more books: "Shadow Memories," "Secrets," and "Ancient Evil." I then found a New York agent who was with the Richard Curtis agency. She branched off on her own and then sort of blew off her authors in favor of recruiting new ones and buzzing around the country to conferences. So that was over as far as I was concerned.

In San Diego, I was active in RWA as newsletter columnist, mentor, ran several critique groups and gave seminars from time to time. I have won numerous awards for my work and want to get busy again in a more serious sense. And this wonderful group has inspired me and re-kindled my enthusiasm. Sisters, I cannot thank you enough. You are the greatest!

San Joaquin Sisters in Crime Newsletter Order Form

Crazy about the Poison Pen? Can't wait to share it with family and friends or co-workers who just think Sisters in Crime is something related to law enforcement (or worse)? Send your \$10.00 with this coupon to **San Joaquin Sisters in Crime, P.O. Box 3885, Pinedale, CA 93650** for a full year's subscription or bring it to the next meeting.

Name _____

Address _____

Paid for by _____ (If the subscription is for someone else

**San Joaquin Sisters in Crime
Renewal Form – 2009 - \$30.00**

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

E-mail address _____

Phone Number(s) _____

Writer ____ (Mystery/Other) Reader ____ (Check as many as apply)

Suggestions for:

Poison Pen _____

Speakers (include contact info if you know it) _____

Other _____

Paid _____ check/cash

An Opened Book



by Dorinda Ohnstad

“Deadly Sins Deadly Secrets” A Sidra Smart Mystery

By Sylvia Dickey Smith

“Deadly Sins Deadly Secrets” is the second novel in Sylvia Dickey Smith’s Sidra Smart Mystery Series. Fifty-year-old Sidra “Sid” Smart inherited *The Third Eye* detective business in a small East Texas town where everyone knows everything about everyone, making it difficult to keep even old secrets hidden. When three people turn up dead, one accused of murdering the other two, Sid is presented with her second opportunity to put her newly acquired amateur sleuthing skills to work. The accused man’s father hires her to clear his son’s name. Since Ned Durwood can’t assist her from his grave, Sid has few clues to work with. Local authorities see it as an open and shut case, but that doesn’t stop her from proving otherwise.

After Sid’s apartment building is sold she is forced to move in with her whacky, but lovable, Aunt Annie who lives in a haunted 19th Century home. Shortly after moving in, nightly visits from the ghost of Civil War heroine Kate Dorman begin. The apparition shows her

the image of a boy that falls and hits his head on a rock and leads her to the attic and her diary. Throughout the book the ghost, via her diary and her visits, provides Sid both guidance and inspiration. With Kate’s help, Sid discovers that the past holds the key to solving the case.

Inheriting the private investigation business gave Sid’s life the direction it needed after she divorced her overbearing preacher-husband. When her investigations swirl around Reverend Humble Bluett and his missing wife, Sid is forced to deal with her own personal prejudices and the past she’s running from. In the process she uncovers that prejudices are at the heart of the murders and the unexplained disappearance of young Caleb Hebert thirty years before.

Where the book shined was its portrayal of Southeastern Texas history and culture. The use of a strong and feisty female ghost to help Sid ultimately stumble upon the answers was interesting. This was a quick one-day read that entertained and the story had numerous plot twists to keep the reader interested.

Dorinda Ohnstad is a Contributing Editor for the Crime & Suspense e-zine, writing feature interviews with mystery genre authors and book reviews. She currently lives in Hanford, California with her husband and three children and works as a commercial transactions attorney, consultant and teaches business and business law courses for Columbia College and Chapman University. She is also a long-time member of the Kings County Writer’s Support Group and is a regular blogger on its writer’s blog (www.kcwriters.blogspot.com). She is also currently finishing up her first legal thriller novel. More information on Dorinda’s writing can be found at her website at www.dorindaohnstad.com.