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# ***THE NOOSE***

March 2010



## **Mystery Writers of America**

**New York Chapter**

### **NEXT MEETING: MARCH 3**



REALITY-BASED  
PLOT: MASS  
MURDER THREAT  
HAUNTS YOUR  
SCHOOL

*Threat Assessment*

*Expert, US Secret Service DSAC Robert J. Sica tells us how the agency applies risk assessment expertise to the threat that haunts the halls of academia. Just the kind of intriguing, real-life material novelists research to create tense, attention-getting, relevant plots. PS: Do you know someone who's a student? Join us on March 3!*

\$40 per person gets you dinner, a drink, and an unforgettable talk by one of today's true mystery stars.

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## President's Letter

Alafair Burke

Chapter President, MWA-NY

### President's Letter

In January, I had the pleasure of sitting at the speaker's table for our chapter's monthly dinner program. A few seats to my right, chewing her chicken with the rest of us, was the evening's speaker, Joyce Carol Oates, a National Book Award winner and Pulitzer Prize-nominated author of more than fifty novels. Next to her was my fellow board member, acclaimed author and artist Jonathan Santlofer, who would do the honors of interviewing our speaker for an intimate Q&A. A few seats to my left was perhaps the youngest-looking woman I'd ever seen at one of our meetings. It turned out she was a high school student. She was also a writer.

It's not uncommon to hear fellow chapter members introduce themselves by saying they

are “aspiring writers” or “trying to be a writer.” The first step to being a writer, though, is to write. If you write, you are a writer. Some may be trying to publish their first short story or trying to complete that first novel. Some are looking for an agent, or working with an agent to find a publisher. Others are trying to get back in the publishing game after a dry spell. Some are trying to hit a bestsellers list for the first time. Some are working their way up that list. And even those lucky few at the top want to hold on to that coveted spot a week or two longer. But we’re all writers, and no one knows how hard it is to be a writer until one writes.

Our chapter is a community of and for writers. Our membership committee, led by the charming Robin Hathaway, welcomes new members into the fold. Our mentor program, headed so superbly by Catherine Maiorisi, matches published members with writers still trying to get that first break. Our live programming and our Noose, spearheaded by E.W. Count and Marie Hannan-Mandel, respectively, provide invaluable research, business, and craft information.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve as the new President of the New York Chapter of MWA. I look forward to supporting our members no matter where they are in the ever-changing process of being a writer.

Best,

Alafair Burke





## FROM THE EDITOR...

Hi all,

Welcome to the latest addition of The Noose, where we hear from our new President, Alafair Burke. We have several interesting items for you to enjoy and ponder. As ever, please let me know your comments and suggestions at [mhannanmandel@yahoo.com](mailto:mhannanmandel@yahoo.com).

Marie Hannan-Mandel  
Editor

## ASK THE WRITER...

ASK THE WRITER  
by  
Lisa Cotoggio

**Rosemary Harris is very busy these days, but I was able to pin her down for a few minutes to tell us how her life has changed since the publication of *Pushing Up Daisies* and *The Big Dirt Nap*, the first two books in her new *Dirty Business Mystery Series*.**

"You mean apart from the glamorous parties, fabulous accolades and red carpet events? Seriously, it's much more work than I had ever imagined. Early on I'd read something on Joe Konrath's blog, *A Newbie's Guide to Publishing*. I think he said he spent 50% of his time writing and 50%

promoting. At the time I couldn't believe that was the ratio, but Joe was right. If the first book took close to two years for me to write, I had less than a year for each of the subsequent books because of all the time spent promoting.

"Of course, each of us makes his/her own schedule and budget and I've yet to reach Joe's impressive stats, but I do believe in touring as much as possible. Online promotion can be effective, but there's no substitute for actually meeting booksellers, librarians, and readers. I've learned to love my GPS and modestly priced hotel chains – free WIFI, free parking and free breakfast trump Egyptian cotton sheets when I'm on the stump.



"When I'm not writing or touring, I spend a fair amount of time on marketing. Right now I'm buying wigs. I'm putting together a special mailing to promote my third book, *Dead Head*. In the book, a suburban woman is discovered to be a fugitive who's been on the lam for decades, so we're packaging the advanced reading copies in a Fugitive's Survival Kit including a wig, dark glasses and fake I.D.

"Something tells me Janet Evanovich is not researching wigs on eBay in the wee hours.

"Lest this sounds like I am complaining, I would add I've also made some good friends and had a number of adventures. I've been astounded by the generosity of superstar authors like Lee Child, Carolyn Hart, Sue Grafton, and Sara Paretsky. My first fan email was from a woman who 'guessed I probably got thousands of these letters every day.' (Of course I do, but that one is still on my bulletin board.) And I've occasionally been moved to tears as I was by a note I received from a woman whose mother had won an online contest I ran. She told me when her mother opened the box of signed books and garden goodies; she smiled for the first time since her husband had passed away two weeks earlier. The daughter thanked me.

"So it's been totally wonderful!"

## What advice would you give to authors approaching their first book deal?

"That's a toughie. Just as we all have our own voices and write our own books, we all have our own paths to publication and our own definitions of success. Maybe that's the advice."

Rosemary Harris is the Anthony and Agatha nominated author of *Pushing Up Daisies* and *The Big Dirt Nap*. Her third book, *Dead Head*, will be available April 13, 2010 from Minotaur Books.

## TREASURER'S REPORT



### Chapter Report: New York Regional Chapter

**Opening Bank Balance: 12/31/2008**                      **\$18,330.22**

<b>Deposits</b>	
Dinners (Monthly)	21,450.00
Special Events	590.00
Interest/Dividends	56.14
Chapter Shares and Other Reimbursements	14,961.05
<b>TOTAL DEPOSITS</b>	<b>\$37,057.19</b>

<b>Expenses</b>	
Office Expenses	4,727.17
Includes: Event Announcements (Postcards); Administration Expenses; Account Fees	
Newsletter	3,451.41
Website/Tech Support	4,753.94
Dinners (Monthly)	19,432.00

Special Events: Includes Member Satellite Meetings; Murder 203 Conference	2,573.90
Audio Recordings: Meetings/Events	750.00
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$35,688.42</b>

**Ending Bank Balance 12/31/2009**

**\$19,698.99**

## IMPORTANT DATES



### MARCH 3rd

"Reality-Based Plot: Mass Murder Threat Haunts Your School." Threat Assessment Expert, US Secret Service DSAC Robert J. Sica. Chapter Meeting at The National Arts Club, 15 Gramercy Park South (a.k.a East 20th Street), 6 p.m. Cocktails 7 p.m. Dinner.

### MARCH 11th

"New York, New York, It's a Helluva Town to Die In." NYPL, Countee Cullen Branch, 104 West 136th Street (near Lenox Ave.), 6:30 p.m.

### MARCH 23rd

"Hard-Boiled Mysteries: Killing with an Edge." NYPL, Mid-Manhattan Branch, 455 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY, 6th Floor, 6:30 p.m.

### APRIL 7th

"My Days with the Dead, My Nights with Martha Stewart Living." Jonathan Hayes, MD, Senior Forensic Pathologist. Chapter Meeting at The National Arts Club, 15 Gramercy Park South (a.k.a East 20th Street), 6 p.m. Cocktails 7 p.m. Dinner

**APRIL 13th**

"Crime Scenes – From Cities to the Back of Beyond: Why & How Mystery Writers Choose Their Settings." NYPL, Mid-Manhattan Branch, 455 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY, 6th Floor, 6:30 p.m.

## **BOOK VIDEOS: Should you or shouldn't you?**

### **BOOK VIDEOS: Should you or shouldn't you?**

by

**Lisa Cotoggio**

#### **Part III: THE FINISHED PRODUCT**

Excitement has been pulsing through my body since the day of the shoot, and if you've been following along, I'm sure you're just as anxious as I am to see the final results. But, before you do, I have to say, the editing process is a time-consuming procedure. So have patience, you'll get there.

Once Ruben had all the shots we needed, he headed back into the studio with his creative team and began the magical task of cutting the scenes together to the vision we had both agreed upon. They worked diligently to produce a rough cut, complete with music, and then called me in for a viewing.

Amazing is the word that comes to mind. The music was spot-on and it looked cool in a creepy sort of way, which was just the look I was going for. I gave some comments about titles and text, and they went back to work to give me a completed version. That is a completed version, for now.

As some of you might already be aware, my manuscript has not been sold yet, so creating this book trailer was something I felt would be useful in more ways than one. As a selling tool, it can be submitted with the manuscript to give it that extra edge, along with a look at what I already have produced to help promote push. It's straightforward and draws you right into the story, so you want to read the book. And once it's sold, it saves time and helps the marketing and sales teams go out with something right away. Of course, at

that point, a re-edit would be necessary to add in the book jacket, blurbs, review comments, author comparisons, the publisher and release date.

For those of you who have seriously thought about this indulgence, take my advice and go for it, but make sure to discuss it with your agent first and script the scenes you think will work best to your story's advantage. If you're uncertain, you can always shoot some extra footage.

Should anyone have questions, feel free to e-mail me at [Lisa@LisaCotoggio.com](mailto:Lisa@LisaCotoggio.com). I'd be more than happy to share my knowledge and experience with any and all of my fellow writers.

And now for your viewing: [www.lisacotoggio.com/media/video/heritage.html](http://www.lisacotoggio.com/media/video/heritage.html)

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