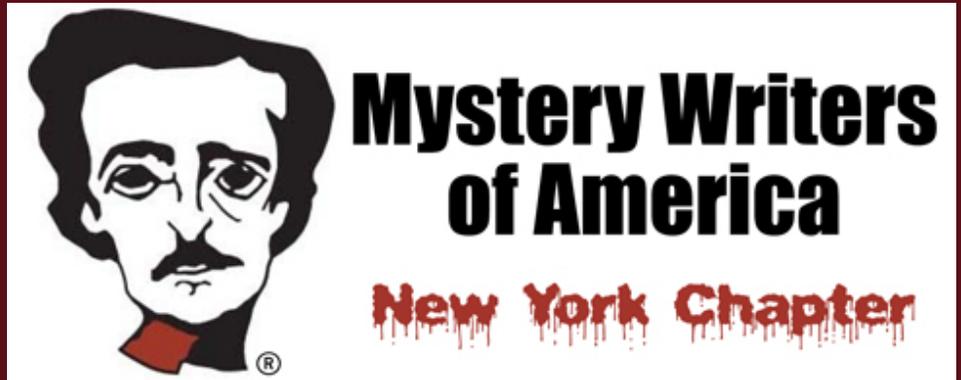


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THE NOOSE

Sept/Oct
Noose 2012



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President's Letter

Dear Fellow MWA/NY Chapter Members,

It took me years after I left school to get used to the fact that adult life does not offer one a new beginning every September. I cannot offer you a new teacher and classroom, a new book bag, and notebooks. But I do have some new directions for our group. In October, we have scheduled another Saturday brunch at Salmagundi Club (on the 13th, not to interfere with Bouchercon, which takes place the first weekend of October this year). And because of the splendid reception of our first brunch last March, we are making these Saturday noon meetings a regular thing—every March and October. Our other meetings will remain on Wednesday nights with much of the format we have always followed.

Also, we will be moving all our meetings to Salmagundi, starting with our holiday party in December. The atmosphere there seems to suit our group, the staff is very accommodating, and the price will be a bit lower—a welcome aspect of the move. Stay tuned for particulars. Our board members are busy arranging speakers and special events, while the mentor program is working to help you learn and grow as writers and organize library panels to give you a chance to meet your public. We're also setting up participation in book festivals throughout our region to help you meet your fans and find new readers. Our new Facebook page and Twitter account have become popular ways for authors to publicize their work and events. Be sure to like us on FB and follow us on Twitter.

The Board and I have one purpose: to do what we can to help our members in their writing careers. MWA/NY has been at this since 1945, but that doesn't mean we are not open to new ideas. We want yours. Please let me know if you have suggestions about how the club can be more helpful to its members.

Please keep in touch.

We are MWA/NY. We help one another succeed. And that means you!

Patricia King
President, MWA-NY

You can write to me at: annamaria@annamariaalfieri.com.

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FROM THE EDITOR

Hi all,

First, I'd like to thank of all you who responded to my request for feedback on the *Noose*. The

response was very gratifying. It makes it seem less like a shout out into the wilderness as I put this issue together. Thank you all!!

This issue includes an *Ask the Writer* interview with a very interesting member, Millys Altman. Find out about the woman who "was born when Warren Harding was president."

Our *Meet the Member* section has proven very popular with our readers, and I extend the invitation to those of you who haven't done so to please send us a short blurb telling us who you are, with a picture (not required, but nice to have.) Remember – a member's a member's, a member – you don't have to be published to tell us about yourself. **I hope to hear from you at: mhannanmandel@yahoo.com.**

Marie Hannan-Mandel
Editor

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All A-Twitter

Members of MWA are encouraged to contact us for promotion on our new [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) feeds! We are interested in hearing about the following:

- events and signings including library panels, bookstore talks, and radio, web, or TV interviews
- fresh book deals from MWA-approved publishing houses
- book or short story launch dates
- awards and nominations

Please do not include reviews of your material. These can range from comments on a *Goodreads* page to *Library Journal* suggestions, and their wide range sadly prevents us from being able to sort through such recommendations. If your book has been selected for a best-of-the-year list, however, by all means let us know!

Contact either hcdavidson@yahoo.com or lyndsayfaye@hotmail.com with all relevant information, including links.

And don't forget to join the MWA-NY group on Yahoo. To join, go to Groups on the Yahoo email page and request membership in the [MWA-NY group](http://groups.yahoo.com/) (<http://groups.yahoo.com/>).

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IMPORTANT DATES



SEPT 12 —

Chapter meeting:

Featuring Christian Dietrich, coordinator of the UN Security Council Panel of Experts. Midtown Executive Club, 40 West 45th Street, New York, NY 10036, (212) 626-9300, 6:00 p.m.

SEPT 28 —

Mystery Writers Panel at Chappaqua Library:

195 South Greeley Avenue, Chappaqua, NY 10514, (914) 238-4779, 7:30 p.m.

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MentorProgram

Want to give writing advice to an unpublished mystery writer? Or get advice from a published one?

Now's the time.

Starting in mid-September, the New York Chapter of Mystery Writers of America's Mentor Program will play its annual matchmaking role. It will match submissions (of up to 50 pages of crime-related novels or short stories in need of a critique) with generous volunteer mentors.

More details will come by e-mail.

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WHAT'S NOOSE?



Contest Winner

Eleanor Kuhuns, *A Simple Murder.*, Winner of the 2011 MWA/Minotaur First Crime Novel Contest.

Short Stories

Gary Cahill, "The Damnedest Things." *The First Line Literary Journal*, Fall 2012. Kindle: Sept 10, 2012; In stores: Sept. 15, 2012. Available in New York, NY at McNally Jackson Books and Bluestockings Bookstore, and from www.thefirstline.com

Lou Manfredo, "A Path to Somewhere." *Ellery Queen Mystery Magazine*, Sept/Oct 2012.

Lou Manfredo, "Soul Anatomy." *New Jersey Noir*, Akashic Books, *The Ontario Review*: 2011. *Best American Mystery Stories 2012*, Robert Crais, Guest Editor, Houghton Mifflin, 2012.

Terrie Farley Moran, "Fontaine House." *Ellery Queen Mystery Magazine*, August 2012.

Shelly Reuben, "Hero Worship Eyes." *The Forensic Examiner*, Spring 2012

Shelly Reuben, "You Again?" *The Forensic Examiner*, Fall 2012

Send items (publications, nominations, and awards) for "What's Noose?" to the *Noose* Editor at

mhannanmandel@yahoo.com. Please use the format you see in the entries above. *Italicize* book and magazine titles and put "quotes" around the titles of short stories and articles.

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ASK THE LAWYER

Dear Bob,

I see where the writer of *Fifty Shades of Grey* just put her work online and it sold and then a publishing house bought and now it's selling a lot of copies.

I have two questions about this: If I put my work online, do I have to apply for copyright for it? Also, is it wise to put my work online like that? I've tried publishers but they say that my work doesn't fit into a genre and would be hard to sell. What do you think about me putting it up online?

Thanks!

Desperate and depressed.

Dear Desperate and depressed:

If by "put my work online" you mean self-publishing (whether through Author Solutions, Lulu, Amazon, iBooks, or any other assisted self-publishing operation) a fully edited and proofread, professional-looking copy of your book, with a decent digital cover, then I think it's a fine idea, so long as you are prepared to promote the heck out of it (via Facebook, Twitter, an author web page, and whatever else you can think of) and do not expect to sell a lot of copies.

I'm not saying it's impossible to sell a lot of copies that way, just that most books sold that way do not become bestsellers. The reason we've all heard of *Fifty Shades of Grey* is that it is one of the relatively rare exceptions. If your book has merit, and if you actively and tirelessly promote it, you may be able to build a readership (it may take more than one or two books to develop a substantial following). If that readership grows to the point where publishers take notice, it is then possible that you may hear from an agent or a publisher interested in your work.

Do you need to apply for copyright? You do need to include a copyright notice ("© insert date of first publication, insert your name"), and you should also (but are not required to) apply for a copyright registration. You can apply online at www.copyright.gov. It'll take you about half an hour and cost \$35. If your book is published only online, and not in any print edition, you will be able to make an electronic deposit of your book to the Library of Congress; otherwise you will need to send two copies of the print edition. There are advantages to registration (e.g. you cannot sue an infringer until you've registered),

and there is really very little reason not to do so.

Good luck!

**Best,
Bob**

Bob Stein counsels and represents people at all levels of the entertainment industry from writers to film producers. He has represented David Baldacci and Janet Evanovich and spent 13 years in-house at Random House, Simon and Schuster and Warner Books before entering private practice.

Advice given in this column is general, and is not based upon a thorough review of facts and considerations in any given instance. You should consult an attorney in depth if you need legal advice.

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ASK THE WRITER

Meet Millys Altman

By Patricia King (aka Annamaria Alfieri)

Millys recently reinstated her membership in MWA, so I sent her an email welcoming her back to our chapter. We struck up an email conversation, and it became abundantly clear that our chapter membership needed an introduction to this singular member. Here is the bio she posted on the website of the ePublisher of her new novel *Innocent Strangers*:

*I was born when Warren Harding was president in a small town at the foot of the Allegheny Mountains in the golden era of the coal and coke industry, and I live there today. My father was a doctor. After high school, where I was class valedictorian, came Hood College, a school teaching job, and marriage. I was a camp follower in World War 11. My architect husband and I raised three sons, all professionals. I have been a widow for some time. *Innocent Strangers* is my second novel.*

I am so happy to introduce you to Millys Altman.

--Patricia King

PK: Millys, tell us what inspired you to make your current book a mystery.

MA: I can't say why I picked a mystery. I instinctively knew that I couldn't write a thriller, or detective, or spy story. When I came up with an idea that seemed a fit for me, I went with it. It would be a bold lie if I said I always wanted to write. When I was young, I did not have any strong inclinations.

My college degree was a Bachelor of Science. But I was infected with the writing bug, dormant, and when it emerged, I had a serious case.

I came to writing late, and I had early success. Two of my boys were professional racing car drivers, and one day I realized I had an idea right in front of me. I wrote *Racing In Her Blood*, a young adult novel, and I shipped the manuscript to New York over the transom.

My high expectations were quickly rewarded when an editor called to tell me that she liked the book. It was published under the Harper imprint.

Flushed with success and hubris that I could write anything, I moved up the next rung of the writing ladder (in my opinion). I read where the romance field was wide open, and there I went. I wrote several romances and sent them into the maw of New York publishing. All were tossed back.

That sobered me up. Coming from the generation that I do, it was folly for me to think I could write romances. Both my mother and mother-in-law were Victorian ladies. So, I returned to my roots, to the culture I was raised in for my next effort.

I carefully chose my home town for the setting and modeled one of my characters after my father. He was the doctor for a large coal mining company when I was little. I understood small town life and politics. I tried to set myself up so that I could produce an authentic story with historical accuracy and not have to agonize over ambience. Even so, the writing was incredibly difficult, and it took me several years. Early on, I tried a professional critique, and it was very little help.

I got an agent through an item in *The 3rd Degree*, and the novel made the rounds without success. To hell with writing, I thought, and moved on to other things. (Don't do as I did). I have always been an achiever, and the fact that editors rejected my novel stayed with me and rankled. When e-books became popular, I pulled the novel off my closet shelf, and with fresh insight, revised it. After a stumble or two, I managed to get it on line as an e-book.

PK: You recently decided to reveal your real age. What motivated you to do so?

MA: Age gets to be a problem. I have a close friend who cannot use a computer. "I'm too old to learn," she says. I shy away from that attitude. If I'm interested, I give things a healthy try. I discover how far I can go when I bump up against my limitations. Three years ago, I decided I wanted to do yoga. My body soon told me to get out of the class, and I did. In one instance, I do not heed the messages, signals, and bells ringing in my ears. I refuse to give up golf.

When *Innocent Strangers* went on-line, I worried that if I revealed my age no one would buy the book. But I was stuck with this statistic. How many years could I fudge with credibility? I didn't want to be deceitful. Finally my family convinced me that revealing my age would be more of an asset to sales than a detriment. We shall see.

PK: What's your writing routine? What's the next project for you?

MA: I am a morning person, and I write when my energy level is highest. I do not write for a set number of hours or pages. I can spend an hour composing a single paragraph. I can write all morning, or if I feel like it, all day. I guess you would say I'm not disciplined, although I could be. One of the beauties of living alone is that I can do this. The telephone seldom interrupts because many of my good friends are in a nursing home, or are no longer with us, as my mother would say. I have the luxury of not having the pressure to meet a deadline. I am working on a sequel to *Innocent Strangers*.

Patricia King is president of MWA-NY chapter. You can find out more about her at

